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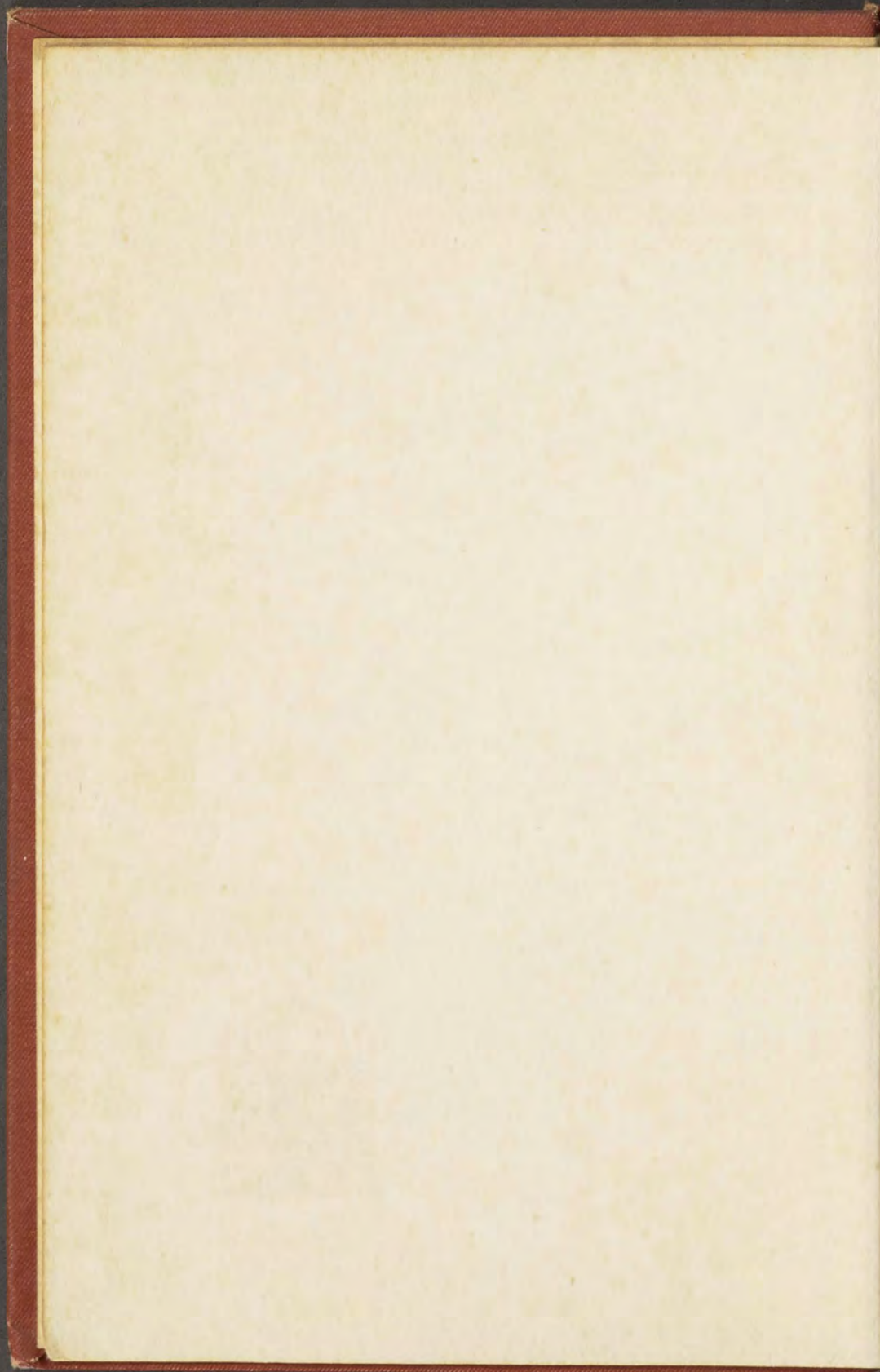
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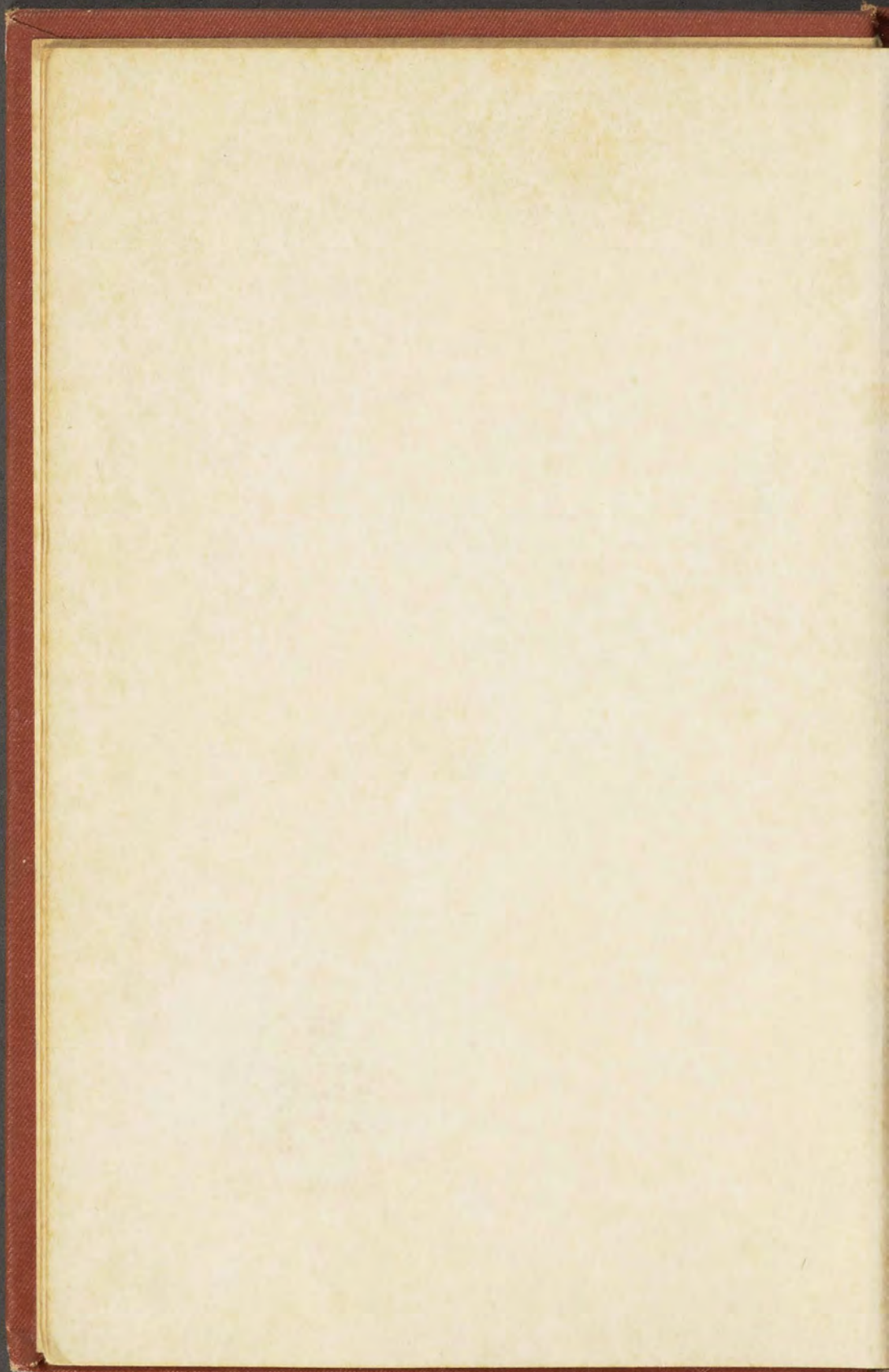
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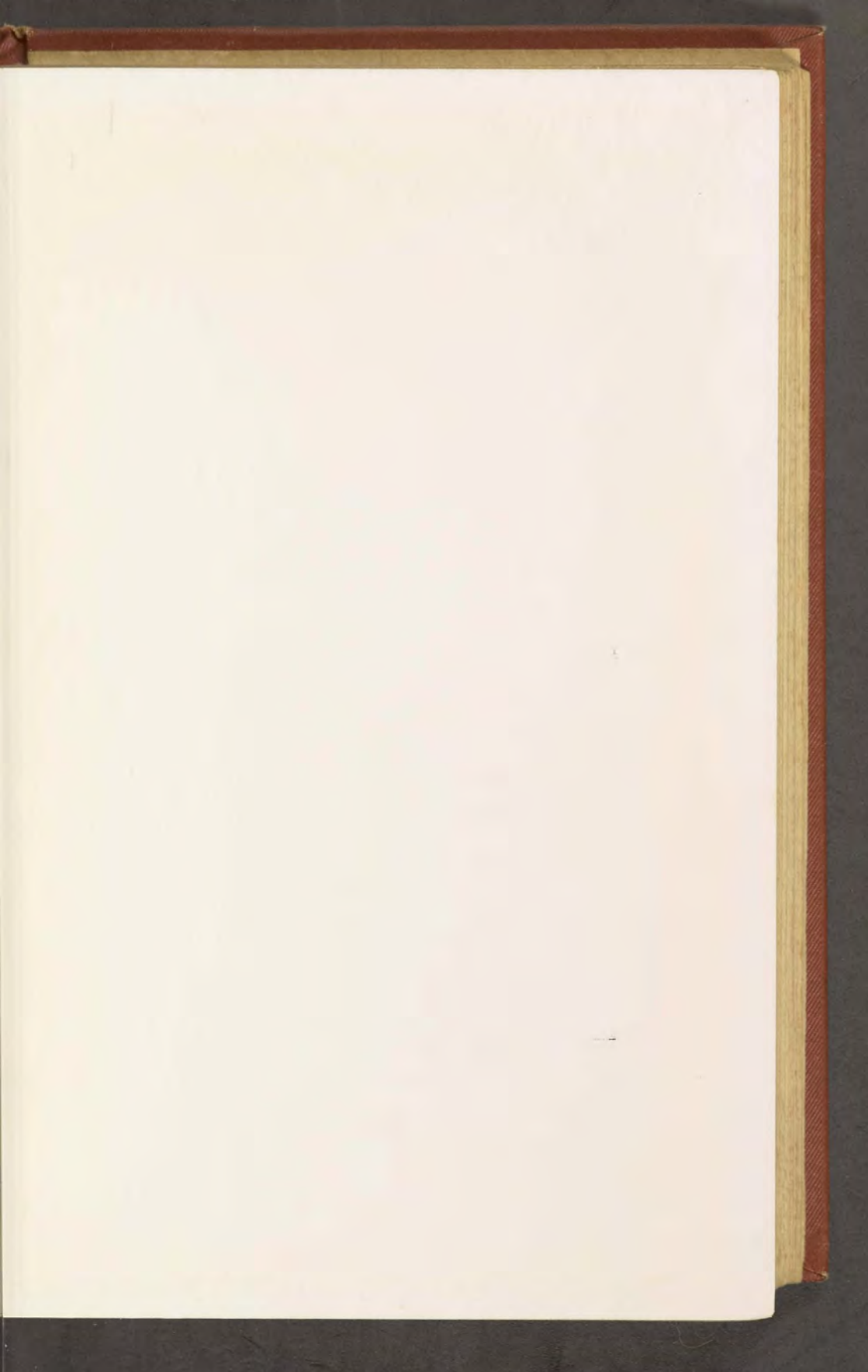
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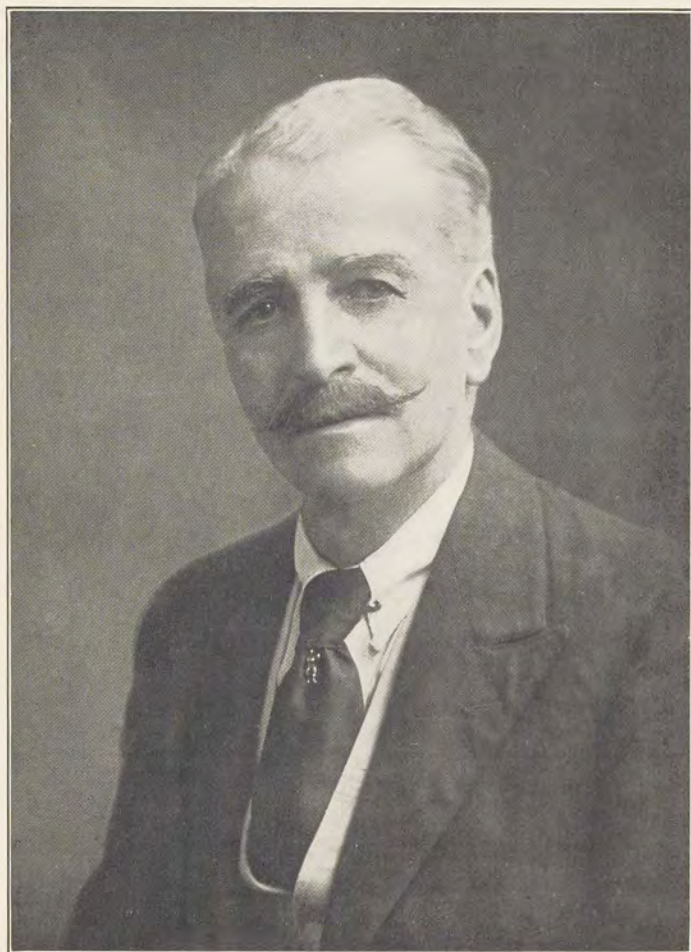


REMINISCENCES OF  
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LOUIS COHEN

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By  
LOUIS COHEN  
*Author of "Reminiscences of Kimberley"*

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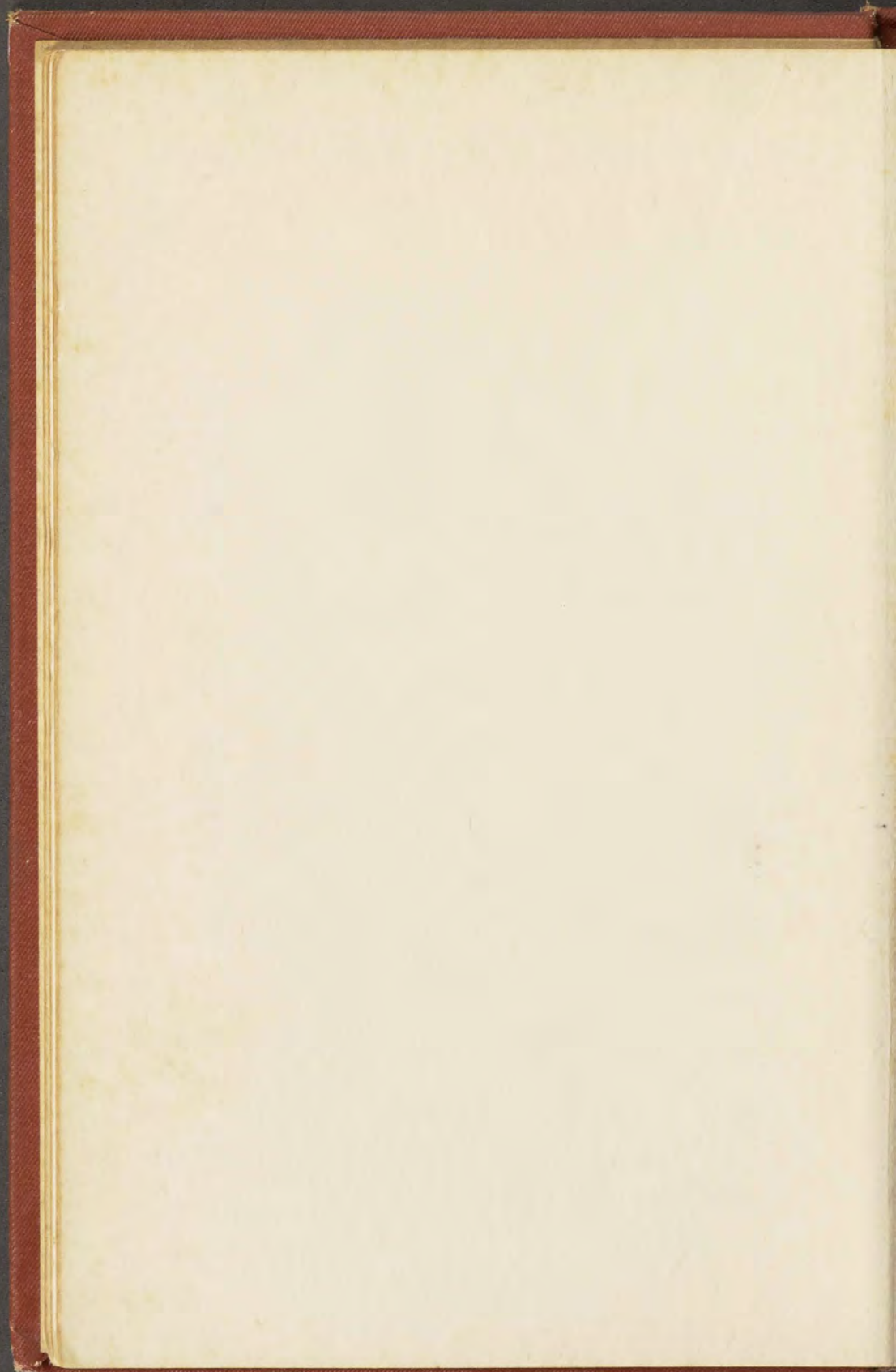
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TO  
MY WIFE



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## PREFACE

I SET out to tell of life in Johannesburg, and have done so, to the best of my ability, in these detached and fragmentary sketches which were mainly written some ten years ago, and therefore—like the Newgate Calendar—are rather old-fashioned. The purpose underlying this volume is firstly to amuse or interest, and secondly to describe the methods and traps of company promoters, their touts and jackals. Apart from this I thought that perhaps a book narrating the everyday adventures and experiences of one of the pioneers of the South African diamond and gold-fields might prove acceptable. I look back on a strenuous life, and if I have not rubbed shoulders with world-renowned people, many striking personalities were known to me, and the *mise en scène* of my youthful days was almost virgin ground, full of possibilities, when I first began to write of South African affairs.

Born in 1854, in Liverpool, of an Irish mother, I first put foot in Kimberley in 1872—went into partnership with Barney Barnato—was diamond buyer, claim-holder in Kimberley Mine, actor, journalist, dramatist—1876 found me gold-digging in Pilgrim's Rest—in the Zulu Campaign—Basuto War—London—Johannesburg 1887—stockbroker.

I knew, amongst a hundred others, during their early careers and after, Aylward, Dr. Holub, Barnato, Rhodes, Trollope, Peter Raaf, Jameson, Carrington, Cronje, Kruger, Joubert, Siveright, Farrar, Selous, O'Reilly, D'Arcy, Shervington, Ava, Schlickmann, Southey, Lanyon, and many who have made South African history, and had something better than money to recommend them. The lesser characters, too, were full of colour—some of crime—and originality, appealingly interesting to those who knew the prototypes. I have met every actor or actress of note

that came in my time to South Africa (acting with many of them), a few noblemen—or the reverse—*literati*, soldiers, explorers, pugilists, experts (all kinds), racing dons, sportsmen, bandits, and a round dozen of millionaires who don't count—except when money grabbing.

With such an armoury I was tempted to try my luck, and though the book may not suit Josiah Bounderby, John Brough, Esq., Barry Lyndon, Jemmy Twitcher, George Barnwell, Becky Sharp, Lady Bellaston, and even less Mrs. Grundy or Shepherd Stiggins, still these great ones are not everybody. Perhaps it will appeal to gentlemen of sporting proclivities—but I am not sure. I lately advised a racing man to see a certain film—"Just suit a sport like you," I said. He went, and when he met me later he remarked with a sniff, "Call that a sportin' picter—there ain't a hoss race in it—just piffle about Germans and wenches." "What's the name of the film?" asked a bystander. "Oh," replied the sport, "it's called the Four 'Orsemen of the Apoplexy."



# Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London

## CHAPTER ONE

Back to South Africa—The Land of Rheims and Compromises—The Rand—*Vivat* Johannesburg—The Admirable Abe.

It was somewhere in the middle eighties that I, accompanied by my wife and son Binks, who was then a baby, stepped on board the slow-going *Roslin Castle* on the way to Johannesburg, then a newly discovered endroit of great obscurity and uncertainty.

As far as worldly goods were concerned I was not very well off, though my wife had money or money's worth, but, as I had a sanguine though nervous temperament, I looked at the future, if not with pleasure, at least with confidence. There was nobody on the ship I recognised except Joe Lewis, a man I had known for many years in Kimberley, and who showed no overpowering desire to hobnob with me. I could hardly comprehend the good fellow's reticence, but presume he thought I had too little money to permit us quite to be the intimates we became afterwards.

The *Roslin Castle* carried the usual kind of passengers—the ladies who were sick all day, the gentlemen who played cards all night, and the glowing girls who flirted when the shades of night were falling fast. Then there were some Africanders returning blithely to the land of their birth, a few exiles like myself who regarded our destination in quite the reverse manner, half-a-dozen wastrels who didn't care, and a score, perhaps, of melancholy, sad-eyed third-class passengers, who looked like shabby Napoleons going to St. Helena. As a fact, there was no great curiosity on the ship, except a lady who wore a crinoline to hide her interesting condition, which emphasised the sympathetic fact all the more.

In due course the *Roslin Castle* arrived safely at Cape Town, at which windy, dull city myself and family transhipped to the *Melrose Castle*, en route for Durban, as I considered the Natal port offered the easiest way to Johannesburg. This small steamer had lately been the scene of the murder by Patrick O'Donnell of Carey, the Irish informer, and in the saloon could yet be pointed out the indent of the bullet which had sent the Fenian accuser to kingdom come. From Durban, where we were assured the people on the Rand were dying like flies, we travelled by rail some miles up country, and then boarded the mule waggon which was to take us to Johannesburg. I shall never forget passing through Ladysmith and once again seeing the gaol in which I had been lodged during the Zulu war, the details of which I have set forth in a former book. I should very much have liked to have called at the prison and had a chat with good Jesse Nutley, the head gaoler of the place, who in the bygone days had "been very good to me," but I found no opportunity.

The discomforts of the road pilgrimage were as nothing compared to those I had endured when travelling from Cape Town to Kimberley in 1872, yet the trip was anything but enjoyable. There were the usual inspannings and outspannings, during which operations the passengers snatched a hasty, coarse breakfast, tiffin or supper; occasionally we rested at a farmhouse for the night, but the whole pilgrimage was a hurry and scamper, with little to relieve its deadly monotony except heat, dust, thunder, lightning, and ferocious flies, that took me for a Christmas pudding. Personally, I should not have minded the discomforts of the journey, but I was travelling with a young wife and baby, and they made all the difference.

One of my greatest horrors on this historic expedition was being installed as a kind of wet nurse, with the feeding bottle consigned to my care, thus laying on me the great responsibility of nourishing Binks. This may sound a very easy and cotton wool appointment, but you can wager your feet it wasn't anything of the kind. It happened that

the weather was fiery as Hades, and if the bottle was not well rinsed with hot water at every stopping place it would naturally corrode, then the baby would have been poisoned—oh, Mrs. Lucretia Borgia, to say nothing of Mrs. Louis Cohen!

So when we arrived at an outspanning station it became my part of the day's work to hop off the conveyance with the alacrity of a courier carrying news of the fall of Paris, and rush into the farmhouse for hot water—which was seldom handy. Hot water in Dutch is pronounced with some difficulty, and when after a deal of oratory and diplomacy I received the precious fluid, I could be seen cleansing the pathetic bottle as if I were churning, to the great delight of Boer maidens and matrons who regarded me as an ideal husband and expert milkman. Then as a rule, when I had fulfilled my pious mission, the bugle sounded the starting warning note, and I would continue the journey dinnerless, while Binks sucked the udder riches as if they were tokay.

We saw numerous poor adventurers tramping on the road, many returning disheartened and disillusioned from the gold-fields, and others pressing forward, hungry and weary, yet full of hope. Some trudged along loaded with carpenters' or masons' tools, and one chap, whom I recognised as a whilom waiter at St. James's Restaurant—"Jimmy's"—carried a roulette table on his back, which, when cultivated, became very productive. But none of these sad-eyed or defiant stragglers ever asked for alms, and in all conscience they looked pitiable enough. The passengers themselves were a decent lot of people; but anxious and worried. I presume there was a six-shilling volume of tragedy or comedy in each of their lives, though few of the company were anxious to enter into confidences; they all kept their reflections and thoughts fixed on the gold-fields, of which they had heard such varying reports.

I noticed that one of the voyagers, a good-looking young man, on the plea of indisposition, never ate any of the meals at the roadside places, and preferred sleeping in the

waggon when accommodation for the night was offered. On a certain evening, however, half-way through the journey, he altered his rule, and partook of supper, patronising as well, a bed in a spanning-out farmhouse. He performed with an appetite of Gargantuan proportions, much to the concern of the Africander Proprietor, who watched his viands disappear with grave dismay. It was early morning when the paying time came, and the landlord—a little grey-beard, who wore prodigious spectacles—stood at the head of a candle-lighted table exacting legitimate toll for his entertainment of board and bed. Our passengers—amongst whom was the voracious one—sat around the table, each placing in front of him the amount of his bill. The small, stout Dutchman suddenly beamed, glinted at his guests, and, stretching out a pair of fat hands, scooped all the money in sight as if he were a croupier. But the descent of the host on this particular occasion was hardly accurate, for he left ungathered the five-shilling piece of the pale-faced youth, who instanter slyly annexed and pocketed it.

“*Ja*, you have all paid,” exclaimed the Boer in the vernacular, proceeding to count the small pile of silver which lay in front of him.

At that moment the driver’s bugle rang out, and the passengers, issuing outside, proceeded to take their seats in the waggon. The morning was breaking over the brooding veld in all solemnity, solitude and grandeur, the black tobacco-chewing driver firmly manipulated the reins, and his companion, all white teeth and strong odour, poised a long bamboo whip, whilst the poor mules quivered in fear and expectancy, as the drowsy passengers sighed and nestled together for comfort. Silence reigned supreme at this impressive moment—when, hey presto! the whole scene and surroundings changed, for the smug Dutchman, in great excitement, came lurching out of his dwelling, followed by his entire household, the members of which acted as a shrill chorus whilst he, with arms to heaven, voiced his complaints in squeaking, despairing tones.

"There is one *schelm* (rogue) who has not *besalt* (paid). I am robbed. *Sis* for such *verneukery* (humbugging)!" cried the Boer, as his relatives held up their hands in lamentation and horror.

"But I paid you, *Mijnheer*—didn't I?" said the wan-faced young fellow, eagerly bending over the side of the waggon. "I paid you—didn't I?"

"*Ja, Ja, kerel* (nice fellow), you have *besalt* all right *vračter* (truly)—it is another *verdomde* (cursed) *schelm*."

The leader, squaring his broad shoulders, muttered something of a confidential though demonstrative nature to the kicking mules, and shook his reins; the driver loyally responded, as, yelling the most blood-thirsty epithets, he brought the bamboo's lashes with awful force on the backs of Blesbok and Englander, which operation started the team of mules at a terrific pace, to the consternation of the Boer, his family and retainers, who, standing on the stoep surrounded by barking dogs, made a terrible ado.

The enterprising youth who had thus despoiled the Dutchman, however, went no more to meals; but, on the evening of the same day that he had bilked the Boer, I suddenly returned to the waggon, and found him devouring a tin of Bink's condensed milk, with an appetite only to be lavished on pickled pork.

"Hallo! my friend," I said. "Hope you enjoy it."

He reddened, and replied, "I've eaten nothing but your baby's milk and one meal since I joined the coach. I've only five shillings in the world; you saw me lift it from the table this morning. I didn't want to land in Johannesburg without a bean."

I gave him half-a-sovereign, and he ate for the remainder of the journey. My new acquaintance never forgot this episode, and in time he became eminently successful at Johannesburg—as his exploit foreshadowed—and was as good and honest a man as one would wish to meet; he is alive now, and no doubt will grin when he reads this story. I do not, however, mention his name; some people are so very particular if you tell the truth about them.

It is strange, but true, that my remembrance of things that happened in Kimberley—and I went there over fifty years ago—is much clearer than my Johannesburg impressions of events. For instance, I recall, as well as if it were yesterday, in 1873, seeing white-tented Kimberley like a ghostly city rise in the distance on the veld as the passengers, more dead than alive, were trundled into the diamondiferous camp.

But the first appearance of the Rand is not so vivid to my mind. I recollect, to be sure, the perspiring brown driver suddenly pointing to nothing very apparent in front of him, and ejaculating, "*Da es Johannesburg.*" Everybody craned a neck, but all that was descried a long distance off on the bare veld were saffron clouds of red golden dust settling on a hotch-potch of what looked like moving dirty sand dunes, or a huge flame-fanned crucible of molten opals in a state of boiling agitation turning out future magnates. Satan was angry! All this made me think of the green lanes of England, the fragrance of new-mown hay, and my patron-saint, John Bull.

As the jaded mules, urged on by the driver and cruelly lashed by the whip, were approaching their destination, which should be reached in a few hours, the eyes of the travellers were curiously fixed to catch the first glimpse of Johannesburg, on which so many hopes were centred. But all they could see just then were a few cuttings and some claims pegged out on the barren land. The treeless tract itself seemed mournful and sad enough—a despairing, bare, sandy veld, with hardly a sign of life except here and there a poor Boer habitation, the sign-board of which might have been "Funerals," and some carrion birds flying round a stinking bullock's trunk festering on the road, and fouling the air with its poison half a mile away. The wind, playing with the horrible biting dust—sharp as needles—sent its irritating particles to clog nose, eyes and mouth, and drove the shapeless, coppery clouds from one end of the uninviting sky to the other.

There ensued on the part of the travellers a silence

teeming with painful thoughts, only broken by the sinister chatter of that perfumed person, the gloomy driver, whose remarks re Johannesburg tended to describe it as anything but a rendezvous in heaven, and caused the back mules to kick like steers.

As the passenger cart neared the town, we passed many dilapidated stores. One young fellow got much interested when he saw the word *winkel* (shop) inscribed on every business tenement. He considered in silence for some minutes, and remarked, "By Jove, this Winkel must be a rich man, he seems to own everything. Who is he?"

"Why, he's the son of old Rip van Winkle," a wag answered.

"I've heard about him."

"No doubt, but he's been asleep for some years," observed the funny man.

"Anyhow his son appears to have wakened up," said the new arrival.

I am not quite certain who discovered Johannesburg, and I'll be bound to say that the *Encyclopædia Britannica* does not record the information. It is piteous to recognise the undoubted fact that, though Columbus is the accredited finder of the Great Republic which later on gave to a wondering world its Rockefellers, Astors, Carnegies, Vanderbilts, etc., the fossiker who was the means of granting financial life to Beit, Wernher, Barnato, Bailey, and others, should remain inglorious and unsung. That is not to suggest, however, there are no claimants to the dignity, for their name is legion, and it is for this reason I presume that no suitable monument has been erected to the genuine discoverer, nor yet a baronetcy conferred.

It seems to me that South African honours are only given to successful financiers or soldiers, i.e., to those who scheme and kill. I should like to know what 70 per cent. of the Rand millionaires, without performing an act that could help their memory to the least honour, have ever done to deserve a knighthood—although that is a calamity that might happen to anybody. The conduct which gained

them fame and wealth as a rule was meaner than the methods of the worst bucket-shop keeper. As to their social virtues, the least said about them the better. Often have I wondered how it is that no doctor or divine—Jameson was not knighted for his healing capacity—has ever been honoured in South Africa. I have met some of the former profession that should have been—Matthews, Davis, MacLean, to wit—this last, with his kind Rossetti face, the finest Scotchman I have ever known.<sup>1</sup> If any one of them had successfully conspired in Kimberley, bribed in Johannesburg, or operated in Rhodesia, thereby annexing somebody's property, he might have become Sir Lord-knows-who, and had a splendid myth woven round his name.

When I arrived on the Rand<sup>2</sup>, it had been proclaimed and recognised—after being condemned by the most learned experts—as a possibly payable goldfield only a few months before, but so far as I can remember, the gentleman who was popularly acknowledged as the successful fossicker was a certain Fred Struben—one of two brothers who had been well-known and respected in South Africa for years, and whom I had met in Kimberley. But, again, it has been said that one Carel Kruger sent some quartz-bearing gold from Witwatersrand as long ago as 1832, but like O'Reilly's first discovered diamonds, his report was shelved by the Cape Town authorities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A South African journalist, writing to a newspaper, says, "Mr. Cohen, in talking of the amusing and promiscuous disposal of titles over here, declares that no doctor other than 'Dr. Jim' has received a knighthood. . . . Quite right, but he has forgotten for the moment Sir Kendall Franks. Nor must be omitted Sir Geo. G. Turner, formerly P.M.O. in the Transvaal and subsequently knighted for his splendid work amongst lepers."

<sup>2</sup> The Rand was proclaimed September 8, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> It was in 1876, when on my way back to Kimberley from the Leydenburg gold-fields that I stayed at Bloemhof, a budding town some little distance from the diamond fields. The "hotel" of this delightful Townlet of the Plains was then run by a Mr. Cross, the local Judge and Jury of the unattractive spot, whom I had seen in Kimberley. While resting at this "hotel" mine host introduced me to John O'Reilly, whose name is indissolubly connected with the discovery of diamonds in South Africa. At the period I met him—a heavily-built man, with a shaved chin, ample side-whiskers, a hard, intelligent face, and keen, grey eyes—he was engaged in ostrich hunting. The first diamond was discovered about 1867, in Adamantia, and found its way to the house of a Griqualand-West Boer named Jacobs, whose children played with it as a marble. Another Dutchman, Van



It is a fact that few of the pioneers or fossickers of the Rand ever finally retired from the scene of their labours much better off financially than when they started operations. It was exactly what happened on the diamond-fields with the first claim-holders, most of whom were glad enough to walk away in a decent pair of boots after having parted with their property—as a general rule to a mob of Posen tailors, Whitechapel ole clo' men, and German swindel-kopfs of alarming ingenuity.

The same thing occurred in Johannesburg, and was perpetrated by almost the identical chosen crowd, who, in the meanwhile, having waxed rich and powerful, consequently became more arrogant and audacious. This was bound to happen in a new-found place like the Rand, the Boer officials of which, seduced by the professors of *la haute finance*, soon became as corrupt and rotten as their tempters, and openly took bribes without the least sense of shame. One can hardly reproach them, these men who had been used to scanty pay—oft deferred—and whose only pleasures consisted of the delights found in coffee, dop brandy and Boer tobacco ; besides, they were encouraged to be dishonest by their superiors, who were more debased than the subordinates. After Witwatersrand had been proved by a group of hardworking prospectors and diggers, the financial gentry who were destined to capture the caboodle began to appear, and crime was born.

At the time I made my bow, there was hardly a sign of them in the happy village, and certainly no rich men of any kind. One of the characters in the place was Colonel

Niekerk, being struck with its unusual appearance, offered to buy it for a trifle, but Mrs. Jacobs preferred to give the stone to him. From Niekerk it came into the hands of O'Reilly, who took it to Cape Town, where he was ridiculed for his pains and enterprise, and, disheartened, took the magic talisman back to Colesberg, whence it was afterwards sent to Dr. Atherstone, of Grahamstown, a geologist, who declared it a diamond. The gem weighed twenty-one carats, and was purchased by Sir P. Wodehouse, the then Governor of the Colony, for a substantial sum. O'Reilly, who was the son of a Colonel in the British Army, died of cancer in 1904, after presenting two unsuccessful petitions to the Cape House of Assembly praying for a pension in consideration of his discovery. I must mention that Van Niekerk, encouraged by O'Reilly's good fortune, began to look about, and ultimately unearthed a Kaffir witch doctor, with whom he exchanged his small flock of sheep for a gem weighing eighty-three carats, which he sold for £11,200. The stone was christened the Star of South Africa.

Ferreira—whose title was “wropt in mystery”—a cheery, good-natured, white-eyed chap, as brown as a cocoanut, who on his arrival out-spanned his wagons on the ground which has ever since been called Ferreira's Town. And so it ought to be, for the gallant Colonel proceeded at once to peg out claims, which he regarded in meditative moods as stands, letting them as such and coolly exacting license money. Small blame to this nutty Africander, shining out alone from the army of German and Whitechapel plunderers as the only native son of the soil who ever dared get something for nothing in his own country.

As a fact, Ferreira's Town may be regarded as the germ of Johannesburg, the acorn from which sprang the oak. In the very early days it was the place where people most did congregate, the Post Office<sup>1</sup> was established there, and mail carts started for Pretoria from the chocolate Colonel's new station.

When I set foot on the Rand, the few influential denizens there were representatives of business people (mostly Scotsmen) in Natal, slow, unprogressive, economical individuals with neither brains nor money, for of all the towns I have ever visited, Durban was the one whose inhabitants best knew the value of a farthing, which to them was the most retentive coin of the realm, until the Jew taught them that a sovereign was better.

As it was, however, Johannesburg grew apace, and the men from the Garden Colony who had first pitched their tents and mud huts near the Natal spruit adjacent to where Jeppetown now stands, crept back into the space which had been chosen as Johannesburg's site. The inhabitants of Paarl's Camp, Ferreira's Town and Roodepoort did the same, leaving the kopjes they had hacked and the holes they had dug for the allurements of the brazen town of

<sup>1</sup> A nigger runner came from Pretoria, once or twice a week, with a bagful of letters, which he emptied into a large trunk housed in a small tin shanty, and then the Randites would sample the goods. Afterwards, a clerk was employed to take charge of the pregnant box and to bawl out the addressee's names through a peep-hole fixed in the Post Office wall. They managed better later on in Pretoria, for when things commenced to hum there, the clerks, when tired of sorting the letters, used to drop a huge sample of them down a well.

Square Face, which was thriving like a newly-hatched chicken. Newcomers with a little money could have made an immense fortune if only they had believed in the place. A Mr. Donovan—his brother, a fine young fellow whom I knew well, was killed in a petty skirmish with some kaffirs outside Kimberley—was offered Auckland Park, Parktown, Fordsburg and what not for two thousand pounds. I do not think he will ever get such a bargain again, even though he stays in Canada—where he is at present located—all his life.

The Rand that I saw in these early days had nothing of the glamour of the ordinary goldfields fixed in the popular imagination. A laggard<sup>1</sup> place it seemed, with half-deserted canteens here and there; shabby, newly-built general stores full of the same kind of goods—clothing, coffee, tea, sugar, sardines, spades, picks, beer. No red-shirted heroes, bowie knives, revolvers, lurid gambling, or melting virgins who boasted a brace of babies in need of fathers; instead, only a few mild-mannered Indian itinerant vegetable traders, some transport riders, meek-faced store-keepers, greasy Malays, sour-looking Boers, drunken loafers, thirsty fossickers, a couple of Barons from the Almanac of the Ghetto, ruined gamblers, cunning smousers, and a bushel of toffs from Poland, destined to oust the Boers and become the aristocracy of the land.

The new chums rarely quarrelled, except through liquor, or when they tried to jump claims, or a favoured native washerwoman. In fact, there was little or no crime in the town, and it is amazing to record that, although the banks—which dealt mostly in overdrafts and convivial managers—occupied tin shanties as easy to open as match-boxes, they were never broken into or held up.

Johannesburg at this period was very different from what

<sup>1</sup>“ In 1886 the wonderful richness of the Sheba Mine in Barberton attracted a good deal of attention, and drew a large number of persons, prospectors, speculators, traders, etc., to the Transvaal. Before the end of 1887 ten or twelve thousand must have poured into the country. The effect was magical. The revenue, which had already increased by 50 per cent. in 1886, doubled itself in 1887, and then there came unto the Boer Government that which they had least expected—ample means to pursue their greater ambition.”—*The Transvaal from Within*.

Kimberley had been when I was there. The *Eastern Province Herald* of July 1879 records that "The road between Kimberley and Du Toit's Pan is said to be infested with highwaymen. In one case they stripped their unfortunate victim of everything he possessed, not even leaving him his shirt." However, many of the highwaymen came later to the Rand, brought their horses and their mares like Claude Duval, and prospered exceedingly; some of these gentry have since migrated to Throgmorton Street, where their manners have not mended, as they now annex boots in addition to the shirts of their victims.

But to return to Jo'burg. The Post Office was left "on its own," and the gaol was easier to leave than to get into. Private residences were guarded by cats, four-legged and two-legged—the latter being the more formidable—for bolts and bars were unknown, except to runaways and boozers. Nobody cracked anything in swaddling Johannesburg, not even a joke; it would have been a dreary place for Mr. Justice Darling. Yet there were many loafers hanging around, ostensibly looking for work, but praying to their Maker that they should not find it. Later—1888—the town was shocked by a series of terrible murders.

A dozen barmaids, made for love, who smelt of virtue a league off, had, it is true, found their way to the Sleepy Rand, where they were taken and offered as the bookies say, but as I wasn't hunting any Queens of Beauty just at that time, I didn't bother much about them. I remember, of course, the lively Araminta, of ardent fascination, who was introduced to Witwatersrand by a man named B—, who had lost his arm in a Boer war and his heart to the charms of the lady. Mr. B., who was the proprietor of a bar and billiard saloon on the Market Square, installed therein his auburn-haired charge, whence she beamed on all comers, looking, as she ladled out stirrup-cups, as luscious and tasty as the primest of Harris's sausages. B— married the good-hearted fairy—he was the Rupert of his race—became a member of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange like all respectable people, and ultimately "took the knock," a

circumstance I do not forget, as I was with others "in the cart."

Cockney Liz later on came down from Barberton, where she had been put up to auction and knocked down for a couple of hundred Wheel of Fortune shares; but she didn't last long on the Rand, the end of the poor creature being deplorable, as she died literally in the gutter. Ladies of the Oldest Profession in the World being few in number in Johannesburg at this time, it will not come as a great shock to the reader to be told that consequently other men's wives were looked on as fair game, and I grieve—though not seriously—to relate that some of the matrons succumbed after very little chasing. Indeed it was remarkable how soon the news spread among "the fancy" that Mrs. So-and-So was complaisant, and how all her neighbours, relations and friends knew she was "carrying on"—with the exception of the deluded husband, who never dreamt of the number of callers during his absence. But it was a fact faithfully noted by the highly virtuous Mrs. Smeller Knowall—a matron who begot annually—posted in all the freshest gossip of the market, who, finding her imagination tickled, threw all prudery to the winds, and, imitating the gay gambols of the giddy lady across the road, sold herself to her senses.

Some of these playful ladies of Johannesburg, many of whom sprang from ballet or chorus, became so notorious that they were called amongst their male admirers by nicknames such as Flatfooted Fanny, the Golden Goose, the Brown Hen, etc. One gentleman—red-lipped, swarthy-skinned and nigger-haired, known once as the King of Cuckoldom, a cigar vendor from Kimberley who lived on pillars of smoke and credit, made the entrapping of married women his especial entertainment, and as he loudly advertised his achievements, it is miraculous how he has contrived to live even to this day. But there are cuckoo folk in most human communities.

I do not think any town ever expanded more rapidly than did the Rand—it appeared to grow almost hourly,

and newcomers of different nationalities came swarming into the place from all quarters. But apart from this, Johannesburg, although situated 6,000 feet above the sea, was not in those early days a nice town to live in ; it smelt like a farm of rotten eggs and was filthily dirty. When it rained—and didn't it!—the blessed village was submerged by fearful floods, and when dry it was hidden by the most terrible red, brown and yellow dust storms, born in the sanitary settlements, that were ever invoked by the devil. It is not to be wondered at that this foul dust caused much illness and many deaths. Although at times there was enough water in the town to float a ship, at other periods there was not sufficient to drown a flea—except at prohibitive prices—and a good, wholesome, liberal bath was generally out of the question. Some of the Anglo-Saxony tribe missed nothing they hadn't been used to.

When the magnates came up, I have known some of them wash for days in soda water. Of course, there was floating about any amount of cape smoke, square face, dop brandy, and a horrible local liquid preparation made of raw potato spirit, tobacco juice and pepper, which was used to poison the Kaffirs ; consequently it was a relief to the white thirsty ones when Chandler moved in with his small brewery and fixed it up at Ophirton, an unimportant suburb near Johannesburg.

Early in June, 1887, the first theatre was opened in Johannesburg and christened the Theatre Royal—an ugly tin one-storied building looking more like a stable than a Thespian temple. The establishment commenced its career gaily but soon “bust up” ; then it went in for charity performances, and great excitement would be manifested when a man entered the auditorium in a dress suit, or a woman in a costume cut so as to display her heaving bosom—a sight which made the males sigh and the females squint with envy.

It was at this little theatre that poor Charles Duval gave his Fred MacCabe-like entertainment, prior to leaving for Delagoa Bay, where he threw himself overboard. Madame

Mendlessohn, the Australian soprano, also sang here; Bobby Boulder, supported by Katie Leechman, gave some theatrical entertainments, and the chorus girls ladled out other recreations "after the opera was over." On some grand evenings, the theatre was devoted to "balls" or parties, when the *élite* of the town, composed of all the women of fashion—and what an *élite* it was!—attended to balance their graceful bodies on light fantastic toes and give glimpses of ankle to hungry admirers.

