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Edited by George Earle Buckle

Excerpt

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO CHAPTER XII

DURING the year 1896 Queen Victoria entered on the last stage of her great career. On 23rd September she had reigned longer than any of her predecessors, and there was some disposition to make the day one of national celebration. But her Majesty let it be known that in her view public rejoicings ought to be deferred till 20th June 1897, when the sixtieth year of her reign should be completed. In other respects 1896 was for the Queen a year of mourning. Her son-in-law, Prince Henry of Battenberg, to whom since his marriage to Princess Beatrice and constant residence under her Majesty's roof she had become deeply attached, died of fever on board ship on 20th January, having been invalided from the Ashanti Expedition.

With the opening of the year the storm broke in South Africa. News came that Dr. Jameson, the Administrator of the British South Africa Company's territory, had crossed on 29th December the frontier into the Transvaal, at the head of 400 or 500 troopers, in order to assist the Uitlanders to obtain by force the civil rights denied them by President Kruger. Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, had immediately telegraphed to Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner for South Africa, repudiating the raid, and directing that it should be stopped. But Dr. Jameson went on till, on New Year's Day, he met a Boer force near Krugersdorp; and after a fight of several hours he and his troopers were defeated and surrendered. Sir Hercules Robinson at once proceeded to Pretoria. On his representations the Johannesburg Reformers, who were not ready for action when Dr. Jameson moved, laid down the arms which they had since hurriedly taken up; and President Kruger gave up his prisoners—the raiders—to be put on trial by the British Government. But he ordered the arrest of the Uitlander leaders on a charge of high treason. Mr. Chamberlain endeavoured without success to get him to come to England and make a reasonable settlement.

Mr. Rhodes, Prime Minister at the Cape, and Dr. Jameson's chief as Managing Director of the Chartered Company, resigned his Premiership, came to London, and placed his resignation as Managing Director in the Board's hands. He then went immediately to Matabeleland, and, largely by his personal influence, succeeded after some months in crushing

a serious native rebellion there. After trial at Pretoria, the four chief Reform leaders, one of whom (Col. Frank Rhodes) was Mr. Rhodes's brother, were condemned to death—a sentence which, after a strong protest from Mr. Chamberlain, was commuted to fifteen years' imprisonment (afterwards much reduced) and a fine of £25,000 apiece. Fifty-nine other Reformers were tried and fined £2,000 each. The trial of Dr. Jameson and his principal fellow-raiders in London resulted in July in a verdict of *Guilty*, but with a rider that the state of things in Johannesburg presented great provocation. Dr. Jameson was sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment, but was released at the end of the year on grounds of health. His five principal military officers were sentenced to lesser terms, and (with Col. Rhodes) were directed to resign their commissions in the Army. A Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to enquire into the raid, but the taking of evidence was postponed till the next session. Meanwhile, President Kruger hardened his heart, used the money obtained by the Reform Leaders' fines to increase his armaments, and continued and accentuated the system by which the Uitlanders contributed more than three-quarters of the Transvaal revenue without having any voice in its expenditure.

There was from the first much personal sympathy in Great Britain and in the Empire for Dr. Jameson and the raiders. This movement of public feeling was strengthened by a telegram which the German Emperor, after consulting his Ministers, sent immediately after the raid, congratulating Mr. Kruger in terms virtually recognising his independence, and which he followed up by orders to land marines from a German cruiser in Delagoa Bay to proceed to Pretoria—a measure frustrated by Portuguese refusal to acquiesce. As control over the foreign relations of the Transvaal was secured to Britain by the Convention of London, and as both Government and people were determined to maintain it, the Emperor's action caused an outburst of angry indignation. In view of the anxious situation alike in South Africa, in Anglo-German relations, and in Anglo-American relations over Venezuela, a Flying Squadron was mobilised, and preparations were made for sending more troops to South Africa. But, before long, the tension was relaxed. It was found unnecessary to despatch the troops; the German Emperor protested that he had been misunderstood—a protest formally accepted by the Government, but altogether

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1896]

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

3

distrusted by British opinion ; and the Anglo-American dispute became a matter of friendly negotiation, which was concluded within the year by a reference, under certain conditions, of the Venezuelan boundary question to arbitration.