Occasionally they used to have unedifying boxing matches at the Thespian Temple, and I once saw Abe Bailey—now a belted baronet—who had the reputation of being a great sparrer, give a most indifferent show during a contest from which, being worsted, he blushing withdrew.

It must be admitted that Sir Abe Bailey possesses a strong personality, an active mind, as well as great talent for organisation, and I have an idea that he will in time become the Rockefeller of South Africa. He has the assets, and it is as certain as things can be that the finish of his career will find him the richest man that South Africa has produced. In himself, Bailey—and I say so in a hushed whisper of respect—is a strange character, rough, devoid of delicacy or refinement, and adamant in his business dealings. Except on one or two occasions, he has been pretty decent to me, but somehow his individuality does not attract, and as to his athletic prowess, that is a myth, a snare and a delusion.

I went to see him box on two or three occasions, the first—as I have mentioned—being about the year 1889 at the Old Theatre Royal, Johannesburg, and his intelligent shoulder went out.<sup>1</sup> This happened at convenient moments each time he performed. Again I saw him one morning—it was in the days of the boose and the blowens—strike Benny Lazarus—I beg pardon, I ought to say Hansford, or the *late* Benny Lazarus, I had forgotten for a moment that the gallant patron of the Boy Scouts had "recovered his ancient

<sup>1</sup> It was poor Dettlebach—he committed suicide in London a few years ago—who, harbouring a high feeling of admiration for Abe's fistic abilities, whispered to me mysteriously: "Ah, Cohen, Bailey boxes to-night; if you go to the Theatre Royal to-night you will see 'somesing.'" I did—I should shay so.

patronymic." The young gentleman of the changeling name was very much smaller than his smiter, but doubtless equal in pluck, for Benjamin made an abject apology next day. On this special occasion the pugilistic financier's shoulder was true to the core.

It was Dr. Jameson, that miraculous healer and feeler, who advised the astute Abe to go in for politics, and when Cecil Rhodes died, Bailey, with no braggadocio but a supreme belief in himself, said: "C. R.'s cloak has fallen on me." A grandiose assertion, and one which may or may not be true, but when Sammy Marks—that classical Polish scholar, of the firm of Lewis and Marks—heard of the prophecy, he remarked: "Yes, possibly, but I think it is a misfit." And the whilom dealers in ole clothes warmly endorsed this erudite opinion, which is regrettable, as Sir Abe's "figger"—to say nothing of his figures—is tremendously engaging.

Apropos of Sammy Marks, whom I met for the first time in 1872, I may mention that he had lent the Boer Government £5,000 when they were agape for hope like thrushes for worms. Kruger said of him, "If there is one man in the whole Transvaal I like, it is Sammy Marks, and I will yet *convert* him." How ungrateful! Fancy, too, only £5,000 to be in Kruger's Calendar of Saints; it costs much more to get into the House of Lords. But Sammy remained a good Jew and Kruger died a good Dopper.

Sir Abraham Bailey was born in South Africa, and his father, a small storekeeper, became a personality in a little village outside Queenstown, called Baileytown, after its most important inhabitant. In due course Mr. Bailey senior became M.L.C. for that particular district, and thus had the privilege of prefixing Honourable to his name. Young Bailey was educated at Clewer, near Windsor, and when he returned to the land of his birth his father put him in his shop; but serving behind a counter did not suit the aspiring youth, so he ventured north to try his luck.

Barberton, that mining town which first had the honour of receiving into its bosom as a citizen the celebrated



Abe Bailey, has not yet erected a statue in his honour, which at once and for all time proves that towns—even mining towns—can be as ungrateful as individuals. But Bailey was not by any means a huge success in Barberton ; that is why, perhaps, the City of Gold—more or less—does not pride itself on his matured glories. As a matter of fact, Abraham was a distinct failure there, and so made tracks for Johannesburg, in which Arcadia of Adventurers he arrived, sunburnt, sinless, and practically on his uppers. But Bailey, with his boyish face, scarcely born moustache, athletic frame, keen, though dormant, intellect and greedy temperament, was a personality to be reckoned with, and it can be truly said that there never was a Christian who deserved to be an Israelite more than the Queenstown lad, whose snub nose should have been a hooked one of alarming proportions.

Once in Johannesburg, Mr. Abe Bailey looked round—in fact, he looked to the right of him, he looked to the left of him, he looked to the front of him, but he never looked to the back of him lest he'd see Barberton. At all events, he soon decided as to what he should do, and entered into partnership with a reputable man called Peacock, the firm being known to a small though inquisitive circle as Peacock and Bailey.

But that partnership, though founded on the chilly heights of rectitude, did not last long, as Young Bailey—the son of Old Bailey, which has a sinister sound—found the Blue Bird a bit slow in its throstle ; so they separated, the Peacock proud and 'aughty, but multi-coloured from financial bruises, in contradistinction to Abraham, glowing with pride and ambition, and aided by an Africander accent you couldn't cut with a knife without blunting it. Abey, light-hearted and nimble-minded, being in single-blessedness, financially, then looked round for new worlds to conquer, likewise new partners to woo, and his golden mood shone on Hughes and Hepburn, with which firm he became associated.

But the colleagues of Abe Bailey were apparently banned

from the start of their unlucky association with the gentleman in whose head fermented all the ideas. Hughes committed suicide, Hepburn—poor Jimmy—died of rapid consumption, and Ben Curtis—a racing partner—shot himself. Peacock is alive to-day, though not blessed with too many of the world's goods, but as a rule Abe Bailey—like Jay Gould—buried all his partners, or, to be more exact, he saw them pass away with a resignation and calmness quite Christian-like in spirit and fortitude. I have no axe to grind with the financier, on the contrary the owner of the black and gold hoops is not a bad sportsman in the abstract, and during his later years has done much for South African athletics, and is quite properly regarded as a popular patron of all manly games and of the Salvation Army.

Abraham is so versatile that he is like the elephant, and can with the greatest facility tear down a tree or pick up a pin. One has to recall the earliest days of the Rand to aid one in gauging the astute mind, steady aims, and cold calculation of one destined to become South Africa's leading financier. One of Sir Abe's first substantial coups on the Rand was in connection with the long buried Spes Bona Company. "Good Hope" was all the unlucky shareholders got, as they said "Good-bye" to their money invested in the coffin of this company, the pioneer of Bailey's concerns.

The financiers soon felt their feet, got into their stride, and the methods they evolved were ingenious and peculiar. I cite one case I remember out of a dozen.

Johannesburg lay, as it were, in swaddling clothes when ——— was identified with a small company of £20,000 or £30,000 capital, the shares of which concern at the period I refer to being quoted at ten shillings each. That bluff and genial person, Colonel North, having ascertained that the corporation was a small company with a small capital, commenced to buy all the scrip offered. But the strange thing is that the more shares the Nitrate King purchased the more plentiful they were—a most prolific company, my masters; it bred overnight. North having bought the company's advertised number of shares about

twice over, called for delivery of same, which was no wonder, considering they had risen from ten shillings to £5 10s. The gallant Colonel's face must have portrayed a study in emotions when all the shares he had purchased were delivered to him with a politeness and alacrity quite embarrassing. Pondering deeply, the Nitrate King then sent out to South Africa a man named Claridge, to make enquiries on the spot anent the mysterious happenings. The solution of the puzzle did not take long. It seems that adjoining the original concern was another mine. In twenty-four hours these two companies had been amalgamated, fresh scrip was printed, and North got more shares than he bargained for. But the Colonel was a good fellow, he simply cut his loss and said nothing. This kind of finance is indigenous to South Africa, and though it was very common in the Land of Gold—where it almost grew on trees—the particular blend I have described is known as Your-Money-or-Your-Life Quadrille.

## CHAPTER TWO

The Grand Hotel—Honest John—Sir Aubrey Wools Sampson—Samuel Fox—Sam Height—Ikey Sonnenberg—Luscombe Saerelle—The Land of Gold—President Kruger—The Legend of the Rotten Egg—Wigs on the Green—The Genteel Art of *Vermeukery*—"The Chains" and its habitués.

WHEN I arrived in Johannesburg I put up at the Grand Hotel, which was not half such a magnificent hostelry as its name suggests. The "Grand," presided over by Mrs. Dean, was built of some old corrugated iron which James Ferguson had carted up from Kimberley. The first "hotel" ever seen in Johannesburg, consisting of a dilapidated tin house and a trio of dirty brown tents, was run by one Hodgson, but it was a Mrs. Minnaar from Potchefstroom and her daughters who had the distinction of being the pioneers of the boarding house vocation. This lady audaciously announced—on a frank notice stuck outside her establishment—that boarders were "taken in," but whether they were or not the writer is unable to allege, and if they were after such an awful warning, all I can say is that it served them right. In any event, they were not the only people doomed to be "taken in," for were not the financiers approaching, those gentry who never advertise—the truth.

Mrs. Dean, who hailed from Aliwal North, in the course of time became hostess of the "Grand Hotel," relinquishing her interest in Bray's Boarding House for that purpose, and Madame, the widow of a non-commissioned officer, proved quite an efficient landlady, though at times she displayed a certain martinet austerity which can only be attributed to her warlike training.

The hotel itself, as I have remarked, was a huge tin edifice composed of a large building in front, which served for dining saloon, sitting-room, bar, etc., and a spacious quadrilateral courtyard behind, three sides of which were

devoted to tiers of double-storied tin shanties—called bedrooms by the grace of heaven and Mrs. D. It may be said at once that the "Grand Hotel" was a most respectable hostel, free from rowdyism or riotous living of any kind. I engaged a bedroom on the upper story in the decorous yard, and on the opposite ground floor—in much more comfortable apartments—lodged Carl Hanau and his family.

This was the first time I had met Mr. Hanau, whose name was soon to become a household word in the Transvaal. It was a blazing summer's morning about ten o'clock, and the scorching hot apartments of the gay quadrilateral were being tidied up, in many cases by the resident ladies themselves, who, because no better arrangement was possible, were in the habit of throwing slops into the courtyard.

My wife was diligently engaged in getting things in order as Carl Hanau, spick and span and alert as a butterfly, stepped across the enclosure to chat with some acquaintances. In returning he had to pass under the balcony in front of our tenement, and as he did so a white arm launched a jugful of slops on his devoted head. The assaulted one looked unpronounceable things, but when he glanced up and saw the painful confusion of the lady, his gentility came to his rescue, and courteous Carl, pardon and resignation appearing in his eyes, glanced up at the offending one and said with a smile kind as the sunshine, "Oh, don't bother, Mrs. Cohen, don't worry—it doesn't matter a bit—I like it."

But suppose the slops had been thrown with such accuracy by an old and ugly woman?

Our bedroom, from which we saw neither the back of the sun nor the front of the moon, was moderately comfortable in fine weather, except that it became as hot as an oven, but when it rained, the apartment was flooded and resembled a kind of Noah's Ark. Again, the partitions of each chamber being composed of thin corrugated iron, one could hear the movements of the occupants on either side. If the man on the left snored, sneezed, or grunted, you heard; if he sighed 'twas wafted to your ears—in fact, if the least noise was made

one would think that it was taking place in your own compartment.

There was the newly-married couple—who called each other “Birdie” and “Pet”—located in the next room, who were very restless and kept us awake with their chatting and canoodling. That was very interesting and proper, but quite an insufficient reason why I should be deprived of sleep. But I stood it like a Stoic and said nothing until Binks, my first-born, desiring no doubt to share in the Ark’s festivities, began to show our dear neighbours the quality of his lungs. Such bellowing I admit was annoying, and had a depressing effect on the slumbering gentleman to the left, for he groaned, moaned, mumbled, grumbled, and snarled in a most alarming manner, but that was as nothing compared to the action of the lively bridegroom on the other side, who commenced to hammer on the tin wall with his boot, making an awful clamour.

“Hi, you, hi! Can’t you keep that cursed baby quiet?” he shouted.

“I’ll try, but you’ve made enough noise in your room for the last week. You’ve nothing to complain about,” I rejoined.

“That’s all right, but we haven’t got a screaming baby, have we?” returned the young husband.

“No,” I said, somewhat nettled. “But you damn soon will if I’m any judge.”

At which I heard the suppressed giggling of a dozing beauty, which was redoubled when the Johnnie on the left-hand side, no doubt in great trepidation, quavered, “If there’s going to be more than one baby in this establishment, there’ll be a lodger less.”

The boarders of the hotel included, amongst others, George De Pass, a real good fellow, Mr. and Mrs. Simon Sacke, Zeb Goodman, and last, but certainly not least, my highly esteemed friend, John Stroyan, who had a prodigious reputation in finance and gallantry, and was known throughout South Africa’s bush, veld, or town, as “Honest John.”

This gentleman was, as usual, busily engaged in billing and

cooing, and to some purpose, too, for he subsequently married Mrs. Dean's daughter, to the intense relief and gratification of several paterfamilias blessed with virgin daughters. Thus the tin "Grand Hotel" became the cradle, as it were, of the future golden British aristocracy, since Stroyan blossomed into M.P. for West Perthshire, and lavished (limited) hospitality to gaunt retainers and selected guests on his broad demesne of Lanrick Castle, to say nothing of the gruff but honest Ferguson, architect of the historic building. Thou mighty John of the granite face, shall I sing sweet pæans in thy praise or pass thee by and thy glorious place in the niche of fame for ever? Mighty creator of the Eagle Co. and other gold-producing properties, thou hast a figure all thine own in the annals of South Africa, not forgettable by those who, pricked by the thistle, made themselves so poor. But what of that? Did ever chieftain reach fame except through the fallen?

It is a strange fact that although I lived in Johannesburg so many years, I cannot remember ever seeing Mr. Wools Sampson—as he was then. The other evening I met a South African friend, and in the course of conversation asked some questions about Sir Aubrey, and amongst other things I was reminded that his father had been a homœopathic doctor in Kimberley during the very early days. Although I could not fix the son, I knew white-bearded Dr. Sampson with the kind, blue eyes intimately well, for he used to come and sit for hours in my office and chat with me. He was a worthy old gentleman, well esteemed in the town, and held certain original medical opinions of his own, which may have been right or wrong. Of course, I must have seen Sampson Junior in Johannesburg often enough, yet cannot place him, but if I do not know him, I know of him. For instance, he served right gallantly in the siege of Pretoria, which is saying much, for that event proved anything but a gem in Britain's crown of victories. As a reward for his valour young Sampson got a lieutenancy in the Cape Infantry, which formed part of the troops commanded by General Gordon.

After the Cape Infantry regiment was disbanded, Mr. Sampson associated himself with Bailey, and has practically done so ever since. With the Admirable Abe, Wools Sampson took a prominent place on the Uitlanders' Committee, and was the go-between used by that party and Rhodes in Cape Town, whilst old Kruger was waiting "to kill the tortoise when it put its head out of the shell." For his participation in the reform movement which culminated in the abortive Jameson raid, Sampson and his friend, Karri Davies, were sentenced to two years' imprisonment and £2,000 fine.

Smarting under a strong sense of injustice, these two gentlemen refused to appeal or sign any declaration, and were consequently detained in gaol long after the other reformers were set free. Indeed, they were only released on Queen Victoria's Jubilee—Kruger gladly taking advantage of that joyous event to get rid of his unwelcome guests. But when the Boer War came along, the two reformers did not forget to pay the Dutch in full for the treatment they had received. As a soldier, all Africa knows Wools Sampson's admirable qualities, and no man during the Boer campaign merited his military knighthood and many decorations more than alert Sir Aubrey. He did not say to his men, as the Chinese officers were wont to exclaim to theirs, "Charge for your country, gallant soldiers—go and get killed, and I'll cheer you from about five miles in the rear or behind the walls of a Celestial hotel."

A certain hotel, near Cape Town, will go down to posterity as the scene of sundry gallant engagements during the Boer War. "Going to the front," it is sad to relate, meant at one time that during the campaign many an unwarlike officer malingered and loitered in this pleasant hostelry, full of merry widows—or those in hopes of attaining that interesting state—love ladies and maidens who had been vaccinated for virginity's sake. Everything, however, is fair in love and war, and during some of the hottest periods of the strife it was not unusual at this hotel for some kind soul to ring a bell at four o'clock in the morning, so that the ladies who,



through inadvertence, found themselves in the wrong rooms could go back to their own before the early tea was served. But Kitchener one day made an early appearance, and before noon many a wooer had his marching orders.

There was nothing of the fribbler about Sampson, he was always to the front—the fighting front—showing his men how to “come on” as if he had a dozen Nelsons in his ancestry. During the Boer War Sampson did yeoman service for the Empire, and Britons ever think of him with admiration and respect.

The morning following my arrival in Johannesburg, I was strolling down the main street—or Commissioner Street, if you like—when I encountered Sam Fox, who was smoking outside Emil Hollard’s office. Samuel Fox was the most popular of the early settlers in the Transvaal, and although he and Hollard—very hot stuff—had the reputation of being the cutest Boer manipulators on the Rand, I for my part found S. F. one of the kindest of men. Sam Fox and group McHattie, Nellmapius and Co., who surrounded him, were the real financial pioneers of Johannesburg—that is to say, they acquired valuable farms, or secured options thereon, from the Dutchmen, and being well in with the mining officials—save the mark—knew where to peg out the choicest claims.

These properties later on passed into the hands of the clever European adventurers, who soon became financial leaders, then magnates, and finally blossomed into arrogant Knights, of triple brass. But the golden gentry had not yet appeared to glorify the Rand, and when they did, a trustful, generous fellow, such as Sam, had no chance with them. The only one of Fox’s cluster capable of grappling with them was old Hollard<sup>1</sup>—he of the steely grey eyes, shaggy whiskers

<sup>1</sup> Emil Hollard, whose real name was Music—and many a man and, for the matter of that, woman, danced to it during his life—was a South German Jew, who had settled, in more ways than one, a number of years ago in Bloemfontein. Having fallen in love with a lady, a gaoler’s wife, he somewhat hurriedly—but not alone—left the Orange Free State capital and migrated to the Transvaal, which was then practically No Man’s Land. He subsequently chose Pretoria, the home of the *Vierkleur*, the veld cornet, the Sjambok, as his resting place, where he acted as a law agent, was in due course admitted to the Transvaal Bar,

and shabby attire—a sly chap, the very Devil in Trousers, who met any deep-set plans to lay him low with counter-manceuvres of divine audacity.

But let me return to the pacific Mr. Fox, who, with his stump leg—he had been grievously wounded at the siege of Pretoria, fighting on the British side—was placidly pipe-puffing and caressing his straggling thin beard, which, however, could not efface the kindness of his thin features, or the sparkle and sharpness of his keen eyes.

“Hallo, Cohen,” he said, “what are you doing up here?”

“I’ve come to try and make some money.”

“Good for you,” replied Fox. “Did you come alone?”

“No, I’ve brought a wife.”

“A wife! Ah,” he laughed, “you’d better not show her to Hollard.”

After some minutes’ conversation, and as I was about to continue my stroll, I said, “By the way, Sam, do you know you owe me twenty pounds?” I had sold him a horse some five or six years ago.

“For what?” he asked.

“Don’t you remember the stallion Sultan you bought from me?”

“Of course I do, it quite slipped my memory. Here’s your money,” replied Fox, handing me four fivers with the usual pin stuck in each. “And now we’ll have a bottle.”

Although I had promised myself to be a teetotaller, recognising that in drinking healths I might lose my own, I remembered that the Mohammedans, whose religion forbids them wine, regard champagne as a sort of mineral water—so I became an Arab while I absorbed the sparkling draught. Just as I was going away, Fox said, “How are you off for——” and pointed significantly to his pocket, where the notes reposed.

and developed some ability, thereby earning great renown amongst the Doppers and other native residents of that historic City of Roses, which he turned to his own advantage. The name of his firm was, I think, Hollard and Keet. In Johannesburg he prospered amazingly, was recognised as a man of undoubted talent and a Dutch lawyer of remarkable subtlety. He was an original character in his way, and commanded much popularity amongst certain communities on the Rand. He died, full of sanctity, honours and riches, a few years ago.

"All right," I replied.

"Well, if——" and he tapped his chest.

Such was the kind of man I found Samuel Fox. A friend in human shape.

So up the road I wandered, encountering many members of the Lost Tribe, the thoroughfare becoming decidedly more lively as I progressed. At the top of the first half of Commissioner Street I met my old friend, Samuel Butler Height, who was engaged in building, or planning to build, a bodega, which came into being later on, next to a little tin shanty occupied by the Bank of Africa.

Samuel Butler had not changed a bit—he retained his handsome looks, was faultlessly neat in dress, juvenile in manner, and possessed the same glittering imagination. I turned Arab again with him, and enjoyed his society much until he told me a "whopper," which almost made me faint, and followed that up by another magnificent specimen that brought me round.

"Sam," I said, "that's an awful one."

"Sa-ay, that don't go, I've told you the truth. I give you my word, I ain't told a cram this month. I ain't got no time, and can't sleep for counting my money."

People dodged up every five minutes whom I had known in Kimberley, Basutoland, Cape Colony, The Free State, or Natal. The Germans were, as usual, to the fore, having left "Gimberley," that Eden of Exiles, in search of another Paradise, while Whitechapel was well represented by a crowd of merry tinkers who were popularly known as the "boys," and got their living by the "broads." Of course, there were a few Russians and Poles of the capotes and earlocks knocking about, but whence they came, and where and how they lived, nobody knew or bothered.

On this same eventful morning I sold Lovegrove, who was printer or proprietor of the *Diggers' News*, a penny reprint copy of *The Times*, containing the official account of the Battle of Trafalgar, for a sovereign. He would insist on buying it, and I wasn't bashful. In Reid and Campbell's Mining Board I encountered dear hollow-cheeked Ikey

Sonnenburg, with, I do believe, the actual ancient white topper I saw him sport in '73, and sucking, I could wear, the identical antique pipe of the same period. The ancient one had not changed much since last I beheld him, he seemed the same big-limbed, small-shouldered, large-footed, large-hearted Ikey of yore, full of dry humour and caustic comments. He was addressing a few choice cronies as I entered.

"Yes," the old-timer held forth, "he erected it out of the blood, the ills and moans of men, out of the groans of little children, the cries of sorrowful and weeping women—many of them widows."

"Of whom are you talking, Ike?" I asked. "A millionaire?"

"No," he replied, "a dentist."

"Tell me, Ikey," I asked, "have you seen Barney Gomperts lately?"

"Yes, poor fellow, when last I saw him he hadn't got a shirt to his back."

"Poor fellow!"

"Yes," continued Sonnenberg, shaking his head sadly, "he was bathing."

Then I meandered back to the Globe Theatre, or its shell, and, seeing an unfinished drop scene innocent of picture or design, I forthwith entered into an arrangement with Dick Thorne, whereby I agreed to fill the vacant space with advertisements. The first store I entered the next day, as a canvasser for my new speculation, was an imposing building in the Market Square run by Scott, Guthrie and Co.—one of the brothers belonging to this firm, "Guts," as he was familiarly called, died whilst serving against the Boers in the late campaign—and was received most affably by the manager of the firm, Mr. F. Gray, the same gentleman who committed suicide whilst, as one of the Reformers, he was detained in Pretoria Jail.

To make a long story short, he gave me the first advertisement and a cheque for ten pounds—but I made a couple of hundred altogether out of the act drop. After some other transactions of a profitable nature, I trotted off to the

“Grand,” and feeling sure of my prospects went to rest a contented man with a light heart. As I lay in bed, I said to myself, “Heaven has sent thee, O Son of Palestine, into a Land of Promise, the inhabitants of which happy valley regard it as a distinction to be decently plundered, and where rogues and *verneukers* must surely prosper. Thy hat is in the ring, so pray for success in this thy new sphere and for enlargement of thy capacity.” Slept I then a sleep full of sweet dreams; and as it came to pass that in the fulness of time I became eminently fortunate when I had seen the copper age, the silver age, and golden age come and go, it may be taken for granted that my prayers were heard, a circumstance which many conspicuous clerics regard as a theological curiosity.

I found Johannesburg rather dull—goodness is always dull—for the first few months, but I potted about doing one thing or another during the day, and writing for the *Diggers' News* in the evening. Nevertheless, I did fairly well—indeed, well enough to move into a large house at the corner of Kerk and Von Welligh Street. I also rented an office, built of huge blocks of solid masonry, which stood almost next door to the *Diggers' News* office and Reid and Campbell's Mining Board bar in Commissioner Street.

About this time Luscombe Searelle came to Johannesburg with a theatrical company, and finding no theatre ready to receive him, soon caused to be built a tin structure—which he called a music hall—at the far end of Commissioner Street. Happening to have spare rooms built into my house, but apart from it, which were quite useless to us, Searelle and his wife—a beautiful woman—rented them until his new Theatre Royal was constructed. Extraordinarily clever and talented was Searelle, the author of *Estrella*, *Prince Methuselah*, *Isidora*, *The Black Rover*, etc. Luscombe also wrote that splended poem, “The Dawn of Death,” and did much work in conjunction with the American poetess, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, who recognised the little man's great abilities. Apart from that,

he was an extremely nice fellow, but of an obstinate and disputative nature, and so self-willed that nobody could advise him. He hardly ever touched spirits, but smoked an old briar-root pipe, which perfumed his whole apartment night and morning, and was so careless in his attire and appearance that a Johannesburg journal printed a cartoon of him after the style of Pears' famous advertising picture, "He won't be happy till he gets it."

It can well be understood that when a basket full of pretty women and chorus ladies, with bubbling hearts, arrived—the Globe Theatre was open, too, and in full swing—there was great excitement amongst the bucks, and much perturbation amongst the barmaids—in fact the latter suffered a severe slump for the moment, but, as they say in the Stock Exchange, they soon recovered, although prices were easier, with an upward tendency. Some of the Thespian daughters who had no intention of living on bread and water and virtue, got married; a lot didn't, a few wouldn't; while those who had already been corrupted by matrimony winked the other eye and played the harp with maidenly grace.

But amongst the newcomers was one never-to-be-forgotten comedienne christened Griffiths' Safe, who wore a suit of chain armour, a solemn fact which has been duly authenticated by some busy bees. Nevertheless, the advent of these ladies, greedy of caresses, in silk stockings and picture hats, who lied so gracefully, much disturbed the modesty of some of the matrons of Jo'burg, whose hearts kept green the memories of their own infidelities. I remember a rich and influential maggot, a cent. per cent. company promoter, calling unbiddenly on Mr. and Mrs. Searelle. The musical composer received him, with immense politeness, on the verandah, talked finance with him like Lloyd George for a quarter of an hour, and when the visitor was departing, Searelle, as he shook hands, enquired blandly, "And when shall my wife and self have the pleasure of receiving Mrs. E——?" The financier *à la* Don Juan showed up no more.

Living was very expensive, meat being the only article of

consumption that was cheap ; butter scarce—and nasty, vegetables were often unobtainable, while as for eggs, they disgraced the virtuous brood of hens that produced them. One of Mrs. Dean's fresh laid eggs—she of the "Grand" Hotel—was the primary cause of my sudden departure from her gentle hostelry.

As a matter of fact, rotten eggs have played a conspicuous and revolutionary part in the early history of the Rand. An unwholesome ovum had much to do with the downfall of Boerdom, as it is an incontestable fact that Kruger swore a deadly hatred of the Rand from the time he was regaled with a Johannesburg shop 'un, which wicked edible he regarded as an unsavoury bombshell aimed by the Uitlanders at the pit of his Republican stomach.

Indeed the President loathed the Rand so much that he would go miles out of his way and encounter terrible roads rather than pass through the detested town. Later, when for policy's sake, he attended a Rand banquet, Oom Paul showed that he had not forgotten the treat, for at that bright particular Grand National feast, one of Zoccola's primest Polish waiters hopped with all alacrity to Kruger's side with a yellow omelette, bursting pleasantly or otherwise with apricot jam. The president, seated in an atmosphere of arrogance, had just, in a primitive manner, blown his nose, and was preparing to finish the operation by the aid of a huge red handkerchief, when he espied the perspiring, greasy-coated servitor and the orange mess. Paul looked at it, blinked, squinted, and snarled in Dutch :

"What is that ?"

"Omelette, your Honourable Honour, sir."

The patriot sniffed suspiciously at the food, contorting his puffy features horribly.

"Yes, Sir Honour—apricot jam *delicatessen*—delicious dish—and *fresh eggs* born in the town."

The Boer Lion started as if he had received a full charge of shot in the face, his little eyes fairly blazing with memories, and his uninviting fringe of beard bristling as he hastily waved the yellow thing aside with his fat brown hands.

"*Voetzak* you and your *verneukery*—send it to Meneer Rhodes."

Every day that I spent on the Rand increased my number of acquaintances, and brought me into contact with hundreds of the people, select and unassorted, whom I had known in Africa, and as the richness of the mines became bruited about, newcomers arrived by hundreds, the considerable population working on the eastern goldfields also flocking in, and I could almost imagine myself once more in Kimberley. But the magnates of the Diamond City had not yet appeared, as Gardner Williams—Rhodes' "expert" and the De Beers engineer to boot—had, with a cheery pessimism, declared the field a river bed unworthy of being regarded seriously.

So the Kings of Diamonds of the long-pointed fingers dallied amongst their gems until an engineer struck the reef at a depth of 283 feet—a visible advent of the great future—and then their representatives rushed up to Johannesburg as eagerly as hungry feeders in a Scotch boarding-house when they hear the dinner bell go.<sup>1</sup>

The first Stock Exchange in Simmonds Street was not opened when I arrived, but I used to buy and sell shares in the street, and very hard work I found it, as the few brokers who were there, mostly Germans, seemed determined to keep what little business there was in their own hands, and resented the intrusion of newcomers. This was particularly the case with a chap named Arthur Lillienfeld, who subsequently became a member of the London Stock Exchange, and died a couple of years ago in London, leaving a quarter of a million of money. He was a big, aggressive German, of good family, and honourable in his dealings, though so greedy that he would not have let another person live if he had his way. As it was, he insisted on taking two-thirds

<sup>1</sup> Poor old Wemmer was one afternoon sitting very dejectedly outside his hut, which stood where the headgear of the mine used to be. He was dead broke, couldn't trace the reef, and hadn't the money to pay his licences, which were overdue. The next day, quite by a lucky chance, he found the reef, and shortly afterwards sold his claims to the Wemmer Mining Co. for eighty thousand pounds. But that did not ease him for long, for I saw him a few years afterwards wandering about the streets of Johannesburg without a pound or a pal. His friends ultimately went to heaven—in Park Lane,



of the commission when I dealt with him, and often bullied me into compliance.

Anybody who knows me will admit that I was never the man to stand such tactics, and many a time I was on the point of letting go at his nose. I mention this fact in order to point out that it was due to this insignificant incident that the new Stock Exchange came to be built. Says a Johannesburg newspaper: "The old Stock Exchange Buildings, which are now in process of demolition, were erected by the Johannesburg Estate Company, Limited, two or three years after the establishment of the Exchange. The erection of the building was due to a dispute between Mr. Barney Barnato, Mr. Louis Cohen, and the brothers Lillienfeld. The dispute, which took place on 'Change, ended in a free fight. The four participators in the fight were called upon by the Committee to apologise, but Mr. Barnato declined to do so, and on being expelled from the Exchange, he at once floated the Estate Company for the express purpose of building a much bigger Exchange. In this way he secured the control without giving way to the Committee."

As mentioned, I had rented an office, but, as no clerk was employed, I found it particularly awkward having to close the place when outdoors. One day I came upon Barney Gomperts, a man I had met in Kimberley in 1873, and with whom I had always been on terms of friendship. A bright, merry, and good-looking little fellow was stout, cherry-faced Gomperts, with his well-waxed, small moustache, black close-cropped hair, and deep scar on left cheek. He was a pathetic figure, for in the times of yore the chubby Hollander had been one of the Jagersfontein pioneers, and by pure accident had amassed some forty or fifty thousand pounds whilst there. Then he hurried to England and lost the lot. Since that period poor Gomperts had had visions of diamond-fields on his soul, and a forest of hopeful thoughts wherein to wander. Time after time, on the flimsiest information, he would get up syndicates and drive over the veld seeking the unobtainable. He was a man without

*savoir faire*, and his one obsession was diamond seeking. His first and last success had ruined him.

Gomperts being very hard up, I took the chap into my office, promising him a share of (anticipatory) profits. Therefore, lo and behold! his worship sat in great state all day, and slept there quite royally o' nights. But the old craze of golden dreams was ever present, tingeing his mind, and urging him to be a magnate, hence whenever I returned to the "shop" I invariably found two or three expectant Dutchmen who had farms to sell. It was then my bounden duty, after a ceremonious and stately introduction, to take pen in hand—a proceeding which much impressed the Boers, who regarded it with grave suspicion—and go into what is called "figures"; Gomperts, in serious attendance, twiddling his fat fingers and occasionally winking at me, as much as to say: "You see, we've fairly got them by the trousers."

Dutchmen in those days had not learnt the value of money, but the sight of a heap of sovereigns had a magical effect upon them; consequently they fell an easy prey to the experienced and versatile Boer-*verneuker*, who cheated them right and left. The Dutchmen who visited my sanctum, which had been massed with mining plans suggestive of great riches, invariably sniffingly asked "hundred t'ousand p'und" for their farms. This was the standard price demanded by the Boers, having been made fashionable by a highly respectable financier, whom I will dub John Rann, because, like Sixteen String Jack, he was famous for his plunders and his gallantries among the ladies, and had in consequence mines baptised in his name, which is so revered in high-class clubs and low-down workhouses.

It seems that a Johannesburg syndicate had proposed to buy from a Boer—Hans—his farm for £20,000. When a certain full-fledged financier heard of the negotiations, he, with his lawyer, drove a spanking Cape cart turn-out to the Dutchman's place, and offered him £100,000 in gold, *haardegelt*, as they say, for the property. Hans, after sucking a peppermint, accepted the bid, and the buyer then produced two

bags of coin, the first containing one hundred pounds and the other a thousand—an excess of gold that made the Boer's eyes blink. The Dutchman counted the hundred pounds, and then the thousand. Pointing to the two glistening heaps of gold, which had further caused Hans's mouth to water and his *vrouw* to clasp her hands in speechless ecstasy, the financier said, smilingly, as he indicated the smaller pile of coins: "Oom Hans, there stands a hundred and here," designating the larger heap, "is a thousand—one hundred thousand." The Boer took the money, signed the receipt for a hundred thousand pounds, and told the neighbours that he had sold his farm at that price.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, all the Dutchmen for miles round thought it the correct thing to ask "hundred t'ousand p'und" for their stretch of veld.

That was a delightful and not uncommon way of getting rich quick in the Land of Ophir, but here is a tale even more charmingly characteristic of rascaldom. The directors of a reliable gold mine, situate on the East Rand, discovered that their rich reef ran into an adjoining farm owned by a Boer—Piet shall I call him?—who demanded fifty thousand pounds for his ground, which was really worth four times that amount. The aforesaid directors immediately empowered an emissary to approach the Dutchman on business bent. These negotiations, however, unfortunately became known to a shuffler—a practised Boer *verneuker*—whose identity must be hidden under the name of Sharp. After sniffing around the farm for days, his snout to the ground, this Mr. Sharp, as keen as a razor, one morning made his appearance at the Dutchman's house with five hundred golden sovereigns, and a prepared agreement in his pocket, which Piet signed, accepting the coin as payment for a three months' option to purchase his homestead for £45,000.

A few months later the old farmer had the sensation of his life, when a letter came to hand from Sharp telling him

<sup>1</sup> This farm was subsequently floated into a company with an enormous capital, and the gentleman who acquired it rose like a star in heaven.

that, in conformity with his agreement, he hereby tendered fifteen thousand pounds, the price of the farm, and intended taking immediate possession of same. Oom Piet, begrimed his nose with rapee, heatedly saddled his best trippler, and hurried into Johannesburg, interviewing Sharp and pointing out that the purchase price was £45,000. That slim gentleman, crinkling his nozzle like a vicious creature about to bite, smiled his sweetest smile of denial, and with sharp sarcasm showed the bewildered Dutchman his copy of the contract, witnessed by a neighbour who had had no knowledge of its contents, and could barely write his name.

The Boer expostulated *Alamachtigs* with considerable vigour, and spat contradictions, but when asked for his copy of the agreement explained that in his haste to come to town he could not lay his hands on it. "All right, *mooi kerel*," said the other, "return, man, to your house and find it." So Piet, his heart going pitter-pat, his silver whiskers flying, galloped home Johnny Gilpin fashion, while Dick Turpin went round the corner to "have one." But the cheated Boer never found the document for the all and sufficient reason that, at the tempting of Sharp, a well-known criminal—who subsequently got jailed for another offence—had burgled the farmhouse and stolen the original agreement. So it fell out that the Dutchman parted with his property for £15,000, and has never ceased cursing and wishing to roast *verdomde rooineks* to this day, while the astute Sharp, who had put the stroke across him, made over his right and title for £50,000 to the company whose reef ran into the Boer's farm—and pocket.

But I was no hand at this kind of business. I knew nothing about *Plaatspruifs*, *Kaalfonteins*, or *Smitkops*; *mynpachts*, reefs, and *bewaarplaatsen* were as Chinese to me or the mysteries of company floatations, so after about a month of these abortive interviews I decided to give my diamondiferous friend his *congé*, together with a sum of money, and devote all my attention to share dealings on the Stock Exchange, of which institution I had become a member.

I had good health, fairly bad habits, but natural and seasonable, three sons, and a wife in a million. I deplore much for their sakes that in those salad days I did not go in for company promoting as a profitable profession and princely pastime. With my native ability and aptitude it is certain that I should have been a stupendous success in this slippery business, now monopolised by German baronets of true British breed, though no doubt many families—and all my friends, in the regular order of things—would have deeply regretted my advent on the financial horizon. I am sure I should have been acclaimed a genius, seen my portraits published in all the newspapers, and when I died have had a marble tablet affixed to my residence announcing to a multiplicity of people I had robbed that “Here died Sir Louis Cohen”—to which no doubt some ungrateful victim would have added: “And a damned good job too.”

Almost from the beginning the streets surrounding the Stock Exchange became the busy centre of Johannesburg, while later on, a part of Simmonds Street in front of the institution was chained off, thus providing a kind of open air mart for the brokers and general public; it was something like Throgmorton Street on a small scale. Thus “The Chains” was destined to become the centre of attraction of all that was good and bad in Johannesburg. In this Rialto stood the shouting brokers, the watchful dealers, merchants, hotel keepers, pugilists, racing men and ne’er-do-wells. Ladies were seldom seen between “The Chains,” except those—and they were not always ladies—who presided over the adjacent bars and the hearts of affluent lovers.

I have said that few ladies, or rather females of fashion, visited “The Chains,” but many came to view the Exchange in full swing from the gallery. Their presence had rather a disturbing effect on the members, who posed and shouted and twisted their moustaches. Some of the fair or dark ones had only recently left their fathers’ shops in the Mile End Road, and imagined themselves, in their new surroundings,

somewhat as peeresses attending the House of Lords, and, to the best of their ability, they acted accordingly. It is only fair to add that they raised great hopes in the breasts of their admirers. "Oh," pæaned one perspiring young Posener, lifting his black eyes ecstatically to the row of Judean beauties and enjoying a barmecide honeymoon, "I shall never marry no one but a Jew."

"Good boy," I said, "then you won't have a family."

I am talking of "The Chains" as it appeared in the early nineties during the boom times, when champagne was fizzing, and money was as dirt. I can truly say that I have spent some of the most happy and exciting years of my life between "The Chains," and met some of the best and kindest men. To a few it was a Golden Passage, to the majority a Bridge of Sighs—to others a riotous road to a suicide's grave. So many genial spirits do I remember, many of whom have passed away and now haunt this by-way of ghostland: the Hon. John Tudhope, as good and exalted a being as ever breathed; the kindly, clever Honourable James Leonard, who was a legal master-mind; that gallant Spreckly—Colonel to be—killed in Matabeleland, and merry Coffee Adams. Then who can forget manly Couper, a bonnie fighter with the face of a pugilist and the golden heart of Paladin, the sportive Curtis, tall Bertie Mosenthal, those splendid doctors Davis and Maclean, who call up memories of Mathews of the same guild. Quaint Ikey Sonnenberg was not bad to know, nor the two Sams—Height and Fox—whilst the gentle Frank Lowry was loved by all who knew him, and though he is dead his memory endures.<sup>1</sup> But Cor. Rissik, a genial Africander, who fought at Belmont, is yet amongst us to beam on all a sympathetic smile that never ages.

Every day now seemed to increase my chances of success, and I regularly made from forty to fifty pounds a week, and felt myself "coming on," and very much at home. The Hon. J. X. Merriman, a renowned South African

<sup>1</sup> Frank Lowry wrote many of the "Queer Stories" in *Truth*.

statesman, who was about as joyous as cold porridge, in 1888 described the majority of the population of Kimberley as "peripatetic adventurers and wandering thieves"—an assertion which impelled many gentlemen from Whitechapel and Warsaw, born in the bulrushes, to exclaim, tapping their virtuous bosoms with their diamond-adorned fingers: "Vell, he don't mean *me*—'cos he don't *know* me—see," which almost suggests a terrible alternative and shock to Society had J. X. Merriman enjoyed the honour of their acquaintance.

Gradually *tout* Kimberley migrated to Johannesburg, the choicest and most successful of the "peripatetic adventurers and wandering thieves" having fallen foul of the Diamond City, and divided the spoils of their plunder between their noble selves. Consequently, having pulled down the blind on the dead town, all that was left of them, left of five hundred middle class "peripatetic adventurers and wandering thieves," found their way to the Rand, and were soon followed by the successful brigands yclept magnates, who had risen by chicanery and cunning from the ruck and muck, and were now as a reward laden with a couple of tons of the dirtiest money on earth and the remembrance of as many sins as are chronicled in the Newgate Calendar.

The diamond aristocracy, who sneered at the Rand upstarts, arguing that they were gentlemen from those very reasons which proved they were not, soon found a substantial footing in Witwatersrand. Thus it came to pass that I felt myself, as it were, in my native element amidst this brigand band, surrounded as I was by the friends of my youth, the rivals of my erstwhile trade, and the companions of my glory. But most of them, the rank and file especially, had altered much since the early days of the diamond-fields, their Whitechapel accent was subdued, their terrible oaths modified, while the prosperous Pullack had lost half his vile jargon and poetic gesticulations, though he still ate soup, as a compliment to his host, like a grampus. Their love of jewellery had gone too, and they

no longer adorned themselves as if they were perambulating Tiffanys. "You see," declared one of the up-to-date swells, who had amber coloured fox's eyes and red hair, "gentlemen do not wear jewellery no more, it ain't the thing." I asked him why, and he answered, "Because they've pawned it all." They had; the diamond scrip boom had spent itself.

Some months before I arrived in Johannesburg, Barney Barnato had visited the Rand, bringing with him a couple of leading experts who affirmed that "the outcrops of reefs were merely the elevated beds of old watercourses," and who so utterly condemned the place that after a few days Barnato determined to return to Kimberley, and leave Witwatersrand severely to its fate. In the two years that had elapsed since B. B. had quitted London I had sent no word to him, for I considered he had behaved shabbily to me. At the time I am writing about (1888), Barney was fighting for his election as representative of Kimberley in the Cape Colonial House of Assembly, and some bitter things were said about him in the different newspapers, one diamondiferous journal declaring that "he is not a fit and proper person to represent this constituency in Parliament . . . his wealth divorced from honour, etc."

If Merriman's description of the population of Kimberley were true, it would have been a decided stroke of policy on the part of the sour statesman with the jolly name to have assisted his candidature, thus implying that Barnato was the only fit and proper person to represent "peripatetic adventurers and wandering thieves."

But Barnato was in many respects a much better man than those who wrote about him, and quite suitable to represent Kimberley, considering the status of some of those who had likewise been honoured. During the heyday of the First Empire, when its dazzling eagles were golden and triumphant, the beautiful and highly-bred Duchess de Chevreuse one day presented herself at the Tuileries blazing with diamonds. The *grande dame*



curtseyed to the Emperor, who rudely exclaimed: "What a magnificent display of jewels—are they real?" "*Mon Dieu, sire,*" replied the haughty lady, "I really do not know, but they are good enough for here." In the same spirit could Barney have replied to Merriman.

## CHAPTER THREE

Barney Barnato, M.L.A.—A New Way to Pay Old Debts—The Races—  
The *élite* of the Rand—Flat-foot Sal—Girls and Others—Barney  
as a Bookmaker—Oom Paul—Spider Leyds.

ONE morning, when the sun was high in its brightness, as I walked from the Johannesburg Exchange I heard my name called, and on looking round beheld Willie Ross, who had been manager at Kimberley to the Oriental Bank Corporation—of which I was a client in the early days—and had since deservedly blossomed into a Member of the Legislative Assembly, for Mr. Ross was a chap whom everybody liked, and there was no man in all Griqualand West more respected than the astute, fine-framed, and sportive young Scot.