Lord Salisbury realised in March that an opportunity had come to begin that movement for regaining the Soudan for civilisation, to which so many of his countrymen were looking forward, and which the regenerating work in Egypt of Lord Cromer, the British Agent-General, and of Sir Herbert Kitchener, the Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, had by now rendered possible. An Italian expeditionary force in Abyssinia had been defeated by the Negus at Adowa on 1st March, and their hold on Kassala was threatened by the dervishes, who were in a ferment throughout the northern Soudan. Partly as a diversion to help the Italians, the Sirdar was ordered to advance up the Nile from Wady Halfa, but not to go farther than Dongola. Though violent attacks were made on this policy of advance in Parliament by the Liberals under Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley, Ministers were sustained by large majorities, 268 to 126, and 288 to 145. The expedition, mainly formed of Egyptian troops, was completely successful. On the morning of 7th June, at Firket, the dervishes were surprised in camp and routed with heavy loss ; and in the autumn, after a sharp conflict at Hafir, Dongola was occupied on 23rd September. In West Africa the aims of the Ashanti Expedition were accomplished without any fighting ; King Prempeh was deposed and deported. In Canada a General Election placed the Liberals in power, with Mr. Wilfrid Laurier as Premier. He was a French Canadian, but a strong Imperialist, a main branch of whose policy was the adoption of preferential tariff arrangements with Great Britain and sister colonies. In Australia, in spite of the death of Sir Henry Parkes, the idea of Federation made distinct progress, and all the Colonies, except Queensland, resolved to meet in a Federal conference in 1897.

The Russian Emperor and Empress were crowned with imposing ceremony at Moscow on 26th May ; but the festivities were marred by a terrible disaster, on the 31st, in which, owing to defective police arrangements for regulating the enormous crowds, 3,000 people were suffocated or trampled to death in a crush. In the autumn the Imperial pair made a tour in Europe, accompanied by the Foreign Minister, Prince Lobanoff, who died suddenly on 30th August. They

III—2

visited the Emperor Francis Joseph in Vienna at the end of August; spent a fortnight, from 22nd September to 3rd October, with Queen Victoria at Balmoral, where the Emperor saw Lord Salisbury; and then paid a demonstrative visit of five days, 5th to 9th October, to France, being received with great enthusiasm and ceremony in Paris.

The peace of the world was threatened by the failure of Spain to subdue an insurrection in Cuba. Marshal Campos was superseded by General Weyler without any greater success. The attitude of the United States, where there was much sympathy for the Cuban rebels, was menacing; and the Senate passed a resolution, disregarded by the Executive, acknowledging the independence of Cuba. Attention in America was largely occupied by the Presidential Election, in which Mr. McKinley, Republican, defeated Mr. Bryan, a Democrat in favour of the free coinage of silver. The state of Turkey as well as Cuba remained a menace to the world. Though Lord Salisbury had restored the concert of Europe, he could not get it to work efficiently. An attempt was made to end the unrest in Crete by appointing a Christian Governor. The massacres of Armenians in different parts of the Turkish Empire continued, and culminated in a peculiarly atrocious holocaust in Constantinople in August. The Powers protested, without result; and Lord Salisbury could not induce them to do more than protest. Indignation rose to a high pitch in England, and a large part of the Liberal Party, stimulated by Mr. Gladstone, advocated independent action to depose the Sultan. Lord Rosebery combated this movement, but without much success in his own party; and accordingly, by a letter to the Whip on 6th October, he resigned his leadership.

The first session of the new Ministry was not a wholly successful one, as its principal measure, a comprehensive Education Bill, though welcomed on its second reading by the unprecedented majority of 267, proved so unwieldy and so unacceptable to the Nonconformists and to many Churchmen that it had to be withdrawn in the middle of June, after only two lines of the first clause had been passed in Committee. Mr. Balfour, however, succeeded in carrying a sessional order by which supply was limited to twenty days—an arrangement still in force. The House of Commons sanctioned further large increases in Naval Expenditure. Important bills were also passed to relieve agricultural land of half its rates, and to facilitate land purchase in Ireland.

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CHAPTER XII

1896

Mr. Chamberlain to Queen Victoria.

COLONIAL OFFICE, 1st Jan. 1896.—Mr. Chamberlain presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs to submit copies of the telegrams which have passed with regard to affairs in the Transvaal.

Doctor Jameson's invasion¹ of a country with which your Majesty is at peace appears to have had no justification. His action has been disavowed by Mr. Rhodes and by the Chartered Company. Mr. Chamberlain hopes that the action taken by Sir Hercules Robinson² and himself will prevent bloodshed and avert further mischief.

[*Télégramme.*] *Queen Victoria to the Sultan of Turkey.*

2 Jan. 1896.—Je remercie sincèrement votre Majesté Impériale des bons vœux qu'elle m'adresse pour le nouvel an. Dieu veuille que les nuages qui l'obscurcissent se dissipent et que votre Majesté ait la satisfaction de voir cesser les souffrances de vos peuples ! VICTORIA R. I.