He had for many years been friendly with Barnato, and I was not surprised when he told me that Barney—whom he had left a few days before in Kimberley—was having a hard contest, and had desired Ross to ask me if I would do some literary work to further his cause. I replied that I did not care a pinch of snuff who won the election, that I had in my life slaved hard enough for him for nothing, that if he wanted my services he would have to pay for them, and not being bashful, stipulated how much, at which Ross, as if I was asking for an overdraft, strangled a laugh and pursed his mouth into a negative, which is a Scotch way of saving words.

I heard no more about the matter, and felt no disappointment, but about a month afterwards I was standing in the middle of the road between the Mining Board and Eckstein's corner, my back towards the Stock Exchange. I had learnt from Barnato's representative, Neville Abrahams, that his principal intended visiting Johannesburg, but as I considered

that my rude message, our strained relations, and his enhanced position had probably parted us for good, I did not bother, and had decided not to speak to him first.

There must have existed some magnetism between us two, for although I had not met him for some time, I sensed that he was nigh. I went on talking to someone, and did not turn to see whether the newly-elected M.L.A. was about the premises, for I felt a kind of nervous emotion at encountering once more that strange being, whom I had known when life was new, and risking a blank visage or a snubbing. Irresolutely I stood, and had decided to run over to my office and escape from the dilemma, when suddenly a heavy hand banged on my shoulder. Turning quickly I beheld the immortal Barney with outstretched palm and genial presence, his large unblinking blue eyes beaming kindly through his gold pince-nez at me. He looked so well and happy, so forcible and confident, so full of grit and go, his well-knit, athletic figure showing its strength in stylishly-cut clothes of sportive shape. A different Barney altogether to the hapless, lonely one I'd met in seventy-three.

"How are you, you old —?" he said, speaking like a sailor and grasping my hand warmly.

"Quite well."

"That's good," he answered, taking off his glasses and wiping them. "Come and have a drink."

I went with him inside the Stock Exchange, he chattering away in his usual disconnected manner.

"You see I beat the swines down below—beat 'em hands down—nobody didn't want me in, not even Rhodes, though he was on my side—he had to—he had to. But I know he doesn't like me—he looks down on me because I have no education—never been to college like him—ah, ah, but I had my way—his education!—he had a stone in hand, but I won in a canter. Rhodes said to me one day after the amalgamation of the diamond mines," he continued, "'Now, Barney, what do you think of me?' And I said to him—he did stiffen up—I said, 'I think this, that if Barney Barnato had received the education of C. J. Rhodes, there would have

been no Cecil John Rhodes.' He only beat me once," Barney rattled on, "and that was with the diamonds—a fair crop, oh, yes, but it pleased him—a little bit of sugar, you know—mustn't be greedy. What kind of a place is this, eh? Germans—square-heads—aren't they? Don't like 'em, don't like me—damn good job—Lippert, I'll singe his carroty beard—Carl Hanau—yes, decent fellow—Beit don't like me up here—don't care, don't care, I know 'em. Kruger, eh?—hair on his teeth—coffee—I'll give him coffee. How's your wife? Have you got any money? How are you getting along—honest, tell me?"

"I have plenty of money"—which was the truth—"and am doing quite good."

"That's right—plenty of money, eh? You owe me a tenner, Ormonde—yes, you do—don't talk so much—always pay your racing debt—musn't put other debts against it—no excuse, you lost," he rejoined. "I'll make you tons of money—tons of it—not for your sake, for your family's—you wouldn't write for me—wouldn't do nothing—you should have stuck to your old partner—ungrateful. Damn fool I am—come and have a drink—only drink champagne—never mix—pay for it—put it down to me. Light, please," he said, putting a cigarette between his lips and stalking up to an entire stranger, "light, please, light."

Then he rambled on, drinking champagne—which he never paid for—and begging cigarettes from anybody standing near. This eccentric and clever man was then in the very

<sup>1</sup> One of the authenticated tales told in connection with the famous De Beers Amalgamation was that Barnato had agreed with Rhodes for the purchase of an accumulated stock of diamonds, amounting to upwards of a million sterling. The stones had all been carefully sorted into their various qualities, and on the deal being completed Rhodes said: "It would be rather unique if it could be said that you and I walked across the street with a bucket full of diamonds." Barney, with his innate love of the grandiose, agreed with Rhodes' suggestion that the gems should be thrown together and put into a pail, and accordingly they walked across the street with the bucket of diamonds. The gems were taken to Barnato's offices, and to classify them again took a considerable number of weeks. In the meanwhile, in the interests of the De Beers Consolidated Mines, Rhodes was able to dispatch to London the limited finds of the De Beers Mines, and secured a very excellent price; but had the huge parcel that he had sold to Barnato been ready for shipment in place of having been merged into a heterogenous heap, Rhodes could never have secured such a favourable opportunity for the disposal of the De Beers weekly output of diamonds. Possibly this is one of the few instances where Barney was outwitted.

zenith of his popularity. By dint of a fiery energy and never failing effrontery, which almost amounted to genius, he had surmounted seemingly impossible barriers and obstacles, and stood at the very top of the tree, politically and financially. The people who were in Johannesburg at his advent were as pigmies compared with him, and his unalterable manner, his droll personality, completely dominated and puzzled them. They might scandalise and sneer at the De Beers Bonaparte behind his back, but the best of them were glad of a nod or a recognition. He knew his power, and was wise enough not to endeavour to alter the demeanour and habits which had made him an original. Strolling about he was inundated with invitations to dinner for that evening, but he refused them all, and at last, to my surprise, he declared to an important individual who was sorely pressing him :

“ No, no, I’m going to dine with Cohen this evening, and with nobody else—that’s settled.”

Well, of course, it might be “ settled,” but I was not in ecstasy over the job, as I was quite unprepared for such a favour, hardly possessing presentable table requisites for a decent dinner, and I couldn’t ask the man to sit down alone. However, I did the best I could, and that night there foregathered at my house a few people, amongst whom were Searelle and his wife, Louis Joel, Neville Abrahams, Harry Samuel, and others whom I forget. But it was a merry party, and Barnato was in his best vein—witty, genial, and as frisky as a springbok—one could not have believed how hard he could be on occasions.

At about ten o’clock on that auspicious evening Barney and I went to Searelle’s Music Hall, and whilst there Carl Hanau asked him to a supper which was being given at the Central Hotel.

“ No,” said Barney, “ I’m with Loo Cohen to-night.”

“ Ah, then,” said Hanau, “ bring him along, too.”

But I wouldn’t go—I didn’t want to become famous all of a sudden—and so Barney stayed with me, and we drank the sherbet deep.

The next morning before six o'clock there was a loud banging at my front door; I hurriedly opened it and Mr. Barnato tumbled in, looking spick and span, and as fresh as a lark. He said that he wanted to talk about Johannesburg, so I had to dress myself and go out with him, whether I liked it or not—and, by a long shot, I didn't. He took me for a five-mile walk as if I had been a pugilist, viewing each street and asking questions about men, women, places and institutions. He sought information on every subject while his "head was clear," as he put it. The wealth of detail that he demanded was a bit too much for me, but if I failed to give him satisfaction on any point he would exclaim: "You don't know that? Well, I thought you were clever; you must have been asleep." After about a couple of hours of polite conversation he suddenly stopped and said, "Let's have a small bottle—I'm parched."

"All right," I agreed, "it would do me nicely—I had too much to drink last night. But don't forget that you owe me for five bottles I paid for yesterday."

"That's all right, old cock," he answered cheerily. "Now you only owe me seven pound ten, Ormonde."

"Oh, is that it?" I said. "Well, I'm not thirsty any more."

"I thought that would buck you up. You know I never carry money—look here, pay for another bottle and I'll give you an order on 'Change this morning." I did, and for more than one, and by the time I got back to breakfast I was pretty well finished.

Later on in the day I met Barnato at the Exchange, surrounded by an admiring throng, for he was like a magnet, and could keep an audience together better than any man I ever knew. Directly he saw me he came to my side and gave me the promised order, and a real fat order it was. When the list was called, the Exchange was packed, and I bought the shares with an alacrity that did me proud. After "high change" was over, Barney said: "Come along, I'll take you to all the banks and introduce you to the different managers as my special broker." That sounded

good, for he was one of the most influential men in South Africa, but it was not of much use to me, as I had a bank already. Still it showed a nice feeling on his part, and it couldn't do any harm. So I went with him and was introduced, and there ended the matter—as I didn't want any banks. South African banks, with their 12 per cent. charges, are no catch to anybody—a mossy bank near Maidenhead, with a pretty girl by your side, is worth all the Rand usurious institutions put together.

Thus commenced my Johannesburg connection with Barnato—a connection which opened as brightly as wedding bells, but which ended on my part in gloom and regret. I could have done better without him; I had made money and was forging ahead like a punter on a good day, couldn't do wrong. I do not suggest for a moment that Barney did not mean me well in his kindly advances, but at the same time he had a very exaggerated opinion of my abilities, and I for many years had not only been useful to him, but well-nigh indispensable. Yet, when all is said, if you write of a man's life you must be careful to dot down and underline the good he has done—or what passes for good—otherwise the testimony is valueless.

Barnato was such a curious individual, so careless of his reputation, yet so sensitive, so vain, and yet so openly and defiantly vulgar. Thoroughly domesticated, he was wayward, cunning yet simple, courageous yet timid, an affectionate husband, a good father, and at times a warm-hearted friend, yet he would, when it suited him, display an almost inhuman callousness. He was an envious man without a particle of jealousy in his disposition; so suspicious that he saw an enemy in every bush, and so trustful that he was betrayed a hundred times. He was a purse-proud man who would hob-nob with any broken and discredited individual, and was as profane as religious, superstitious as level-headed. He believed in the Jewish religion, but never gave it a thought; he respected the synagogue, though seldom entered one.

With the exception of myself, Barnato, throughout his

life, because of his contempt of the ethics of friendship, had ne'er a friend, and thus he became irresistibly drawn to me. I was in the show, though I only played the shouts outside, but still a valuable asset—very much, if I subtract the "et." I was useful, cheap, and had neither monetary ambition nor envy. No man ever ran after another as Barney did me, and he would have been helpful if the process had cost him nothing, and then perhaps my second state might have been worse than my first. What he cared about was the thought that money made him the equal of all who had once been his superiors.

Full of sensibility and commonsense, so little did he regard the opinion of others, or the effect on them of his eccentricities, that he gloried in his quaint originality and vicious independence. Thus, he had only been in Johannesburg a few weeks when the local races were held, and he proposed to Zeb Goodman and myself that we three should make a big book on the handicap, Goodman to be the manipulator, but I to be the Minister of Finance; he would not trust Goodman, for what reason I do not know, as Zeb was honest enough to his friends.

When the day of the races arrived, Barney Barnato, M.L.A., and in a way one of the most powerful men in South Africa, attended the course dressed in sporting suit of unique pattern, a flaming flower in his buttonhole, an aggressive race-glass dangling by his side, and the shabbiest handkerchief ever seen. On this auspicious occasion the grand stand was filled with the *élite* of the Rand—if such a term could be applied to the new aristocracy that had sprung up like a mushroom in the night—some of the ladies of which dressed to outvie other women, or to display their wealth, not to please the men. In this spirit I heard one of these "fashionables" remark to an *intime*, "Mrs. Hoggenheim won't sleep for a month when she spots my new frock."

Never afterwards did I see in Johannesburg such a flower-garlanded throng of women, of elate young and middle-aged men buoyant in their hopes and suddenly-acquired riches, and guessing the future in the present, for Johannesburg



was in the very honeymoon of her financial marriage. There you see the tall equine lady of aristocratic presence and delicate perfume, big-nosed and red-mouthed, like a wound, an interesting well-bred *divorcée* from England, who regards her silk attired, muslined and tailor-cut neighbours with British disdain and icy coldness. Quite *passée* is Madame of all the virtues and delights, and deliberately loud voiced in her criticism of those around her, a criticism especially directed towards Pretty Polly of Port Elizabeth, the Girl from Graaf-Reinet with the laughing face, or other Africander naiads whose ways are not hers, and at whom she curls the lip. She feels that she is *the* thing, a lady of the Shires, and sniffs her birth and breeding among the other poor dots whose virtue is certainly as good as her own.

Farther on you may espy a lovely woman—a belle lately imported into the country, whose husband only consented to marry her after she had been pronounced perfect by a chivalrous authority.

Again I remember the haughty dame of opulent charms who, it was darkly rumoured in the twilight, claimed relationship with alien royalty. For that reason no doubt the grand lady, when in condescending mood, shook hands Kaiser-like, and affected an impertinent lorgnette to cloud her handsome eyes, which were good enough to see through a stone wall or a cheque book. Figure, fashion, frolic!

Thus upon the race-course were congregated the fashion and passion of the day. The sweet Natalians, with their abundant hair and deep black eyes that partake of the sunny brilliancy of the Garden Colony, those prudish spirits of whom Judge — of Durban said: "Never trust anything with hair on," although the luminary himself had remarkable whiskers, which perhaps paradoxically accounts for the absolute justice of his legal decisions, which are quoted with rare reverence in the Natalian law books of to-day.

Everything feminine was scented, powdered and bewigged, and all the dear souls, even those who were as cold as the heathlands of Scandinavia, exuded a perfume of riot and

recollections, which, judging by their fragrance, gave them a high place in Arcadia. What was the grandeur that was Spain, the glory that was Greece, compared to the jiggery of Jo'burg?

There they all sat or stood, the great, the grave, the grandiose, and heated the wooden seats with their flaming virtue, which being nothing to speak about on this hot summer's day, did not, by God's mercy, set the grand stand on fire. The structure's floor at places, I may mention, was not always in good repair, and a generous view of the hosiery of some of the women was often in evidence. This fact was pointed out by Abe, a Wandering Yid of erotic proclivities, an erstwhile ornament of Leman Street and a strong believer in taking what he could while he could, who waxed so enthusiastic over the glories of the many charming feet and golden garters that he unselfishly beckoned a pal, Flash Fred, to share his delight. One particular pair of neat ankles, encased in swell bottines and flesh stockings, sent Peeping Abe into ecstasies and impelled him to go outside to discover the fair possessor; he came back much flurried in double quick time. The wearer of the elegant bottines was his buxom wife Judy, and Punch only then realised how rich he was.

"Lord lummy, may I die! You could hev told me my mother was a boy!" exclaimed Peeping Abe in vivid adjective, a large smile extending his huge lips and illuminating his dark features. "Who'd a-thought them 'ere legs belonged to my missus."

"Stoopid!" ejaculated Flash Fred, glowing with pride, '*I knew 'em at once.*'"

In front of the same Johannesburg grand stand is not the sight impressive for so young a country, saying plainly enough that England has arrived, for her sport is here, and where her sport goes so do her arms. Missionaries and betting books have ever been the advance guard of the fife and drum, the red-coats and the Union Jack. The elusive three cards are blatantly visible in all their trickery; the pea, roulette, faro, and a line of howling bookmakers—

the tory-rory ranter boys—of sinister and bloodshot eyes, wearing nob and trencher hats, shouting with flagrant gestures the most unremunerative prices in the Babel, and taking all the coin they can put their hands on. They were honest—frequently, and would no more think of breaking their word than their marriage vows. In a cleverly chosen and judicious spot I see my old friend, Benny Lazarus, garbed in a four-pund-ten drab coat with huge pearl buttons, braying the odds, with a capacious satchel filled with nothing in particular. He is with a firm called “Clarke and Froomberg,” from Port Elizabeth, who were regarded with a certain amount of awe by their patrons and with suspicion by their friends. Benny with the black bag is the centre of attraction of this interesting trio, Clarke standing to the left and Froomberg to the right of him. Lazarus—ever mindful of the satchel—looks as if in custody of his enterprising partners, one of whom has his big nose in a huge betting book as large as a shutter, while “Nobby” Clarke improvises the most lurid imprecations, which he hurls at the heads of “ower smairt” punters. The ever lamented “Nobby” was in his way a genial, original, and objurgatory fellow, and when his conversational talent was fully wound up and in ripe going order he could have beaten the late Dick Dunn by a street in the harmony of language.

“What can I do for you?” shouted the energetic “Nobby” to a clerical-looking individual. “Any price some of these funny beggars (vowels slightly different). Which is it—Dolos—Erato—here Fuscus, eight to one Fuscus to *you*—have it?”

“I never bet on races, only on the race to heaven.”

“All right, betcher six to four, you don’t get a place.”

Strolling nigh is the slight figure of Sir Thomas Uppington, also a lover of Highland blends and other negotiable luxuries, who did Isaac Joel some service in the House of Assembly, and almost lost his reputation through it. In company with his henchman, decent, ill-fated Ben Curtis, Abe Bailey swings along in festive mood, young, bright-eyed, athletic,

with sport born in him. Near him is Solly Joel, posing eagerly for his photograph and twisting his moustache. Also many others—Longhurst (the jockey), Badger (the steeplechase rider), Ostler, Jack Peters, etc.—pass before me as in a bioscope. Then there is jewelled Moritz, the tailor of Commissioner Street, with his cloth cape thrown well back to show the silk, and carrying, if you please, a waterproof negligently fixed over his arm so as to display in gilt letters, "So-and-So, Makers to *Her Majesty the Queen*." Could vanity and patriotism go further. And poor Joe Webb—the clerk of the course—so proud of his top hat and scarlet coat; dear old Captain Von Brandis, the kindest soul that ever drew breath; Cor Rissik, the genial; stout Morkel; merry Chauncy; tall Lawley; brown Ferreira; red Harris; and a bunch of magnates and their consorts so magnificent that I dare not mention them with my common breath.

The Intelligentsia was more than amply represented by men of Law, Letters, and Medicine, so for a trifle you could be prosecuted, libelled, or "done in." Boers, being legally the owners of the country, were seldom seen, and scarcely tolerated on the grand stand. And nobody can forget the windy wives of the Jewish bookmakers, remarkable for gait and hips, who sat royally rigged out like ships on a gala afternoon at Cowes, full of beans and kugel, and delighted to be members of the racing *esprit de corps* that lent radiance to the Transvaal's sporting centre, while they remembered with horror their waistcoat-making days as they broke the wing of a parboiled fowl or dug to digestion a cold steak and kidney pudding.

But what is all this to do with that splendid Barney, a conquering hero, who, marching through this crowd of select nobodies, screams the odds, Goodman following in his wake, with myself far behind to see that they didn't drop anything. To bet was human, but to bet with a real millionaire, an M.L.A., a director of De Beers, the associate of Rhodes, was something different.

Ladies and others—and there were others with a roguish

sparkle in their eyes—craned their hair-curled necks or tilted their powdered noses to watch the agile, alert figure of the financier pass their lines, carrying his betting book as if it were the scroll of the law, or a recruiting drum. I recollect that he laid the odds to seven hundred pounds about a horse to one man, and then Carl Hanau speculated three hundred about another gee-gee, and so forth. On meandered this marvellous individual of most memorable of memories, who went booking bet after bet, never stopping to register the wagers until he had twenty stored in his cranium. The gold-teethed dames could gape and the men could gasp, but nimble muttering Barney of the chewed cigarette looked them up and down with his placid blue eyes, glass-protected as if from ruin. He gambled so heavily that I got nervous, and said, "Look here, I can't stand to lose more than three hundred—if you bet this way I'm going to clear."

"Lose, lose! What do you mean? Lose, you fool, Barnato never loses, I ain't going to lose with these damned mugs." Barnato was no novice at book-making; in Kimberley he had made a speciality of it, advertising as "The Leviathan." Therefore Johannesburgers were up against something.

Barney laid the horses regularly for the three days that the races lasted, the metalicians down below wondering whither the punters had vanished. At the end of the meeting he handed me the book, a book that grips the reader from start to finish, and departed, and for a week I never set eyes on the champion. We had won three thousand seven hundred pounds, and had not made a single bad debt. I received the money, and had paid Goodman out, and was sitting in clover in my office one morning, when suddenly there came somebody bounding into the place which made me think a span of oxen had broken loose. It was Barney.

"Damned gonoph, where's my money? You thought I wouldn't come, didn't you, thought I'd forgot, eh? No fear, come on, buck up; how much did we win?"

"Three thousand seven hundred pounds."

"More than I thought, more than I thought. Have you got it all, have you been through the books; not been diddled, eh? Sure?"

"There you are," I said, handing him the books, "you can go through the accounts yourself."

"No, no; take your word. No time, no time; if I'm done, I'm done. Come on, give me my money, I ought to charge you interest, you've had it nearly a week."

"But you didn't call?"

"What's that to do with it? Why didn't you send it? No, no, you were right, the office would have got hold of it. Don't say a word, clever, aren't I. What mugs, ah, ah, any prices because I was Barnato. I shouldn't have bet, they say, because I was a M.L.A. Now, did they care a damn what I did, when I wasn't? What rot. I've all the dames of the town after me. One wants a piano—fifty pound—and another a pony—fine girl—I have no money—cigarette! Come on, you wouldn't have made a cent if it hadn't been for me, would you? I'm a bit worried; Woolfie says I ought to be ashamed of myself. Licked them at their own game. Three to one each is even money coupled, isn't it—they didn't even know that. Never lay the same horse for a double event. I haven't got a farthing on me—this cheque no good at present—you haven't done me in, no, no, I know you wouldn't. Cigarette, lend me a sovereign and I'll stand you a small bottle."

"Haven't got a sovereign."

"Fiver then, fiver. I swear by God I'll pay you back. Don't be greedy, look what you've won."

I gave him a fiver, and as the drollish one took it he said, "Now you owe me two-pound-ten, Ormonde, good boy—good boy, you always pay your debts—but too much to say, too much to say."

Was he not the cunning one?

What Barney did with his surplus money nobody knew, but a few days afterwards he gallivanted about Johannesburg without a shilling in his pocket, for he seldom drew on the firm for a penny to meet his extraneous expenses. If

ever he did, there was a cabinet council held, and Barnato dreaded family squabbles.

Only when the Black Prince's feathers, Napoleon's grey coat, Frederick of Prussia's cane, Garibaldi's red shirt are no longer remembered, will Paul Kruger's pot hat be forgotten.

Notwithstanding that the dour dopper, four times elected President of the Transvaal, died defeated and discredited, he was the only great man the Boers have produced, for Retief, Bezuidenhout and Piet Uys can hardly be regarded as such, although Botha did develop into the peaceful Washington of his country. But Kruger in his time was much more the representative of the Boers than the tactful Louis Botha, whose memory history will ever keep green and sweet, for the dour President had contrived to impress his grim personality on the burghers' imagination, and their hostile minds minted only Krugerism in its worst form.

Oom Paul was a strange hybrid of barbarism and surface-civilisation, as represented by his superstition and black frock-coat. In truth, the very basis of his policy was hatred and suspicion of Great Britain, her institutions and people, though it must be allowed that the calculating peasant had some reason to regard Englishmen as the persecutors of his race, and the Union Jack as the symbol of servitude and oppression. The old man, soured by memories of the Great Trek period, could not forget those boyish days of bitter hardship, when to escape from the sight of the Rooinek, the *Voor-trekker* Boers—he a *Voor-looper* amongst them—penetrated far north through dismal waste and gloom, across rivers, over frowning mountains, in search of a magic region where they could live their simple lives in their own way. With an ancient musket in one hand, and a well-worn Bible in the other, these single-minded folk sought an asylum and found it in solitude. Then they proceeded to put their house in order and rested, trusting to God and Brown Bess.

In the years to come, they saw this haven, the country

of their adoption, taken from them and annexed to the British Empire, Sir Garnet Wolseley, with military optimism, declaring that "as long as the sun would shine, the British flag would fly over the Transvaal."<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder, when one remembers these things, that Kruger had an antipathy of the Red-coats, and interpreted British Liberty as meaning Boer Thralldom. It was a redoubtable phantom that kept this son of the soil awake at nights, and led him into Hollanderism.

But although Paul was a great patriot and brimful of Anglophobia, that did not deter him from taking office under the British Government during the first occupation, only resigning his post on being refused an increase of salary. Mirabeau once wrote, "Buffon is the only man we have whom the English envy, and the English know a man when they see him." Well, they certainly showed their appreciation of Kruger for a period; why they did not increase his wages I do not know. Later he went on strike with a vengeance at Laing's Nek and Majuba, the Boers being victorious, as Mr. Carter writes, "when they were on the top of the hill, and we were at the bottom, and when we were on the top of the hill, and they were at the bottom."

After the peace, the Transvaal deputies, Messrs. Kruger and Smit, took a trip to Europe for the purpose of arranging a loan and securing some alteration in the Convention. I well remember the two gentlemen at the Albemarle Hotel, Piccadilly, which was kept by one Lopez, who formerly ran an inn in Cape Town. Old Lowenthal used to stay at Lopez's London establishment, and when I called on him, I saw Kruger, in his funereal top hat and lugubrious frock-coat, looking the picture of misery, blinking at the wet depressing weather, the while his gamp shed tears of consolation. The unhappy pair of politicians being unable to borrow a shilling in Holland (who could?) or elsewhere, soon found themselves stony broke, but Kruger managed to tap Baron Grant for

<sup>1</sup> No doubt Sir Garnet was right in his prophecy, the Union Jack does fly over the Transvaal to-day, but the sun shines in quite a different way from that anticipated by the hero of Coomassie.



enough—and a bit over—to pay the hotel bill, which otherwise might have remained unreceipted.

After having thus raised the wind at the expense of the estimable Baron who beautified Leicester Square for the Londoners, the Boer deputation did a grand tour on the Continent, and were acclaimed as heroes in The Hague, Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Paris. At Berlin the Emperor William received the cheap lot and gave them something to eat. At this banquet General Smit was describing in flamboyant phrases the methods by which the Boers had ambushed and shot down the English. Bismarck, who had been listening to the hero's recital of his exploits, said to the gentleman whom Smit was enlightening: "Ask him (the General) if he knows what would have happened to himself and friends had Disraeli been in power?" Smit replied, "No." "Well," said Bismarck, "I will tell you. You would have been hanged on the tallest tree in the Transvaal long ago."

Kruger was on one historical occasion received very politely by a crowd of many thousands of people at the Wanderers' Club, Johannesburg. Oom Paul, looking remarkably greasy—the unwholesome, puffy rings beneath his little eyes hiding their cunning glint and furtive glances—stood on a platform surrounded by some Boer officials and the most important men of the Rand. The President peered suspiciously to the right and to the left, as if his immediate attendants had designs on his pockets, and after gathering anger on his brow and blowing his nose like an elephant trumpeting, shambled to the front of the platform, his ungainly massive figure and scowling countenance seeming to challenge in a warlike manner the crowd he was about to address.

The august visitor, in his loud, harsh growling tones, commenced a ponderous oration, but had hardly finished the first sentence when some young fellows in the crowd began to sing "Rule Britannia." His Almightyness stopped as if he had been pin pricked, glared as savagely as his stolid pasty face would admit, emitted a hoarse snuffle, and then,

with a voice like a Uhlan, roared out to the sea of heads, "*Blij stil*" (be quiet). The whole performance was so droll, so quaintly childish, so unexpected, that the crowd broke into peals of laughter, and here and there into a variety of bad language. It was one of the funniest incidents I have ever beheld, but Oom Paul saw no humour in the laughter, no music in "Rule Britannia," so he incontinently turned his broad back rudely to the attendance, walked off the balcony, and thus ended an important chapter in the Grim One's melancholy career.

In the afternoon the people, who had become excited and more numerous, pulled down the Transvaal *Vierkleur*, from the Government buildings.<sup>1</sup> On the same day the residence of Captain Von Brandis, nearly opposite mine, where the President was staying, was besieged by an irritated mob who wanted to vent their grievances, and being unable to do so, crushed into and destroyed the railings which enclosed the house.

Writing of the attack on Von Brandis's abode reminds me that an ignorant third-class German auctioneer—a newcomer of infinite cheek and audacity—desiring to be in the limelight, elected himself a public personage and representative. This impudent Square-head, spokesman of nobody, pushed his carcass into Von Brandis's dwelling on the plea of presenting a petition to Kruger. The Head of the State, who was a good judge of character, declined to hear the impostor, and told him to be gone, whereupon the adventurer, puffing out his cheeks, said to Kruger, "Do you know you are insulting the people of Johannesburg?" "No," roared Oom Paul, his eyes flaming, "I didn't know

<sup>1</sup> "When Rogaly was arrested for pulling down the *Vierkleur*, the Transvaal Government, in order to magnify the act, had him arrested, and gave orders that this desperate man—who by-the-by was quite a decent person—should be conveyed to Pretoria escorted by policemen. The young man charmed his guardians by his genial manner, and when he arrived at the Halfway House he invited every member of the escort to dine with him, and needless to say they did themselves well. On the road they had come to the conclusion that their prisoner was a splendid fellow, but after the repast they felt certain of the fact, until the bill was brought, when they were stupefied by Rogaly saying, "That's all right," with a lordly wave of his hand to the landlord, "put it all down to the South African Republic, for I am the Republic's guest at this moment." They stopped at no more roadside inns."

that, but I do know that I am insulting you. *Voetsak*," and out the inconsequential bounder was shot. So much for this Rand patriot whose name was Liebman.

Kruger, in speaking of the Johannesburg people and the flag incident, said, "They remind me of my old baboon that is chained up in my yard. When he burnt his tail in the Kaffir's fire the other day, he jumped round and bit me, and that just after I had been feeding him."

Some time after this—just before I left the Transvaal—Oom Paul visited Krugersdorp, a township near Johannesburg, and, addressing a crowd of Boers, diggers, tradesmen, and aliens, commenced his oration by harshly bellowing, "Burghers, friends, thieves, murderers, newcomers, and others." Naturally the good—and bad—people of Witwatersrand did not cotton to the veracious Prophet of Pretoria, and none would do him honour, which, to say the least, was the very thing he did not want.

About 1894, when the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Lock, visited Pretoria over the Malaboch affair—in which the Uitlanders were commandeered illegally to fight—a British enthusiast, after the horses had been taken from the carriage and Englishmen substituted, mounted the box seat of the barouche, with the Union Jack fastened on a bamboo, and in the excitement of the moment allowed the folds of England's flag to gather round the President, who was sitting next to the Commissioner. His Honour rose very excitedly, and spitefully struck the banner with his walking stick. Arrived at the hotel, Kruger was unfortunately left in the carriage with neither horses nor men to move him, and there he was obliged to wait until a number of burghers were called upon, who drew his Honour off to his own residence. This unpremeditated incident much increased the rancour that Oom Paul felt for the Uitlanders. In the opening months of 1895, Kruger once more came to Johannesburg with the spirit of a man attending his own funeral, and although the visit passed almost without a hitch, Mr. President rewarded the people of the town for their good behaviour by describing them as "A pack of lick-spittles."

It was thus seen that nothing would please Kruger, and as all great men are unscrupulous—to hitch on to another subject—it is not surprising to find that two years earlier, in 1893, the august Paul had diddled Joubert out of the Presidency. The result of the election was announced as Kruger 7,881, Joubert 7,009; but, as a matter of fact, the figures were the other way about!

The day that Kruger first saw the arch-plotter, Spider Leyds, who, in a letter to a friend in Holland, described his master as a “narrow-minded, pig-headed old Boer,” he met his evil genius. This Dr. Leyds, of the frosty smile, was a weed that could have flourished in no other country but the Transvaal. The wily Hollander was out for money, and nothing else, and he got it dripping with blood. But Leyds or no Leyds, Kruger was an impracticable person, fully determined to grant no privileges to the Uitlanders, who, he was certain, had it in their minds to filch his country. “You see that flag,” he said in 1893, pointing to the Transvaal *Vierkleur* flying over the Government buildings. “If I grant the Franchise, I may as well pull it down.” “Their rights,” he exclaimed on another occasion. “Yes, they’ll get them—over my dead body.” And he guessed correctly. Perhaps he was not altogether wrong in thinking that the British coveted his country; they certainly got it at the finish.

Kruger never attempted to hide his opinion of the newcomers, no matter their nationality. “The Uitlanders,” he said, “were never invited to settle in the Transvaal, and are not wanted there.” The President also, in curious humour, once asked a Yankee deputation: “If a crisis should occur, on which side shall I find the Americans?” And when he was told, “On the side of liberty and good government,” he snarled, “You are all alike, tarred with the same brush, you are British in your hearts.”

Rude and uncouth, without perhaps meaning it, the old chap could never be persuaded to argue in diplomatic terms.

Kruger’s ideas were large, and though his face was barren, his imagination glittered with fruit. It was nothing in his

eyes that he lusted after Matabeleland, Bechuanaland, Zululand, Swazieland, Mashonaland, Tongoland and even Delagoa Bay—only to find a mirage in the desert.

“And where do you get your land?” unwisely asked a political interviewer, questioning Oom Paul’s right to the territory.

“I got it where you got your ugly face—from my father.”

“My father was a gentleman,” replied the other.

“It’s a pity he didn’t make you one,” retorted the Chief of the State.

Just one more anecdote, which shows how impossible it was for Kruger to steer the helm of State with decency and decorum. The gruff President, on one of his official visits to Johannesburg, was given a banquet at Height’s Hotel. When invited to take into dinner the charming wife of Mr. Ralph Williams, who was the British Agent at Pretoria, he brutally refused, saying, in his horrid Dutch jargon, “What do I want with the woman?”

Delarey, Methuen’s future opponent, was supposed to be coming with his Honour, but at the last moment the victor of Tweebosch, hearing of the hostile feeling of the Johannesburgers, thought discretion the better part of valour, and stayed at home. After the lugubrious and mediocre dinner had proceeded on its way, the drinking and gobbling guests, who were as cheerful and jolly as pall bearers, were interrupted by Judge Kotze getting on his feet and announcing that “His Honour wants to say grace,” which that elderly party did, with a barking fervour and piety which must have surprised the angels as much as it did the diners, who had been guzzling to the chorus of an angry and booing crowd outside.

The noise redoubling, Oom Paul pricked up his bird’s-nest-like ears, and asked what it meant, and Kotze replied, “Congratulations, your Honour, congratulations.” Then, full of spiritual opium, sour old Kruger was got out by the back door. O Johannesburg, financial mother of Scottie Smith, Sixteen-String Jack, Solly Slush, and Benjamin Lazarus, can this be true?

Paul Kruger forgot, or pretended to forget, that England had saved the Transvaal twice from annihilation by Secoconi and Cetewayo, and to his dying day he could not understand that it was British capital and energy which had transformed an almost uncultivated and decidedly bankrupt country into one of the most prosperous centres in the world. But whatever may happen in the future, Oom Paul's figure will always loom large and cunningly as an unprogressive patriot who never quailed, even before the conquerors of Bonaparte. Though possibly Kruger had never heard of the Great Emperor—his name was not in the Bible, and the Pride of Pretoria read no other book—is there not a Napoleonic flavour in his reply to the English nobleman, who, during an interview, remarked to him, "My father was a Minister of England and twice Viceroy of Ireland," to which the dour old Boer answered, "And my father was a shepherd!" Again was there not something Cromwellian in his character, as witness the day when the *Volksraad*, in full debate, disagreeing with him, he threatened to turn all the members out, lock the door and pocket the key. The British courted the Old Man too long before they basted him, and then, too late, Kruger learnt, "that kissing don't last—cooking do."

## CHAPTER FOUR

The Double Double—The Silver King—Ethics of Share Dealing—A Ghetto  
Claude Melnotte—Beauty Unadorned—J. R. Couper, Champion—  
Some traits of his Character—His Opponent—Woolfie Joel—The  
Fight for the South African Championship.

THE Witwatersrand Mines were barely opened ere gold stealing became prevalent, and soon, like I.D.B., it developed into a notorious industry, and bucketsful of gold amalgam were filched each week, and easily found a ready market. A great portion of it was sold to Kimberley "speculators," but as the demand far exceeded the supply, the enterprising gang running the show on the Rand hit on the happy expedient of faking stock, which they sold as the real thing to their friends of gold and diamonds from Kimberley, who were in the habit of making financial assignments near Johannesburg to receive the stuff. Of course, there was much lamentation on the part of the cheated ones when the gaff was blown, and the "gold" was found to be in the main a cunning compound of worthless metals, but this did not happen until a lot of money had been made by the Rand manipulators.

In this relation I remember two gentry, dear old pals they were to each other, whom, for the sake of convenience, I will call Simmy and Isaac, who were much engaged in the thriving industry and lived in constant dread of disaster. Simmy, however, had acquired in the pursuit of his illicit calling, a genuine button—I think you call it a button—of pure gold, worth over a hundred pounds, and he had given it to his friend Isaac to dispose of to a local jeweller, a certain Keetler, whose mode of living was recluse and solitary. Now Mr. K. happening, to his great regret no doubt, to be out of town on that auspicious occasion, Isaac with commendable honesty, returned the ingot to Simmy

at the latter's house, and the two, to while away the evening, indulged in a game of hazard with quite disastrous results to Simeon, that young sport losing fifty pounds to his friend, who bent his eyes enquiringly for an immediate settlement, as was usual amongst gentlemen of this type. Simmy, who had the reputation of being a "bad partner," suddenly seeing a way out of his difficulty, exclaimed: "I'm a bit broke for money, Isaac, I tell you what I'll do. You shall go halves with me in the button." Ike's brow lowered as he answered, "'Tain't the thing, Simmy, and you know it ain't. It ain't commercial, and it ain't reg'lar, a gamble is money down with me; you understood it is. In that respect I'm pertickeler."

"Then why don't you pay Louis Schnutz?" asked the other, getting one home and laughing nastily.

"Why, why, I'll tell you for why," replied Isaac, indignantly tapping the table with four fingers. "'Cos he ain't a pal, that's why; 'cos he ain't one of *us*. Would I owe *you* gelt—me, Isaac Shlimmer? No!" he added, virtuously beating his immaculate breast with the flat of his hand. "I'd have my 'eart torn out fust. *Me*—that's *me*, and am reported as such all down Commissioner Street."

"Well, you can wait a week *surelie*, Ike," observed the unfortunate one.

"I can't, I'm short, and it ain't the game. Suppose you was nabbed to-night with that blooming button—where would my 'alf century be? That's what I want to know," added Shlimmer, with a burst of genius.

"I don't take no chances like that," returned Simmy. "I'm going to bury it, and to-morrow morning I'll sell the thing sure to Sam Blitzer—he asked me about it to-day—and I'll see you at eleven o'clock and settle up."

The two companions, after further sacred promises and lurid exhortations, then walked a little distance outside the house, and after burying with due solemnity the precious button in a spot known to each other, parted the best of friends.

But Simmy, on whose gentle soul the loss of the fifty



was sitting like a nightmare, did not retire to his simple couch, but betook himself to moody ponderings which lasted a painful half-hour. Then he straightened himself like a man who had taken a sudden resolve, went out into the open, and in a short time returned with a gay heart and the precious ingot in his pocket.

Next morning at eleven to the minute—for our friend was exact in business—Simmy met the expectant Isaac, who eagerly inquired if the “goods” had been sold.

The other regarded him with a sorrowful and painful expression as he moved his head to and fro in silent admonition.

“What the ’oly ’ell’s the matter with you?” piped Shlimmer, looking seriously alarmed.

“I didn’t think it of you—you was the last,” droned Sim, contemplating Isaac with a reproving and severe eye. “The button’s gone—you flummoxed me—you came back and took it.”

“*Me*—by gosh. Bly me if I’ve been anigh the place. May I—” swore Shlimmer, thunder and worry dew gathering on his brow.

“It’s no use a denying of it,” put in Simmy, interrupting the thread of what would have been a reel of oaths, “I almost see you do it. You’ll never have no luck—no; you’re welcome to the bit of gold, but you have lost the best pal you ever noo.” Having delivered himself of this tremendous outburst, the upright Sim hurried away, leaving the indignant and blameless Isaac aching under his friend’s accusing reproofs.

Shlimmer, left alone, his cheeks flaming, regarded the retreating figure with a sinister and blood-shot eye, then blinked, rubbed his ear, wrinkled the bridge of his nose, and caressing his left nostril, ejaculated: “May black sorrow go with him; I’m flimflammed for fifty. Serve me damn well right for working with a—gonoph.”

Very late that night, or rather very early the next morning, as Isaac wended his way home through the bottom

end of Commissioner Street, his attention was attracted towards a third-rate canteen, from the portals of which an excited half-dozen chattering midnight gamblers hurried into the middle of the road, and commenced to argue and gesticulate. Soon there was a violent movement in the group, and a swarthy-faced wastrel was seen belabouring a struggling individual who seemed half dead with fear.

"By my life," murmured Isaac, who was watching from a doorway, "if it ain't Biffing Philly Rosser a-pitching into Simmy Guggen. So he sold *it* to him—eh?"

"I'll teach you to wig-wag me, you momsir, to sell me a dud button for the real thing—take that, and that," shouted the pugilistic Philly, as he administered severe punishment.

"Leave off—leave off, can't you?" cried struggling Simmy, who was all beak and claws, covering his blood-stained face with his hands and weeping. "By my father's soul, Philly, I'm as innocent as a new-born babe. Isaac Shlimmer must have changed the button when I let him have it for a few hours to sell to Benny Keetler."

Isaac, who knew that that was the delicious truth, meandered musingly home in the darkness.

"It serves Simmy right to be broke up, he looked grand rolling in the mud," soliloquised Isaac, after he had piously said his prayers, and was creeping into bed. "I 'ate a man who deceives; the good Lord always punishes them swine who take down their pals."

It was Barnato who first floated the Transvaal Silver Mines, through the instrumentality of George De Pass. The rumour got about that De Beers Diamond Company was at the back of the new enterprise, and, of course, as is the custom, many other favourable reports were spread abroad to sweeten the stock.

Before, indeed, the shares were in existence, the Barnatos were dealing with them in London, and their representative extraordinary, the incomparable Harry, bought them up to 70s., so as to rig the market. Barney in the meantime induced some of the directors in Johannesburg to sign with himself a large parcel of scrip in his Transvaal Silver Mines,

which he proposed to send to London and off-load to the public. But it happened that De Pass got wind of the little game a few hours after its inception, and instanter persuaded, as was his right, another director to sign with himself further certificates in the company, and arranged with the Post Office to keep the mail bag open until the last minute, so that the two parcels travelled home on the same steamer—of course, quite unknown to Barney. In due course Mr. De Pass's agents were obliging the sapient Mr. Harry Barnato with thousands of shares at 60s. and 70s. per share, which that gentleman took with extraordinary eagerness, thinking that the sellers would not be able to deliver, and that he could thus milk them to his heart's content.

When Barnato *ainé* discovered the manner in which he had been hoist with his own petard, his grief was pathetic, quite a contrast to the merry laugh and chuckling of the victorious George De Pass, who really deserved a medal for getting the better of these financiers. As I have often pointed out, Barney Barnato, with all his faults, never bore malice, therefore it was no surprise a few months after to see the millionaire and George De Pass seated joyously together in a box in a South African theatre. The play enacted was *The Silver King*.

"A good piece this, George?" remarked Barney. "Very good piece. 'Silver King,' eh?"

George laughed in response, smiling and looking at his companion under his lashes. "I suppose that's a dig at me?"

"It isn't a hit—it's only a cuff," replied Barney, wiping his glasses, fixing them steadily on his nose, and looking up straight at De Pass with his innocent blue eyes. "You ain't no Silver King."

"Aren't I," said De Pass in retort. "You christened me that, didn't you?"

"That's true," agreed Barney, pinching his proboscis and grimacing, "but I've changed my mind. You ain't no Silver King—you're *the bally Spider*."

From my previous chronicles of Barney's doings it will be thought by the intelligent reader what a useful friend I had re-discovered in Mr. Barnato. But the M.L.A. was not such a "cinch" as he at first sight appeared in these memoirs. B.B. had been in the Golden City only a very short time when he came up to me on 'Change and said :

"What are Griqualand Wests?"

"Fifteen and ninepence."

"All right," said he, as if one conferring a favour. "You can book yourself four hundred at fifteen and three."

"Thank you," I said, but not gratefully, as I didn't want the blessed shares, more especially when he added on parting, "Keep 'em firm at fifteen and nine, but don't buy any, see?" which was like saying, "Have a good dinner, but don't eat anything," or "Come and have a drink and pay for it yourself."

I tried to keep the stock firm, but I had hardly opened my mouth at fifteen and nine, when a young sprig of old Jewry who, following the golden rule, had "kidded" he was a buyer, promptly landed me with a hundred at that mystic price. Feeling that I was figuratively in the cart, instead of in the van, I scratched my head, and, promptly espying a man who had some belief in philanthropy, I—without the least compunction and to my intense relief—off-loaded the whole five hundred at fifteen and six. But selfish congratulations were short lived, as Barney later on came bounding on 'Change in a terrible rage, and making direct for me asked how the—I dare sell my own shares, and that if I wanted three hundred threepenny bits, why didn't I ask him to give me them, and not go tickey-snatching like a blasted (noun-substantive).