[*Telegram.*] *Mr. Chamberlain to Queen Victoria.*

PARLIAMENT STREET, 2nd Jan. 1896.—Mr. Chamberlain . . . regrets to have to inform your Majesty that Dr. Jameson refused to obey the commands of Sir H. Robinson and to retire. An engagement there-

¹ See Introductory Note to this chapter.

² The High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of Cape Colony.

upon took place with the troops of the Transvaal, and Dr. Jameson had to surrender after losing men killed and wounded. Sir H. Robinson is now on his way to Pretoria with instructions to secure best terms for the prisoners and to assist in a settlement.

Lord Salisbury's Third Ministry

(Formed in June 1895)

<i>Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary</i>	MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.
<i>First Lord of the Treasury</i>	ARTHUR JAMES (afterwards Earl of) BALFOUR.
<i>Lord Chancellor</i>	LORD (afterwards Earl of) HALSBURY.
<i>Lord President of the Council</i>	DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE (formerly Marquis of Hartington).
<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>	VISCOUNT CROSS.
<i>Home Secretary</i>	SIR MATTHEW WHITE (afterwards Viscount) RIDLEY.
<i>Colonial Secretary</i>	JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.
<i>War Secretary</i>	MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.
<i>Indian Secretary</i>	LORD GEORGE HAMILTON.
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>	SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH (afterwards Earl St. Aldwyn).
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>	GEORGE J. (afterwards Viscount) GOSCHEN.
<i>Lord Lieutenant of Ireland</i>	EARL CADOGAN.
<i>Lord Chancellor of Ireland</i>	LORD ASHBOURNE.
<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>	CHARLES T. (afterwards Lord) RITCHIE.
<i>President of the Local Government Board</i>	HENRY (afterwards Viscount) CHAPLIN.
<i>President of the Board of Agriculture</i>	WALTER H. (afterwards Viscount) LONG.
<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</i>	LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD (formerly Sir Henry James).
<i>Secretary for Scotland</i>	LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH.
<i>First Commissioner of Works</i>	ARETAS AKERS-DOUGLAS (afterwards Viscount Chilston).

Extracts from the Queen's Journal.

OSBORNE, 2nd Jan. 1896.—Beatrice read me telegrams after tea, as my sight is so bad, and I have not yet succeeded in getting spectacles to suit. No fresh news from the Transvaal. But this affair is very unfortunate.

There are every day satisfactory accounts in the papers from the Gold Coast. The native Chiefs,

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[More information](#)

1896] GERMAN EMPEROR AND MR. KRUGER 7

especially one is mentioned, were greatly excited and surprised when Sir F. Scott introduced Liko,¹ “who had married the Queen’s daughter,” to them. The papers also say that Liko has been made Military Secretary to the General.

3rd Jan.—More telegrams kept coming in, and one from President Kruger to Mr. Chamberlain apparently referring to those in the Raid who had been taken prisoners, saying they were to be treated with kindness.

The papers are full of very strong articles against William, who sent a most unwarranted telegram to President Kruger, congratulating him, which is outrageous, and very unfriendly towards us. The following is the telegram: “I sincerely congratulate you that you and your people have succeeded, by your own energetic action and without appealing for help to friendly Powers, in restoring order against the armed bands that broke into your country as disturbers of the peace, and in safeguarding the independence of the country from attacks from without.” After tea Beatrice dictated to me from a rough draft of mine a letter to William,² in answer to one I received from him a few days ago.

Sir Francis Knollys³ to Sir Arthur Bigge.⁴

SANDRINGHAM, 4th January 1896.

MY DEAR BIGGE,—The Prince of Wales desires me to write to you and say that he feels sure the Queen looks upon the German Emperor’s message to President Kruger as a most gratuitous act of unfriendliness. H.R.H. also thinks that, considering the Emperor’s relationship with her Majesty, the professions which he has always made as to his love for this country,

¹ Prince Henry of Battenberg, Princess Beatrice’s husband, who had joined the Ashanti Expeditionary Force, commanded by Sir F. Scott.

² See next page.

³ Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales and to King Edward throughout his reign: created Viscount Knollys.

⁴ Private Secretary to the Queen 1895–1901, and to King George 1910–1931; created Lord Stamfordham.

8 THE QUEEN AND THE EMPEROR [CHAP. XII]

and the appointments which he holds both in the English Army and Navy, he has shown in addition the worst possible good taste and good feeling in congratulating the Boers on their victory over a body of men (accomplished it is feared with a considerable loss of life to the vanquished) composed exclusively of the Queen's subjects. But independently of all this, the Prince of Wales would like to know what business the Emperor had to send any message at all. The South African Republic is not an independent State in the proper sense of the word, and it is under the Queen's suzerainty. What the Emperor has done therefore is doubly unnecessary and unfriendly. H.R.H. only hopes he will not come to Cowes this year. Yours sincerely, FRANCIS KNOLLYS.