"I sold you those shares," he stormed, "to hold, not to sell," which was very true, no doubt, for they fell to 12s. 6d. the next day and ultimately to nothing. I do not suggest for a moment that Barney wanted me to lose my money, but this was his way of doing business, and he thought that I should have planted them outside amongst my clients—anywhere so that they should not reach him.

The senior member for Kimberley was at times an impossible man to handle—unreasonable, unscrupulous, heartless. His favourite place on 'Change was at the wine bar, where, in convivial mood—as a rule—he aired his opinions, glorified his shares, and pleasantly and frankly stated what he intended to do—without having the least notion of doing it. On a certain sunny afternoon, while surrounded by his admirers and sycophants—Barney had many of both—he suddenly pricked up his ears on hearing some broker shout, "Buy Auroras at twenty-nine shillings." Whether he desired to advertise the stock to the small crowd around him, and thus induce them to buy, I know not, but he suddenly said to me, loud enough for all to hear, "Go and offer thirty for two thousand."

I stood on a bench and shouted: "I'll give you thirty shillings for two thousand Auroras."

"They're yours," cried Arthur Lillienfeld, who seemed to fall from the clouds, booking the bargain. When I jumped down, Barney jumped up in anything but joyful mood.

"Well, you are a damned fool, you got them!" he snapped out.

"You gave the order—I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could; when he collared you, you should have said, 'I didn't mean Auroras, I meant potatoes.'"

The following morning Barney hopped over to my house before breakfast, saw me, and said: "Don't you say anything about those Auroras to Woolfie."

"But you know I've got to pay for them this morning?"

"That's nothing, hold'em over," he replied. That was just what I didn't gasp to do, nor did I want to render myself responsible for three thousand pounds and run the risk of the shares falling.

It is a strange fact, and one I could never understand, that Barney, although he liked Woolfie very much, stood in dread of his nephew. At all events, my clerk had passed the cheque and I had the Auroras. I ran to and fro from the Exchange to the Consolidated Investment Buildings the whole morning, asking Barnato to take up his shares.

At last I kicked up a row, and Barney popped his head out of his office door and cried to his manager, "Calvert, there's Loo Cohen in distress. Give him relief." One would certainly have thought I'd come for a basin of skilly rather than a cheque.

There was a certain Thespian lady of exceptional ability, haughty carriage and overwhelming conceit, who, hearing of the riches and good looks of Woolfie Joel, whom she had never seen, had expressed an undying desire to meet the successful financier and be introduced to him. Woolfie, who had beheld the actress on the stage and was not impressed—the gilt of her youth had been rubbed off—did not respond to the advances vicariously made to him, and shrugged the lady off as no beauty. But Joel's friends—and they were numerous, for Woolfie was an extremely nice and popular fellow—were disinclined to let the matter drop without having some fun.

Now there happened to be living in Johannesburg at this time a young chap, also named Joel, who was Woolfie's fourteenth cousin, and revelled in the fact, so that when he was approached and asked if he would personate the real and only one, he jumped at the chance. Soon a letter was written and a meeting arranged to take place at an hotel on a certain evening between the London lady and the Yiddisher Claude Melnotte. The latter, punctual to a tick, turned up immaculately garbed in a borrowed dress suit, a huge red silk handkerchief bosomed in his front waistcoat, and a five-pound note in his trousers pocket, which had been supplied by the conspirators—for it must be explained that Woolfie's near relation was a youth of neither substance nor position.

The fair comedienne and Mr. Melnotte, of Petticoat Lane, the moment they met, became enraptured with each other, and later on retired to a private room for supper and other seasonable delicacies. By all accounts, it was a merry meal, and the Lady of Lyons, a charming raconteuse, whose tongue was always in harness, enjoyed herself consummately, which is not to be wondered at, for had she not been the

goddess of wine, wit and wealth for at least four solid hours, and the guest of a hot blooded youth of diverting sallies?

When the two diners parted late at night, with love in their eyes, and rapture in their hearts—they'd had nightingales for supper—the Lady, without being invited, remarked that she would do herself the pleasure of calling at Barnato's office on the morrow, which innocent declaration caused Claude Melnotte Joel to tweak his nose with embarrassment and murmur, "Certainly, much pleasure."

The next afternoon as ever was, Pauline Deschappelles, resplendent in gay attire, could have been seen in Commissioner Street, walking gracefully towards Barnato's sanctum. As it was no uncommon thing for white muslin graces of the corps de ballet, or, for the matter of that, principal boys and unprincipled girls, to call at that historic shrine, the clerks had permanent orders to deny the presence—and, if necessary, the very existence—of their masters. But Mrs. Claude Melnotte on this occasion would not be denied, and after a slight discussion she was ushered into the august presence of the *real* Woolfie Joel. The Lady of Lyons opened her eyes and looked puzzled, then, forcing a pouting smile, said, "I want to see *the* Mr. Woolfie Joel."

"I believe I am that individual," smiled W. J., curling his small moustache.

"But you are not the Mr. Joel—that—I——" stammered the artiste, clutching her bosom and biting her veil, as she saw her golden dreams disappearing into mist.

"Well, you ought to know—had the other fellow a pimple on his nose?" laughingly asked Woolfie, with ministerial tact.

"No, I don't think—he had—a pimple—on his nose," slowly replied the betrayed one, preparing to take her melancholy leave, and, no doubt, thinking what the other gentleman deserved to receive on that useful organ. Thus was it that Bulwer Lytton's romantic play was almost repeated in Jo'burg.

On a certain evening about eight o'clock, when Sol had

long ceased crimsoning the fair town of Johannesburg, I was passing with a gay heart one of those ground floor bedrooms peculiar to Height's Hotel, and as I had often been there for a chat of an afternoon, I thought I would call and inquire if anybody of delightful presence was at home. Seeing that a certain chamber window was half open, I casually peeped in and saw the jet-haired, carmined-cheeked snowy-skinned lass I was in search of—apparently in tights,—posing before a large mirror and looking like a ripe peach on a summer's day. I did not pause to knock—what Romeo does—or if I did, the damsel did not hear me, but I turned the handle and entered the apartment, my heart following my footsteps. The lady certainly was there, but not in tights! She gave a scream, threw a huge shawl around her form, hiding everything but her starry eyes and dainty feet and exclaimed with a glance of gold and fire:

“I didn't know the door was unlocked. How dare you enter my room without knocking? How dare you?”

I trembled before this nice girl of high ideals and splendid limbs, and shivered an excuse.

“I believe I did knock—all the same, I'm very sorry, but I didn't see any——”

“Never mind what you saw—please don't let it happen again,” the fair one observed, assuming asperity.

“My dear Annie,” I exclaimed, with much earnestness and some emotion, “of course not. I'll give you twenty pounds if I ever do such a thing again.”

“Will you?” cooed the half-draped lass decidedly, with joyful wisdom, and a smile playing on her lips. “Right-o! then you can pop in on Friday evening, at six o'clock.”

Really the story, to be thoroughly artistic, should end here, but it doesn't, for Eve, with charming wit, on the Friday morning sent me a rosy apple as a reminder, and I ate it.

It is such a long time since I first met James Couper, such a long time since I saw him fight and beat Joe Coverwell, that one's heart shies at the memory.



From the first moment I set eyes on Jamie Couper he and I were friends. You may search the whole world through, in any walk of life, and never meet a more noble, honest, and courageous man than the John Jackson of South Africa.

Couper, who came from a good Scotch family, was, I believe, originally in the Royal Navy; and on leaving that service went to New Zealand, where he became a mounted policeman, and later on voyaged to South Africa. Hearing that his brother was a captain in a Volunteer Regiment serving in the Basutoland War, young Jamie joined the Expeditionary Force. At that time I was with Carrington, and stayed in Basutoland for some fourteen or fifteen months.

During one of the many armistices, Jamie, the least quarrelsome of men, had one night an altercation with a man named Bloomfield, supposed to have been amateur champion of Manchester—and who afterwards was appointed Chief of the Customs Station at Port Elizabeth. Bloomfield, who had a great reputation amongst the troopers, persisted in the paltry quarrel, and challenged the young Scot to fight. Couper, an unknown quantity, reluctantly agreed, and was regarded pityingly by his chums as a lamb about to be led to the slaughter. Carrington, in command there at that time, a true sportsman, gave permission for the contest to take place, and the supervision of the arrangements was left in the hands of Shervington, who committed suicide some years back in a Piccadilly Hotel, Digby Willoughby, a man who dearly loved a fight, and D'Arcy, V.C., whose life the late General Buller saved during the Zulu War and for which the hero of Exeter received the Blue Riband of the Army. Poor D'Arcy, a hard liver whom I knew intimately, was also supposed to have done away with himself—at all events he was found dead on the veld. But to return to Couper's first fight in South Africa.

It was a fine and bracing morning; the birds didn't sing because there weren't any; flowers did not scent the air, because there were no flowers about; and policemen were not present, because Basutoland had not been civilised and

crime was absent. The two athletes stripped to the waist, Couper a well-built young chap with all the attributes of a fighter, small, keen blue eyes, high cheek bones and a jaw of cast iron. His opponent, a bigger man, advanced to the fray, full of confidence and eagerness, but Jamie with that kindliness of feeling, always his, and which lasted to his dying day, dodged him and then struck the confident amateur an open-handed blow. At the beginning of the second round, Couper without a trace of temper avoided being punished, and disdained to take advantage of Bloomfield, until the Manchester champion getting aggressive, our Scotsman quickly forged in and pushed Mr. Bloomfield's nose back with the flat of his hand. The soldiers around the ring could not believe their eyes, as the bounding Jamie advanced for the third meeting, and Bloomfield, ferocious at the poor display he had made and the comments of the bystanders, rushed savagely in, determined to finish the contest. Then it was that Couper stepped nimbly back, and caught the champion a severe clout from which he fell all of a heap. James regarded his discomfited opponent of the tarnished eye as kindly as if he had been his own brother, and then stooped down, picked up Bloomfield by the breeches, dropped him on the ground and said, "Go away, I don't want to hurt you."

It was after this little turn up that I met the victor in Kimberley, saw him fight Coverwell, and become champion of South Africa. A good tale is told of Couper during the time he kept a boxing school in Diamondopilis. It seems that a certain Hinton, the same big fellow who gave me the hiding which I described in *Reminiscences of Kimberley*, and who fought Barney Barnato behind Cowie's bar in the same town, had, as was not unusual with him, an evening quarrel with Fred Abrahams, who had been a mounted policeman in Natal, and these two leading lights agreed to settle their arguments by a fistic encounter at Barney Marton's—who owned a big red brick house on the Du Toit's Pan Road—the next morning.

As a sick man would hurry to a doctor for advice, so did

Hinton betake himself to Couper at midnight and ask the pugilistic professor to give him a few tips. Jamie, as may be imagined, was not pleased at being disturbed at such an hour, and to get rid of his visitor, said the great secret of fighting was "to hit and get away."

Half Kimberley went to see the scrap. Fred was standing in the centre of the ring with his coat on. Hinton immediately went up to the handsome Abrahams, exclaiming, "You mean to fight, eh?" and with that lunged out, hit Fred a fearful smack between the eyes, and bolted through the ropes to a cape cart standing in waiting about a hundred yards away! On reaching this, in reply to the shouts of "Come back," he observed, as insensible as a target, "No fear, better judges of the game than you say, 'Hit and get away,' and I'm going," and he went.

Soon after this Couper visited England, and was tested in a sparring bout with our well-known boxing amateur, B. J. Angle, who had decidedly the better of it. Subsequently Jamie travelled to America, where he opposed Jim Fell, the American proving victorious, but Couper, who was a truthful man, if anything, told me of the ill-treatment meted out by the Yankees, who kept him locked up in a room without food or drink for several hours before the fight, and during the contest gave an exhibition of the grossest foul play. On his return to South Africa, Couper wandered to the Rand, and when I arrived in Johannesburg in 1887, was keeping a canteen facing the Central Hotel, and was one of the first men I met on my entry into that charming camp.

I often used to go and see him, and found the same equable, fine-natured, good-tempered fellow I had always known. And it was something in those days to keep a liquor bar and have the reputation of being a pugilist. Miners used to come from near and far to have a drink with Couper, and when they got "full," these Johnnies became like the mouse that got drunk and said, "Where is that damn cat that chased me upstairs yesterday?" They would challenge the champion to fight, but Jamie was always peaceful and diplomatic, until one day I saw a couple

of robust roughs go too far, and then James, goaded beyond endurance, jumped over the counter, and the miners were sorry.

In due course, Couper gave up the canteen and opened a boxing school, which was patronised by the best people of the town. He became a member of the local Stock Exchange, and there was nobody, high or low, not proud to know the athletic Scot. Couper, as I have before remarked, possessed a beautiful character, an upright mind, and a certain dignity which was necessary to him in his peculiar position. Cold and retiring in his demeanour towards strangers, yet he had a warm and sunny heart, which, when you do find it in a Scotsman, is very real and genuine. Sober by habit and inclination, a thrifty, but not a mean man, he recorded every sixpence disbursed in a little black book which he always carried with him.

It was in 1889 that the Rand, always alive in sensations, was pugilistically startled by the arrival of one, Woolf Bendoff. It is ridiculous to assume that Barnato ever sent for him. Barnato never did anything of the kind, nor did any Johannesburg contingent. Mr. Bendoff honoured the town "on his own," and if there were no flags displayed when he arrived, there were invisible ones when he went away.

Bendoff took up his residence at a humble inn facing Height's Hotel, and, being a man of parts well up in the *beaux arts*, *belle arti*, and *schöne Kunst*e, at once issued the following erudite challenge, which sounds like something the world has heard before: "Woolf Bendoff, who has just arrived from England, hearing of the boxing abilities of Professor J. R. Couper, champion of South Africa, would like to box him in any style he likes for £1,000 up to £5,000 a side. Bendoff hopes he will come to the point like a solid man and defend his title." To this heroic effusion, Couper replied as follows: "J. R. Couper, though having advertised for some time his retirement from the pugilistic profession, would say, in answer to Mr. Bendoff's pressing challenge, that he would be glad to meet him in a light boxing match,

with small gloves, to a finish, for any stake or for £2,000, on condition that he (J. R. Couper), whose weight is 10 st. 4 lbs., gives no more than 8 lbs. away."

I knew Bendoff's fistic record, and had also been told by Barnato that his uncle, whom Barney knew well in the "Lane," had been one of the most scientific fighters in England. Bendoff as a pugilist read well on paper, for in the Old Country he had beaten Jem Griffith, Jim Hickey, Pat Harrigan, Jem Young of Mile End, Mick Dyer and Harry Langham in America. On his return to his native heath he fought a fierce battle with Jack Knifton, the strong, but slow, 81-tonner, and then got well trounced by my respected friend, Jem Smith, of sterling renown. From England, Bendoff sailed for Australia, where he drew with Jack Burke, a real good man who had met Charlie Mitchell twice. It can well be understood from this that Bendoff looked a formidable customer, so I interviewed him, and though his personality was not quite so engaging as his delightful biography, I came to the conclusion that it was all over with James, more especially as Couper had to give a lot of weight away, and was by many inches the shorter man.

In my first conversation with Bendoff, that gentleman informed me that he would be quite willing to tie one hand behind his back, go into a room with Couper, and emerge with the Scotchman's dripping scalp. And as everything that Bendoff said was more or less true as the Talmud, I felt bound to accept his uninvited testimony. So I trotted off to Couper and observed, "Look here, Jimmy, I'm not going to have anything to do with this fight, because I could not possibly back you, as I think the other man is sure to win. That being the case, I'll have no bet."

Poor Couper was very sore, and asserted that he had a rattling good chance, but I couldn't stand the proposition. When there was a difficulty in making up the battle money, Bendoff's backers having offered to lay £2,500 to £2,000, Jimmy said, "Well, Cohen, if you won't back me, back

the other man, for if you don't, the fight may not come off." I agreed, and found a good part of the stakes.

The night before the contest I called at Parkside, where Barnato lived (he had not yet removed to the Gables), and there I learnt that Couper was suffering badly from stomach trouble. Moreover, later I discovered that Jamie, who had written to Angle—no mean judge—for his opinion of Bendoff, had received a letter, an extract of which ran as follows :—" Jem Mace says, ' Bendoff is the smartest man in England to-day for six rounds.' I am afraid you have taken over rather a large order ; however, I wish you luck."

I had a thousand pounds on Bendoff, and felt that it was almost won. In vain did Lowenthal, who was backing Couper, but not with his own money, and superintending his preparation, beg me to back the other man. But I wouldn't hear of it. So sure did I feel that Bendoff would win that I had arranged for a sumptuous luncheon to be given after the contest to my friends whom I had put into this good thing—one of them was Aaron Jones, brother of that plucky fellow who had twice fought Tom Sayers in the late fifties.

On the morning of the fight, after I had seen a luxurious lunch well and truly laid, Woolfie Joel drove to my house in his dogcart to take me to the fight, which took place on the (to be) Eagle Gold Mining Co.'s ground, about six miles from Johannesburg. Woolfie and I were alone in his chaise, and I have often wondered whether it was a desire for my company, or a hankering after the bets I had on Bendoff, which impelled him to call. At all events, I no sooner got on the vehicle than he began to press me to lay some of my money off, but I was adamant ; and then, as a farewell effort, he offered £1,000 to £300 on Bendoff, which I refused. Poor Jamie ! I shuddered, and felt sad at his unhappy fate, at the same time thinking, like Shylock, how safe my saintly shekels were which I had staked against the Scotsman.

As we sped on to the battlefield, the road was thronged

as on Derby day ; lawyers, doctors, merchants, and hundreds of pedestrians were on their way to see the sport. Arrived on the ground, we found that an enclosure of corrugated iron had been erected, with an orthodox roped ring in the centre. This enclosure was about 100 ft. square and 12 ft. high, and was supposed to be strong enough to keep out those people who were not prepared to pay the fee of £5 for admission. Couper was already on the ground when I arrived. He had been driven down by the elder Lowenthal. As the two of them sat in the jolting Cape-cart, old Low, regarding Jamie critically, remarked, "Ye're lookin' pale, Jimmy, laddie ; are ye skeered ?"

"I am that, mon," replied Couper, who also spoke the Scotch brogue, "I'm skeered for the siller."

Around the ring were congregated five or six hundred people, composed of the Rand aristocracy and rankest families, the very cream of the sporting world and of Johannesburg Petticoat Lane, who were vociferating lustily for blows and the onset ; whilst behind the tin walls clamoured a thousand of the rag-tag and bob-tail of Witwatersrand, who had left their purses at home. But that didn't matter, as the fight had hardly commenced when the noisy mob outside, who thought they ought to "do their dooty," tore down the iron sheets, invaded the enclosure *en masse*, and remained there during the contest.

Clem Webb, one of the most upright sportsmen in South Africa, was nominated referee, and I had the unspeakable honour of being umpire for Bendoff, whilst Lowenthal held the same office for Couper. At about nine o'clock the gallant Jimmy and his seconds, one of whom was Tommy Harris, entered the ring, amidst rousing cheers, to fight for the South African Championship. Couper seemed in superb condition, every limb glowing as with Mars' fire, and, although he was but 5 ft. 6 in. in height and only scaled 10 st. 10 lbs., he looked a perfect athlete, a Hercules rock-hewn in miniature. Bendoff, who stood 5 ft. 11 in. and scaled about 12 st., was the picture of a fighting man above the belt ; but his thighs and calves were weak, and seemed incapable of supporting

so huge a frame in a long struggle. Again, he had not the demeanour of a winner; there was a furtive glance about his visage very different from the quiet, confident gaze of the little fellow who sat nonchalantly smiling from the opposite corner, with a gleam of hopefulness in his eyes. Couper had a short time before taken out his false teeth, which he regretfully handed over to one of his seconds, and to console himself for their temporary loss he began to whistle a few bars of "Here the Conquering Hero Comes."

"That's a good omen, Jimmy," observed young Lowenthal, who was sitting near him.

"Aye, it is," answered Couper, "unless the hero comes from the other corner."

In a hushed silence the principals advanced to the centre of the ring—Couper having the Kaiser's place in the sun, for it was beaming in his face—and shook hands, the one towering over the other as they toed the scratch upon the twinkling grass. At once Bendoff led off and got one on Couper's body, but the small man, quick as lightning, countered Bendoff full in the face, a proceeding which caused the London pugilist to manufacture a look which plainly said, "I ain't come here for this kind of thing."

Mr. Woolf Bendoff certainly had not the best of this round, and as he went to his corner the bluest of blue blood was trickling from his nose. The next meeting saw Bendoff assuming the aggressive, but Couper, with a breezy ferocity, banged away on his ill-treated proboscis, and, dancing all over the ring, at the finish had none the worst of the tourney. In the third round, Couper, gaining confidence, battered his man very badly, and nearly won the fight from a heavy right-hand counter which missed by half an inch.

Soon Jamie made a fearful mess of Bendoff's face, although the Cockney finished the round by knocking Couper down. Taking liberties in the next encounter, James met his opponent with a smashing left-hander on the optic which was heard all over the ring, Bendoff involuntarily putting his hand to the purple organ to see if it was still there, and



retiring to his corner much perturbed and with an eye that looked like a hearse, and made me feel like one.

So the fight went on, Jimmie punishing his man unmercifully and getting away like an eel. As Couper had on several occasions gone down from a tap (which probably was his right according to London Prize Ring rules), I at times claimed a foul; but as certain of the spectators threatened to throw me over the enclosure, I did not persevere.

In the seventh or eighth round Bendoff presented a hideous sight; his scarlet lips were swollen, his nose was bleeding, his left eye—a study in colour—was closed, and the other one was weeping, while his backers were wailing. At a psychological moment, when Bendoff at the finish of the round rested in his corner, there was standing behind him a Mr. Harry Samuel, now in London, who had found some of Bendoff's battle money. This gentleman drew my attention to Bendoff, who was instinctively groping for the sponge which lay in a bucket by his side. I quickly drew the pail away, and though I knew that my £1,000 was lost and Bendoff's knell had sounded, I thought it well to have value for money, and so the fight lasted twenty-seven rounds, Mr. Bendoff getting such a beating as you have never seen, being felled repeatedly, and very unwillingly and sulkily facing the music. Thus ended, amidst great enthusiasm, the fight for £4,500, the largest stake up to then ever fought for in the prize ring.

It will be easily understood that I returned to Johannesburg a disappointed man—moreover I travelled back in a cart with several chums whom I had put on "the certainty," who all blamed me for their losses. There had been, I must mention, lots of drink obtainable before and after the historic combat, and I grieve to relate that by the time I got to Commissioner Street I was pretty full. The banquet, on which shone a melancholy sun, still adorned the table of the house in Kerk Street, but, as Peter the coachman sagely observed, "Nobody wouldn't come now," one of my friends also remarking I had given him "quite enough to

eat " for one day ; the victuals consequently waited in vain, for even I did not go home, but wandered gloomily into a bar close to the Exchange after I left the cart. I had hardly got to the counter when a chap who was sitting near it sprang forward, and putting out his hand exclaimed, " So Bendoff lost ; I congratulate you. Aye, mon, good on yer, Mr. Cohen, you must have done well." That certainly took the cake, didn't it ?

It got bruited about that the fight was a cross, which, of course, it wasn't, and that I had " picked up a parcel." Mr. Louis Silberman—a German share-dealer who accepted my sporting opinions as infallible—waxed exceedingly wroth ; he had lost a sovereign. " What is this *verneukery* ? " he exclaimed angrily. " You tell me to bet Frivolity, scratched ; you tell me to back Tracker, scratched ; you tell me to back this Bendoff—he stood six foot in his boots and six heads in his hat—and he gets two black eyes. Scratched, scratched, scratched. Don't shmoose Mr. Silberman with sthuss—and my uncle Laurie begged me not to back. Yi, yi, yi."

The next morning I went down to see Bendoff, who had been very badly mauled, and asked him how he felt. In answer to my question he huskily spluttered, " How's ' the gate ' ? " I said that I knew nothing about ' the gate,' that I had come to see how he was, and to inquire if I could do anything for him, but he only repeated several times " How's the gate ? "

I got annoyed at this, and observed, " That's not what I want to talk about ; I can tell you I am very much blamed for your defeat ; people can't understand how you lost the fight."

" I'll tell you," he gurgled. " My inside's gone. I was never meant for a pugilist."

" No," I returned, as I left the room, " you were meant for a poet."

A couple of weeks after, during which time I had been unmercifully chaffed, I was passing Abe Bailey's office when that gentleman offered to back a certain MacMullen against

Bendoff for £200 a side. MacMullen, a raw novice without knowledge of science or ringcraft, would have been an easy mark for the Londoner, so I said to Bailey, "I'll go and see Bendoff and hear what he says."

The pugilist at that time was still lodging in the same small hostelry facing Height's Hotel; I told him what had been proposed, also that it would be as well for him to rehabilitate his reputation, and offered him the whole of the £400 if he fought and beat MacMullen. He replied, "Certainly, I'm glad of the chance." I went back to Bailey and said, "All right, that's a bet," and then returned to Bendoff and told him that the match was settled.

My pugilistic hero immediately jumped up from the sofa on which he was lying, and exclaimed, as he pointed to his yet discoloured eyes, "Why the hell don't you let me get rid of these before you make matches?" I pointed out that I had consulted him before dealing in the matter, and gave the gent a bit of my mind, which he resented by threatening me with a brown water jug which stood upon the table, so I thought it time to go. Very sheepishly I hurried back to Bailey—with whom I have done a considerable amount of betting in my life, and one does not want to wager with a better sportsman—who was very nice over the affair, for he could have held me to the wager.

A couple of weeks after the contest, before a crowded house at the Globe Theatre, I presented Couper with a testimonial which had been subscribed by a number of his admirers, and Jamie, ever grateful, sent me a large framed picture of the contest, with a flattering inscription appended thereto, which hangs to-day—I hope—in my house in Kerk Street.

It is sad to relate that the last years of my friend's life were very sad, for the Champion had experienced much domestic trouble.

He often visited me in Kerk Street to read aloud extracts from his unfinished novel, "Mixed Humanity," but as we walked abroad of a night, the broken-hearted man would

discourse of all his troubles, and just before I left Johannesburg he was haunted with an inclination to destroy himself. Afterwards when he ended his life, no one who had passed away in Johannesburg was more regretted and respected than gallant Jamie Couper, a lad of mettle, the Tom Sayers of South Africa, *sans peur et sans reproche*.

## CHAPTER FIVE

Stars of the Rand—An Explosion—Eagle Gold Mining Company—*Vive le  
Jeu*—£80,000—The Boers—Boer Law—Judge Brand—Gregorowski

It is about five o'clock in the afternoon, Johannesburg Exchange hours are over, and members of that captivating institution are congregated between the "Chains," shouting, screaming, gesticulating, selling shares, buying them back, and offering to do all manner of dreadful things to one another, or their friends and relations, for a trifling commission. On one side of this small enclosed thoroughfare is built a row of offices, occupied by the principal company promoters and share producers, mostly Germans, as the names Eckstein (the gentle), Hanau (the merry), Berlein (the ruddy), Imroth (the boxer), amply testify.

The other section—the Exchange side—is altogether devoted to sundry wine bars, which are captained by Hebes who superintend all day the popping of corks and the cracking of jokes. This pastime does not in the least interfere with busy night work, judging from the ladies' fresh appearance next morning, when they open operations by broaching a golden-headed bottle of Bollinger with some favoured individual, whose nocturnal intrepidity had reduced him to the seediness of a raspberry, and who is travelling to eternity by the fast alcohol route.

Round and round this sacred domain could be seen the heterogeneous tribe engaged in the book-making profession and plying their calling *matinée*-like on this Tom Tiddler's ground. In groups of two or three clustered the card-sharpers or dice-men on the *qui vive* for prey, a couple of gallows ornaments, and near them, perhaps with an eye to future business, lawyers, barristers, doctors, Americans of many classes, Irishmen of several classes, and some

Scotchmen of no class at all. They were all hunting the gold bug. Diggers, merchants, managers, actors, pugilists, angled in this deep pond, and fed the fat fishes, whose spawn was ruinous scrip.

In the course of an afternoon, everybody who was anybody, foregathered between the "Chains," basking in the sun, lolling in the bars or passing to and fro, some with downcast eyes, others with noses cocked in air. The brown-bearded, good-looking man, with elegant top boots, just now engaged in telling a great secret to half-a-dozen gossips sworn to inviolable silence, is handsome Bettelheim, known as "Beetles," good chap enough, immense card player, immense lady killer, immense hero (to be) of the Raid.

Cheery Hanau, in shirt sleeves, stands at his office door and laughs at Pearl, the pretty barmaid across the way, who has fine ankles, and wears green silk stockings; while Tickie Ehrlich—Hanau's clerk—humble as Uriah Heep, is inside the stately sanctum partaking of a captain's biscuit and a bottle of ginger pop for lunch. He is "saving up," and the world is witched.

Memory freshens my heart as I call to mind a square-built young fellow—I cannot catch his name—one of the glorious thirty-five soon to die with Allan Wilson on the Shangani river. He is talking to the fair Duchess of Hamilton—who did not know her grace in those times?—a beautiful, auburn-haired bar lady of many fascinations and charms. The figure of this soldier brings to mind, too, a sight of little dark Commandant Raaf, who sometimes visited the Rand—he was a butcher at Kimberley in my early days—a renowned South African fighter of whom Burnham, the famous American scout, said:

"Well, a braver or a kinder man there could not be; moreover, he was a strategist of the highest order. Whether attacking, or in that terrible retreat when we lost Wilson's party, Raaf's form was splendid. Whenever he had food in his camp he was ready to share it with any man in the column. He was as liberal as Allan Wilson himself."

Who is that dapper silent man who walks quickly through

the thron? He is George Farrar, some day to be knighted, and better still to receive the D.S.O., one of the worthiest of all who fought in the war; a man willing to bleed for his country, somewhat different from the numerous nobodies who were only willing to bleed her, and for their distinguished and gallant behaviour in selling all kinds of skoff at three times its worth dubbed themselves "Captings," "Majors," "Kernels," and what not fantastic military appellations.

The Boers could surely never have thought that these gentry were of the same breed as the glorious Lancashires and Devons who, at Elandslaagte and Cæsar's Camp, upset their optimism.

The dark person hurrying across the street is journalist Dormer—Dicky Dormer. He will write a flaming, damning article to-night as Rhodes' henchman, not about a "Dying Duke," but about a Barnato and the National Gold Mining Company's iniquities. He is with big Pullinger—granite Pullinger, a hard fellow to tackle, but a decent man, and slender, grizzled haired William Adler, superfine, and fond of the lasses. Deaf Dicky, so called because he never was known to hear anything except "oof" and the "ladies," which two words, whispered singly or together, would have the same electrical effect on him as "rats" to a terrier, and cause Mr. Adler to prick up his little ears prodigiously. His motto—he has a motto, though you wouldn't think it—is, "I may be bad, but I wish I was wusser."

Aspirating aitches is a pastime, I must tell you, much patronised by Sidney Woolf, ex M.P. for Pontefract,<sup>1</sup> the gentleman with the flowing black beard—a beard of the deepest dye—who is busily engaged talking to Leo Weinthal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sydney Woolf had been M.P. for Pontefract, England.

<sup>2</sup> In her book, *South African Recollections*, this is how Lady Lionel Phillips speaks of Weinthal of that ilk:

"Of course, Du Plessis (he was the brutal gaoler, a cousin of Oom Paul, who guarded the Reform prisoners), being entirely in Kruger's confidence, was a fine go-between, and another who must not be forgotten was a person who played, and may still do so, quite an important rôle in Pretoria—namely Mr. Leo Weinthal, the editor of *The Press*, the Government organ, Reuter's agent, and Kruger's bosom friend. I should not like to guess what country lays claim to this gentleman; whichever it may be it is not to be congratulated. I know that of all the many humiliations I had to suffer, none was more difficult to bear than that of

who looks as if he had been suckled on saffron, sulphur and free calls. Mr. Woolf, a cousin of mine, and I'm not ashamed to say so, is explaining, for the ninety-ninth time, to this Prince of Journalists, as he strokes his glossy beard, how, when he was a "*membar* of the House" (huge aitch), he saved the Empire, and Fat Leo, no relation to Fat Fannie, although he ought to be, is working up in his mind's eye the sparkling article with which he will startle the *haute noblesse* of the Fountain Hotel, Pretoria, entitled "How Woolf saved Europe." Oh Fitchett!

But this historic meeting is suddenly disturbed by the appearance of Lambert Cahn, an American Israelite, who rounds fiercely on "Ole Man Woolf," at which the "*membar*," catching the speaker's eye, and not liking the look of it, beats a precipitate retreat, as did Napoleon in Russia. Mildly I remonstrate with Lambert on his unkind treatment of the gentleman who "had saved the Empire," and tell him that "ole man Woolf" is my *first* cousin, to which information Cahn replies in Yankee language, "That he wouldn't—wizz—have thought it of me, and he hoped he'd be my *last*."

There, just by Pearl Penrose's bar, poses a historical group of "'Eroes of the Raid," Dr. Hans Sauer amongst them, plump, red as a peach, full of valour and armed with Beecham's pills, fat Auret, the highly ambitious M. Langermann, tall, good-natured Lawley, St. John Carr of the auburn beard, more bonnie than brave, the unlucky Strange, stranger than ever, Caledonian Mackie Niven, the Scotch Spruce, attentive Dr. Duirs, rotund Fritz Mosenthal, the elegant Lace, who loved embroidery and suffered much from the salvage, the "patriot," A. R. Goldring, and Sir

asking this individual into my sitting-room on one occasion when he was negotiating the question of release. . . . This same Mr. Leo Weintal was the President's great resource. He used to go and read the papers to him every evening and translate them. The President, not being able to read English, was quite dependent on those who would impart to him a little news from the outside world, and it can easily be imagined how tempting it must have been to anyone not troubled with scruples to impart the news in the way he desired it to be received. I have often been amused, too, at the telegrams this individual used to send in his capacity as Reuter's agent." Surely, surely this is a great trouncing to receive at the hands of so amiable a personality as Lady Phillips. It wouldn't much matter if it were not true—but unfortunately it *is*.



Drummond Dunbar, the only Sir at that period in Johannesburg, and therefore somewhat at a premium in the land which, later on, grew them like pumpkins. Quiet, unassuming George Albu, his clothes smeared with gilded mud, showing that he had been fossicking in the Meyer and Charlton mine, is hovering around and minding his own business. I have known Sir George Albu for nearly forty years, and always found him a very decent mortal of tried integrity, blessed with sober habits and a never tiring industry; but notwithstanding these qualities, I do not believe that even heaven knows why he was knighted, probably it was because the proud and 'aughty Leopold of the motza face is his brother.

Now, if my vision does not deceive me, I get in this historic space, a glimpse of tall Dundas Simpson, who sports a watch and gold Albert, which make him look so respectable. The noble Scot is busy taking option money from a little Pullack, who remarks—referring to Dundas's fine stature—to spectacted Jackson, of Jackson and Blyth: "He's a gran' fellow, ain't he; such a good physic?"

"Rather," replies the other, who was nicknamed Stone-wall Jackson, and now does business in Throgmorton Street. "I've had some of his physic, and it cured me in one dose."

Dundas later migrated to Natal, became interested in coal, and blossomed into the Coal King. That, however, is not to say that he was any relation to King Cole, for that important personage, so I have read, for I never met him, was a merry old soul, and Dundas was just the contrary. Thus we get the Coal King, and it was wonderful the number of kings and queens there were in Johannesburg, considering the country was a dour republic of drab sanctity and veld virtue, though Kruger was majestic in everything but appearance. Kings, forsooth! We had them everywhere in Witwatersrand! There was a Diamond King (or a dozen), a Gold King (or a score), a Rhodesian King, a Tin King, a Dynamite King, a Concession King, a Sweep-stake King, a Libel King, an Asbestos King, a Liquor King, but not one was a Philanthropic King to the Continent

which gave him claim and wherewithal, tongue in cheek, to pose in the Old Country as an "Imperial Pioneer," "One of Britain's Makers of History," a "Napoleonic Financier," or some such adulatory tomfoolery, when all the world knows that many of "the patriots" were square-headed German tailors, bootmakers, and waiters, the most fustian heroes who ever fashioned donkeys' ears into golden purses, or passed with magic speed from Petticoat Lane to Rotten Row.

Then do I see again in my mind's eye, the loose figure of Bob Ferguson, who was some time ago killed by a street car, the chief detective, hail-fellow-well-met with all "the boys," for does he not spend his nights entranced by the mysteries of hazard, faro, and other pastimes of the green table? At this minute he is bewailing his ill-luck to an enthusiastic listener. "Will you believe me, Issy," drones the sleepless 'tec, drawing his hand across his forehead as if to ease a bitter memory, "that last night Mike Hart turned up on me eight aces one after the other."

"Eight!" echoed the consoling Issy, whose hair was seething with coconut oil. "Eight! Gor bly me, Bob, he could turn up eight hundred if he liked." At this moment, habited in a flash get-up, the redoubtable Mike Hart—the veritable King of Gamblers—appears and accepts with good humour and pious resignation, the half-chatting, half-serious comments of his critics.

"Never mind what they says, Bob; you never know Mike to squeak, and you can always have your revenge outer me," declared the mystical gambler, grinning all over his face. Then, turning the subject off, he said to strong-smelling Issy, "What's the name of that 'ere French game I played a Toosday?"

"Chemmy de fer."

"Right oh! To know that word cost me seven hundred quid. What the 'ell would it cost to learn the whole French language?"

But where is the need of wasting time on such painful persons when you see, as in a kaleidoscope, the ruddy-faced,

red-bearded Harry Wright, editor of *The Diggers' News*, and the first man to recognise the value of the deep levels and peg them out, this he owed to the experience he had gained in Australia. I bow to his memory, but surely not to that red-bearded, vulture-like looking person, cold and cutting as steel, who is always on the prowl. 'Tis Lippert of the gargoyle face, the concessionaire, to whom was granted by autocratic Kruger—poor, misguided, patriotic, cheated Kruger—the iniquitous dynamite monopoly which did much to inflame the dissatisfaction that led to the Boer War. Says a writer: "The two names that head the list of the internal influences are Leyds and Lippert."<sup>1</sup> Leyds had made his nest in Kruger's topper, and the other sinister individual is, of course, the Dynamite King, crowned with a coronet of brass—a royal personage who would show the good side of his nature by helping anybody who was not a Catholic, a Hollander, or a Jew, by giving nothing away.

Never shall I forget the first business meeting between Lippert and Barney Barnato. This German, of tremendous capacity, wanted, speaking vulgarly, to "take on" Barnato; it was over the May Company, I think. I did hugely enjoy witnessing the simple Barney figuratively tearing this crafty square-head to pieces. In vain did the lobster-looking man announce argument, and nervously finger his ginger beard, as if appraising its texture. It did not do; Barnato and Doric were irresistible, and as he left the squelched financier, Barney said, as a parting shot, "That's the way I — well treat such — as you!" In this drastic manner did Barnato bonnet the Dynamite King.

But there is a more aristocratic acquaintance who attracts my attention, none other than the Beau Brummell of the

<sup>1</sup> "In the early part of 1888 there used to work in a small office, with living-room attached, at the back of what is now known as Bureau Street, Pretoria, a man and his wife. Quiet and secluded, they were busily engaged in perfecting those plans which led to the very large holding which German firms have in Transvaal concessions. The lady was as indefatigable as her husband; no clerks were employed to deal with the important correspondence. They had no small share in producing the present state of things in the Transvaal. In Mr. Lippert's fertile brain originated the idea for the Dynamite Concession, and with that concentration which marks Teutonic intention, he set himself the task of getting it and he succeeded."—*Scoble*.

Rand, handsome, florid, well-set-up Ducane, valiant ex-guardsman, known to his intimates and the ladies—especially the ladies—as “Duckey.” To me, however, he was always a reproduction of Beau Brummell at his best; and I swear he took me for George the Fourth at his worst, for one day, when I was speaking to corpulent Fritz Mosenthal, he queried, “Who’s your fat friend?” And on another occasion, at a café, this son of Idlesse peremptorily said to me, “Wales, ring the bell” (or perhaps it was “Go to Hell”—I forget). But be that as it may be, Ducane was a rattling good fellow, a connoisseur in the science of love, a *bon viveur*, a man of the world, and, he said, a splendid judge of horses. This being so, he bought for me from Wallace (of Wallace and Rudd) the famous racehorse Earl Godwin, “fit to run for your life,” which arrived in such prime condition that, after plastering him up, bandaging, and supplying him with a pair of crutches, he was brought home—a pathetic figure—on a shutter, a trolley, or something suited to the purpose. But if he was not the sort of horse “to run for your life,” he was certainly the kind of animal to run you into debt—decidedly Ducane’s judgment was at fault. Notwithstanding all this, old Salmon patched up the horse, and at one time he became favourite for the Johannesburg Handicap, and ran nowhere.

Rhodes I saw often on this hallowed ground, Selous too, and Lord Randolph Churchill, Kruger once (I think he visited the Exchange), Leyds was rarely near the place, but I have seen the unholy one, with his silky black hair, creeping about like Satan, and bright-eyed Joubert standing nigh. Never, to my knowledge, have I set eyes on Botha, Delarey, or De Wet, except in London, but that does not apply to sullen Cronje, whom I met at Potchefstroom years before he discovered St. Helena.

A picturesque and familiar figure was tall Schultze, garbed in a blue serge knickerbocker suit, red tie, and sombrero hat. The “Doctor,” so called, was never seen without his dog, “Nigger,” and although exceedingly reserved in manner, there was no more popular individual

than the Bremen gentleman in Johannesburg. Mr. Schultze was connected in business with the Ecksteins; before he joined that firm he had been in Rhodesia, where Lobengula formed such a friendship for the kind-hearted traveller, that when he determined to return south, Schultze was, as a token of the royal favour, escorted to the drift by an impi of the black king's body-guard. And those who remember the stirring days of which I write, will never forget that pathetic figure with the black hair, bullet head, deep blue eyes and scarlet face, who, for years, always in a drunken state, haunted the outside of the corner canteen near the Exchange and recounted—while going through an imaginary bayonet drill—from morning to night, his experiences as a red-coat on Majuba Hill. "Fire low, my lads," he would say, putting himself in an attitude of defence, "Fire low—there's the Boers; fire low, my lads, and hit 'em in the belly." When the last Transvaal war broke out the Blue-nosed Robber, as we used to call him, immediately joined the British, became an excellent soldier, distinguished for his reckless bravery, and with his ever "Fire low, my lads, hit 'em in the belly," on his lips, gave his wasted life to England.

There had been a surfeit of town talk, whispers, and mysterious paragraphs in the different newspapers of Johannesburg and Kimberley anent a new company, the shares of which were about to be issued to the general public. The mine, it was hinted, was expected to turn out the richest gold-blessed spot that South Africa had up to then produced. In fact it was openly stated by Messrs. Stroyan and Barnato that the Eagle would create a great sensation.

Let me say at once that in this respect these gentlemen displayed a surprising amount of veracity. It did create a great sensation, and since that floatation no company promoter has had the temerity to issue scrip in green and gold, alliterative colours which preached a lecture, green for the mugs, and the mugs' gold for the promoters. In the window of an office in Johannesburg could have been seen

proudly exhibited in those wondrous times of long ago a bulky piece of quartz, fabulously specked with gold. A note in front of this magnificent specimen of wealth announced the all-important news that it had been unearthed on the Eagle property. All day long small groups of people stood in front of the magic window, gazing at the glittering reef, and speculating as to what price the shares would soar.

One blessed day—a bird-like day—early in the morning—for, you know, you've got to be up early in the morning if you want to catch a worm or two—somebody came a-knocking at my door, and when I opened it there stood near the threshold the astute Mr. Barney Barnato with a cape cart, to which was attached a spanking pair of horses fully equipped for a journey. Barney said to me, "Hurry up, I've called for you; come and see for yourself."

"See what?" I queried.

"I told you about it yesterday; the Eagle Mine's going to be tested, there's going to be a blow up," he replied, as if referring to a Christmas dinner after a Yom Kippur fast.

"A blow up?"

"It's an explosion, that's what it is; to get some reef."

A beautiful morn heralded a glorious day, as the horses sped on their way to the Eagle Mine, which was about six miles distant from Johannesburg, but really should have been much farther—somewhere on the other side of the Styx. Barnato chatted volubly the whole time about its exceeding riches, and as we came in view of the verdant valley of enchantment, a really pretty vale, he waved his broad hand towards it, and said, "Look at that spot there? Well, you mark me, years after I am dead the name of Barnato will be principally associated with the Eagle Gold Mining Company." He was right; it is. Oh, if I could at that moment have seen as through a crystal the meeting in the Pillar Hall at Cannon Street Hotel in 1896, called by the Barnato Bank shareholders, and heard B. B. declare, as he did then: "I tell you this, that the name of the

Barnato Bank will not die out whilst the name of Barnato Brothers lives."

But it only took nine months before the solemn promise publicly given, had been disregarded as completely as if it had never been made. Yet to-day I do believe—and so the story runs—that Barnato himself was at first deceived, but being once in the meshes had not the slightest scruple in getting out of them in the most profitable way he could.