[*Telegram.*] *The Colonial Office to Sir Arthur Bigge.*

COLONIAL OFFICE, 4th Jan. 1896.—. . . All telegrams were posted to you this evening at seven; Jameson not wounded, but in prison, with White and Willoughby.¹ It is believed that things are becoming quiet and no further disturbance likely. We think Transvaal Government will deal leniently with prisoners. . . .

Queen Victoria to the German Emperor.

[*Copy.*] OSBORNE, 5th January 1896.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—. . . As your Grandmother to whom you have always shown so much affection and of whose example you have always spoken with so much respect, I feel I cannot refrain from expressing my deep regret at the telegram you sent President Kruger. It is considered very unfriendly towards this country, which I feel sure it is not intended to be, and has, I grieve to say, made a very painful impression here. The action of Dr. Jameson was of course very wrong and totally unwarranted; but considering the very peculiar position in which the Transvaal stands towards Great Britain, I think it would have been far

¹ Military officers accompanying Dr. Jameson.

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[More information](#)

1896] QUEEN AND TRANSVAAL TELEGRAMS 9

better to have said nothing. Our great wish has always been to keep on the best of terms with Germany, trying to act together, but I fear your Agents in the Colonies do the very reverse, which deeply grieves us. Let me hope that you will try and check this. . . .

I hope you will take my remarks in good part, as they are entirely dictated by my desire for your good.
VICTORIA R. I.¹

Queen Victoria to Mr. Chamberlain.

[*Cypher Telegram.*]

5th Jan. 1896.—While thanking you for your letter and telegrams sent by messenger on 1st, I cannot help expressing surprise that the more important details of news from the Transvaal have not been at once forwarded to me by telegraph. Telegrams which arrived here by post this morning were published in last night's papers.

I am deeply grieved at this sad disaster, and am naturally most anxious for the latest news.

I sincerely sympathise with you in this most serious and complicated question which has arisen in your Department of my Government.

[*Telegrams.*] *Mr. Chamberlain to Queen Victoria.*

COLONIAL OFFICE, 5th Jan. 1896.—Mr. Chamberlain presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and regrets very much that he has misunderstood your Majesty's wishes in regard to telegrams from South Africa. In future all messages of any importance shall be repeated to your Majesty as soon as they can be put into cypher. At the present time there is no indication of any further disturbance of the peace either at Johannesburg or elsewhere, and President Kruger appears to be acting with great moderation.

6th Jan.—Following telegram received from Sir H. Robinson, 6th January :

“ 5 January No. 4. C. J. Rhodes telegraphs to me that he finds the present position of affairs so strained

¹ This letter has already been published in Sir Sidney Lee's *King Edward VII*, vol. i, ch. 38.

that he thinks I should accept his resignation. His colleagues in the Ministry, I understand, are all of the same opinion. Acting on suggestion from Rhodes, I have invited Sir Gordon Sprigg to undertake task of formation of new Ministry.”

[*Same day.*]—Mr. Chamberlain . . . begs to thank your Majesty for your gracious message.

The situation in South Africa is still very critical, and Mr. Chamberlain is using every possible means to prevent any further raid on the territory of the Transvaal Republic. Mr. Rhodes denies that any is intended, and Sir Hercules Robinson does not anticipate one, but Mr. Chamberlain has heard rumours from private sources which make him extremely anxious. In addition to this, he is trying to dissuade President Kruger from taking any extreme measures which might lead to more bloodshed, and further embitter race animosities in South Africa.

As important telegrams may come in at any hour of the night or day, Mr. Chamberlain feels sure that your Majesty would not wish him to leave his post yet, but as soon as the great pressure is removed he will wait upon your Majesty.

Extract from the Queen's Journal.

OSBORNE, 7th Jan. 1895.—So much to do, and my troublesome eyes make everything much more difficult. Had a letter from Mr. Chamberlain, who is acting firmly and prudently.

Queen Victoria to Mr. Chamberlain.

[*Cypher Telegram.*]

7th Jan. 1896.—From your cypher of last night situation in Transvaal seems precarious. I assume Jameson's safety will be insisted upon.

You should not entertain any suggestion for altering terms of 1884 Convention which would adversely affect our position with S[outh] A[frican] Republic.

I cannot say how shocked I am at the terrible loss of life, and I am struck by the excess of killed over wounded, which is the reverse of the usual proportion.