Well, we arrived at the mine, where there was a crowd of people present—who in the near future wished they'd been further—and soon an explosion took place which financially gave me a black eye, and figuratively "went over" my pockets. Somebody said that Scotia expects every man to sample the goods, so I picked up a bit of quartz, which was gold-laden like the piece of ground displayed in Johannesburg, and which a prospector said reminded him of Barberton.

There was, as might have been expected, a great rush to get on the good thing (and in due course a greater rush to get out of it), the more so when it was darkly hinted that Henderson, the secretary of the company, had whispered to a gossiping crony something about crushing the *quartz* out of the gold, and of special machines producing "so many ounces of quartz to the ton of gold"—it really all looked like Ormonde in a selling race at 6 st. 4 lb., and so I backed Ormonde.

Never shall I forget the eager crowds that gaped in front of Stroyan's window at the miraculous piece of reef from Goldland, the while John, whose honest jolly red face beamed bright as a new wedding-ring, sat inside his sanctum, bountifully signing scrip and receiving blissful visitors, cheerful cheques, and grateful thanks, with broad Scotch smiles and a Highland hospitality—not carnal, of course—which passeth understanding. Outside the interested spectators sighed and gaped at visions of wealth, and I never bring to memory these waiting hopeful crowds without being reminded of the question the expectant Nuns of Brabant put to Dumouriez, who in 1792 commanded the invading

French Republican troops, whose reputation as licentious and fiery lovers had preceded them. "*Quand*," questioned the yearning nuns, "*est-ce que nous serons violées ?*"

The only inhabitants of the Rand who were wise enough not to invest in Eagle shares were the niggers. They gazed at the magic window, grinned at the goods, and clicked their tongues; they had the same disinclination towards purchasing shares as to being hanged. "Hang black man, no good—he not like it—good for white man—he like it—he used to it."

The Eagle was of a distinctly Caledonian species; one of the promoters was a Scotchman, the secretary of the company was a Scotchman, and the manager of the mine was a Scotchman—good old Scotch, prime old bird, Eagles are verra cheap the day.

When the investors were "in the wagon," and it was discovered that the area from which the samples came possessed certain erratic geographical contradictions, and showed few, if any, auriferous riches or golden reefs, there was a great hubbub amongst the "nuns and fantailed pigeons" who had charmed the Rand promoters. Mr. Francis Joseph Dormer, with singular courage, then came forward as the shareholders' gladiator, looking as valiant as if he were about to storm the Redan after it had been evacuated. An indignation meeting was called, where some terrible things were said and threats uttered, and an investigation committee formed which waited on Mr. John Stroyan. Honest John, displaying immense cordiality and cheerfulness, received the committee with open arms, and spent some time delivering golden maxims—nothing else—and listening to their grievances. He averred, in a voice of science, that he would be only too glad to do his best to explain the vagaries of the Mine, but unfortunately urgent business called him to England, and he went home—as is the way of an eagle—to study the elucidation of the problem, which has not, up to date, matured.

The capital of the Eagle Company, I should mention, was originally meant to be £175,000, which, will you credit it,



was increased later to £350,000, so golden was its magic reef, and so potent the glamour of Mr. Barnato's name.

I must explain that it was quite the fashion for some Johannesburg financiers, at this early period, to sell shares of their companies before they were issued<sup>1</sup>, and to keep on, at their own sweet will, supplying all demands by increasing the capital. The floating gentry were, I may as well tell you, quite immune from any laws in England, as they took care that the companies were registered in the Transvaal. A London syndicate took 40,000 shares of this rotten Eagle proposition at 16s. 8d., on the basis of the capital being £175,000. Such methods of suddenly increasing the capital of a company, without any apparent reason, did not appeal to the gentlemen who formed the London syndicate, and to satisfy their just indignation—the shareholders were represented by good old Paxton, and the Barnatos by the late lamented Dan Marks—Barnato gave them an option on 10,000 Primrose shares at 17s. 6d.

Of course, every South African knows how this Eagle, which had goosed everybody, moulted and died a dirty, shameless bird. Let it be said that after the explosion, no gold was found on the fine domains of the Eagle Company, except a little piece of the precious metal which perhaps fell out of Couper's hollow tooth when he fought Bendoff on that hallowed ground. In conclusion, I sorrowfully remember that when the shares had fallen to *threepence* each, I held 8,000, which had cost me £6,000, to which little event there hangs a tale, which I hope to tell.

It had always been a matter of wonderment to me why the company was christened the "Eagle." It couldn't have been because the eagle is a vulturous variety, a bird of prey, a voracious falcon; it couldn't again have been because the buzzard came from North Britain, as no golden

<sup>1</sup> An early copy of the Johannesburg *Standard* contained the following paragraph, headed "Share Jobbery": "Mr. H. Mitchell, sharebroker, Kimberley, draws attention to indiscriminate selling of vendors' shares in companies not yet floated or in course of floating. There is no doubt that the practice has a very prejudicial effect on the prospects of such companies. It seems a sign of want of confidence on the part of vendors themselves. It is rumoured that in some companies shares have been offered in Kimberley at half the price subscribed."

eagle of Scotch descent or lineage was ever known except the specimen that was found on Booyesen's Farm, and which must have escaped from one of Boney's standards at the Battle of Waterloo. Once, in a moment of inspiration, some time after the gilded bird's burial, I thought it might have been called after deaf William Adler—adler being German for eagle—who had been a director of the Golden Legend.

"Adler," I said to William the Silent, fixing my dreamy eye on his thin face, "Adler, whenever I look at you, I think of something I shall ever remember. It's in my heart," I added, putting my hand in my trouser pocket. Sweet Willie, no doubt thinking I was about to part with conscience money, started, pricked up his left ear, four fingers guarding it, and anxiously enquired, "What is it?"

"Nothing much, except that you remind me of the Eagle Mine."

"My dear fellow," replied Deaf Dicky quickly, letting his glasses tumble off his proboscis, "if you can't look at me without thinking of that, I wish you wouldn't look at me at all."

"But, Adler, I do want to know something about that mine."

A pause.

"Can you hear what I say?"

"No," said Deaf Dicky.

I am irresistibly reminded of a dinner party which Barnato gave to some chorus ladies at the Savoy in 1897. A prominent journalist, who is well known to-day by reason of his caustic wit and versatility, made a speech, and, amongst other sweet things, he said, "We have such a galaxy of beauty present that they remind me of Barnato stock, once you have got them you've got to keep them." There was great indignation expressed; the girls blushed, the actors sniggered, the waiters inflated their cheeks to restrain unholy mirth, and the parson's nose of a dainty chicken went down Barney's throat the wrong way.

When I repeat that this same Eagle "mine," the capital

of which had been increased to £350,000, was in 1891 amalgamated—the purchase consideration being £16,500 in *shares*—with the National Gold Mining Company, one of Barnato's ventures also destined to make sordid financial history, and that the two were refloated under the title of the Unified Main Reef; reconstructed as the New Unified Main Reef in 1893, and again in 1895—one will be inclined to confess there was something rotten in the State of Denmark.

The five principal fine arts are, I believe, literature, music, painting, sculpture—and gambling; the lesser ones are acting, dancing, eloquence—and company promoting, therefore it can at once be said that Johannesburg was the most artful city in the world.

Mr. Carl Hanau, as well as being an important promoter of Johannesburg ventures, was at the same time one of the most popular figures on the fields, his sportsmanlike character, geniality, and charity marking him out as an especial object for the esteem of the public. Carl, always devoted to a game of cards, on a certain evening got into the hands of a select coterie of the "boys," who charged him seven thousand pounds for their entertainment. Mr. Sol Joel and Bob Ferguson, the detective, pressed on him that there was no need to pay, for reasons which were obvious. Ehrlich, as depressing as a joke writer, and who used to do his own washing, was at that time in Hanau's employment as clerk, and nearly went down on bended knees in his exhortation for the withholding of the money—indeed he went so far, when his whimperings ended, as to cable a partner in the firm the horrible news of the heart-rending situation. But Hanau would listen to neither reasons nor entreaties, and without a moment's hesitation wrote a cheque for the amount. In the light of this transaction it is strange to read a few months back that the capricious Carl was on the point of suing Ehrlich for non-completion of his contract to engage Hanau as his manager in Johannesburg. Thus the wheel of fortune spins round.

But a bigger gamble than that was born to interest the town. About the year 1893, just before the morning's  
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business on 'Change commenced, it was easy to see that something was amiss, or that something startling had occurred, judging by the whisperings and grimaces of certain of the regular habitués of the Exchange. It soon leaked out that there had been a stupendous gamble at Joel's house in Doornfontein, and that the amount lost totalled nearly £80,000. The players included Leopold Graham, Chauncey, poor Bertie Mosenthal, Watkin of Barberton, Sol Joel, Jimmy Grewer, Woolfie Joel, Barney Barnato, and others. The greatest loser at the green table was Dr. Magin, who lost over £20,000, which he promptly paid the same morning, for the Doctor was a gentleman to his finger tips.

Some of the distinguished company, however, forgot to part. Leopold Graham was one and that was not surprising. The gallant, gay, and grasping Leopold Graham was no relation, I do assure you, to Claverhouse, for his proper name was Gluckstein, and if he had not carried buckler at Killiecrankie (and he would have had no hesitation in avowing that he did, if you pressed him on the subject), the gentleman had at least figured somewhat in the Hansard Union bother, which interested Londoners some years ago. Nothing but this gamble was talked of for a whole week afterwards in Johannesburg.

It was the custom among the "boys" on the Rand, when they got hard up for money and there were no bonnie birds about, to purchase anything they could get on credit. One day a Dutchman, who lived on a farm near Jo'burg, came into the innocent village with 2,000 sheep for sale. Quickly a leading light of the gentry got an introduction to him and bought the whole flock, giving the unsophisticated Boer as purchase price a bill payable at three months.

On a certain early morning, as a select party of sportsmen wended their way to the race course to witness a trial gallop, there sure enough was the new owner of the sheep, tending his mighty herd with the aid of seven dogs and some Kaffirs.

The Boer carried the promissory note in his pocket for

two months until it got torn and dirty, and then he asked a flat-nosed *Predikant*—a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church—to write to the “sheep buyer” for a fresh bill, which that worthy did, but foolishly enclosed the worn out promissory note, which the Rand dealer stuck to, even forgetting to forward a renewal. Needless to say the Dutchman never received a farthing for his merinos, and the tale became so well known to the sporting circles of Johannesburg, that whenever the purchaser showed himself at the theatre his friends and acquaintances greeted him with cries of “ba-ah, ba-ah.” The sheep realised, I think, 16s. each.

The Boers, indeed, in those days were very simple and homely folk, and thus fell an easy prey to the financiers, sharpers of the Market Square, swindlers, quack doctors and tockers (travelling pedlars) who despoiled their clients right and left. Shady medical men in particular regarded them as their especial prey.

The amount of money made by journeying “physicians” who travelled the countryside, vaccinating (with condensed milk) the Boers for five shillings or more each, and the native servants for half-a-crown, is unbelievable. Sometimes they would make a contract to inoculate a whole tribe of Kaffirs—as was the case with Magato—receiving a drove of fat oxen in exchange for the use of a tin of milk.

In those happy days the Boer still slept in his clothes, and the most simple and hospitable of them had no compunction, failing a spare room, in offering the weary traveller a share of the family bed. In this relation the tale of the horrified cleric, who sought shelter in a Dutch farmer’s house, and awoke to find the Boer and his ample wife snoring beside him in the matrimonial couch, is a South African anecdote which has been often told with much Rabelaisian detail. The doings of the Dopper magistrates, many of whom could neither read nor write, appointed by the Transvaal Government to officiate in the small outlying towns and villages, were, and no wonder, much ridiculed by the Uitlanders in their newspapers, but, as a matter

of fact, as there was hardly any crime amongst these Dutchmen themselves, the kind of justice administered appeared to their simple minds quite satisfying.

On the other hand, the brutal treatment they meted out to the natives was based on the worst traditions of slavery. It was no uncommon thing for Boers to keep Hottentots for years in their service without pay, in the meantime practising the most infamous cruelties on these starving slaves—often castrating them—and unmercifully thrashing the miserable wretches for the most trifling offences. There was one rotund Landrost, smelling much of peppermint, as yellow as saffron, and with a fearful cast in his eye, who always sentenced the Kaffirs brought before him, no matter what the offence, to three months' imprisonment, two pounds fine, or ten lashes—for the simple reason that this was the only sentence His Honour knew how to write. The same magistrate forced the convicted natives to work on his lands, and was in the habit of receiving money from the more prosperous Kaffirs to let them off floggings, a common custom among the Landrosts.

One day a native interpreter, by inadvertence, put four prosecutors in the dock and the four prisoners in the witness box. Although he realised that he had made a mistake, the learned expounder would not correct it for fear of being lashed, but declared that the four innocent, gloomy-looking Kaffirs pleaded guilty, and they each incontinently were sentenced to six months and twenty lashes, the real offenders getting off scot free. Those Boer Beaks thought it no shame to take money in the most open manner from litigants; and to make sure that the judgment should not be reversed on appeal, the briber's attorney would write it out beforehand, and instruct the corrupt stipendiary to copy it in his own handwriting, so that it should look genuine. At one trial in which his Worship had been bribed, the learned magistrate, while hearing the case, pretended he was taking careful notes of the evidence, and when the opposing attorney had finished his pleading, the unworthy judge winked knowingly at the other counsel,

produced the prepared verdict, and read it ; then he cracked his knuckles, as if heaven had illumined him.

“ Landrost, you could not have written that judgment,” exclaimed the defending attorney ; “ you were engaged all the time in taking down the evidence.”

“ You are a great liar, Stephanus,” exclaimed the honourable arbitrator, hurling the copied judgment at his defamer. “ Don’t you tell me I can’t write ; this took me till three o’clock this morning, while you were drinking at the canteen.”

On another occasion, when a prisoner was brought before this legal luminary, charged with forgery, he asserted with immense wisdom, as he rubbed the stiff, blue bristles peeping through his chin, “ It is not the prisoner who should be before the Court, but the fellow who taught him to write.”

“ That is my case,” declared a solicitor, as he ended his speech and handed up a very soiled promissory note to the Court.

“ Then a very dirty case you have,” observed His Honour, giving judgment for the other side, and declaring that “ such pieces of paper are the root of all evil.” It was also considered legitimate for a Boer magistrate to go halves with the doctor, who got a guinea every time he examined a Kaffir sentenced to be lashed ; consequently, the Landrost ordered that all natives who could not pay fines were to be flogged. Never by any chance would Mr. Justice Boer give judgment for an Englishman, who, he declared, were all liars.

I do not know from experience if justice has improved on this in Pretoria as, thank the Lord, I was engaged in no law case during my sojourn in the Transvaal. But from matters that came under my personal observation I may count myself lucky in being neither plaintiff nor defendant. As a fact equity was born very late in the Republic.

In the early days there lived in Pretoria a certain Judge Brand, who administered justice according to his lights which, to say the least, were peculiar—and liverish.

His father, Sir John Brand, President of the Orange Free State, was one of the most enlightened and estimable statesmen that South Africa has produced. The son—eugenics notwithstanding—hardly followed in the footsteps of his distinguished sire, but withal a merry soul, who loved the flowing bowl much better than the judicial bench, and regarded juries as somewhat of a nuisance.

One fine morning, two solicitors of Pretoria, representing plaintiff and defendant, wanted to get an order for their respective clients, and for that purpose sought the erudite Judge in Chambers. Failing to find his Honour in the abode of learning, and knowing something of the erratic Justice's pleasant vices, they proceeded to the Fountain Hotel, and there discovered the luminary enjoying his favourite beverage in the bar parlour. The genial toper—*le plus beau des viveurs*—received his visitors like Falstaff, in merry mood, until they told him that they each wanted an order; then his sunny amiability relapsed into gloomy silence, and he saluted them with whiffs of smoke from his cigar, while the enterprising and eloquent solicitors pressed their claims vigorously.

At last the meditative one, whose principles were to change, blurted out a good live proposition. "I have listened with great attention to your arguments," he said; "stand me a drink and I will talk to you." With alacrity and Pretorian politeness, the two practitioners, seeing contempt of court staring them in the face if they refused such a mandate, complied with the seasonable request, and his honour, quaffing deeply of the golden liquor, all at once exclaimed to his learned hosts, "Now fetch me a sheet of paper and a couple of pens." These useful articles duly appearing, the sagacious judge, with solemnity and dignity took the foolscap, and proceeded to draw a target on its surface. When the sketch was finished, the artistic Brand rose and stuck the pictorial design upon the wall, regarded it admiringly, then handled the pens, and producing a penknife, he improvised darts, finally handing one to each of the gaping solicitors. "There you are," his Honour



said, pointing to the wall, "there's the target—three shots each—the one that gets nearest the bull's eye receives the order." Brand's services were ultimately dispensed with by the Transvaal Government, and he retired to the Orange Free State, where he practised as a lawyer. He was killed, I believe, in the last Boer War, fighting for the *Vierkleur*.

I don't like legal stories, but here's one which shows that even years later, Boer justice was in swaddling clothes. It appears that prior to the trial of the Reformers, after the Jameson Raid, there was some difficulty in finding a Transvaal judge, who in his official position, would be acceptable to the Boers. At length it was decided to appoint a certain Free State luminary of the woolsack, yclept unattractively Gregorowski (there's a sniff of the briny and a ketch about that sneeze, isn't there?) who did his job, like a cobbler, in an efficient and expeditious manner. So it came to pass that on the evening after the Reformers had been sentenced to be hanged, Gregorowski sat in a certain club in Pretoria, prepared to receive the congratulations of all and sundry on his glorious achievement.

Into this sanctum wandered Barney, who at once commenced to make pregnant criticisms on the absurd verdict, and ended by "chipping" his Worshipful Honour in true cockney style. The One and Only Judge stood it for a short time, and then losing his temper, blurted out, "You are no gentleman, Mr. Barnato," to which the gentle Barney retorted, "Maybe, but you're a damn bad judge."

## CHAPTER SIX

John Hays Hammond—An American all the Way—Du Plessis—"Tante Sanne"—Harry Wright—Francis Joseph Dormer—Buffelsdoorn.

IN the year 1892, the American John Hays Hammond, escorted by Messrs. I. V. Clement, O'Connor and Starr, also Yankee quartz prophets, came to South Africa as chief mining expert for Mr. Barnato, at a salary of £8,000 a year.

Hammond was accompanied by his wife and sister, charming American ladies of education and good breeding, truth to tell very different indeed from the majority of the new feminine aristocracy of Johannesburg, who put on so many airs and such a lot of powder. John Hays Hammond was a small, spry Yankee, bright and alert as a sunbeam, with keen grey eyes, and clean-shaven save for an inoffensive moustache; indeed, I should say he was something like myself in the face, if I thought the statement wouldn't amount to libel.

I soon came to know the Expert King, and found him quite a nice man, who had settled in South Africa with a fixed determination to gather sovereigns and keep them, for John Hays Hammond, though a U.S.A. chevalier, of spotless reputation, excellent family, and irreproachable training, was never known to waste anything—not even his golden opinion. Now I come to consider, I do not think the gentleman from Ohio, or Oh-I-don't-owe, was much impressed by my personality or quality, as the following episode proves, which I tell against myself with gusto and amusement. I may mention that Mrs. Cohen at this time, now over thirty years ago, was a very handsome woman; one who knew the secret of dressing herself well and presenting an attractive toilette without the aid of a chemist's shop.

It happened shortly after Mr. Hammond's advent that my wife and I went to the races, and during an interval I left her with the Barnato crowd. When I returned, she told me that she had met Mr. Hammond and considered him quite pleasant and an American "all the way," as he undoubtedly was. "But," she continued, "when I was introduced as Mrs. Louis Cohen, he said, almost in a tone of disparagement, 'Great Lands—sa-ay that don't go—you don't mean to tell me that you are *Loo* Cohen's wife?' " with a great emphasis upon the *Loo* as if I were some monstrosity or a game of cards. She replied: "And why not, pray? You are the husband of Mrs. Hammond, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Gee Wizz through his nose, "but *I am John Hays Hammond.*"

Fancy that! I was froth in comparison.

Later on I completed some business for him, and in return he agreed to give me fifty shares in a company called the Bulawayo Syndicate, in which he was interested. But I couldn't get the promised scrip, and although they were only worth £50 I became nettled at being put off, and began to think he had taken the Barnato complaint, for it was very catching in tone and virulence. So one day, tired of countless excuses, I went into his office, and, finding him alone, said: "Why the devil don't you give me my scrip?" He hummed and hawed, coaxed me like a cat, pursed his mouth, and showed a decided disinclination to fulfil his part of the bargain.

"Were these shares promised?" I enquired.

"Yes."

"Then why don't you give them to me?"

"I ain't got time," was his reply in pure Yankeeese.

"Then," I said, "I'll make time for you." So I closed the office door, sat in front of him, and gave our conversation a ticklish turn "all the way." He handed over those shares.

After that Hammond and I settled into friendliness, though I never had any more business with him; but he

used to come to my house often on a Sunday afternoon and sit talking in my library for hours, and I remember one remark he made which set me wondering at the time, and even more so since his subsequent distinguished diplomatic career.

We were conversing about the American Civil War, and I was chatting about Sherman and Sheridan, Lee and Longstreet, Beauregard and Jackson, when he looked up and said: "Guess you're teaching me something fussin' about that war, for I hardly know anything of it." That was a pretty strange admission for the son of a distinguished West Point officer, himself educated at Yale<sup>1</sup>, whose great-grandfather was the last Major-General of the Colonial Forces, the more so as I was not particularly well up in the military history of the War of Secession. All the same, he was a frequent visitor, and now, Good Evans, when I come to think of it, he might have been after my old woman; I have never thought of that before.

It need hardly be said that Hammond did not stay long with the Barnato firm—six months after his arrival he resigned his post and was appointed mining engineer to Rhodes, at a salary of £12,000 per annum, every penny of which he earned, if you take into consideration the fact that he nearly got hanged through it as an Early Martyr, or, if you like, Reformer.

At the time that J. H. H. dropped upon the Rand, there were many Americans amongst us, some of whom had dwelt in granite halls until their term had expired, though Hammond was a different type altogether from the gentry who formed this smart set; indeed, he was that peculiar product—an American aristocrat. You see it was this way, John Hays Hammond, feeling that he ought to do something for his £12,000 per annum and a percentage, thought—being a native of the Land of Freedom—that he'd take a hand in teaching Kruger how to run his Republic, and, finding Oom Paul recalcitrant, he with Messrs. Leonard,

<sup>1</sup> Hammond also studied for three years at the Royal School of Mines at Freiburg (Saxony).

Rhodes, Phillips and Farrar signed a polite letter to Jameson to come to the succour of Johannesburg, which mischievous note was found on the battlefield after the Dornkop fiasco in a leathern pouch.

Of course, John Hays had a very busy time all through the Raid, and must have looked with pride at the forming of the George Washington Volunteer Corps, the members of which swore to keep their sacred flag stainless and did so mostly with soap. These Transvaal terrors, the mirror of martial men—all Americans—mostly picked 'uns and gum chewers, loudly expressed their unalterable determination to be "in at the death, you bet"—but after the fatuous Raid miscarried, the corps of the fearsome name failed to emulate the deeds of their countrymen at Yorktown, and wisely took to prayer, for on the Sunday following Dr. Jim's surrender, "The George Washington Corps attended a special service. The hymns were warlike, the sermon strong, and pacific." Still, if the George Washington Corps stayed and prayed, "like 'ell," they certainly went one better than the Cornishmen, who, wanting to fight another day, dragged women and children out of the railway carriages and got away as fast as the trains could carry them to Kimberley, where they were presented with bunches of white feathers.

But this has very little to do with Hammond, who by this time—in company with other Reformers—was lodged in Pretoria prison and guarded by the gorgon-eyed jailer Du Plessis, that terrific cousin of Kruger, vividly described as "a ponderous man with a wild beard, a bloodshot eye, and a heavy voice."

Now, although this deadly Du Plessis, who has a strange Harrison Ainsworthian flavour about him, will doubtless go down to posterity as another Simon (the fellow who tortured the poor young Dauphin during the French Revolution), I am inclined to think that the horrible person had hived in his bosom, like the bag o' the bee, a subtle humour of which he was quite insensible. That this is so is obvious, for a few days after the Reformers we

imprisoned, he betook himself to the President and said : " These men are not like us ; they are gentlemen, and cannot stand such hardships."

Oom Paul must have breathed hard at this and regaled his ever-hungry nose with unlimited snuff. As a matter of fact, notwithstanding his objectionable habits and rough ways, Kruger was by nature a much greater gentleman than many of the so-called Reformers, the majority of whom had neither patriotism, courage, nor independence, unless this trinity of virtues was merged in their predominant characteristics—selfishness and cheap danger-proof notoriety.

When John Hays found himself in prison and was asked if he wanted anything, he said : " Honest political treatment," and a cable was produced from Olney, the United States Secretary of State, to the American Consular Agent, Mannion, which ran thus : " Take instant measures to protect John Hays Hammond and see that he has fair play." On the other hand, Jameson, after his first night of durance vile, on being requested to state if there was anything of which he was in need, replied laconically : " Nothing, thank you, but flea powder." Thus do we see in these historical replies, the spirit of the budding diplomatist and the curative mood of the matured doctor.

Captain Mein, an American in chokey for doing he hardly knew what, neither cared for fair political treatment nor fleas, Boer or British. He never argued, but spent his time in a kind of retrospective and introspective bewilderment, silently smoking and spitting and uttering at regular intervals a formal pronouncement which seemed to give him infinite condolence, " They've Gord darn well got me in here, and they've Gord darn well gotta get me out, see." A companion patriot, on the other hand, shady of renown, who was remarkable for racing and financial disappointments, employed his leisure, which was considerable, in humming politics and lamenting the failure of Jameson. " *Pluck*, sir ! it's *pluck* that's wanted," insisted the gallant sharemonger, who'd never smelt powder, except on a

woman's neck. "You have it," said Leonard, the lawyer, "for you've plucked everybody I know."

The defeat of the Raiders had prevented the formation of an enlightened Government run by, and for, themselves, with Lionel Phillips as President enthroned on the stoep in Pretoria, John Hays Hammond decreed Minister of Mines, Solomon Joel appointed Censor of Morals, Bettington declared Minister of War, and a Selected One raised to the high post of Minister of Justice.

Colonel Bettington—great strategist, unsophisticated stockbroker—sat cross-legged, with a wet crash towel on head and pored over military maps with solemn importance. A well-known townsman became thoroughly irreligious through studying the Bible—and then took to Zola; while another bemused patriot steeped himself in novels and was reading *Les Misérables* when Mark Twain visited the gloomy keep. "Comfort yourself with *Innocents Abroad*," advised Mark on the hustle. "No need," said the other, "they're all here."

While Hammond was in limbo, he, Phillips, Farrar, and Colonel Rhodes were kept apart from the other Reformers, and lodged in a small cottage inside the prison. Farrar, installed housekeeper to the quartette, did the domestic work in a thoroughly capable manner, washing the cups and saucers and sweeping the floor with such fearful élan, zeal, and regularity that it scared Colonel Rhodes, who said that he would always be pleased to give him a splendid character as housemaid if ever he wanted another situation, and he hoped that he would soon get it. But even Farrar's superb qualities as a maid-of-all-work did not prevent Hammond becoming seriously ill, and he was, after much negotiation and finesse, allowed, on a bail bond of twenty thousand pounds, to depart for Cape Town, there to wait, when summoned, his trial in the High Court of the Transvaal. As we know, he was sentenced to death, and subsequently given his liberty on payment of a fine of £25,000, which was to have gone in charities, but I rather think went in armaments. It was agreed on all sides, however, that John

Hays Hammond displayed considerable courage and fortitude during this terrible time, while his noble and virtuous wife set an example of gracious and affectionate womanhood much to be commended. Even the *Standard and Diggers' News*, a pro-Boer organ, said :

“ One respects the probity of the man 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.’ ” That may be so, but a heap of them did an awful skedaddle at Bull Run.

It has often been asked if the four Reformers condemned to death were ever in serious peril of being hanged. I should think at one time that they were in a position of the greatest danger. Here was an ignorant, suspicious, fanatical, autocratic ruler like Kruger, surrounded by such men as the prejudiced, gangrened Judge Gregorowski, “ who was like a dog that had bitten and chewed and guzzled,” the execrable Leyds, a shining villain,<sup>1</sup> and a horde of wily Hollanders feeding the prejudices of the shallow Boers, who were at every opportunity reminded of the Schlaagters Nek affair of 1816, when the British hanged five Boers, and of other horrors likely to inflame their passions and race-hatred.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that it was by a majority of one vote in Kruger's Council that Hammond's life, with those of the other leaders, was spared. What saved the Reformers was Paul Kruger's horror of blood-guiltiness,

<sup>1</sup> “ As the prisoners (the Reformers—after they had received their death sentences in 1896 and were on their way to gaol) slowly approached the Government buildings, Dr. Leyds, accompanied by one friend, walked out until within a few yards of the procession of sentenced men (a great proportion of whom were personally well known to him) and stood there with his hands in his pockets smiling at them as they went past. The action was so remarkable, the expression on the State Secretary's face so unmistakable, that the Dutch guards accompanying the prisoners expressed their disgust. His triumph no doubt was considerable, but the enjoyment must have been short-lived, if the accounts given by other members of the Executive of his behaviour a month later are to be credited. The man who stood in safety, and smiled in the faces of his victims, was the same Dr. Leyds who, within a month, became seriously ill because some fiery and impetuous friend of the prisoners sent him an anonymous letter with a death's head and cross-bones ; who, as a result, obtained from Government a guard over his private house ; and who thereafter proceeded about his duties in Pretoria under armed escort.”—*The Transvaal from Within*.



and perhaps the beneficent influence of that kindly, homely "Tante Sanne"—the name by which Mrs. Kruger was affectionately known in Pretoria—who had always a tear in her eye and a sigh in her simple heart for the overthrown, even though she felt they were the oppressors of her country and the enemies of her spouse.<sup>1</sup>

But there were honourable men amongst the Transvaal justices who were horrified at the wicked sentences. One of the most esteemed was Mr. Morice, a burgher and a distinguished Judge of the Transvaal Court, who as soon as he heard the death penalty pronounced, ran pale and breathless through the streets of Pretoria to withdraw Gregorowski's name, which he had put up at the club. It can be, however, regarded as pretty certain that if unfortunately Cecil John Rhodes had been among the prisoners, nothing would have preserved him. He had coveted the Rand for years in pursuit of his Imperialism, and engineered the Raid from beginning to end. The Boers knew him as their bitter enemy, and remembered with anger that the first time Kruger attended a banquet in Johannesburg, Rhodes had made a speech and described himself as one of the young burghers of the Republic—just as Bonaparte spoke when he was plotting to destroy the Directory.<sup>2</sup>

The Raid led to world political changes, and a great loss of British prestige abroad, which the Boer War did not regild. For be it understood that the English as a race have passed beyond the barbaric state, and are now only the finest fighters in the world when they can believe in the justice of their cause—and the heart of Britain was never in the Boer

<sup>1</sup> After the raid, when the reformers were imprisoned, their ladies begged Mrs. Kruger to use her influence with Oom Paul on their behalf. The good woman said, "Yes, I will do all I can. I am very sorry for you all, although I know that none of you thought of me that night when we heard that Jameson had crossed the border, and we were afraid the President would have to go out and fight, and when they went and caught his old white horse that he had not ridden for eight years. But all the same I am sorry for you all."

<sup>2</sup> It is only fair to mention that "Between 1889 and 90 Rhodes, accompanied by Mr. De Waal, visited the Dopper President in Pretoria, and warned him without beating about the bush that unless he changed his way of governing he would lose the Transvaal. Rhodes' strictures were so trenchant that the interpreter was afraid to translate them literally, but be that as it may, Oom Paul from that date had a perfect dread of the Colossus."

Campaign. It is said that Kruger was autocratic ; well, if he was, he must take his place as the mildest and most credulous despot that ever existed. He has stood on the hilltop in the carnival of storm and sunshine, he has suffered hunger and seen crime and cruelty while the rain swept at his windows, but never warped his gentle though misguided mind. No clot of blood clings to his shabby frockcoat and frayed trousers, no brutalities tarnish the sheen of his quaint top hat, no memories of torture bleached his grizzled locks, no blasphemy pastured on his kindly mouth. No laurelled crown, purple or ermine, it is true, adorned his massive head or ungainly body, and lent a gorgeous dignity to his exalted rank, yet in that sallow-skinned, swollen-faced man of ugly presence, austere aspect, and ambling figure, there dwelt the soul, like glowing iron, of a great patriot and of a herculean hero of many valorous deeds.

John Hays Hammond, unlike many of his countrymen, did not indulge in tall talk and "hustle" (detestable word), but was a simple and, I should think, a kindly chap at heart, who seldom frequented bars—although he was not on the water-cart—or evinced any interest in the affairs of others ; quite a superior man I judged him to be, and I am sure he will agree. For instance, he never took the credit of foreshadowing the value of the deep levels. Hammond said that the merit lay with Rhodes, but that was a bit of complimentary candy, for before the time of his alleged prescience, old Harry Wright had guessed their value, and had formed a small company out of the Heriot and Jumper deep level claims, the shares of which (2,000 in number), being hard up for cash, he sold to me for a mere song, and I in my ignorance disposed of them to Barnato for *threepence each*. Goodness knows what they are worth now.

After leaving South Africa and inscribing his name in the thrilling book of heroes, Hammond came to London, where he put in a year or two on professional work, and then returned to Yankeeland, which is described by capable authorities as God's own country, thus hinting that all

the others are of negligible quality. Once more upon his native heath, he did a mighty lot of reviewing and a little expert work which resulted in some successful distresses; then all of a sudden John Hays jumped into diplomacy, for he was determined at last to know America's history, which, as it hasn't got any, is a simple study. He became President of the League of Republican Clubs, made himself genuinely promising in politics and polite society, and so necessary was his presence in the United States that President Taft hurriedly nominated him as Minister to China, so that he should be far away. But John Hays said he wouldn't go, as he had heard of Chinese labour, and any kind of labour is hateful to experts; therefore he stayed in America. Mr. Hammond is, or has been, a leading member of the Counsel of National Civic Confederation, a highly meritorious organisation wherein the Yankee eagle screeches the American language with undoubted lucidity and patriotism. But the high-water mark of his diplomatic career was reached when his great friend, President Taft—who was for ever wishing him further—sent him as his special representative at the Coronation of King Edward, an honour which he fulfilled with dignity and grace.

Francis Joseph Dormer was born in England and commenced his successful career in South Africa as a school-master. The learned one became editor, I think, of the *Cape Argus*, in Cape Town, and then promoted in the interest of the company who controlled that publication, a newspaper in Johannesburg, called the *Star*, of which he was managing editor. But Mr. Dormer's ambitions towered much above the editorial chair, and being no sleeper, as his name suggests, busied himself much in speculation, promotion and general finance, in all of which he showed extraordinary skill, and proved himself not only a graceful and trenchant writer, a fluent speaker and adroit tactician, but displayed in all his acrobatic financial somersaults an intellect, an ability and an activity keen as mustard.

When the Duke of Clarence passed away in 1892,

the *Star* newspaper published a most offensive attack directed against the dead Prince and Royalty generally. The scurrilous article was called "The Dying Duke," this alliterative title being printed in large type, at the head of a *Star* column which contained satirical reference to the "good young man who died." It was wonderful to behold how the general population, Dutch and English, though living under a Boer Republic, showed on one side their condemnation of the diatribe and on the other their loyalty to the Motherland, and more especially to the English Reigning House. A hostile shouting crowd, fully believing that Dormer had written the article, and knowing he was the managing director, hurried to the front of the *Star* office, made a frenzied demonstration, broke every window of the place with stones, and were with difficulty restrained from doing further violence. On that same evening, Dormer unfortunately visited the Standard Theatre, where some loyal Colonials, at the head of whom was Harry Ellis, commenced to hustle and maul the affrighted scribe of the gifted pen, and it would have gone hard with him had not Stroyan, that Cock of the North, and Pullinger, rescued him from his physical monitors. During the melée, Dormer's black coat and immaculate vest got much disarranged, showing in all its purity and whiteness a well starched dicky; and from that period the black-haired journalist was called "Dicky Dormer," thus, at times, even through washerwomen do we become famous.

Dormer had much to do with the appearance of the Buffelsdoorn Mine, the shares of which went up to £9 10s., and now stand at nix—which is a very good quotation for them.

The manipulation of these shares in London showed the Barnatos' Stock Exchange manœuvres in all their sordid light. When "Buffels" stood at three pounds, Barney mysteriously advised a party of his friends, who were dining with him at the Savoy Hotel, to sell out their holdings. They rushed to do so, and the shares went to £9—result, tinkers' imprecations. Then he gave a strong tip to all and sundry to buy them at that top figure. The gulls

obeyed and they fell ultimately to sixpence—more tinkers' imprecations.

It is necessary to set forth that, in Johannesburg, during the middle of 1889, I was a rich man, and that by the time the first boom had collapsed I was to all intents and purposes poorer than when I landed in the Colony. I had unfortunately, too, gone into joint speculations with the late Woolfie Joel, and the result of these precious joint speculations had cost me about £7,000. On one stock alone, the National, I lost over £4,000, and as my instructions were to buy all that were offered, I one night went down to the North Western Hotel and bid Mr. Harry Samuel £30,000 for his 20,000 shares. I do not know what would have happened to me had Samuel accepted my bid of £30,000 for the National shares; I should probably have found myself in the Johannesburg Carey Street establishment, which, if it is anything like the institution in London, I could well afford to do without. In writing these chronicles, however, I like to be as fair all round as possible, therefore I must record the fact that one morning Woolfie Joel accosted me in Mrs. Hickey's bar, and asked me if it was true that I was badly hit. I told him that I had lost everything, whereupon he said, "Come into the office, and I will lend you £300." Up to then no man had ever lent me any money, and I replied that I would struggle on without it, and I did. As things go, it was kind of him to tender this loan, which might have been a gift as far as he cared. Write I wisely or otherwise, it is an undubitable fact that of all the members of this firm, he was the only one during the whole of my connection with them who ever offered me a helping hand—such as it was.

I was broke to the world, and I did not know how to face it with my increasing family and responsibilities. Yet I was young and of a remarkably buoyant and hopeful disposition, so I followed and fought the storm, not knowing whither it would lead me, and had it not been for my wife I should probably have been shipwrecked. But "in the hum and scum of things, something always, always sings," and I

kept the flag flying—not a white one to be sure, though much bedraggled.

It is no wonder, all things considered, that the last time I met Sir James Siveright, which was at the Queen's Hotel, Leicester Square, he said, "Well, Lou, upon my honour, you are the last man I should ever expected to have not seen rich." But he did not know.

It need hardly be said that the Buffelsdoorn Mine was a mighty profitable speculation to the promoters, but a very dreary and expensive one to the investors. To continue the history of this company, it will be necessary for me to anticipate, and to transfer myself for the moment to London in 1897 or thereabouts. Following the well-known policy of the Barnato firm, when it came to a division of the profits, which were immense, naturally B. Bros. did not want to part, but they reckoned without their host when they attempted their tactics on Mr. David Pullinger, a really sterling and adamant man, who was supported in his just demands by the intellectual Mr. Dormer, that star of the literary firmament, who had a large interest in the amount claimed.

Pullinger and Co. after being fiddled about for a considerable time by the Austin Friars Autocrats, went to law, retaining Sir Edward Clarke as counsel, and everything pointed to a *cause célèbre*, until Sir Edward got an order from the Law Courts to have Barnato Brothers' books impounded, when, hey presto! a change came over the spirit of the scene.

There were hurried counsels of war, and lifeboats were figuratively put out to save the threatened shekels, but the waves were too high, the danger was intense, and amidst many lamentations and tearing of hair the firm had to pay up. On the day that the cheque passed, I met Woolfie Joel in Throgmorton Street, and he murmured, "Come and have a drink; I never had such a morning in my life, I had to part with—I forget if he said £100,000 or £200,000—and I can tell you my hand trembled while I was writing the damn thing."

Regarding Buffelsdoorn, I remember that one morning in Johannesburg, being at the Mining Board Bar, a prospecting friend whom I had known for many years introduced me to some miners, who were engaged in the Buffelsdoorn property, and had just come up to Johannesburg from Klerksdorp. After two or three drinks the men became communicative, and gave such a dismal report of the mine and its prospects—and ample proofs of the truth of their statements—that as the shares stood at £9 in London, I went to some brokers and sold a bear of six hundred at that figure, and later covered them in at £5, thus clearing £2,400 through having a small bass at the Mining Board Bar.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

The Magnate's Farewell and Return—Cecil John Rhodes—St. Barney's Day—Primroses all the Way—Barnato *s'amuse*—Spencer House—A Bouchebender—Sammy and the Ducks—The Johannesburg Hospital—The Battle of Willow Grove—Dr. Hans Sauer—The Reformers in Gaol—Mark Twain—A *Chef of Chefs*.

AFTER Barnato's manipulation of the Eagle and other proceedings connected with the National, Balmoral, Edinburgh, and Gardner companies, Mr. Barney thought that a trip home would do him no harm, so amidst the applause of the few admiring friends who had made a bit, and the murmurs of the many who hadn't, loquacious Barnato, suddenly deaf and dumb, put out to sea.

It is true that before this dual affliction had overtaken the financier, he had with great generosity given in Johannesburg a couple of invitation complimentary banquets to himself, where he was told in sundry speeches, by his guests, how exceedingly clever and generous he had been, and what an ornament he was to politics, finance, and sport, all of which orations were religiously printed in those brilliant newspapers, whose editors were busy sitting on free calls, hatching chickens that never came to hear the nurses cluck, "Open your beaks, birdies."

It was on one of these festive occasions, that a bottle of Johannesburg dated 1875 was found on the table, and that Mr. Barnato delivered the historic remark, "What fools these wine growers make of themselves—Johannesburg was not discovered then."

Notwithstanding these feasts, no sooner was the millionaire's back turned, than a great outcry was made against his character and methods. Dormer was at the head and front of every demonstration and meeting; it was also certain that Cecil John Rhodes, the then Colonial Prime Minister, was pulling the strings, and, for reasons



which I forget, mightily desirous of sapping Barnato's financial and political power. I did what I could in championing the absent man's cause—and cared not whether it was bad or good—attending meetings, denying allegations which I knew to be true, but as I was of little or no importance, my efforts were fruitless, and the tide was running strongly against Rhodes' erstwhile colleague.

While Barnato was in England I corresponded regularly with him, and could glean from his letters that he had a great disinclination to return to South Africa. I wrote urging him to face the music, as only harm could befall him and his firm by staving off the evil day which was bound sooner or later to arrive. After my last letter counselling him to sail as soon as possible, he wrote at length thanking me for my advice, blaming himself for his procrastination, and announcing his determination to leave England at once.

In due course the traveller returned to Johannesburg. He found public opinion, especially on the Stock Exchange, very much irritated, and the polemical Dormer and others doing all they could to compass his undoing, blacken his horizon, and further besmirch his not too savoury name. There can be no doubt that Mr. Barnato was in a fearful state of anxiety, and as misery loves company, never a morning passed that he was not loudly tapping at my chamber door at six o'clock, and, forsooth, I had to tumble out of bed to minister to his mind. Around and about the town he would whirl me, expatiating on his turbulent sorrows, the machinations of his enemies, and the tactics he meant to adopt.

The slump had left me "broke," in fact I was as badly off as when I first arrived in Jo'burg, and these incessant matutinal walks did me no good—either financially or physically. The only panacea Mr. Barnato could think of to wean his woes and cool his fever were innumerable tots of rum and milk. For four or five weeks my early excursions continued, until a triviality, as is often the case in life, quite upset my hero worship and never equable temper.

At that time we were expecting an increase in the family, and as my wife one day fancied a duckling (to be sure she had me), I ran over the town to procure it, and failing to do so asked Barney to let me have one of his—he had a dozen—and my friend without exactly refusing, grumblingly demurred. “Oh, Loo, don’t take my ducks.” As I had had a considerable number of Eagles supplied to me, I rather resented this not quite generous disposition—a man who had been stuffed with 8,000 Eagles, certainly deserved one duck.

A couple of mornings after the duck incident, vividly remembered, I, thinking of my own anxieties and the needs of those who depended on me, took advantage of a break in the conversation to remark, “Look here, Barney, my position at present is this——” He abruptly interrupted and put in sourly, “Oh, stop that, you don’t damn well think I take you out of a morning to talk about *your* business. I want to talk about *mine*.” I replied, “That may be so, but you’ve given me five weeks of yours. I have eight thousand Eagles,” I went on, “which cost me £6,000, now quoted at threepence each.”

“Eagles, Eagles, what’s that? Look at me, I’m a millionaire and the most miserable — on earth. There isn’t a soul,” he continued, “whom I can trust, except you, and you want to cram your paltry business down my throat.”

“That’s all right,” I observed, “but don’t forget that you and your partners have indirectly had my money.”

“You’ve always got an answer,” he retorted, “no matter what I say. I’ll tell you what I’ll do—if you stick to me through this National business, attend all meetings and work outside, I’ll give you 200 Primrose which stand at 17s. 6d. (i.e., £175 the lot) in exchange for your 8,000 Eagles, if I get the better of Rhodes and Dormer.”

As the Eagles would have barely fetched £100 if I had sold them in the market, he was offering me (for what I had paid £6,000) a problematical bonus of £75 contingent on succeeding in getting over his difficulties. Confronted by

the fact that the Dirty Bird shares were worth practically nothing and I was hard pressed, I said, "All right, Barney, that's a bargain."

I worked day and night, week in, week out, and one morning as usual he knocked at my door looking more than ordinarily spick and span, and said, "I'm going down to Doornfontein to see Rhodes—come with me and we can talk on the road."

The financier was full of restless concern, and his eyes were glinting blue flashes as he chewed the end of his cigarettes and talked vehemently of Rhodes's intent to ruin him. As it is some thirty years ago, I can hardly recollect Barnato's exact grievances, although I could furnish some of the details if it were necessary. But I do remember that when I said anything that struck him, or spoke an appropriate phrase, he would dot it down on his cuff.

When we arrived at Doornfontein he walked determinedly, as if with dire intent, in the direction of the Premier's abode, and asked me to wait outside for him. But he was such a long time absent that I got tired of hanging about, so I walked towards the house in time to see Barnato and ruddy Rhodes—in shirt-sleeves and without a hat—come on the verandah. Barney stepped on the side-walk and played nervously with his foot on the stoep, while he spoke to Cecil John, who answered him in syllables, never glancing at his visitor, but gazing over his head with half-closed eyes. It was easy to see that there was no love lost between these two men; Rhodes was talking volubly with hands behind back, which he at times loosened to put angrily into trouser pockets or to thrust one towards his visitor or pass it over his brow pausingly, but he did not look Barney in the face for fear the other should discern his thoughts, of which, by the by, Barnato was in full possession. Seeing me close to him, Barnato took off his glasses and, apparently glad of an excuse to break off the one-sided conversation, exclaimed, "Oh, Rhodes, this is Mr. Cohen, do you know him?" The Colonial Premier said, "From Kimberley, I think," and nodding in an off-hand manner added, "How

do you do? It's a fine morning." Thus the mountain to the molehill.

Knowing that all great men think alike, and feeling that the statesman was not anxious to debate atmospheric questions I agreed with him, at which Mr. Rhodes turned his head upwards and commenced to survey the horizon in contemplative mood, which caused the Sieur Barnato, after a few desultory words of farewell, to wish him good-bye and turn his back. As we increased the distance between ourselves and the house, Barney seemed in merrier mood, as he travelled gaily on mumbling to himself. Suddenly in an elated manner he turned round to me and said triumphantly with a sniff, "I've done the——"

I never spoke to Rhodes again, although I had known him fairly well in Kimberley, but afterwards I saw the Colossus at times taking the morning air in Doornfontein, looking robust and rotund, a large financial swell indeed. Rhodes, who had all the qualities of a ruler of men with the temperament of an academician, was also imbued with solid business aptitude, and though generous to a fault, he wasted nothing. A rare combination to be found seldom in patriots, and Rhodes with all his errors was a full-hearted one. Like Napoleon he had many enemies, few real friends, no men of transcendent talent surrounded him, and Jameson was his Duroc. Faithful in death as in life, the lovable doctor rests near his idol for all eternity. And it is fitting that these two, David and Jonathan, should sleep their long sleep on the hills side by side, though I myself would prefer to be warm in a few yards of good English soil.

Rhodes was a great man, and his renown is not forgotten as the years roll by, although there is no name of which the echo is not faint at last. A paladin of the fighting English, Rhodes came from a breed that only Britain exports, of the same stock as Raleigh, Drake, and a score of others who made our history. He is, and always will be, to South Africa what Clive is to India, Wolfe to Canada, Cook to Australia. Full of faults and vanity he had a potency and

personality that even his enemies recognised. One must take off one's hat to the Rhodes family; they were a fine lot of Englishmen, the kind who are not made in Germany. There is a statue of Rhodes erected in front of the club at Bulawayo. The great statesman is depicted with his left hand behind his back, and his right pointing north.

One day the youngest brother of masterful Cecil, Mr. Arthur Rhodes, who is now alive and farming in the neighbourhood of Bulawayo, was lounging by the corner of the club and looking up mournfully at the statue of his departed relative, when Mr. Blank, a broker in the town, came up to him and said: "Well, Rhodes, it's a great pity you're not sculptured up there on the pedestal where your poor brother is, and that he is not standing down here alive and amongst us to continue his great work."<sup>1</sup>

A couple of days after the visit to Doornfontein I came down on 'Change and noticed small groups of brokers interestedly talking to each other, as they always did when any new sensation had been sprung upon them. I soon learnt that the evening before Barnato and Dormer had met, and after an hour's drinking and polite conversation, the famous financier and the mighty gladiator, figuratively fell into each other's arms, the sun went down on their anger, and they passed the night under the same roof, and so the poor shareholders got none. This day was called St. Barney's Day, and people fasted through it for many a year after, and were very hungry.

After this historical rencontre, Messrs. Barnato and Dormer became as thick as honest men, the morning visits to my house ceased, and I was left to the enjoyment of uninterrupted matrimonial bliss.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Rhodes, the eldest brother of Cecil, was, in the early days of Kimberley, on a gun-running expedition with some other friends, endeavouring to get through a six-pounder brass cannon to one of the Northern Transvaal Native chiefs. While they were sleeping in a hut it was either accidentally, or as some people say intentionally, set on fire and the poor chap was burnt to death. He was a grand man, Herbert Rhodes, standing over six foot one, and a big-hearted, kindly-disposed mortal, loved and respected by everybody who knew him. His invariable expression after every sentence he spoke was, "Don't you know?"

<sup>2</sup> A Rand journal of 1891 under the heading of "Barnato and Dormer One"—comments on passing events as follows: "Yesterday was a day of humiliating revelations. Mr. Dormer, the man who, during Mr. Barnato's absence in Europe

I commenced to ask for the promised Primrose shares in exchange for the Eagles, but my applications were received with ice-cream fervour, which rather upset me, for I resented much the ingratitude which was shown and the contemptible manner in which Barnato shirked his pledge. I stood it for a long time, but one evening I walked over to the Gables, determined to know finally how I was to be treated.

When I entered the dining-room Woolfie Joel was smoking a cigar with his back to the fireplace, Barnato was walking about in shirt-sleeves, Captain Hayley also being present, while John Stroyan was sitting on the sofa neither smoking nor drinking, but making geometrical figures with his fingers. Old Morty was there, Lord Ava, I think, and a few others whom I forget. After I had been in the room some little time, Woolfie Joel, who smoked very expensive Havanas, said to me, "Lou, will you have a good cigar?" and Barney on hearing this, instinctively made a dead stop in his perambulations and blurted out as if he couldn't help it: "Why, Woolfie, you ain't going to give Lou Cohen your *good* cigars, are you?"

Everybody laughed, but what they thought, I didn't know, nor did I care, as I had long been hardened to B. B.'s eccentricities; nevertheless the host received a rejoinder which he did not forget, and which I followed up by observing testily, "Look here, I came this evening to learn whether I'm to get those Primrose shares promised for my £6,000 worth of Eagles."

There was a dead silence, and Honest John rubbed his nose, for the unhappy bird was a forbidden word in the home of its birth; but after a few moments' pause Barnato said: "What's the good of coming here of a night and talking business?" I replied, "Because it is impossible

at the time of the notorious National, Eagle, Balmoral, and Compton and Gardner indignation meeting, called Mr. Barnato all the vilest names his fertile, though diseased, brain could invent, was to be seen acting the part of Mr. Barnato's henchman, jackal, factotum, lick-spittle and hanger-on-in-chief. Ay! money can work wonders. Not only is the National investigation relegated into oblivion, but Mr. Barnato's last fiasco, The Johannesburg Waterworks Company, which far outstrips that of the National, is being aided and abetted by the man who was the prime mover of the attacks made against Mr. Barnato during the latter's absence. Verily, money hath great power!"

to catch you anywhere else, and I want to know once and for all if you intend to keep your promise?"

Barney shuffled about, lit a cigarette by the lamp, burnt his moustache, and replied, "Promise, what do you mean, promise? Primroses! I never promised you nothing of the kind." I said, "That's a lie, you know you did; I worked for nearly two months, and John Stroyan and Woolfie Joel are witnesses. Is that not so, John?"

Honest John, who would not tell a lie or swear for a bawbee, looked down and went on manipulating his fingers, and when I insisted on an answer, he in that bland Scotch accent which chills the heart of a petitioner, said excusingly, "Bar-n-ey doesn't want to par-r-t with his P-r-imroses."

"Perhaps he doesn't," I retorted angrily, "but he shall part with me, and it would do him no harm if he parted with you. Good-night all, that settles the matter," I added, preparing to go, but a voice from the fireplace—it was Woolfie Joel's—observed quietly, "I know that the shares were promised to Cohen. He has earned them, and I'll give them to him to-morrow at the office."

Thus have I read to you a veracious page from the sacred record of *la haute finance*.

Barnato, who could be beneficent enough when in an ostentatious mood or tilting for an advertisement, was, all the same, an awkward subject to "touch." He would make promises galore, a trait that runs in the family, but his memory, otherwise prodigious, became very turgid when the time came for parting. Of course, a man as wealthy as Barney had many charitable requests made on his pocket which it would be really impossible to satisfy, or even to inquire into, so he seldom took notice of written communications. He regarded with a distinct distrust anything in the form of parcels addressed to him since the day he received an old pair of pants and an invigorating note, saying, "As you've had my boots, you may as well take the only garment you have left me. I, too, will shame the world."

On the Lord's day in Johannesburg, Barnato would sometimes sit in great state at the Gables—that is, in his

shirt sleeves, braces hanging down, a cigarette in his mouth, and something to drink on the table. Sunday mornings were his especial days for early ceremonious receptions, business conversations, facetious stories, and general interviews. At these moments of supreme interest, the Great Mogul would relapse into his former self, and the veneer of decorum with which huge riches and a few cultured acquaintances had dowered him, disappeared, and he became the same unrefined, irresponsible individual of his early days.

Old habits die slowly, and so it was with Barney, even at Spencer House, London, where, in disordered attire, I have seen him pacing the stately parlour eating a baked potato, followed by an obsequious servant who picked up the pieces of skin as he threw them on the ground. The following sketch by Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who went to "read the millionaire's thoughts," is too good to be missed; it hits Barnato off to a nicety:

"He did once, however, try to concentrate his thoughts so that I could perform an experiment with him. But it was of no avail. It was one morning before breakfast at Spencer House; and round and round that room we went without anything being done. Barney presented a strange figure. He had, as was frequent with him, come down in his pyjamas, over which he had slipped his trousers. The braces were loose and trailed behind him. During his perambulations round the room, one of his slippers came off, and his dragging braces caught hold of things.

" 'Fine exercise before breakfast,' broke in Barney, after the second walk round the table.

" 'Don't talk, Barney,' I said, 'but think.'

" 'I am thinking all the time,' he replied.

" 'How can you think of the object you have selected, if your eyes and thoughts are fixed on me and what I am doing?'

" 'That's just it. How do I know, if I fix my whole thoughts on the thing, you won't "nick" something when my eyes are turned away? And,' he added, 'the silver things belong to Lord Spencer.' "

*Pyjamas  
Trousers  
Slippers*



Poor Barney! His own standard of others was not very high, and his belief in human virtues anything but profound. With him, everyone who came to see him wanted as he euphemistically put it—to “nick” something, money or shares.

I remember that once, at the never-to-be-forgotten Gables, a clerical gentleman, attached to a charitable institution or mission, was ushered into the august one's presence, and politely bidden to sit down. The visitor, having expressed in dulcet tones a decided inclination for a donation, Mr. Barnato sniffed suspiciously and held forth thus: “Mr. Barnato always gives, whether to Jews, Christians, or Catholics; Mr. Barnato always gives, whether to help clergyman, soldiers, fallen women, fallen men, or to asylums for the idiotic, the foolish, or the wise.” After a long rigmarole, he concluded by remarking that he had just given a large sum for the conversion of the Noffkurs (Gaywomen) in Cape Town, at which the reverend gentleman bowed low and said, “it was, no doubt, good bountifulness,” and Mr. Barnato replied that he was about also to endow a Spoofers' club in Kimberley. “But” continued the philanthropic Barney, “I have all the same a great disinclination to contribute to institutions I know nothing about, as I generally discover that half the money I subscribe finds its way into the pockets of officials. My experience of these parties is that they are groosemackers.”

“But, sir,” exclaimed the cleric decidedly, “I am not a groosemacker.”

“If you say so, you may not be that,” agreed Barnato, “but it's my honest opinion you're a bouchebender.”

The clergyman, looking startled, half rose and said with vehemence, “Mr. Barnato, I am *not* a bouchebender.”

“Well,” retorted Barnato, “I am very sorry, sir, but I think you are.”

“I tell you,” replied the other, red with anger, “I am *not*. That's a serious accusation, and I shall never put my foot in your place again. How dare you accuse me of being such a person?”

"I'm sorry," quoth Mr. Barnato blandly, "but can you tell me what a bouchebender is?"

"No, sir, I do not know what a bouchebender is."

"Well, sir, no more do I," replied Mr. Barnato, "but I'll inquire, and let you know when I send you a cheque for your charity?"

"I will never visit here again."

"Yes, you will," exclaimed the M.L.A. And his prophecy was correct, for Barnato sent him a cheque for a small amount, but omitted to sign it, and when the reverend gentleman called to have it rectified, he was told that a bouchebender meant a damn good fellow.

But Barnato on occasions was guilty of such seemingly paltry acts—without doubt meant to be playful—that they got him a bad name amongst those who could not appreciate the fun. For instance, there was a barmaid at the Mining Board bar to whom the financier had promised a pair of gloves. She asked for them, and Barney replied with great cheeriness, "Certainly, miss," and invited her to sit next to him, which the lady did with as much alacrity as if she were going to be throned. In a few minutes Barnato extracted the girl's purse from her pocket, took out half-sovereign, treated himself and a friend, and handed the fair one the change, telling her to buy the gloves. Of course he made it all right, but what a silly joke!

Another time he owed a coolie a few shillings for vegetables supplied to his house, which the Indian found difficulty in collecting; so whenever he saw B.B. in the street he would plaintively accost him.

"Oh, sahib, do pay poor Sammy seven-six—me call often—pay up—Sammy poor man—not rich sahib."

This happened many times, until one day a happy thought was born in Barnato's teeming brain, when the persevering coolie had finished his usual exhortation by exclaiming:

"Rich man want cheat poor Sammy."

"Damn your eyes, do you mean to say I want to rob you?" questioned Barney testily.

"Yes, damn your eyes, me do say you want rob me," replied the coolie placidly.

"Do you know I am Mr. Barnato?" queried Barney.

"Me no say you arn't—pay Sammy seven-six."

Barney quickly turned to the Indian and inquired angrily:

"How much do you say I owe you?"

"Seven-six owe poor Sammy—verra poor."

"All right, you're a great nuisance—here's a half-sovereign—give me *seven-and-six* change, I'm in a hurry."

Sammy did. These and kindred funniosities showed something more than eccentricity.

But Sammy had his revenge, for he stole four of Barnato's fowls, and sold a pair of them back—through another coolie, to one of the servants at the Gables. Barney, walking down the road a few days after the theft, saw Sammy with the stolen birds, which were of an ordinary black breed.

"Hallo," cried B. B., stopping the Indian; "those are my hens."

"No, sar, this fowls belong Sammy."

"Don't you tell me that," exclaimed Barney, "they're exactly like the ones I have at home."

"Dessay, poor Sammy lost lots of birds!"

He cared nothing for what people thought about him, although he was the vainest of mortals. For instance, when Lady de Grey at a Savoy supper once asked him point blank if he had been a clown—which, of course, he hadn't—the millionaire neither admitted nor denied it, but replied, "I can walk on my hands now," and taking off his coat, proceeded to promenade the room head downward in proof of his assertion.

Yet our peculiar friend about this period, at much personal inconvenience to himself and some expenditure, bailed a man—whom he and I had known for many years—out of Marlborough Street police court, where he was charged with an offence, and saw him through his trouble. As regards this episode, I may mention that soon

after arriving at the police court, Barney went into the witness-box to answer the few necessary questions the solicitor desired to put to him.

The magistrate before whom the application was made did not know who Mr. Barnato was. Turning to him somewhat sharply, he said, "What are you?"

"I'm a diamond merchant," replied Barney.

"A householder?"

"Yes."

"Are you good for five hundred pounds?"

"Yes."

"Where do you live?"

"Spencer House, St. James's."

"But that is Lord Spencer's house. Are you his major-domo?"

"Major-domo! I'm my own domo! I pay a bit over £8,000 a year rent for the house, and I've got a bit of freehold in Park Lane, and I——"

Here the solicitor interrupted with: "This is Mr. Barnato!"

"*The* Mr. Barnato," broke in the magistrate; then, with a smile, "I think we can safely take Mr. Barnato's bail for £500." This was the kind of cheap advertisement that Barney gloried in.

In relation to his charities, it may be interesting to narrate how a wing of the Johannesburg hospital came to be built. One day in conversation with a chap whom he had known well in Kimberley, he told how he had the huge structure in Commissioner Street named Barnato Buildings; how he intended to build a house and call it Barnato House; how he had decided to buy an estate and dub it Barnato estate; that some of his companies were to be distinguished by a similar label, etc. The man to whom he was talking said, "You had some claims styled Barnato Mines in Kimberley, also a public bar flourishing under the same appellation."

"Yes," assented Barney, "and I have a Barnato bar called after me here."

'It would do you more good in every way if you had a wing of a hospital named after you.'

"I believe it would," said Barnato, catching at the suggestion, "that's a good idea"; and it was through this conversation that a wing of the Johannesburg hospital, costing several thousand pounds, came to be built. So he gave something while he was alive to a Witwatersrand charity, which is more than can be said of the majority of the Rand magnates, although Bob Stroyan left the same institution £10,000, an example not followed by Sir Donald Currie, who made his millions out of South Africa.

I have seen many boxing matches and prize-fights in my life, but the most savage contest I ever witnessed took place in Johannesburg between two gentlemen, named Muggins Williams and Fred Shaw. Williams and Shaw, it appears, had quarrelled over some triviality in the Barberton district, and Williams, a very nice fellow, who is now frequently to be seen in Throgmorton Street, entered the employment of Bailey. Shaw, a few months afterwards, visited Kimberley, the feud was renewed between them, kind friends rubbed the friction to heating point, and soon a fist fight was arranged between the two rivals, Bailey backing and esquiring Williams at the ring side. The combat, which will be long remembered by those who saw it, took place at Willow Grove, a short distance from Johannesburg, where the men fought under London Prize Ring rules in an orthodox roped arena, surrounded by a pageant of pugilistic sports. Shaw, rather the shorter of the two, was a sturdy, scientific, hard-hitting athlete, and had taken many amateur honours in Australia. I knew nothing of Williams' boxing capacity; I only knew him as a quiet, inoffensive, gentlemanly chap who interfered with nobody, and it is only fair to add that Shaw was of a like temperamental calibre.

Right away from the start Shaw slogged like a veritable pugilist, inflicting fearful damage and repeatedly knocking down his opponent, who each time came up as game as a bantam. The contest, proceeding on its bloody way,

became a horrible affair, and as after all the principals were only fighting to settle some trumpery difference, and Williams' face was battered and bruised in a terrible manner, it seemed shocking and unfair to send a game man up to receive further useless punishment, which promised—and did not belie—permanent disfigurement. To me and to the majority of the sightseers round the ring it was a gruesome spectacle, and when I saw the lion-hearted fellow, his nose divided by a terrible gash, with the bone broken and protruding, upper lip cut as if with a saw, and his face smashed almost out of recognition, being encouraged by his seconds as he sat bleeding in his corner, to continue the fray, I could not stand it any longer. I jumped into the ring and declared that many of the spectators present were of opinion that things had gone far enough, and that the contest ought to be stopped.

Bailey, with no glad eye, but with wonderful courage and remarkable fleetness, ran over to where I stood, and with much aggressiveness threatened me with a thick ear unless I left the magic circle, which I had not the slightest intention of doing at his behest. If he had struck me I should not have licked his boots, as Benny Lazarus had done on a previous occasion in Pretoria ; besides, I was not alone, for some of the people outside the ring—those who were free of gall, grog and bad grammar—would not have stood idly by.

At all events I did not move, but as despite the interruption, the men went at it hammer and tongs, I ultimately got under the ropes.

The succeeding rounds pictured a sickening spectacle, as Williams—to all intents and purposes a hopelessly beaten and bleeding specimen of a human being—battled bravely with his opponent, who was practically unhurt. Suddenly all was changed : Williams, desperately boring in, caught the other man a thundering blow on his left ear, and Shaw fell headlong to the ground, and the fight was over.

While the beaten warrior lay insensible under the golden sky, Williams was helped to a neighbouring hostelry, and

the last thing I saw was a gory phantom lying helpless in a chair, being tended and pulled about by a couple of doctors. Certainly it was a game, plucky and determined fight, but if that kind of thing be sport or honour, I never want to look upon its like again. Shaw wrote me as follows from London in 1908: "Dear Cohen, . . . I think in the book I am writing, I shall personally allude to you for the plucky stand you made in the ring against Bailey, and his brutal tactics."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Hans Sauer, an Africander to his heelings and his feelings, was a jovial-visaged medical man who would, at a price, cure you of anything bar poverty. His diagnosis, apart perhaps from mines, was always correct to a tick; if you had pneumonia or measles you bet you would die of pneumonia or measles and there'd be no bones about it. He was one of a shoal of medicos flying around, for although there were no postmen in Johannesburg to deliver the mails, there were many doctors who made fine things by delivering—but I am wandering somewhat from the worthy Hans Sauer.

The physician himself comes from a highly-respectable and talented family who resided in Aliwal North, and his brother-in-law was the late Mr. Caldecott, a kindly gentleman whose name and family got unhappily mixed up in Von Veltheim's trial on the Rand for shooting Woolfie Joel. His brother, J. W. Sauer, was a Cabinet Minister when Rhodes was Premier. This was in the days when the Cape Parliament boasted such men as Merriman, Jan Hofmeyr,

<sup>1</sup> In Shaw's book, the *Science of Self Defence* one reads: "Shaw once more signified his disinclination to indulge in a public fight, and Abe Bailey, who measured six feet and was, next to Williams, regarded as probably the best amateur in Johannesburg, thereupon stated that if he were in Williams' place he should come round and thrash Shaw himself. Upon which Shaw invited him to consider himself in Williams' place and further, asked him to proceed with the thrashing. But Bailey's interest did not appear sufficiently keen to permit him to do this and he beat a hasty retreat." That Mr. Bailey "beat a hasty retreat" I can well understand, but that he was the best amateur boxer in Johannesburg is paying a poor compliment to the other exponents and an undeserved one to the admirable Abe. Mr. Shaw asserts in his book that he was drugged, but I am bound to say I saw no proof of that during the encounter. The Press and the town were full of the combat. *The Star* said, "So ends the greatest fight ever seen on the Rand—leaving the Couper-Bendoff one far in the shade."

Sir Gordon Sprigg, Sir Thomas Scanlen, and J. W. Leonard, all of whom would have done honour to any legislative assembly in the world. Moreover, they had to take the places of crippled Saul Solomon, of tiny frame but gigantic brain, and resolute, commanding Sir John Molteno, two of the finest statesmen South Africa has produced. Dr. Jameson became a general because he wanted to ride on horseback in a picture, where Caton Woodville put him, and Dr. Hans Sauer became a mining engineer by instinct, certainly neither through special experience nor technical education. He found it a much easier job to localise reefs, which, as a rule, produced more mud than gold, than to cure cancer, consumption or diabetes.

At any rate, the gentle Hans proved himself as good a mining expert as Jameson was a commander, and few of his reports were ever sour, though they were signed by a name phonetically like it. *En passant* it should be noted, if not commented on, that many medical gentlemen of Johannesburg have had prosperous and stirring careers. Dr. Mathews years ago was a commanding personality in South African politics. If we had had no Dr. Jim we should have seen no Raid, probably no Boer War, but we have to thank Jameson in a great measure for the acquisition of Rhodesia, which might not have been annexed at all if the clever little doctor had not cured Lobengula of the gout. It was this cure that put to flight the German suitors who were sending cartloads of champagne for the stout savage's consumption, to say nothing of such useful articles as opera hats, gingham and powder puffs. I am rather puzzled as to which particular pedestal I should place Dr. Hans Sauer upon—but the finish is not yet—so I must content myself at present by recording the Irishism that if he had had no being this sketch of him could not have appeared. Thus, in a marked degree, has the gallant medico contributed to literature.

In the early days of Johannesburg, Hans represented in that mining centre the firm of Caldecott, Rhodes, and Rudd, and when he left this triumvirate he proceeded North, where he got into touch with the bountiful Bailey, and



became in Rhodesia to that ruddy-faced genius what Sir Aubrey Wools Sampson is to the same financier in Johannesburg. So Abraham at one time boasted a doctor north and a soldier south, which to a company promoter is really very useful, being thus able at his own sweet will either to kill or cure.

It must be mentioned also that Dr. Hans Sauer accompanied Messrs. Rhodes and Colenbrander into the heart of the Matoppos—called by Africa's strong man the "View of the World"—during the second Matabele War to interview the combative indunas. General Carrington had offered Rhodes an armed escort, but the Colossus, although he knew the meeting-place was surrounded by the Matabele warriors in great numbers, refused it, and even went unarmed. Rhodes's courage and tact had their proper reward, for after listening to the Great White Chief, the principal indunas came forward, and in token of peace, threw their spears at his feet.

It was on this occasion that Rhodes remarked to Dr. Sauer, "It is such scenes at this that make life really worth living"—and, strange to say, it was almost on his grave that he uttered these sympathetic words. It must not be forgotten that friend Hans has made history as well as pills, and although I confess I would rather digest a ton of his history than an ounce of his pills, it nevertheless behoves me, in that spirit of fair play for which I am remarkable, not to omit to mention that heedful Hans was one of the gallant sixty-four "patriots"—mostly descended from Irish chieftains, Sea Kings, or Yiddisher Princes—who, as reformers, were marched mercilessly off to gaol, and suffered martyrdom in the Pretoria prison.

Oh! that jail was full of heroes jumping about like frogs in the wet, for was not Solomon Barnato Joel a hero too, a prisoner in those dreary dungeons, and if he never shed blood for England, he did tears. Is it any wonder then when Mark Twain came to the Rand, he made a bee-line for Pretoria gaol, and condoled with the martyrs in the House of Bondage.

Twain looked round with silent admiration and bowed frequently towards the different martyrs, some of whom were playing hopscotch, marbles, bowls (as did Drake), or scratching their heads like Colonel Bettington.

"Guess, Colonel, this seems a lively place—killing time, eh?"

"Yes," replied Bettington, airily, fixing his monocle. "I'm a soldier—must kill something."

"You tickle me to death, cully," observed Twain. "You've all the bigbugs here, haven't you?"

"Yes, they were in my cell last night," repined the Colonel, rubbing his back and moving shoulders. "There are two hundred million here," he exclaimed with awe.

"What, bigbugs?" questioned the Yankee uncomfortably.

"Lor', no, *two hundred million pounds sterling*," pointing to the patriots.

"Smells like it," said Twain. A witty man was Mark, when he didn't mean it. "Did the dandies bring the dough from home or do the trick right here?"

"*We* made it all on the Rand," proudly.

"Je-ru-sa-lem! God's own country!" cried twain with emphasis. "Say now, cough up, did you slay any Boers in this stunt?"

"About seven or eight hundred—between me and Bailey," said the famous warrior carelessly.

"Snakes, you fetch me. Who's the guy on the gush, talking to that bald-headed gink over thar?" enquired Mark.

"He's one of the bigbugs, Barnato firm."

"Think of Wallace," said the condoling American, advancing to Solly Joel, "and bear up."

"Why should I bear up—Wallace is not starving for his country," replied the Jolly Soul grumpily; "he's not here, he's not one of *us*."

"Hold your yop. You take me wrong—I mean Wallace of Scotland."

"I thought you meant Wallace of Wallace & Rudd," commented the hero.

With his giant wit the great humorist illumined the prison atmosphere in something like this style, reminding Bailey of Marshal Ney and Charles the First, examples which fairly finished Abraham, who at once sought medical assistance, and as he couldn't possibly get worse, the Reformer instanter put himself in the capable hands of the six imprisoned doctors Messrs. Davies, Mitchell, Sauer, Hillier, Duirs and Brodie, who went over him, and finding nothing dangerous on his sacred person, except *Spes Bona scrip*, dropped him and fled in terror. Being told that John Hays Hammond was an American, Mark Twain at once pounced on him with aerial lightness, exclaiming, "Say, you're an American—one of the boys?"

"I should smile," replied John Hay, frowning as if displeased at doubt.

"What's your trade—your hustle—chum?" enquired Twain.

"Mining expert," pecked John faintly, like a hen moulting.

"Gee-wiz!" ejaculated the author of *Hucklebury Finn*, feeling for his watch.

"And my name is——" added Hammond.

"I know, beat it, say no more," interrupted Mark Twain. "George Washington."

Let me affirm that England knows nothing of her greatest men and women. Says Mrs. Hays Hammond in her Johannesburg book, entitled *A Woman's Part in a Revolution*: "Mrs. ——— 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." Shades of Flora MacDonald and Flavours of Brillat Savarin. It is a moral certainty that a roast duck safely reached the hands of Solly, the Patriot, who offered, with that generosity which

has always distinguished him, half its carcase to fat, hungry Fritz Mosenthal, who, though German to the core, exclaimed ungratefully, "I tank you verra much, but I von't have it and I von't look at it. I'd rader go to the scaffold."

Just an anecdote to liven up the story of Sauer. There lived—and lives—in Johannesburg a chap named Zoccola, a cunning old bird that meditated an attack on all arguers, and who at one time was *chef* at Height's Hotel, then owned by a Mr. Mears, whose ghost now haunts it. Zoccola, a native of Organ-land, speaks a lingo all his own, mostly with his hands, though sometimes with a skewer, and when he first meets you, looks enquiringly, as if asking: "Are you the boiled cod or the pickled pork?"—his soul was in pots and flesh. When angry his eyes seem to gridiron your heart, liver and lights as he exclaims, "*Grand Tête de Veau!* You can be served with an uppercut *à la Brioche*, or a kidney punch *à la Diable*—choose."

Nevertheless, a good cook does more for humanity than generals, statesmen, or even millionaires. The only things that can beat a cook are maggots, and there were some in Jo'burg. One evening, however, the mining doctor and the culinary artist got at loggerheads at the Grand National Hotel. Thereupon the accomplished meat baster suddenly ran amok and stuck a fork in a part of the learned Sauer's anatomy, who uttered such lamentations and lachrymose ditties that the neighbours thought it was a case of arson. The affair created a mild sensation in the town at the time, and people were very sorry for the pronged doctor, who, needless to say, was more sorry than the whole lot put together—for he had suffered the sensation while the public had only enjoyed it.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

An Amateur Cook—Stormy Weather—A Financial Romance—Eckstein's  
—Pugilistica—Burke—Goddard—Jimmy Murphy—Burge—The  
Golden Gehenna—Crime—Humming Times—Ladies' Revolver Club—  
A Fancy Dress Ball.

AT one time in the early days when there was a considerable dearth of vegetables, Jimmy Hepburn, by some lucky chance, bought a splendid cabbage, the like of which had not been seen for many a day in Jo'burg. After the vegetable, under an escort, had been safely conveyed to his abode, a kind of levée was held, many of the neighbours attending to view the rarity. The inspection over, a solemn council was convened from amongst Hepburn's pals, and it was finally settled who should be invited to the dinner-party, which the host had decided should take place outside his domicile that very evening in honour of the green stuff.

Suddenly one of the friends asked a pertinent question—who was to cook the cabbage? Meat they could manage; but cabbages—that was a different thing! Dismay crept over every face till Hepburn suddenly remembered that there lived close by a gay *Boulevardier*, an Adonis of forty who prided himself on his knowledge of the culinary art. So a deputation waited on the distinguished disciple of Francatelli, who got red with indignation when asked if he knew how to cook a cabbage. "Can I, Monsieur Jacques, cook a cabbage?" he burst out. "I, who many a time and oft have charmed the palates of *gourmet* guests with my creations of *Tortue Claire*, *Ris de Veau*, *Pique à la Toulouse*, *Fève de Marais*, or *Croquants au Parmesan*. Can I cook a cabbage? Yes, sir. *Chou navet*, *chou frise*, *pomme de chou*, *chou cavilier*, or *tige de chou*. Or a lump of beef? Glories of Goyer and Gouffe, can I not!"

Finally it was agreed that the eminent amateur *chef*

should have full charge of the "kitchen," and Hepburn departed to buy the beer, etc., for the banquet. It was a merry little party that could have been seen on this auspicious summer evening. There they sat and laughed and chatted and sang, waiting anxiously for the Parisian's artistic effort. Restless Monsieur Jacques was fussing, perspiring, and messing about and around a big iron pot, fully aware of his awful responsibility, also what was expected of him as *chef* and epicure. At last the heaven-born cook proudly exclaimed, "Sports, it's ready, and I'll put it on the table."

The announcement was received with cheers by the gastronomists, to which the stately and happy Jacques bowed acknowledgments as he bent over the saucepan. Its contents did not appear as soon as expected, and one observed with intense concern that the *chef* was having a stupendous struggle with something not apparent. After much wriggling and bending, poor Jacques, sweat upon his brow, pale and leaden-eyed, turned round to the assembled company and murmured, "Boys, it won't come out of the pot!"

The effect was as if the visitors had suddenly been precipitated from Italy to Iceland. Disappointment and distress abounded, as the guests gathered round the iron vessel containing a divine pudding of beef and cabbage. Everybody had a try to extricate Uncle Jacques' imprisoned masterpiece, but it was labour in vain, and at the finish they had to send for a blacksmith, who broke the saucepan. I grieve to relate that the delicacy—*à la Diable*—was so awful that nobody could eat it, which the disgraced and humiliated Jacques attributed to the quality of the cabbage and beef. True, a lost dinner can never be replaced; but at any rate the party dined on beer and bread and cheese, and Hepburn's terrier devoured Uncle Jacques' creation—with what effect on himself I did not hear, but certainly to the famous *chef's* disgust at the terrible and complete shipwreck of his pudding.

Life is like war—high in the morning, low by the night.

As I have explained, in about the year 1892 or 1893 I had lost everything I possessed, which was rather disappointing, considering that during the first three years of my sojourn in Johannesburg I had accumulated a considerable amount of money, notwithstanding expensive habits. It is a fact that calamities always stir me to better endeavours, and my brain clears in the din of battle. Where is the human being who has lived in sunshine all his days? Show him to me, and I shall find a mortal more unhappy than ever I was. No man can enjoy shining times who has not experienced stormy and gloomy weather.

Thus it was that, although I was in a parlous financial state in Jo'burg in the early nineties, my spirits were as blithe as ever, notwithstanding that the aspect of things was thoroughly discouraging. I had no money; worst still, innumerable Stock Exchange bargains were running, which under existing circumstances I could not meet; and the mining shares I owned—mostly Barnato bargains—were valueless. The most tantalizing debt was £2,000 owed on my house to the Consolidated Investment Co., for which I was charged £40 per month interest. The Bank of Africa—where I had an overdraft—sent me a kindly intimation that if I drew any more cheques they would be dishonoured. This notification was a knock-down blow, as it prevented my dealing on 'Change, and as a man's monetary position always leaked out in Johannesburg, I was regarded as suspect in a financial sense, and relegated to the ranks of the "gone unders."

Morning after morning I would wander around the Exchange and watch the bargainings going on, exactly like that melancholy spectacle, which one often sees on an English race course, of a bookmaker who has fizzled out, mournfully blinking at the more successful pencillers who had taken his place, and were busy roaring the odds and their own ethical views.

It may be truly said that I had practically less than nothing, for all my possessions consisted of 8,000 Eagles worth a few pence each, and some seventy-two claims,

extending from the Wulhuter Company to the Simmer and Jack, a distance, I should say, of a mile and a half or so, which were covered with thousands of tons of virgin tailings, deposited there during the early days of the mining industry, long before the cyanide process had been invented. As there was licence-money to be paid on these claims each month, they represented an incumbrance rather than an asset, and I was at my wits' end as to what I should do to keep them alive.

Month after month I got lawyers' letters from directors of the different mines adjacent to my property, and rather than enter into litigation with these potent people, I agreed to surrender a claim here and a couple of claims there—for the law then, I need not tell you, was very corrupt, and coin often bought justice as in an auction mart.

Periodically, too, I would receive a notice from the mining authorities that the licence-money, for no apparent reason, but for a very real one, had been raised from 5s. per claim to £1, and, strange to say, this increase would always synchronise with the advent of dull times. Clearly I was being frozen out by my powerful neighbours, and as I owed on these claims—which I had formed into a small company—£3,000 to Mr. Julius Friedlander, I was obviously in a tight place.

I remember one beautiful morning, when the world was being kissed by the sun, entering the Stock Exchange where everybody was down in the dumps, and seeing Friedlander, who was a very honest and kindly man. He took me on one side and sympathetically whispered, "Cohen, things are so fearful here, I must call up that £3,000." I said to him, "I would pay you with the greatest pleasure, but I have lost all my money, and when I think of your loan I can't sleep of a night."

Friedlander replied in his placid German manner, "I am sorry to hear that, but *now* I shan't be able to sleep."

In my dilemma, I went to Barnato and offered him the whole of the property for £2,000. He listened to what I had to say, and agreed to send Hamilton, the then manager



of the Primrose Mine, to report on the claims. I waited a week, but could get no satisfactory answer from Barney. At last I cornered him and said, "Let me know what you mean to do; do you want the property or not?" He declared in his erratic manner, "It's not worth a damn; it might be useful for my grandmother or grandfather;" meaning, of course, that in the dim future the claims might be of value to his grandchildren. "But," he added, "I'll tell you what; I'll take half for nothing."

Although this was an astounding and outrageous proposal, I thought there was a gleam of prosperity in it, for I figured that with Barnato as a partner, the freezing-out process to which I had been subjected for so many months, would soon cease. At the same time, I knew perfectly well that if the claims attained any considerable value in the near future, that I would more or less have been "dusted down" by Barnato Bros., as it was a standard principle of theirs never to part with anything that fell into Barney's plump hand unless they were compelled to do so in the law courts.

However, beggars cannot be choosers, so I said, "All right, Barney, I will give you half for nothing." Luckily, I could get no agreement from him of any kind or sort, and after some weeks of shuffling the deal fell through.

My goodness! but things were looking particularly awful as, on a later day, I walked into the Stock Exchange; everything had vanished—house, shares, money, credit—and nothing remained but those claims, which were something like a millstone round my neck. I stood there an active, inactive man, wondering whatever in the world was to become of me, but still never losing hope, and grinning a confidence I did not feel. But the Lord has not always been unkind, and this moment was one of the most surprising in my varied life.

Suddenly I heard "Louis Cohen" called, and, going outside the Exchange, I found a clerk, who informed me that Mr. Carl Hanau—whose office was only a few yards away—wanted to see me. I hurried over the road, and in

less than a quarter of an hour I sold the claims to him, and returned with a cheque for £12,000, and a free call on some Rand mines. Thus, as it were, through the magical wave of a financial fairy's wand, came back to me my house, my credit, my banking account, and, not least, Mr. Julius Friedlander's sleep, and fully he deserved it. I believe that Hanau bought these claims for Ecksteins, and that they were afterwards incorporated in the Rand Mines Company, and were worth at one time at least a quarter of a million of money.

It is only fair to add that whatever dealings I might have had in my life with Eckstein's, I have always found them courteous gentlemen, fair-dealing and broad-minded. They did not like me, as I was, unfortunately, "a Barnato man," and fighting for a firm that financially devoured its young. Had I been associated with Eckstein's, I should, with my enthusiastic personality and adroitness, have attained a far better position than that which I ever reached. It is a fact that almost everybody who was ever yoked in business with the firm of Barnato Bros. came to a sad and bitter end, either as suicide, bankrupt, convict, or pariah; a terrible harvest—and so many widows. And the voices of children! On the other hand, those persons who had been connected with Eckstein's are well off, for this firm did not want the sun and earth, and they were people whose words were their bond.

When I sold the claims to Hanau I was given to understand that if any new company were brought out in the near future, I could apply, and would be treated as a favoured client. So it came to pass that when I arrived in England during 1896 I found that the Ferreira Deep Company had been floated by Eckstein's and Barnato's. I saw Lionel Phillips soon after, in his office in Bishopsgate Street, and reminded him of that promise, which he did not remember; and small wonder, considering that I had never seen any of the members of the Eckstein firm in connection with my deal with Hanau. Mr. Phillips welcomed me in a courteous manner, and the next morning I received a broker's note

from the firm, selling me two hundred Ferreira Deep shares at £4, which, as they stood at £8, was liberal enough.

With Barnato's it was quite different. I, who had been a bosom friend of theirs, made the first money for the firm, and ground my life out for it for twenty years, had been promised for work done a well-merited participation in the same new company. After much negotiation and Shylockian protestations, I was presented with a hundred shares at £6, on condition that I passed the profits of fifty of them over to a theatrical lady who was then much in favour. So all I got was the profit on fifty shares—a hundred pounds.

Let me add that Barnato to his dying day never forgot the chance he had missed with my deep levels, and whenever I wanted to ruffle him I would speak of the transaction, and he would blaze with anger. As things turned out, I am glad he did not get them; they wouldn't have made him any happier, and they are much better where they are.

Again, Eckstein's money brought me luck, and in less than six months I had much more than double the money I had lost previously. As a matter of fact, in vulgar parlance, I never "looked back" financially in Johannesburg, and, although the claims were practically given away, I have always considered that the sale of them marked one of the red-letter days of my life.

It was subsequent to this mining transaction, after in fact I had become prosperous, that I entered into a kind of partnership with Mr. Solly Joel, whereby he agreed to tip me the Barnato shares I had to buy or sell. We went halves in the profits, which were considerable, a result not surprising, for it was like being associated with a trainer of horses who "puts you wise" when the gee-gees are on the job or out for an airing. Mr. Joel was not a partner at that period in the firm of Barnato, and our dealing, though perhaps not strictly *de rigueur*, suited me admirably, no less than Solly Joel himself, who received his profits most politely. Our private arrangement lasted quite a long time; in verity until I left Johannesburg for England and after, but this secret dealing, at the finish, proved my undoing. I thought

to get off with my pickings, but I got beat on the plains of Throgmorton Street.

When Jack Burke came to Johannesburg from Australia, the "Irish Lad," as he called himself, was by far the best pugilist that had up to then visited South Africa. Goddard, the Barrier Champion, and Kid McCoy came later. Immediately on his arrival Burke was matched to box Owen Sullivan, who some years afterwards fought Steve O'Donnell at the National Sporting Club, Covent Garden. Burke's principal backer was Joe Lee, the bookmaker, who had known him in Australia, and he was also supported financially by nearly the whole town.

The fight took place at Fillis' Circus, and attracted one of the biggest audiences that ever came together in that building. Just before the contest commenced I was in Burke's dressing-room, and the crowd was making an awful din. "Listen to them," said Jack to me, with a scornful grin upon his face, "they would like to see me killed; wouldn't it amuse them?" The "Combat" didn't last long, as in the second or third round Burke did a remarkable wriggling performance on his head, and the sponge was thrown up. Couper, who had backed the loser, jumped into the ring, crying, "A fake! A fake!" and that's what it really was. The greatest victim was Joe Lee, who took his loss philosophically, and sat in state at the Grand National Hotel, where he received the condolences of many sympathisers, prominent among whom was the defeated Jack Burke, who was loud in expressions of regret at his "ill luck." Even after this fiasco the two boxers met again, and of course Burke won, and then everybody knew, even to the victimised Joe Lee, that both these contests from the first had been planned to work out exactly as they did.

Goddard was a fine pugilist, nice fellow as well, and although a rough-hewn brawny gladiator, was quiet in manner and made many friends, especially among the ladies; I recollect that a good-looking black-haired Scotch woman fell deeply in love with him. I saw the Australian in all his fights in Johannesburg, and backed him; those I

remember best were his contests with Owen Sullivan, and Tut Ryan. He gave poor Owen a dreadful drubbing, and hit him one knock down blow which caused the man positively to bleed black. His combat with Ryan was not so satisfactory—I think it resulted in a draw—and it was easy to see that the men were doing their best not to hurt each other. When I came to England in 1896, the Barrier Champion sent a cable asking me to back him against Frank Slavin. I would have done so, had I not known that his constitution was undermined. Goddard afterwards went to America, where he was shot dead in a saloon squabble.

A good boxer at his weight was little Jimmy Murphy, who hailed from Australia. Without exception I have never seen a man with such ringcraft and natural and acquired science. He fought the Anglo-Boer Holloway twice or oftener, and easily conquered him. It will be remembered that Holloway visited England subsequently, "beat" Jimmie Curran and Jewey Cook at the National Sporting Club, and also distinguished himself by resolutely fighting against the British when the Boer war broke out.

But none of the Johannesburg pugilists such as Glending, Greaves, Garcia, or Barney Malone could hold a candle to Murphy, and when the Cast-Iron Burge, who had a brilliant fistic record, arrived from Australia with his trainer Jack Barnett, the fight which ensued between the pair created considerable interest; it ended in a draw. After that James Murphy, who was an extravagant, reckless young fellow, got into bad company, and the following newspaper paragraph speaks for itself:

"The Murphy-Burge contest, which was down for Saturday night, has ended in a disgraceful fizzle. It is now admitted on both sides that a 'fake' was arranged. Burge writes to the *Times*, freely acknowledging that he consented to a 'fake,' but maintaining that Murphy first approached him and offered to go under for £200. The greatest disgust is manifested locally, and opinion is universal that boxing

shows are now permanently relegated to the past pages of our history."

The recriminations which passed between the two men ended in making them bitter enemies, and I rather unwisely backed Jimmie Murhpy to fight Burge on the race course for £100 a side—London Prize Ring rules. As the meeting was meant to be practically a private exhibition, I was surprised at the number of people present, and as the combat progressed, deeply regretted that I had taken a prominent part in it. In the second round Burge hit Murphy an awful blow, then threw him on his head, and the poor fellow, partly unconscious, screamed like a shot rabbit. But he was a game boy, and fought to a draw.

As a result of this fight I allowed Jimmie Murphy seven pounds a week, on condition that he entered into no more boxing matches without my consent, and agreed to take him home and match him against anybody at his weight in England. But although a decent enough fellow, civil and modest, he was erratic, and when he got his seven pounds they never lasted him longer than the same number of hours.

It was about three weeks before I left Johannesburg, and it was quite decided that he should come along—a newspaper even publishing a cartoon which depicted me carrying the boxer to England—that something happened. One morning Murphy called at the Stock Exchange and asked if I would be willing to let him go to Kimberley to spar at some exhibitions there. I agreed and gave him £25, but the irresponsible little chap at once hurried over to "Tattersall's," lost the lot, and that finished me. Poor Jimmie Murphy's end was a terrible one; it seems he had carelessly wiped his eye on a handkerchief or towel on which there was some virus; the organ ran out in twenty-four hours, and he died.

Hefferman was another Australian, or rather a New Zealander, who came to the Rand and fought the much advertised Lachie Thompson, whom he decidedly vanquished to the great surprise of the fancy; he also beat Kelly, of

Natal, in brilliant fashion. I must say in conclusion that the pugilists hailing from Australia were certainly a superior lot of men. Burge, Sullivan, Ryan, Goddard, Hefferman, and others were inoffensive, efficient athletes, who gave neither the law nor the public any trouble; one cannot say the same about some of the English pugs., and there was one so-called champion from the East End of London who became a terror to Jo'burg, going from card-room to card-room of a night, sweeping the coin from the tables, and defying the gamblers, who went in mortal dread of the scoundrel, until at the finish the police put him over the Border.

It was this same individual who, taking exception to something which Gray Rattray had published about him in the *Star*, went to the office of that paper to interview the sporting scribe, who had a perfect abomination of pugilism in any form or shape. The "champion," who did not know my journalistic friend personally, found that industrious gentleman in the room allotted to him, and immediately enquired in a blustering and threatening tone if he was Rattray. The canny Scotchman with great diplomacy said "No," expressed pleasure at making his distinguished visitor's acquaintance, and obligingly directed the bully to Francis Joseph Dormer's sanctum. Then, as patriotism was an instinct with Gray, who was the last of his race, he sauntered into the brilliant sunshine, whistling "Scots wha ha'e." What happened in the editor's room I forget, but I should think that Mr. Dormer must have had somewhat of a fright, for Johannesburg was up to then quite unused to such professors of the P.R., and the supreme genius of the *Star* was a quiet, mild-mannered personage.

In the year 1895, or thereabouts, Johannesburg was in full swing, and a livelier city than this golden Gehenna South Africa will never see again. The terrible blight cast on the mining industry and on the natives by illicit liquor traffic was in full blossom, and mostly in the hands of "Peruvians" (lowest type of Polish Jews); gold stealers were flourishing at the top of their form; confidence men

found customers in plenty for schlenter gold bricks and amalgam, while illicit recruiting agents of natives made Johannesburg the headquarters of their infamous traffic.

Cash was plentiful, gambling of all kinds was in the very atmosphere, morality was at a low ebb, virtue abashed, and honesty appalled had taken flight. Swindlers and sharpers found their way in ever increasing numbers to the growing city, and some of them became gentlemen of note and notes. Certain of the barmaids, fair but frail, got twenty-five pounds per month and all found, or found it themselves; while governesses, who must be able to teach English, French, music, and Dutch, were offered twenty-four pounds per annum in the Cape Colony. There had been a money scramble in company floating, land speculation, to say nothing of the "sweeps," and many were those who "got a bit"; those who hadn't proceeded to help themselves. Things were buzzing, though the community had just been shocked by the dreadful outrages committed in their midst by the assassin McLoughlin—"One-armed Mac"—and the slaying of Cruickshank, Carney and others. It was during this period that Mr. Abe Bailey headed a deputation asking what measures the Government was proposing to take to safeguard life and property. (Quite so, but the Raid, of course, had not yet taken place.) Considering the general condition of the town, highway and other robberies (apart from those on 'Change) were infrequent. A courageous bandit on one occasion did attempt to waylay a Rand financier, but after a terrific struggle the fellow was lucky enough to escape without losing anything.

The Black Peril curse also wore an ugly aspect, and day after day one heard of the growing audacity of the natives.

A lady, Mrs. Norman, in Pretoria, taking her courage in both hands, had pluckily, in self defence, shot a villainous nigger dead, but that meritorious act did not check the evil. Sir Drummond Dunbar formed a ladies' revolver club, so as to teach the young idea how to shoot, but at the first muster of members the obliging Sir Drummond got his little finger accidentally shot off.



"Oh!" whispered a female of fashion to a Boer official's wife, retailing the incident and trying to put on side, "have you heard the news? Sir Drummond has had his digit shot off."

"*Alamachtig!*" sighed the Boeress, to whom the strange word signified something more serious than a finger, "I do feel so sorry for his poor wife."

This Dutch lady, well known for her probity and kindness, had once, as an indignant matron, hammered a plaster figure of a nude cupid into a girl cupid, and thus artistically had prevented the young god from sowing his wild oats. It is related, too, that she was on a special occasion invited to attend a Jewish ceremony. On asking what it was she was told, "Barmitzvah"—when a boy attains his thirteenth year. "No, no," replied the good-hearted soul, "I'd rather not see it done, it's too cruel."

One of the most shocking cases, well remembered in the town to this day, took place in a house adjoining "The Empire," which was occupied by a married lady named Stephenson. She was sitting in her room when a stalwart native suddenly entered through the window by means of a ladder. For over an hour the poor woman struggled, and if anything could add to the horror of the situation it is that the Empire was crowded with an applauding audience while this unhappy white woman, a few yards away, the sounds of song and laughter ringing in her ears, was fighting for dear life with a murderous nigger. Finding that she could resist no longer, the unfortunate lady threw herself out of the window, broke her back, and in a few days succumbed. The native was caught, and in due course publicly hanged in Pretoria.

The social scale on the Rand was a money weighing machine and nothing more. As is the mode, gatherings of any importance were described in the local newspapers at great length by hungry reporters, to the great delight of the ladies who gave them, and the envy of those who didn't. The newly rich men, some of whom were worth fabulous sums, entirely fabulous, demanded servile flattery

and an atmosphere of adulation. They considered it their right to be told in print that they were bucks from Bond Street, interesting as Romeo, with the genius of Jay Gould and the generosity of Carnegie. Their wives desired to be called fascinating, talented, handsome, even though they were curios and spoke like Mrs. Malaprop. Their dresses were supposed to be taken from models: Aimée Sultane, La Vallière, Montespan, all jolly good busters, and pictured in print down to the last pleat; it was so pleasant for these leaders of fashion to read how beautiful they were in blue charmeuse, how dainty in white tulle with an edging of diamante and pearl, how magnificent in violet silk, cream satin, sulphur yellow or black velvet. Some of them realised too late that they had been great bargains to their husbands, in fact, thrown away, so they proceeded in some cases to mix matters and divide the spoils of beauty.

But the fancy dress balls were *the* things—when they did take place. Then would Mr. Quill-driver enthuse in a full column of descriptive eulogy, each dress being described as fully as the fee received warranted. Something like the following (except the remarks in brackets) would appear in the local newspapers the next morning:

“Mrs. Fanny Ketchup (who has been twice divorced, but being young has a chance of getting off again), looking sweetly innocent as a Madonna, opened the ball with Mr. Sydney Allthere, who stood out alone as Brigham Young. Madame Israel Guggenheimer (a voluptuous Berlinoise) was a majestic Queen of Scots, while Mr. Snitcher Moritz (the well-known tailor of Commissioner Street) presented a perfectly costumed Romeo (*malgré* his bandy legs). Mr. Sammy Marks, a grand Rob Roy indeed, created quite a furore and much discussion when he danced the Sword Dance, in which he was joined by Mrs. Mutchy Peleg, a braw Helen MacGregor. Messrs. Ehrlich, as Mayor of Tickeytown, B. Lazarus as Sam Sly, and H. Solomon as Eloquence were also beyond reproach. Mrs. Amos Ambercrombie Dinglewell (white and coquettish) figured as Aspasia (as at home), Mrs. Rachel Shiestein was rather too dignified

for Dolly Varden (the reporter daren't say portly, although the lady loomed fat as bacon). Mr. Stroyan, war-painted green and gold as the Indian Chief Golden Eagle from the Booyesian Plains, was picturesque in his martial costume, big black feather nodding on his Iroquois head and giving him the appearance of a stag in the midst of a herd. (To impart verisimilitude to the character, Mr. Stroyan in the pride of his valour uttered a most ferocious war-hoop, sounding like 'screep-scrip,' which so impressed the company with the idea that he might be going 'to do it on them' that they fled in some alarm.)"

But these triumphs were as nothing compared with the satisfaction felt by the Home relations of the lovely figurantes and gay gallants, when the illuminating newspapers reached England and Bree Street, Cape Town, or the dull cities of Poland.

"Did you ever! Fancy our 'Tilda as Julietto in Johannesburg—how gran' she must have looked in such great society," exclaimed Mrs. Spriggins, who kept a vegetable and coal bureau in Tottenham Court Road.

"Ah," replied her good man, "she didn't go to the Alhambra for nothing, did she? What a education I gave her! I knew what I was after," he added, winking.

"And so did *she*," retorted Mrs. Spriggins, who was nothing if not Imperialistic. "I persume," the lady added, "when 'Tilda comes 'ome she'll be presented at Court."

"No matter," said Mr. Spriggins, "if she do, I'll bail her out."

Thus the Rand balls pleased the ladies and delighted mankind, from the slopes of Witwatersrand to the plains of Whitechapel.

Yet many twitterers unknown to fashion hovered round the perfumed corners of Johannesburg; the brown libidinous lark with its lively song, a chrome canary, slender-legged and graceful, a full throated red-breasted robin, a white cockatoo with a dancing crest like a picture hat, a peacock much esteemed for pride and feathers, a sweet-voiced nightingale, a parrot of prime plumage that bit me,

speaking like a suffragette and swearing like a saint, a lap-wing, a tender thrush, a peewit, a starling of the skies, a bull-finch with a naughty beak, a grey wagtail, and once I caught a radiant blackbird that lured me with a hobble skirt and its hawfinch habits.

## CHAPTER NINE

Religion—Kruger and the Jews—A Funeral—Matrimony—Mulder's Drift  
—The Boers at Home—The Grab-all Brigade—Kruger's Dream.

RELIGION on the Rand was somewhat at a discount, particularly the Jewish religion, as from the first bigoted Kruger had done his best to throw cold water on the Sacred Faith, and had not accorded it equality with other sects. It is a fact that in the early days of Johannesburg, Oom Paul granted four stands, or plots of ground, to different religious communities for the erection of churches, chapels, etc., but, to the horror of the Rabbi, the Jewish denomination only received two.

This favouritism was rightfully resented by the Witwatersrand Israelites, who immediately sent over a deputation to Kruger to know why they were treated differently from the other sects. The astute old President listened to their complaints and speeches, the while he regaled himself with much snuff as he sucked at his pipe. Then the veld statesman half closed his eyes, lay back in his chair, and did a vast amount of introspective examination, the digest of which was contained in the following concise speech which he solemnly delivered to the delegates: "You people," he said, "believe in only half the Bible, the others believe in the whole of it; when you do the same I will give you the other two stands." There being a smack of Solomon's wisdom about this judgment, and any amount of Boer philosophy, the envoys hurried back to Johannesburg determined to read the New Testament, with the result that there was a big run upon all the Bibles in the town.

But Kruger's autocratic address had a somewhat direful effect upon many of the Hebrews, some of whom instanter changed their names, many neglected the shool and looked

out for a red-hot church, while others renounced religion altogether. One hitherto highly fanatical Jew, who had been particularly successful, was very drastic, and pronounced himself an atheist, because, knowing his own past, he couldn't understand how a just Lord could have prospered him. In the days of his splendour he used to say that he hoped to be buried with his face to the ground, so that everybody could "kiss his foot." It is good to relate, as a moral, and these pages point it, that since the loss of his money he has returned to the ancient faith, and, with his features to the sun, prays like a Dervish for a sack of gold or a bushel of diamonds. Even so the angels won't hear him, and why should they, when most mortals only call on the gods when they are in a tight corner.

Kruger was a diplomat—or considered himself one—and being mindful of Sammy Mark's millions, thought it wise to propitiate those Jews he had so grievously offended, so, after listening to the wise words of Mendelssohn, a pro-Boer journalist, and in return ladling out good advice and pious epigrams, he agreed to open the Park Station Shool, which His Whiskers did in these words, "I open this place in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Such an inauguration did not appeal to orthodox followers of Israel, especially those of foreign birth.

Although the least evangelical of men, I am in a way religious, but do not talk much about religion; I know very little of other people's, not a great deal about my own, and only tell these tales to illustrate the social aspect of the Rand as displayed to me in this Golden Era. Thus it came to pass that a baby who came to us in Johannesburg had the good sense to dodge the troubles of this world by dying and seeking a better one. Born and bred as I was in the Jewish faith, and holding in a manner fast to some of its customs and traditions, although I do not practise them, I wanted the child to be buried in Jewish ground, so, hearing that a Rabbi from the Cape Colony was in the town, I sought him. He loomed a tall, thin, spectacled cleric of mature years, and as I walked up Kerk Street he listened with courtesy and

consideration to my request. At last he said, "Is your wife a Jewess?" to which I replied, "No; a Roman Catholic." "Ah," he observed, wagging his head to and fro and opening his mouth like a cod-fish, "that is serious and alters the question altogether. Now," the reverend gentleman continued, "if *you* had been a Roman Catholic and she had been a Jewess, everything would be in order, but as it is I'm afraid it's impossible." A sincere man; a sin-seer too.

I said, "All right, it's a pity that such is the law—I must get him buried elsewhere," and prepared to go on my road. The learned prelate, looking wiser than Father Vaughan, then put his hand to his mouth as if in deep cogitation, and glancing at me from over his glasses, mumbled, "Well, Mr. Cohen, you see that's the custom, yet if £25—" But I interrupted him angrily, and said, "If this is religion, I want to hear no more of it," and with that I hastened away.

In a few days a cape cart drew up to my house and two Catholic priests in full canonicals—ascetic, earnest young men—took away the confined child and buried it in their cemetery. They asked no questions and never demanded a shilling, but I took care to do the proper thing. So far so well. A week after the funeral I noticed that a Catholic lady began to call on my wife, and one day, on coming home, I found her rather upset, and in answer to my enquiry, she told me that Mrs. B. had informed her that the priests had declared, "that being a Roman Catholic, unless she re-married me in the Roman Catholic chapel, according to the papal Church, we were living in open adultery." I do not think the Romish clerics quite understood the kind of individual they wanted to make a Papist, otherwise they would have let me severely alone, and not indirectly preached to a man who was already converted. As it was, I forbade the priests my house, and so I didn't get married again, for what's the good if you can't get two honeymoons? These little episodes taught me, without a shadow of a doubt, that as one religion is supposed to lead to Heaven and the other to Hades, it was better for me to cut across the fields.

But really and truly the teaching of most religions would lead you to believe that money makes one comfortable, even in hell. Therefore I ceased to wonder that at the Kimberley Synagogue no seat-holder is allowed to enter into occupation without paying his subscription in advance.

Matrimony was prevalent. The favourite honeymooning resorts were Mulder's Drift, the Half-Way House, and Heiderberg. But Mulder's Drift and the Half-Way House for a time lost their godliness through a playful way certain bachelors had of boring holes through the thin walls and thus visually invading the sanctity of the matrimonial chambers. In vain did blushing brides fill up the interstices with their curl papers, the peepholes re-appeared as if by magic. Nor was it pleasant for the newly married couple to learn that their intimate conversation, as at Dean's Hotel, had been overheard and repeated amidst select circles in Johannesburg. "Marie, my only one," piped a happy husband, full of love and ardour. "Toby, my third," answered the bride, who had been a trained nurse and was full of tricks. "Toby the *third*! What do you mean?" echoed the concerned husband. "If I had known this I shouldn't have married you, it would have saved me perhaps a lot of trouble." "No doubt, my dear, but there it is," cooed his matured wife. "You can take it or lump it."

Poor Toby!

Let me, however, draw a veil over these sweet matrimonial felicities, the details of which are only meat for chronic scandal-mongers.

Johannesburg men smoked like Sheffield and drank like Glasgow, and the odour of the barmaids, whose pretty faces were each worth a pocketful of guineas, perfumed the glittering canteens of a city where the sun is made of flaming gold, and the moon of shining silver. It was beggar your neighbour from morning till evening, and then the carouse did not end, for the night bred a crescendo of activity.

Racing had developed all the vile trickeries that John



Bull had forgotten, but which were accepted here as a new gospel and religiously practised; pugilism, at one time almost a genuine sport in the town, was illustrated by a number of "crosses" engineered to deplete the pockets of patrons, who rejoiced in their plucking and thought themselves a Barclay, an Aston, or a William Windham. The theatres and music halls were in full swing; Thespians and Pélagies enjoyed the dancing days and nights, and though good eyes are not uncommon, yet, let a pierreuse have a superfine pair, and all the Rand was after them, even to a pickled herring dealer.

The opening of the Rand mines had brought the Boers nearer to civilisation, progress, jobbery and robbery, than ever had been reached in their history, yet they were a century behind the times in spiritual and material matters, and didn't realise it. Their dour religion, harsh and rigid, suited perhaps to seventeenth century conditions, like their general policy, was hostile to all new light and the march of modernity. No gold was known to exist for certain in the Transvaal until 1854, and so fearsome were they of the magic of the uncanny metal, and the harm it would do their pastoral life if unearthed, that mere mention of the subject was a capital offence. In 1881, inhabitants of the Republic had only the bare necessities of life—in some remote places eggs were the currency—yet their laws at one period forbade the working of gold mines altogether, although the taxes produced practically no revenue.

Startled by the sudden influx of intruders to the Rand, whom they regarded as blasphemous drunken vagrants, many of the Boers hastily sold their land where the gold deposits nested, for what they could get, and treked far away from the strangers—to resume in peace the ancient customs and solitary life of *Onsland* which their grim ancestors had practised before them.

But it was not so with the Boers dwelling in Pretoria or Johannesburg, who had tasted blood for the first time and fell easy victims to the allurements of money and what it brings; soon they became what is called "slim" in

their vernacular, listened eagerly to the Hollanders and Germans, and advanced by leaps and bounds in the science of corruption and plunder. No more shall Kruger, himself bursting with bullion, explain that "my burgher officials are so badly paid that they are right to help themselves to public money." Was the President wrong? Was not a horde of vile Hollanders with execrable Leyds at their head bleeding the country white.<sup>1</sup> The Boers, it must be said, not only laid their hands on whatever coin was within their reach, but even "jumped" the telegraph wires for fencing their farms; whilst favoured burghers were permitted to build dams, pounds and roads out of the State funds, a practice the financiers eagerly followed by using the shareholders' money to oil the newspapers, bribe the Boer officials, and sometimes to defray the cost of complimentary dinners or political meetings.

But the Boers as a body, notwithstanding the proximity of their enlightened mentors, remained steeped in suspicion, ignorance, resentfulness and superstition. Suspicious, because in the past they had been swindled at every turn by the Red-necks, Jews and Afrikander storekeepers, whether they bartered cattle, bought goods or sold wool; ignorant, because they were born so; resentful, for they had been betrayed and conquered; superstitious, it was in their stubborn blood. Kruger epitomised these characteristics and emphasised his hatred of Britain in all his actions; what he preached was Holy Writ.

There is a fort now at Johannesburg, built after but planned before the raid. The structure stands frowningly like a Bastille on the site of a jail, which, being inconveniently situated, Kruger was petitioned in 1891 to have removed to a more suitable spot. His mistrustful reply was that he "did not care about the inconvenience, because some day the town would become troublesome and he would

<sup>1</sup> In Holland, for a long time before the outbreak of the war against Great Britain, the Transvaal was regarded as a place where young Hollanders were to find employment, as young Englishmen find employment in India. They kept flocking in until, on the eve of the annexation of 1877, Sir Bartle Frere said that in the Government there was scarcely a man who was a native or genuine Boer of the Transvaal.

want to convert the jail into a fort and put guns there before that time arrived." Plainly Paul Kruger was asking for it.

The old man's ignorance was colossal. When the Boers minted five thousand Transvaal sovereigns, they were withdrawn from circulation almost as soon as issued, for two reasons. On one side of the coin the ox waggon had been incorrectly depicted with shafts instead of a *desselboom* or pole, while on the reverse side were the mysterious initials "O. S."—the name of the designer. The word "os" being Dutch for "ox," Kruger took it into his head that it was meant as an insulting reflection on his attributes. I knew a man who bought fifty of the confiscated coins for fifty pounds, and cheated the Boer by paying him in Orange Free State notes worth much less. These Transvaal sovereigns are, or were, valued at ten pounds each.

So superstitious were the Boers that they regarded as rank blasphemy the act of the Johannesburgers in shooting into the clouds to attract rain, and accepted as gospel truth a rumour that a wounded cherub with a shattered wing, had been found gasping on the veld, having been struck by one of the bullets or shells which had been fired at the heavens. It having been positively stated that the stricken angel was being carried in a waggon to the saintly sanctum of Oom Paul in Pretoria to get cured, and sent back to its seraphic home, a huge cavalcade of Boers, loaded with Bibles and biltong, rode to Mulder's Drift to adore the cherubic visitor with the broken wing. When, much to their disappointment, the simple souls found that no waggon had arrived there or was expected, they bitterly resented having ridden for seven or eight hours, but could not quite agree whether profane Uitlanders or the gentle heavens had *verneukered* them.

Such were the Children of the Veld, who aspired not only to govern a country passing through the most difficult crisis of its existence, but an immense population of Uitlanders. The Boers wanted, they said, an honest government, and thought they were well on their way to Utopia

when initiated into the first rudiments of Rand finance. For myself, I affirm that speaking generally, I have found the Boers kindly and hospitable people. When I travelled around in the seventies and wandered into remote districts of the Transvaal, it would have been impossible to meet anywhere more benevolent folk than the primitive tillers who greeted me with a simple and unselfish welcome. If a cold or hostile reception fell to my lot, it was accorded by those Dutch whose hospitality had been outraged, their confidence betrayed. To tell the honest truth, whenever I have had the door shut in my face, it has, nine times out of ten, been performed by German or British farmers who often grudged one the time of day, a glass of water, a rest on their stoep.

The ignorance and credulity of the Boers quite suited the charming Mr. Leyds, an intriguer of infinite capacity and conciliatory manners, on whose shoulders must rest for all time the onus of the ocean of blood that was shed in the war. Here was a gentleman who craved for liberty, to fill his own capacious pockets. The skulls from which this callous Dutchman had drawn his wealth must grin at him of nights from their empty orbits and drive him to *schmaps*.

The magnates and smaller fry of the Grab-all Brigade were choking with coin, and having it, these gentlemen of upstart origin sighed for fresh worlds to conquer, and they, too, bold with prosperity, screamed for liberty. I wonder how many of these "patriots" who played at whisk and swabbers, would have prated of liberty if the reef, which they had "pinched," had pinched out. In the Jameson Raid, according to their account, every one of at least a thousand had played a hero's part, like those French courtiers who followed Louis XVIII. to Ghent. They remind me, too, of the tramp who said that he had fought in Egypt. "No doubt," observed a sympathiser, "you remember Tel-el-Kebir?" "Rather," replied the 'ero. "Why, it was me who shot the old bounder."

It is all very well for Sir Percy Fitzpatrick to write a

brilliant book proving what tyrants the Boers were and what heroes—he was one of them—the reformers became. Let me say here, and it is only just to put it on record, that I have lived in South Africa on and off for fifty years, yet I have never been oppressed by the Boers—with many of whom I was closely associated. At first they were sober, honest, religious and simple people, until they were taught how to steal. Certainly if the Boers in Johannesburg blossomed into Artful Dodgers, the magnates got rich by being Fagins, and the Artful Dodgers lost their country.

Really to talk of Boer tyranny and oppression in Johannesburg is absurd and untrue. At the time the Transvaal flag was outraged by a mob, I saw no massacre of the innocents—not a soul was hurt—but later, when the Union Jack was torn down from its mast, the hideous spectacle was seen of a hundred people ruthlessly killed and wounded almost under the eyes of a British governor. Kruger's policy may have been wrong, but, Fitzpatrick of the ponderous ode or no Fitzpatrick, it was nearly as good as the ruling Lord Gladstone has shown.

## CHAPTER TEN

Stock Exchange Methods—Telegrams from London—" Consols "—Bluff  
—Redrup—Windsor Syndicate—B. M. Woollan—Bettelheim—  
Minerva—Rare Ben Lazarus—Nobby Clark—One Good Turn  
Deserves Another—A " Spec "—The Magic Picture.

THOSE who have never been in South Africa can hardly realise the shameful manner in which the British public were despoiled by company promoters, and perhaps some readers of these annals will heartily agree that I have much exaggerated. As a matter of fact, I have done just the contrary, for there are some things I know which I do not tell, as they would not be believed. Promoters in Johannesburg had only to float a dunghill and christen it the " Garden of Gold Company," rig the market, and bribe the Press with " free calls," which cost them nothing, to start not only the British public running after the shares, but even the citizens of Johannesburg, who ought to have known better through being on the spot and acquainted with the characters of some of the " heads."

There was no artifice too mean for these people to practise, no cunning too contemptible for their use, no betrayal too base for their appetite. These chaps were always striking the lyre—except when the instrument was their mining expert—in their mendacious prospectuses, but they never got hit back, as they sheltered themselves behind the Transvaal law, which safeguarded them from any prosecution.

Many financiers waxed fat by off-loading on to the public, at their face value, blocks of share certificates worth nothing. This operation was greatly facilitated by carefully devised " rich " strikes on their magic ground, rumours of amalgamation with a well-known mine, or " nearly completed " arrangements with famous English banking houses. Like spiders in their web, the promoters allured

their prey as they dodged amongst the crowd with blandishments and sly hints.

On occasions bogus cablegrams, instructing the buying of shares, would arrive, purporting to come from Rothschilds; these were shown confidentially on 'Change to gullible people and the important item was bruited about with the desired effect. And as subscriptions flowed in, so was the capital increased. Puffs of course were inserted in the local newspapers, while influential journalists received in exchange further puffs—financial tarts which eventually were found to contain no jam. Brokers, especially those with a Colonial connection, got free calls in exchange for inducing clients to part with their money, and even the manager of the "mine" would pass the good things round.

I do not forget that when a devouring "house" was in full pregnancy with Barnato Consolidated Investment Shares, I, before the precious concern was born, bought three thousand shares from Barney at £2, a thousand of which I purchased for my wife. When they were issued the shares stood at £3 odd, and one morning when I wandered into the Exchange Barnato buttonholed me and said, "Come and have a small bottle."

Now it is an indisputable fact that when the late lamented M.L.A. asked you to have a small bottle, you ought either to prepare yourself to pay for it or look out for Spooks. On this auspicious morning, I encountered Spooks, for Barney said, "See here, I've oversold those shares twice over; your wife don't want that thousand; let me have them back and be content with the two thousand you bought for yourself." By the Lord, if I hadn't agreed to that proposition, I shouldn't have got a single share, as law is an expensive matter, especially with people who give public officials free calls, and you see them doing it—to attempt to get your own from such gentry was like poulticing a wooden leg. So perforce I had to let my wife lose £1,200. I should like to know whether, if these shares had fallen to ten shillings, he would have let me off a single penny? Thus was I always, as it were, squeezed between a pair of nut-crackers,

and compelled to march to the drum tap. I do not think (at least I am sure) that any person was more surprised at the success of the Barnato Consolidated Investment Shares than Barney himself, for when they subsequently rose to over £5 nobody knew better than he that they were intrinsically not worth anything approaching that figure. But Barnato, whatever his faults, was a clever man. When I got orders to deal in these shares, I was instructed by him to call them "Consols," not Barnato Consols, thus making them appear to be, as it were, a near relative of Great Britain's premier stock.

I never met anyone fonder of being in the limelight than Mr. Barnato. Even the quaint eccentricities which he affected were in a measure designed to afford advertisement and comment. He loved to mimic Rhodes, adopting that statesman as a pattern as religiously as the latter modelled his character on that of Napoleon. It is not quite decided yet whether Rhodes imitated Barney in never carrying money about him, or whether Barney took a welcome hint from Rhodes; however, it is certain that they were identical in this respect. B. B. copied Rhodes' cogitative manner, his brusque speech, the gesture he used when talking earnestly, and every little trait he could remember. Because the Colossus, when he appeared before the Parliamentary Committee in England to answer for his share in the Jameson Raid, thought fit to regale himself during his examination with a pewter of stout, Barney judged it his prerogative at the Barnato Bank meeting at Cannon Street to do the same, so he drank diligently from a pewter of the same beverage and flourished the leaden utensil with rhetorical vehemence in the face of his auditors, who believed all he said and suffered considerably.

Mr. Rhodes, as is well known, was a maker of sweet and sour Ossianic phrases and philosophical epigrams; Mr. Barnato, following suit, also uttered pregnant *mots* at times, but it was I who invented them for him, which, no doubt, explains their stupidity.

In the course of my sojourn in Johannesburg I had become



acquainted with Sidney Redrup, quite a good and honest fellow, possessed of but one unforgivable fault—he had no cash! On a certain day he alleged that he had acquired thirty claims, but whether they were north, south, east, or west I have never known to this moment, and to tell the truth I never enquired. He proposed, if I paid the licences, that we should go halves in the claims, and to do him a turn—for I had no genius for company promoting—I agreed, and a few days afterwards, lo and behold, a company was registered called the “Windsor Syndicate,” which Redrup had so christened after his native town. I declined, however, to be a director of the concern, so the Hampshire man nominated my brother John, a merry, liquid-loving fellow of no business capacity, to that distinctive post. In due time about 200 Syndicate shares were delivered to me, as my part of the bargain, which I threw aside, and thought no more of the matter, until one fine morning I was walking through the Exchange, when Sam Levy stopped me and said, “I want to speak to you. I know what’s up,” continued he, winking; “and don’t tell me it isn’t so.”

“But what *is* up?”

“Oh,” replied Sam, “you think I don’t twig. ‘Windsor,’ my boy, ‘Windsor.’ You must let me have a few as a favour,” he added.

Not guessing what on earth he had heard, my natural business instinct prompted me to reply, “My dear Sam, you know I’m not a seller of those shares.” It was a golden law of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange that if you ever wanted to sell anything you had to pretend that you didn’t.

Then Levy rejoined, “You might let me in. I’ll give you £10 each for five,” and after some bargaining I did “let him in,” for I sold him that number for £75, and he was happier than I.

In the afternoon of the same day on coming from lunch I met slovenly Barney Myers, of the firm of Myers Bros., jewellers in Commissioner Street. Barney, whose jolly face shone like a Dutchwoman’s warming-pan, made a direct

bee-line for me, and, putting his fat finger on his red nose, said "Vinsher."

I questioned, "What?"

He replied, "Vinsher, and don't you forget it. I've heard of them, and I want them," and as he wanted them so badly I obliged him with ten for £200. As I turned to depart the greedy man asked for an extra few. My conscience smote me—so I let him have more old brown Windsor.

After that there was quite a run on the Syndicate shares, and it was wonderful to hear what a brilliant future there was in store for Mr. Redrup's property. On a certain afternoon, feeling rather curious about this gold mine, and dazzled no less by the glowing accounts than by the incoming of guineas, I decided to have a peep at the El Dorado, and so, in company with my friend Sidney, started on a tour of inspection like a mining dude, and as I knew nothing of geology, engineering or mining, it may be taken for granted that I was fully competent to qualify as a Rand expert. Which road we took in a cape cart I do not remember, if ever told, but after two or three hours' travelling, the pair of us came to a dreary bit of veld on which a small hole had been dug. Redrup stopped the cart and said enthusiastically, "Here it is; let's get down."

"Is this the 'Windsor'?" I enquired incredulously.

"Yes, he replied, brightly twirling his moustache like an Italian cavalier. "What do you think of it?"

"I don't know; it seems full of metal," I continued, pointing to some discarded salmon, oyster, and sardine tins.

"Oh, never mind that; it's very rich; and look at its position," said he, pointing in the direction of some lonely furrows and latrines which saddened the horizon when they seemed far off, and offended one's nostrils when they were adjacent. "Over yonder," continued rash Redrup, sweeping the air with his hand to mark out the vicinity, "there is the 'Gold Bug' Company; next to it is the 'Golden Morn,' and then the 'Golden Shoe'; also the 'Golden Star,' while at the end the rich 'Monte Christo' lies."

"Does it lie as much as the 'Windsor' does?" I enquired, as we got into the cart to return.

Still the people went on buying the shares; I sold some more—until one day there was a slump in the market and the blue Syndicate certificates were decidedly under a cloud, so much so that they fell to about 10s. sellers, with no buyers for miles off.

Now there dwelt in Jo'burg at this period an eccentric sportsman called Hyme Levy, a boon companion of my brother John, and as these two used to go on the spree together they knew each other's little failings. One day I left the Stock Exchange and was entering "Tommy" Shilling's bar, situate between the "Chains," when I saw Hyme, very drunk and melancholy, leaning against the walls of that curious canteen and holding in his hand a "Windsor" Syndicate share, which he was regarding with a disconsolate expression of extreme disgust and contempt.

"Well, strike me pink," he ejaculated, nodding his curly black head to himself in a reproachful manner, "fifteen quid for this. It ain't by no manner of means the first time I've been diddled by scrip, and strike me pinker if I didn't always know I was a fool; but that I should have been kidded into this blooming bit of blue paper for three fivers licks me. I can stand a lot, a 'oly 'ell of a lot," he went on in abject misery, "but however I got flimflammed into buying anything that was signed by Johnnie Cohen beats me. *Johnnie Cohen!* Hyme, you must have gone balmy."

As there existed no extradition agreement between the Transvaal and England, it followed that the country became the refuge of many levanters who had vexed the law. Some buried themselves in the small dorps and married coloured women, or established wayside stores where they dragged out a solitary existence so near and yet so far from the gold city brimming with life, but ever longing for England. A few, who had paid the penalty of their lapses, and more that hadn't, penetrated into the highly respectable precincts of the Stock Exchange, which

already sheltered transgressors of the diamond, liquor and gold laws, runaways, "Peruvians," a few deserters, and a trio who were wanted but never taken.

Some of these were quite the most honourable folk on 'Change, and two or three became remarkable for their honest endeavours to get back. Of course, there were whispers and nudges, but the exiles were left comparatively unnoticed, except by a vicious and unscrupulous clique of retired I.D.B.'s who had lived for years on the threshold of jail, and thought it an imperative obligation to vent their outraged feelings, and thus set a seal upon assumed integrity by hounding down any man, especially one who attempted to wipe out the past.

Amongst these unfortunates, a Scot named John Nicolson Niel, dwells in my memory. A decent, kindly, laconic, fellow, partial to a wee drappie and his own company, he was the founder in London of the outside stockbroking business of Abbott, Page & Co. ; he had got into a tangle in the City, and to avoid a prosecution, had fled the country. As a member of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, he, liked and trusted, was pulling himself together, determined to make good, living economically, and even remitting money regularly to London to repay some of his poorest creditors, when a blackguardly scoundrel who knew of his trespass commenced to blackmail him.

Niel practically kept the miscreant for many months, but at long last the unhappy man demurred, finding it impossible to satisfy the ever increasing demands of his persecutor, who one morning, in front of a small crowd, denounced the defaulting broker and gave a full account of his flight from London. The fat and disagreeable rabble on 'Change, ever on the watch for a victim, at once grimaced the whites of their eyes, and Niel—feeling that he could not withstand the exposure—hurriedly left Johannesburg. He turned up in Perth, South Australia, and became secretary of the Perth Stock Exchange, but his history was on his heels like fate, and being compelled to resign his post, the broken chap lost heart, tossed up the sponge, sank

lower and lower, and, destined never to have a chance, finished without enough to pay for his coffin.

It is an error to imagine that a single mistake or *faux pas* in man or woman is crime ; if it were, it would not be so easy to fall, and there would be fewer foolish virgins. Every lost soul should have a second chance in life, not crushed at every attempt at redemption by those pitiless ones whose cunning and good luck (by the grace of the devil) had protected them from disaster. The bottom dog that gets on top is of the salt of the earth, and no expiated crime—like misplaced love—is unforgivable.

Sometimes the blackmailers, through the wheels of chance, got hoist with their own petards, and here is a tale, stranger than fiction, which I commend to short story writers. I'll call him O'Flynn because that wasn't his name, but like the celebrated father of that ilk he had wonderful ways wid him. Guilty of a murky exploit, characterised by audacity and genius in England, he had escaped to South Africa with a portion of his booty, settled in Johannesburg, was thriving in the piping times and feeling his way to a triumphant success—when the unexpected eventuated.

During the baby days of the Rand, it was incumbent on those who hadn't paid for a private box to apply personally for their letters at the post office, and thus it often happened that persons of the same name were handed missives not intended for them. Thus it chanced that a second O'Flynn—a perfumed wastrel—became possessed of a letter intended for the O'Flynn who had such a taking way. This letter disclosed to the holder full details of the other O'Flynn's felony, of the efforts of the English police to apprehend him, and the name of his robbed employer. With the instinct of a born blackmailer, O'Flynn the Second lost no time in ferreting out his namesake. When it came to the patter, Mr. O'Flynn the First, a redoubtable rascal, squared his shoulders and met his pursuer with a cool smile of resignation, compared himself to a trapped rat and arranged to meet the rogue next day. He kept the appointment, and after much discussion promised to pay his Nemesis,

under certain conditions, a stipulated lump sum as hush money, and to enable him to leave the country. At the same time he handed over fifty pounds in cash and a travelling ticket for Kimberley, where the blackmailer was to await his victim's arrival, and so give him time, as he explained, to complete a business transaction which would put funds at his command to satisfy his creditor.

"Besides," remarked O'Flynn I, "it is well for you to be out of Johannesburg as you may get on the ran-dan, and talk."

The creature, head and ears in debt, was delighted with the idea of leaving Johannesburg, and a few days later found him paying his first visit to Kimberley and staying at a central hotel, where he pacified his soul and stomach by enjoying the lively living, and his own livelier anticipations. Such a jolly fellow and keen adventurer (who lied equally well in six languages) soon made himself popular amongst the bar-frequenters of the hotel, and especially so with an engaging voyager of open breezy friendliness, who seemed mightily attracted by the rover from the Rand, and became quite a dear old pal.

O'Flynn's trust in human nature consequently suffered a severe slam when one morning, a fortnight after his arrival, a second individual introduced himself, and the two detectives, for such they were, arrested him on the serious charge of being in possession of an unregistered diamond in contravention of the statute, and in a jiffy marched him off to the police station. Upon Mr. O'Flynn's sacred person the searchers found a diamond and a letter addressed to himself which ran something like this: "Parcel to hand. Herewith one stone which you must exchange for the large one you promised. Be careful or you'll spoil the game. Talk and drink less."

It was a poor defence—although a true one—that O'Flynn the blackmailer put up, when he swore that the diamond had reached him, through the ordinary channels of the post, from the Orange Free State, together with the letter in, to him, a strange handwriting, and that the affair was a mystery

from beginning to end. The detectives sneered at what they considered a silly explanation, and the accused went out of the betting. A report in a Kimberley newspaper of the trial was headed, "Sweet Innocence," and O'Flynn went down to the breakwater for five years, convicted of an offence never committed by him, yet the outcome of the greater crime of which he was guilty, and for which he deserved all he got.

After doing his time Mr. O'Flynn II, in the devil of a temper, hurried to Johannesburg, war in his face and hip-pocket, to interview Mr. O'Flynn I, but his journey was wasted as subtle O'Flynn the First, Last, Middle, and All-the-Time, had left the Holy City so glorified, and choke-full of guineas that a romance of respectability had been braided round his name to endure until the last trumpet call.

It will not be forgotten that some years ago a plan of the battle of Trafalgar, drawn in Nelson's own hand, was discovered in an old desk which had belonged to the famous admiral, and that afterwards this unique historical document was bought for some three or four thousand pounds by Mr. Woollan, who at his decease left it to the nation. It is now in the British Museum.

I hardly remember any man with whom I came in contact during my sojourn in Johannesburg of whom I retain more kindly feelings than I do of the late jolly, florid B. M. Woollan, who became Mayor of Tunbridge Wells. When I first arrived on the Rand, he had an office at the corner of the "Chains," in partnership with Bettelheim, who was, before the late Balkan war, at the head of the Turkish police in Constantinople. Mr. Bettelheim, whose *sobriquet* was "Beetles," was quite the dandy of Johannesburg; good looking, a *bon viveur*, a punishing gambler, and withal a fine-hearted, kindly soul, who would rather do a chap a good turn than a bad one.

But that did not prevent the adventurous traveller from becoming a reformer, and after the Raid, to his great disgust, being put in durance vile with the many heroes of that momentous period.

When a certain famous statesman visited Johannesburg he honoured Bettelheim by being his guest. Following true Eastern style, a private dinner in Doornfontein was given to a select coterie, at which the brilliant British orator was the principal attraction. To show how Johannesburg had advanced in epicurean manners, it is said that the illustrious visitor was regaled during the banquet by the sight of a female form divine being brought in under cover on a dish. I do not know what dressings the piquant lady of the devilled legs boasted, but it was rumoured that the bird was distinguished by a few capers and illimitable sauce, to say nothing of eyes dark as blackberries, shining chocolate hair long as a pig-tail, skin as white curds, raspberry lips, a smiling mouth, and heaps of dimples—thus was it that the snowy ice cream blushed.

But I am forgetting Woollan, and let me mention that I tell the following tale to exemplify how easy it was to make money in the old Jo'burg days. During the first two or three years I was in the Golden City I had never done any business for Mr. Woollan except in a haphazard manner, and was surprised one day when he called me out from the Exchange and asked if I would run a new stock for him. The new company, I learnt, had been baptized as Minerva. As Minerva was the Roman goddess who presided over all handicrafts, inventions, arts, and sciences, the classic appellation appealed to my virtuous soul and eager pockets, so I answered, "I would with pleasure, if you made it worth my while"

To be brief, Woollan gave me free call on five thousand shares at seven and sixpence, another free call on a further ten thousand at ten shillings, and left the whole of the business in my hands—all the selling and the buying, and naturally all the brokerage appertaining thereto. As I had been drilled in Barnato's methods, I could hardly understand his liberality; got suspicious of Mrs. Minerva, and thought her a disguised Becky Sharp, so, when I had run the shares up to ten shillings, which happened in about twenty four hours, I let rip my first five thousand shares. In a few



days they were at fifteen shillings, and then, to my regret, I let go the other ten thousand. Steadily they rose like a bird in the skies and eventually touched seventy-two and sixpence—which means that, if I had kept my holding for only a reasonable time, I should have made another forty thousand pounds.

As it was, I cleared over five thousand for myself and made some fifty thousand pounds for Woollan—if you remember, the number five was sacred to the goddess—and I can say this, that in all my life I never dealt for a more open-hearted, unsuspecting, or kinder man. He questioned neither my methods nor transactions, but let me do just as I liked, and erred only on the side of excessive liberality. It was a blow to me when the genial one, in the prime of his life and prosperity, died some four years ago at Tunbridge Wells. I certainly missed making a *coup* in these Minerva shares because of my Barnato experience, whose free calls were given attached to a bit of string, and the scrip, if you got it, was only fit to wrap round fried fish, and that in itself was an insult to the savoury dead that had been caught on some silent shore Wapping way.

No history of Johannesburg would be complete without some slight mention of the courtly Mr. Benjamin Lazarus, remarkable for his ambitions, his splendid past, and apparently brilliant future. Mr. Lazarus—a native of Middlesex Street—came to Kimberley in the late seventies from Australia in the good ship *Lusitania*, and on those historic diamond-fields I at once had the pleasure of becoming intimately acquainted with him. Of course, this is as it should be, for there never was a cobble or a nut that bounced into Kimberley that did not gravitate towards my alley. I do hope that the gay Lochinvar will not say that he never knew me, because that would be the cruelest cut of all, for I am fond of good company, and even of bad.

Mr. Lazarus, like myself, was renowned for his infinite virtues, personality, unrivalled versatility, perfect teeth, and imperfect manners. He could make a book, though

hardly enjoy one; he could rattle the dice with infinite grandeur and profit, was a sultry judge of diamonds, a good judge of men, a bad judge of women, and regarded a horse as mankind's greatest benefactor. From the word go and all the way Bennie was an Oriental cockney.

Nevertheless, after a rough and varied diamondiferous voyage, in the course of which he nearly got seasick, the young mariner, principally through the efforts of a Mr. Elias Jacobs, got upon his legs, and then, ye gods, Pretty Polly couldn't catch him. In the middle 'eighties I met him again in London, surrounded if not exactly by the nobility of England, at least by South African celebrities who had made good in S.A. as bookmakers, second-hand diamond dealers, and gentlemen whose professions were problematical.

I remember that one of his companions was cheery and good-hearted Nobby Clark, with whom, in association with Froomberg, our Heroic Scout had been in partnership in South Africa as bookmakers. This Mr. Clark, a decent enough chap as far as I know, had acquired a horrible habit of using the strongest language without knowing he was doing it. I met him one day at the Café Cavour, and directly he saw me, he exclaimed loudly, "Well, Cohen, upon my — soul I am — pleased to see your — face."

"Hang it, Clark," I rejoined, "don't let everybody hear that fearful language."

"Fearful language?" he replied indignantly. "May the Lord — me — blind if ever I said a — word in my — life."

Again I met him in Throgmorton Street, and was walking towards Godwin's to stand the sport a drink, when a newsboy ran up and, touching his hat, said, "Now, Mr. Clark, ain't you going to buy a paper?"

"No, I'm — if I do," retorted Nobby, "I've bought three of the — things this morning."

"Oh," replied the urchin, "have another. This is the special edition; lots of noose."

"Well," said Mr. C., "— me, I'll — well toss you for one."

"Right oh!" said the youngster, spinning a coin. The newsvendor lost, and Nobby snatched the journal and prepared to hurry down the street with me.

"Why, Clark," said I, "you're surely going to pay the boy for the paper, aren't you?"

"No — fear," replied Nobby emphatically. "Gord blimey, it's the first time I've beat him."

Another anecdote about this strange but easy-going individual I remember. There was once a game of cricket being played in Johannesburg, and Nobby, because he was a bookmaker, was selected as umpire, although he knew nothing of the pastime but felt loth, as a sportsman, to confess the fact. In the course of the play the batsman stopped the ball with his leg before the wicket. The bowler at once appealed to the dashing and accomplished umpire for l.b.w., exclaiming as he did so, "How's that, umpire?"

Nobby scratched his ear, but at once replied, as he held his red hands to the blue sky, "Well, all I can say about it is that it's — marvellous."

But it was not at all to Nobby Clark and his vagaries that I intended to devote this page; it was rather to my association in Johannesburg, with that ferocious wagerer, Mr. Benjamin Lazarus—who has lately changed his name to a more harmonious one—and it ought to prove interesting, because it is so undeniably true.

I had not been long in that city when Benny popped up as serenely as the annual clown at Drury Lane, and, if he did not say "Here we are again," he certainly looked it; the populace shivered, the policemen stood to attention, the pantaloon hid his sausages, the winking columbine giggled and grimaced her legs, while the harlequin, being traditionally blind, did nothing in particular except flip-a-flaps, and at times surround the newcomer in a shining circle of diamonds, gold, and silver, which rare Ben Lazarus fully deserved.

The young gentleman greeted me with remarkable effusiveness, laughing a merry laugh and grinning through his large white teeth, at which phenomenal characteristics I put my hands in my pockets and waited for a red hot poker. I got it. I was already a member of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange—which Ben wasn't—and had been nominated and "put up" for the Turf Club, when Chauncey, the winner of many Johannesburg races and a real good fellow, came to me and said in a kindly manner, "If I were you I would take my name down from the Turf Club nominations, as the bookmaker Lazarus has been trying to spoil your application." It was a well-meant warning, but I took no heed of the tip, and was elected.

A few weeks after that, Mr. B. L., with some confidence, "put up" as a member of the Stock Exchange, and although I could have caused to be told one, two, or maybe three ungenerous things about the incoming associate, I scorned to do so, as there is nothing more ungracious than to prevent a man getting an honest living—and the Lord knows it was difficult enough on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, though one mostly never tried. And so the horsey applicant was successful, and thus to the blare of trumpets added his name to financial history.

A year or so after his admission to that unique institution, he and I became associated financially, and used to run joint accounts together, but although the gent of the pearly ivories was exceedingly cute in ordinary matters, I always found him quite honest in his dealings as far as I was concerned.

One fine day he proposed to me an inviting bit of business which, as it looked well on paper and perfect in perception and prospects, I at once accepted as a royal path to fortune along perhaps a ratty road. So we agreed to embark in the venture, taking care, however, that the members of the Stock Exchange should not know of our understanding.

The scheme thrived magnificently—as most well-laid inside Stock Exchange plans do—and all the members wondered how I had seemingly got into my hands the whole

of the manipulation of a company's shares, and likewise at the manner in which the operation was worked. I never spoke to my partner on 'Change, and foolishly, as I think now, had made myself responsible for at least seven-eighths of the dealings therein.

It is not my intention to disclose the name of the company, but Mr. Lazarus can do so if he has any inclination ; suffice to say that everything was running in our favour as in a golden stream, when suddenly one Sunday morning the bold Benjie called at my house in Kerk Street and asked me how we stood. I told him that I had sold ten thousand shares short (they stood at about £2) ; that I had given " put " money on another ten thousand and taken " call money " on an equal number. The inquisitive individual was sitting on a red velvet sofa with me at the time, but when he heard the full and veracious account he jumped nearly up to the ceiling and exclaimed, " My God, you want to ruin me ! " an exclamation which really stirred my innards to considerable emotion considering, as I have said, that I had made myself liable for nearly the whole of the bargains. I said to him, " If you're not satisfied, I'll take a thousand shares of your five thousand off your hands."

" Yes," he replied with alacrity.

" And another thousand," I added.

" Yes," quoth he.

" And another thousand."

" Certainly ; then I will be able to sleep and not think I'm going to fall for a ton."

" And the remaining lot if you like ? "

" No," he replied, " I'll keep the two thousand, but you can take over half my share of the ' puts ' and ' calls. ' " To that arrangement I agreed. What a daring speculator Benjamin would have made if there had been no risk !

After this adjustment, being weighed down with responsibility, I did not feel strong enough to manipulate the operation, and although I pocketed three or four thousand pounds out of the deal, I narrowly escaped making at

least thirty thousand, which certainly would have been the case if Lazarus hadn't backed out, but all the same the shares fizzled down to half-a-crown, and then to fourpence, which is about what they are worth. The Lord knows what they are called now and what they are quoted at, but I pity the poor devil who has got them, as Joe Lewis says "in the box," and dreams his dreams of Paradise.

Diamond-bedecked Bob Switcher—a barman by trade and heredity, backer of horses by inclination—came from Camden Town, and having amassed a few thousands on the Rand, buying and selling claims, had built himself a nice little house which he thought quite artistic and up-to-date. Bob wanted to be a swell, imitated the airs and graces—no great thing—of the brokers who executed his orders on 'Change, and who for this reason tolerated his pranks and pandered to his foibles. He regularly attended the music halls and theatres, made love and presents to the girls, talked of his pictures and was regarded as a bit of a mug, but a sound and safe bettor on the race-course. It was unfortunate for Bob that at one of the meetings, a book-maker, who shall be known to the reader as Bingo, had experienced a bad time, and more unfortunate still, owed him a hundred pounds. So he hied to Switcher. "Bob, you've always been a pal to me and I want to be a good pal to you."

"Good on yer," said Bob heartily.

"I suppose you've heard that the Honourable Snubbin who started for Home this morning owed me a parcel. Well, he gave me in settlement a beautiful oil painting which he pinched from his father's old castle. For all as I understand it may be worth twenty thousand pounds or more."

"Some pitchers is worth a lot, but we didn't have no ile paintings in Camden Town," replied Bob.

"I know your artistic tastes, and I don't want to take it to the toffs here who'd jump at such a work; besides I'd be exposing my position—always remember your 'possey.' There isn't another picture like it in Johannesburg," concluded Bingo enthusiastically.

"What's the moniker of the painter?" asked Bob, looking wise.

"I ain't quite certain—Rubens or Rembrandt, perhaps Turner, one of them I should think."

"I've heard tell they're big 'uns."

However Bob agreed to take the picture, which was duly delivered, cancelled Bingo's debt, and gave him fifty pounds as a bonus.

It was a medium-sized landscape mounted in a nondescript frame, and Bob fairly gloated over his prize, its ancient history and hidden beauties.

"There ain't a pitcher like it in Johannesburg," he bragged to Jimmy Owen, a sharebroker who posed as an erstwhile London artist, and wore a velvet coat as a symbol of art.

"I should like to see it," said Jimmy, with an air of professional pride.

"Me too," put in Reddy, another man of the (clothes) brush, who tinted photographs as a hobby.

The next day five or six of the *cognoscenti* called on Switcher to view the heirloom and drink some drinks. They were cordially received in Mr. Switcher's chamber of *beaux arts*, dedicated to a number of oleographs, coloured prints, and a few daubs of problematical origin.

All attention was directed to the recent acquisition, as Bob reverently removed the green baize which covered it, and the connoisseurs crowded round.

"By the great Jehosphat, she's plaguey handsome," exclaimed the breezy Yankee. "I ain't seen nothing to match it since I left Conn., Mass., Miss., Pa. and Ma."

"Guess and calkilate your pa and ma ain't got nothing like it," replied Bob, with scornful assurance, and feeling duty bound to respond in Americanese.

"He looks like a Frenchman," said a Cornish miner sagely.

"Or a Portugee," commented another nobody, removing his pipe.

"Hightalian, bet your life," quoth Bob.

Jimmy Owen regarded the picture with critical vision and pursed lip as if drawing on his artistic mentality. "In my opinion it's a Perugini, a Vandyke, or a——"

"Cox," put in Reddy sententiously.

"Cocks be damned," cried Sam reprovingly, "nor yet 'ens—them in the corner is pigs."

"Herring," murmured the learned licensed victualler, who remembered the name on his sporting prints.

"'Erring! What do you mean by 'errings!" expostulated Bob. "They're rabbits those brown things."

"Hold it up to the light," directed Jimmy, handling the masterpiece. "Yes," he said, peering at the canvas, "I can see the first letters—ah!—it's a Tryon."

"A try-on!" exclaimed Bob indignantly. "No 'tain't, it's genu-ine."

"By Jove, I'm wrong," cried Jimmy excitedly, still scrutinizing, "I see the name distinctly—it's a Potter."

"A potter?" questioned Bob.

"Great Dutch painter," explained Jimmy consolingly.

"Don't think much of them," replied Bob. "One did the outside of this 'ouse a deep green—now it's yaller."

"Try-on, Potter," mused Jimmy, examining the picture.

"Perhaps they was pardners," suggested Bob anxiously.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the art critic, much perturbed, "there's another name."

"Another!" echoed Bob.

"Quite a bunch of them," put in the American.

"Yes, Pickles," replied Jimmy decidedly. "I've got it, 'Try Potter's Pickles'—on an old show canvas card. Switcher, I always knew it was a dud. You've been done."

"Bob," said Jimmy Owen, banteringly, the next morning, "how's the masterpiece?"

Switcher uttered a faint squeak, sighed, and perspired.

"I suppose there isn't another picture like yours in Johannesburg?"

"No, there ain't," replied Bob. "I put it on the fire last night."



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Youthful Theatrical Recollections, 1862-72—Mrs. Kendal—Henry Irving—Ada Isaacs Menken—MacDermott—Franco-Prussian War—Kimberley in the Seventies—The Wizard of the North—Theatre Royal—An Amazon—*The Octoroon*—Barnato as an Actor—Iago in a Rage—The Cassandras—Pretoria—George Edwardes' Co.—Actors and Actresses—Anna, Comtesse de Bermont—Jenny Hill—An Alarming Conjuror—Genevieve Ward.

It is many years ago—when the world was young—since I was first taken to a place of entertainment, still my childish theatrical experiences, in the main, are yet clear to my mind, though later on dates get somewhat mixed. I was born in Liverpool, and my father, a confirmed play-goer, rather encouraged than otherwise my visits to the theatres. At that time there were fixed periods at which the whole family would attend the play-house. But my mother was a good sort, and would often smuggle me to the theatre under the charge of a nurse or the foreman of my father's business.

One of my earliest impressions was of seeing big-nosed Charles Dillon play Belphegor (how splendid he was in that part) and G. V. Brooke (who went down in the *London*) as Othello. Brooke's wife (Miss Avonia Jones) I also saw in *Fazio*. I remember, too, Joe Jefferson as Salem Scudder and Rip-van-Winkle, and Sothern—who did not appeal to me—as Lord Dundreary. As a small boy I marvelled at Barry Sullivan in many characters, and shall never forget his Richard the Third, and equally fine Stukely in the *Gamester*. A tremendous favourite in Liverpool, the people swore by him, and wove legends around his career. Amongst other things they alleged that he was born on the field of Waterloo a few hours after the battle. (He was certainly charged with gunpowder.) Nevertheless

he may be classed as a powerful, and in his way, an excellent actor of the old school ; they would not have him in London at any price, yet who to-day in all Britain could play Richard as he did.

Some years after I met the tragedian in the Great Smoke and was introduced by Chatterton, the former lessee of Drury Lane. Barry wrapped himself up in his cloak with splendid grace, and walked with measured steps ; a bombastic, vain old fellow, who ordered a cabman to drive him home in so pompous a tone as to cause the jarvey to turn white if he was red, or red if he was white.

Prime favourites of my boyish days, who came to Liverpool, were Henry Neville, Joe Eldred, Charles Rice, Charles Mathews, Mrs. Stirling, MacCabe, Miss Bateman, Miss Marriot, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, and a score of " stars " who are now but memories.

Well do I recall Hortense Schneider in *Orphées aux Enfers*, also the Colonna troupe of can-can dancers. I am afraid that " Wiry Sal " thrilled me more than any tragedienne I had ever applauded. I saw Ristori in *Mary Stuart* once, but forget whether it was in Liverpool or London. A majestic woman, she married a jumpy little fellow, the Marchesa Capranica del Grillo (sounds appetising) who acted as a kind of baggage-man to her. The lady herself was said by the superstitious to have the evil eye ; the last occasion on which the Emperor Napoleon went to see her perform, the Orsini explosion occurred. Thus you see there are worse things than glad eyes or even black eyes.

An actress who took my youthful heart by storm in my native town was black-haired merry Julia Mathews, whose Grand Duchess of Gerolstein drew crowds to the small theatre in Clayton Square. I went to encore her time after time, and always waited to catch a glimpse of the duchess at the stage-door. She was the mother of James Mathews, who came to Johannesburg in the early nineties with Saintsbury, and married E. V. Sinclair's widow, Maude Clifford, an old-time Kimberley favourite. Jimmy

was a decent fellow, popular with everybody, and for years Frohman's principal man at the Duke of York's.

It was in Liverpool, about the year 1868, that I saw a young artiste, who had recently made her début, at the Amphitheatre as Pauline in the *Lady of Lyons*. Young as I was, the debutante—of great personal attractions—struck me as a superb actress and I have been in love with her ever since. She was billed as Miss Madge Robertson, later to become the distinguished Mrs. Kendal. The Prince of Wales', Clayton Square, was a lively little theatre in those times. And what a stock company it had. Edward Saker and Lionel Brough were the funny men (the former infinitely the better comedian) and then at intervals (I have no notes to guide me) Lydia Thompson, Augusta Thomson, Edith Challis, Rose Massey, Julia St. George and many others. Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft) used to star in burlesque, and I saw the original company in Robertson's comedies, but whether in Liverpool or London I cannot say. I think it must have been half and half, but I do know that the man who played Eccles in *Caste* (George (?) Honey) was the best Eccles I have ever seen, much better than David James or Sir John Hare.

I mind one summer's evening when my father took me to the Prince of Wales'. I forget what the pièce de résistance was, but I shall ever remember that the name of the curtain raiser was *Only a Clod*. While this trumpery farce was being performed, my father, a sound judge of acting, pointed to a tall, young man, playing a subordinate part, and remarked: "That chap's a good actor, Louis—what's his name?" I looked at the programme and read—Henry Irving.

In Duke Street, Liverpool, about this time, lived a doctor, named Dr. Saul Davis, whose sons attended the same school as myself, so I often popped in and out of his sanctum. Next door was a high-class private boarding house, kept by one Stern, and outside this establishment on several afternoons I noticed a handsome black brougham, with silver statuettes of a naked man bound on the back of a

wild horse, adorning each corner of the equipage. It happened that my uncle frequently stayed at this boarding house, so on one occasion after I had visited him and was seeking for my hat in the hall, I discerned a tall, olive-complexioned lady, garbed in a flowing black robe, coming downstairs. A stately woman indeed, with her beautiful dark eyes, raven hair, fashioned in short crispy curls like a Greek God, and queenly demeanour. She stopped in front of me, threw a kindly glance, asked my name and expressed the opinion that I was "a nice leetle boy." I thought her a person of great discernment. The lady spoke in a sweet voice with a pronounced foreign accent, as attractive as her entire personality.

She glided rather than walked towards the carriage with the Mazeppa statuettes, and I soon knew that she was Ada Isaacs Menken. I saw her frequently in the only three plays she presented—*The French Spy*, *Black-eyed Susan* and *Mazeppa*. She could not act, and her stage attire was supposed to have shocked all womankind in Liverpool, but it had a contrary effect on the men, who flocked to see her and revel in her engaging individuality. I call to mind a certain evening when my father gravely discussed with my mother, who wore a huge Victorian crinoline, whether it was a proper performance to patronize. Years after I felt a pang of jealousy when shown the Creole divinity in a portrait seated on the elder Dumas' knee. Later she published a book of passionate poems which were attributed to Swinburne. Menken was Heenan's wife, and a much talked of woman in her day; she died in Paris, and is buried in Père Lachaise.

Towards the latter part of the sixties I was sent to school to Brussels, at Anshel's Academy, where I had as school-fellows Rufus Isaacs (now Lord Reading) and his brother Godfrey. I studied at that abode of learning and misery for nearly two years, returned to Liverpool, and remained there only a few months when my father decided to settle in London. Before I left my native town for good, I heard Charles Dickens read in the Theatre Royal, Williamson

Square ; he looked sad and bored, and I felt the same. The Star Music Hall was also situated in this square, and it was under its dome I first saw George Leybourne, Fred French, Liston, Vance, Rickards and other *lion comiques*, with their glossy hats, silk handkerchiefs, and ridiculous airs, which were the order and fashion of the day. I heard Mario, also Sims Reeves, Santley (in his prime), Pauline Lucca, Christine Nilsson, and was a consistent visitor to Saker's new Alexandra Theatre ; the last opera I saw there before my departure for London being *Les Huguenots*, with Titiens and Mongini in the cast.

Although I had not overmuch pocket-money I managed to get round London a good deal. There was a rich young man about town named Lacey who showed me the sights. With him, although young enough to have known better, I went to the Argyle Rooms (afterwards the Trocadero Music Hall, and now the restaurant of that name) and feasted my eyes on the vestal virgins who waltzed themselves to death on the polished floors. Bandmann, a vapouring German tragedian (he who proposed to Baroness Burdett Coutts because she had been good enough to patronize him) was trying to make a name. Irving had done an Edmund Kean touch with Mathias at the Lyceum and thrilled the city. I saw Fechter, a most engaging actor, as Hamlet and Ruy Blas, James Fernandez and T. C. King in *Notre Dame*, and George Belmore in *The Flying Scud*. Belmore was the best comedian that came my way, and Toole about the worst ; there was for me not a laugh in him.

I beheld all the star turns of the hour ; the performance that most impressed my mind, and which I have never forgotten, was that of Phelps and Creswick in *Macbeth*. Never shall I cease to remember Creswick in *True to the Core*.

As a youth I went often behind the stage of St. James's Hall, Regent Street, and mingled with the minstrels in their dressing-rooms. It was there I first met Pony Moore, Walter Howard, Gene Stratton, and other dusky spirits who are now phantoms of the past.

There were stirring times in London during the Franco-Prussian campaign. The German party waxed very strong at first, and the nights at the Alhambra, when the war songs were being sung, were turbulent in the extreme. Of course, I was for France always, and after her cruel defeats a strong wave of sympathy swept over England, which even the egotistical and didactic writings of Carlyle could not subdue. The Sage of Chelsea—would you credit it—wrote to the *Times* as follows: "I believe that Bismarck will get his Alsace, and what he wants of Lorraine, and likewise that it will do him and us, and all the world, and even France herself by-and-by a great deal of good."

Thousands of French refugees, many of them actors and actresses, sought an asylum in London, and it was then that the Café Royal was opened. Here I once met Rochefort, but forget the year. By this time I had partaken of a great feast of theatrical, operatic, and music-hall fare, from Patti to Annie Adams, from Irving to Arthur Lloyd, from Nelly Power to Adelaide Neilson, and I did so love Blondin, Leotard, Onra, and Niblo. Some months after peace was proclaimed, I decided to try my fortune in South Africa, and at the latter end of 1872 I first set foot on the diamond-fields. I was about eighteen years of age, and for a stripling had had a considerable amount of experience.

When I arrived in 1872 on the diamondiferous ground known then as the New Rush, and now throughout the world, and beyond it, as Kimberley, nondescript entertainments, dramatic and otherwise, took place in a small shabby hall constructed of corrugated iron. The edifice had been erected in the Market Square, and from this coign of vantage and vegetables, looked the whole artistic world of Diamondopolis in the face and was not ashamed. Here the foundation of the House of Barnato was laid by Henry of that ilk, the senior brother, who commenced his South African career by giving two-bob sparring exhibitions to wondering Dutchmen and wandering diggers. Later the fistic professor (real name Isaacs) under the *nom de guerre* of Signor Barnato, the "Wizard of the North," appeared in a large

tin shanty in Du Toit's Pan, where he invited public patronage for some legerdemain exhibitions. The wizard's performance consisted of doing a few sleight-of-hand tricks, as old and verdant as the hills, accompanying the finale of each illusion by ejaculating "*A la me!*"—which was accepted by the majority of the audience as positive proof of the exotic ability of the "Seggnor," and his complete mastery of the language of Molière. Without a doubt he brought forth eggs from nowhere, cards from anywhere, and goldfish in glass dishes from the region of his coat-tails—value for money indeed! The night I attended the show, the "Seggnor," in the course of his amazing feats, borrowed from me, as one of the audience, a sovereign which, I am glad to record, he duly returned. Again, I remember how, a day before the opening night, the wording of the play-bill had occasioned much discussion at the "Seggnor's" headquarters in Du Toit's Pan. Mr. Harry Hart—Barnato's manager—inspired by what he considered the linguistic powers of the Wizard had conceived the idea of having a little bit of "parley-voo," as he termed it, at the end of the posters and programmes to give a distinction to the performance. So he had consulted amongst others the polyglot and spirituous barber of the "Pan," one Hicks, who had written on a piece of paper the magic words "*Vive la reine*" as a suitable finale to the play-bill. Armed thus, and feeling very important, Mr. Harry Hart sought the "Seggnor" and said "'Enery, let's have a bit of French outside as well as inside."

"'Arry 'Art," replied Barnato, severely surveying him, "you've had enough French outside as will do *your* inside good."

"Only three 'arf goes of 'Ennessy, 'Enery, that's all."

"I noo it," said the Signor decidedly, "it's 'orrible Why, you've got the hiccoughs."

"So would you if you'd been 'unting the French language all day. Never mind the iccups; I've got the French words writ for 'Long live the Queen,'" replied Hart solemnly.

"Ain't *a la me* enough?" asked the other.

"Certainly not, 'Enery," denied the manager, "not if you want to be 'igh-class."

"Well, what's the French words?"

"*Vive la rain,*" says Hart, reading the precious scrap of paper.

"*Vive the what?*" queried the Wizard, gyrating his nose.

"*Vive la rain.*"

Henry fixed Harry with his hypnotic eye before his anger burst.

"Rain, you idiot, what the 'ell do I want with rain?"

"That's the fashionable French for 'Long live the Queen,' I'll bet my 'ead," retorted Hart heatedly.

"Yow don't tell me that rain——"

At this moment Cantot, the Parisian hotel-keeper, happened to be passing, and he, with others, was asked to settle the question.

"*Oui, messieurs,* 'Long live the Queen' in French becomes '*Vive la reine.*'"

"Same as if you had a king," put in a much travelled scene shifter, "you'd say '*Vive le roir.*'"

"*Vive le raw,*" corrected the pianist of the show authoritatively.

"*Non, non, messieurs,* we say in French '*Vive le roi,*'" excitedly affirmed Cantot, making such a ferocious and ugly grimace that the cat with a reproachful glance left the room. Arguments waxed warm, until the "Seggnor" exclaimed "To 'ell with your rains and raws, Gord save the Queen's good enough for me, and 'Arry 'Art, you can take your bloomin' 'ook from the 'all."

Crestfallen, black at brow, Hart betook himself to Hicks the barber, who received him with bullock heartiness.

"'Icks," he said sadly, "'ide away my 'igh 'at. The Seggnor won't have no French such as rains on his bills."

"Blyme, he oughter die of heart disease," ejaculated Hicks sympathetically.

"'Im?" questioned Hart, scornfully wagging his head. "Himpossible! 'Icks, 'e ain't got no 'eart."

An actor of some ability, Dallas, at the time the Theatre



Royal came to be built in Kimberley, was recognised as a meritorious and consistent histrio, popular on and off the boards. Years after he made his debut in London, but with no particular success.

Then a sterling comedian, E. V. Sinclair, became lessee of the theatre, and with his wife (Miss Maud Clifford), Seymour Dallas and others, presented really decent dramatic fare. I have seldom encountered a more sterling low comedian than Sinclair; his Jacques Strop was especially good, and with the exception of Paul Martinetti the best I have ever seen; but he touched no part in which he did not shine. Although hardly an able business man, or even a genial acquaintance, money rolled his way fast enough, and, not leaving well alone, he engaged Tom Paulton and his lady (Miss Emmeline Montague) to show what they could do, and that song and dance contract knocked the bottom out of the Kimberley theatre so far as his interests were concerned. The two comedians disagreed, the ladies quarrelled, and a breezy kind of Rose Bell versus Kate Santley rivalry ensued. But Miss Clifford as an actress could not hope to compete with the versatile Emmeline, one of the most gifted women ever seen on a South African stage. She was young, fair to look upon, could dance and sing engagingly, and play equally well in farce, comedy or drama. The upshot of the imbroglio was that Paulton and Cox (who had acted as musical conductor for Sinclair) stepped into E.V.'s shoes, and the Sinclairs—with well-lined pockets, be it said—left for England, where the little man opened a theatre in Bolton.

Then commenced a booming time for the new Kimberley régime, which gathered strength day by day. From first to last there mustered round its banners Dave Sims, his brother Charley, the Thornes, Barnato, Harry Miller, his fair wife, Flora, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Palmer, Kershaw, Miss Bessie Cranston, Miss Marian Cox, and others whose names and fame vanished into the *Ewigkeit*. Miss Cox was, in my opinion, the pick of the bunch. Although not a great actress, she was a sweet, winsome and virtuous

little lady, the pride of the Kimberley stage, respected by everyone in the town. The performances generally commenced at eight o'clock, not quite exactly, but generously suited to the vagaries of the convivial Cox or the accommodating Tom Paulton, who was the very soul of goodness and expediency. At intervals stars in the shape of Anna Bishop and Madame Mendelssohn (for whom I wrote her opening song) came down from heaven and fluttered their wings. I made my bow as a player later on, appearing with overwhelming success and distinction (as a super) in *Jessie Brown*, or *The Relief of Lucknow*, refusing on this particular occasion, with great gallantry and considerable violence, to allow myself (a British soldier) to be killed by Nana Sahib, thus causing much confusion on and off the stage, spoiling the tableau and bringing down the curtain on the carpenter's head. Nana Sahib was enacted by the late Colonel Digby Willoughby, the gifted amateur, wearing as usual a certain red vest with silver buttons, destined to become historical.

When I first met Willoughby in Kimberley, he was a distinguishable figure in club circles—a tall thin man with clean-cut features and a black moustache. He was accompanied by his wife, who later on also went on the Kimberley boards with conspicuous success. A decidedly pretty person, although her face was marked with a huge scar, Mrs. Willoughby possessed undoubted histrionic talent, and when I returned home in 1883 she starred at the old Gaiety Theatre, also appearing in *Lady Clare* with Ada Cavendish at the Globe, in the green-room of which I met amongst others Robert Buchanan (the author of the play, I think) and Herman Vezin, who had coached the lady for her London debut.

Following my ignominious display as a super, I found that my stage services, even at nothing a night, were tabooed, so I betook myself in earnest to the writing of theatrical notices, and for a considerable period acted as dramatic critic for the *Diamond-Fields Advertiser*, *Du Toit's Pan Herald*, and other publications. In this capacity I found it quite impossible to please everybody.

If I praised one fair exponent I offended the other, and with the actors it was not less so.

A Miss Flora Miller, nice woman but perfectly incompetent actress, had appeared in a farce called *A Kiss in the Dark*, and I slated the performance. The lady, who was very tall and muscular, announced to her friends and admirers, after she had read the notice, her fixed determination to thrash me at sight. That same morning, as I entered the theatre, Miss Miller, who on seeing me had snatched a gingham from Hoppy Davis, made a running jump at my advancing person. The Junoesque goddess of war, of the blazing eyes, looked formidable enough—hair stiff as bayonets, cheeks flaming with England's bloody red, teeth gleaming like shells and such a lot of powder on her nose. I received the onset at first with great elegance as would a matador, then dodged brilliantly prize-ring fashion and bolted, doing excellent foot-work, with the Amazon in full chase. According to plan I ran with discretion into the auditorium, upsetting two chairs, a nigger, and Mrs. Cox's poodle, and by the skin of my teeth and shins reached the stage, the fair artiste, in springy elastic side-boots well after me, holding her tempestuous petticoats with one hand and beating nothing of importance with Mr. Davis's white and green umbrella. Almost at the last hurdle, when victory was in her grasp, the huntress fell, smashing into smithereens Hoppy's gingham and displaying a lavish amount of hose and lingerie. Thus, Mrs. Grundy, are the wicked rewarded. I apologised and stood drinks, in which half a dozen disappointed onlookers joined.

Mr. Jack Joel as a youth, desirous of following in the footsteps of his gifted uncle, appeared once, and once only, as an entertainer on the Kimberley stage. He was advertised to sing *un chanson de la guerre* entitled "The Lion and the King." The debutant received an overwhelming reception from "the boys," and piped "Now the Lion and the King"—then he stopped, and, bending his head towards the pianist, plaintively cried, "*Play up, Fielder, go on.*" This was distinctly a bad beginning, and embarrassing

enough to any artist, but the prodigy was made of sterner stuff, so nothing daunted, he chortled in painful accents his undying political opinion, "Now, the Lion and the King, I think he's had his fling." Israel's hope got flurried again, looked reprovingly at the perspiring accompanist, and reiterated, "*Why don't you play, Fielder?*" By this time the audience commenced to titter, which quite upset the youthful vocalist, who forlornly wiped everything off the slate and commenced again. "'Now the Lion—*play up, Fielder*—' and the King—*why don't you play up?*—' I think he's had—*faster, Fielder!*—' he's had his fling.—*I shan't sing at all—there!*" and with that he ran off the stage, also, alas, out of the musical world.

Among the starry theatre-folk who visited Kimberley, and are now no doubt held in mind by the oldest inhabitants, were the Sisters Vesalius, Yates, Charles Wilstone (a ripe old comedian), Guilfoyle Seymour (an engaging Irishman), Towers and his black-haired daughter, the radiant Rosie, Jeff D'Angelis with an American crowd, Franklin, Constance Young, Colville and others. Harvey brought up another company, a shabby, second-class variety team, consisting of Leonard and Pine, the brothers Wilmot, and a Miss Bradshaw, who presided at the piano. It followed that Harvey nearly went broke, but he fell back on burlesque, and Miss Bradshaw—quite an amateur—pulled him out of the fire. The lady was not very good-looking, and had no voice, but she had an engaging personality added to a fine figure, and that did the trick. In consequence Miss B. received many offers of marriage, but I forget if the bells rang. Baby Benson, an exceedingly clever child actress, created a furore in Kimberley when she made her appearance. The manager of the company was an American, full of chin music, collar and cuffs, who also created another furore at Bloemfontein, where, after drawing crowded houses, he (according to the local papers) made his exit (in his astrachan coat) without paying. After such good notices too, and such a brilliant diamond stud!

In 1878 I wrote *The Land of Diamonds*, a five-act

drama, which was produced at the Lanyon Theatre about the same year. Sutton Vane (ought to have been spelt Vain) played the leading part, and Barnato a Jewish character therein. Colonel Layon, after the curtain had fallen, called me into his box to receive congratulations on what was then only a successful failure. Be that as it may, I can claim to be the author of the first drama ever written in South Africa.

Years ago *The Octoroon* was a popular drama, treating of the old slave days way down Louisiana. In it on a certain night—oh, so long ago—I played the noble Injun Wahnotee, and Barney appeared as the villainous McClosky, a terrible person of fearful snarls and frowns. At the Kimberley Theatre Royal there was a record house to witness the performance. Some well-known ladies of the town were present in all their finery, anxious to see how much the octoroon girl would fetch. Many of the high society dames of Diamondopolis, as they entered the theatre, glanced scornfully another way, as if these poor creatures were abomination to them, and the Argyle Rooms, Eagle, and Alhambra things of the past—which indeed they were to a fair number of these leaders of fashion.

But everything went well until the end of the third act, in which the slave maiden, Zoe, is put up to be sold by auction. Looking ravishingly attractive in a white dress, Miss Cox was led to the rostrum. The excitement rose to fever heat as the auctioneer proceeded to dispose of the young lady, and the bidding waxed fast and furious between pitying planters and the dreadful McClosky, who topped all their bids. Tears glistened in every woman's eye when the auctioneer exclaimed, "Gentlemen, there is twenty-five thousand dollars offered by Mr. McClosky for the octoroon girl Zoe. Is there any advance—for the first—second—and third time?" There was silence for a few seconds, broken only by the sobs of sweet Flash Kate. Suddenly, during this tense stillness, one Russell (in the stalls) cried, "Twenty-six thousand dollars." All attention was focussed on the figure of the dress-suited bidder, who was on his feet.

Cox, in cogitative mood, eyed him with his head on one side, as a bull would watch a red dog. Russell, however, who had dined well, returned savage scowls with complacent smiles, until the enraged Cox shouted from his orchestral seat, "Shut up, Russell. What do you mean by making a row in my theatre?" "That's all very well, Cox, old fellow," returned the benevolent Russell, screwing up his cheeks and regarding the conductor pityingly, "but what kind of a chap d'ye think I'd be to sit here and see your daughter knocked down for the sake of a paltry thousand dollars?"

In the course of time, what with intrigues and Cupid's darts, there developed a grave schism in the small theatrical world of Kimberley. I, with Barney Barnato, Sutton Vane, Cox and his daughter, migrated to the Lanyon Theatre, leaving as our opposition show the Royal, with Tom Paulton, Miss Emmeline Montague, Dave Sims, etc. However, things were bad, and it did not matter what the managements staged, the public did not respond. One morning Barney Barnato came to me with the news that an actor called Boothroyd Fairclough had arrived in Kimberley—I remembered the name well, having seen it starred in London. We found him at Mrs. Jardine's Queen's Hotel, smoking a cigar on the verandah, attired gorgeously in new clothes and sombrero. He seemed a likely kind of fellow, well built, keen visaged, intellectual, but when we commenced to talk business he put on the airs of a *Grand Seigneur*, and referred us magnificently to his manager, Mr. Gray, who opportunely arrived on the scene from behind the front door, or other adjacent nook.

Gray, a dapper, sandy-moustached little chap, talked *les affaires* with alacrity and independence, and was not to be nonplussed by the most gigantic word in the dictionary or out of it. This was all the more startling, considering that months after, when we had all become intimate, Gray told me that the pair of them, tired, footsore, and penniless, had, the same morning, walked into Kimberley, where Gray had procured the new togs on "the nod." Nevertheless,

Barney and I engaged Fairclough at sixty pounds per week (cash down) to recite at the Lanyon Theatre. I must mention that this new place of entertainment had been erected by two Americans, Loyal and Abel, and opened as a circus. It had done well at first, and then died out.

Fairclough duly appeared, but recitations hardly appealed to Kimberleyites, and we lost money by the venture. Our reciter nevertheless was not allowed to remain long in idleness, as Paulton and Cox arranged with the tragedian on sharing terms, to show his quality in a round of Shakespearean plays. His acting created a great impression in Diamondopolis, and filled the pockets of Messrs. P. and C.

Never shall I forget the crowd of gambling harpies who waited outside the Theatre Royal for the actor on the nights he received his share of the receipts, and rooked him on every occasion of his last shilling. Their motto, if ever they had a motto, was "One good play deserves another." I never saw Fairclough after he left Kimberley, but years ago, in London, I was told that he was engaged as a super at the St. James's. Fine actor; good fellow.

Barney by now had become a constant mummer at the theatre, and was somewhat of a favourite among the miners, and a prime pet with the brigade who under the name of "the boys" dominated the bars, saloons and billiard-rooms, and in a measure the theatre. They were all Barney's sincere admirers, his ranting, tearing methods being quite to their fancy. All the same Barney had the dramatic instinct, a good voice, stage presence, supreme confidence, enthusiasm and a prodigious memory.

Talking of his memory, here is an instance that comes to mind. He was in conversation one day with Irving, and Sir Henry was mentioning the first time he produced one of his most popular pieces, probably twenty-five years before. "I remember the night," Barnato said; "I sat in the first row of the pit and watched it." Sir Henry went on to relate that on that night he had played three parts; whereupon Barnato contradicted him, saying he had played only two. "Excuse me, Mr. Barnato," Sir Henry said, "but

I think you will admit I ought to know what I did." "I don't care what you know," Barney replied. "I will tell you exactly what you did that night, the times you came in, the doors you went out, and every scene you had." In the end Sir Henry had to admit that he was perfectly right. But Barnato's lack of education was an insuperable bar to real distinction. In *The Bells*, for example, he would loudly complain "'ow the dogs 'owl," and cry "'elp, 'elp."

Notwithstanding these little drawbacks Barney made up his mind to play Iago. When the auspicious evening arrived on which he was to essay Shakespeare, Benjamin Hart sat in the front row. Benny, who once sold cabbages, was also a would-be actor and poet of intense ambition, between whom and Barney existed a jealous feud. Now Mr. Hart boasted a natural laugh as spontaneous and loud as that possessed by the late Jolly John Nash—but to the great night.

Barney in the blaze of his paradise, magnificently arrayed in all the glory of the theatre's props, spouted and ranted the while he was critically regarded by the facetious Benjamin. Things went indifferently well until Iago, hunching his back, declared: "Who steals my purse, steals trash," and then Hart gave birth to a lusty laugh, noisy enough to make a clown envious. Barney stopped, threw up his chin, glared viciously at his interrupter, but with enduring faith and a fearful whisper went on to the lines: "But he that filches from me my good name——" Once more the tormenting auditor roared uproariously, the audience joining in chorus. This was too much for the talented Iago, who, borrowing Macklin's grand pause, dropped all histrionics, hopped to the front of the stage, glowered at his giggling critic, and ejaculated: "All right, Benny Hart, when the show's over I'll give you a punch on the nose, see if I don't." And he did!

Long ere this I had been accepted as a votary of Thespis, and had played Melter Moss, Wahnotee, Cousin Joe, La Frochard, etc., month after month, and acted without receiving any remuneration whatever, which is more than



can be said of some of the "amateurs" who, sub rosá, took a pull at the treasury every week.

Towards the end of the seventies a touring troupe of entertainers—the Cassandras—came to Kimberley. The company consisted of Professor Lover (the wizard and proprietor of the show), a couple of charming girls, Elise and Adele, a juvenile clog dancer, and Smith, a baritone. Becoming enraptured with one of the young ladies, I journeyed with the company as manager and *jeune premier*, receiving, however, no salary for my services, and playing in all the towns, large or small, in the Transvaal. It was rare fun at some of the villages when we gave a show at times in the chief farmer's kitchen, and "fashion" came from miles around to watch, with mouths agape, the talented professor produce eggs from all parts of his person. "Ah!" remarked one Dutchman, "*die ouw kerel* (old fellow) is better than a brood of hens"; but what puzzled the worthy burgher was the absence of a rooster, whose presence he deemed necessary to unravel the mystery. After Elise, whose song "Good-bye, lovely Loo" had enticed me from Kimberley, had done her turn, she and I would retire to the back of the "stage" in the vicinity of the boiler, where we passed the time contributing to the professor's legerdemain and our own mild flirtations. Lover was a decent chap, but addicted to drink, and at Vrede, being happy with the bottle, thus causing a card trick to miscarry, he blurted to the auditory, "Two damned fools behind don't know their business—I order Mr. Smith to sing 'The Ship on Fire'; later Miss Elise and Mr. Cohen will appear in the sketch, *A Cup of Tea*, which, as you don't understand English, and drink coffee, and I don't drink tea, I beg most respect'fully to say won't be much good to any of us, so I'll retire to the hotel to sell a few tickets for to-morrow evening."

Arriving in Pretoria, I was struck with the great change in the place since last I was there; instead of lethargy, sparkle; money, plentiful; the streets bright with the red of British uniforms. A fourth attempt to conquer Secocoeni was about to be made by Wolseley, and the walls

of the capital were plastered with bills calling for volunteers. The garrison was commanded by handsome Colonel Bellairs, a Crimean veteran who had been present at Inkerman, and whose heroic conduct at the "Soldiers' Battle" is recorded in Kinglake's stirring pages. The influence of English money was everywhere, and Lover made a heap of shekels with his show, the large hall in which we played being packed every night.

At the Globe Theatre, Jo'burg, Barney and I took part in many performances, and the house on these occasions was always packed, as Mr. Barnato, being an M.L.A., was a very good draw. I was the low comedian and played also the character parts, especially Jewish ones, Barney having a decided repugnance to appearing in them. Barnato attached some importance to good press criticisms, and of course the mighty man of means usually got them. One day he remarked to a scribe who had omitted to chronicle his genius, "Oh, I say, no notice—how's that?—I thought you were a friend of mine." And the journalist replied, "I didn't do one, Mr. Barnato. What further proof do you want of my friendship." Another newspaper chap, who must have mixed his drinks or been treated not wisely but too well, wrote, "We are glad to notice that Mr. Barnato gives his farewell performance on Wednesday." Great Clement Scott! Nevertheless, when Barney appeared on the Johannesburg stage, he had improved as an actor, and his performance impressed those who were not too exacting.

I forget her name, so I'll call her Tibbs. Miss Tibbs was a pretty, guileless little lady who, as a novice, had once or twice walked upon the stage and—to use a vulgar phrase—had rather "copt the flavour." On one occasion in Johannesburg she was cast to appear as Mathias' daughter, a small part in *The Bells*. Towards the end of the play there is a scene in which the remorseful burgomaster is expected to caress his child. Mathias (Barnato) was seated on a chair, as trim Miss Tibbs, fresh and innocent as an Alpine flower (although she affected a slight Grecian bend),

tripped on the stage, and made towards her "father," who opened his arms to receive her. She nestled to him, and Barney, full of dramatic fire, instead of putting his parental arm round his daughter's waist, in pure frenzy laid his huge hand on the lady's bustle. Pretty Miss Tibbs looked puzzled, jibbed, essayed to move away, blushed and hung her head. When the pathos was over, the indignant girl flew off the stage like a scalded cat, and encountered the manager, who asked how she had got on. "I'm afraid not very well, sir," said simple Miss Tibbs, pouting and wrathful, "I don't think Mr. Barnato knew his piece."

In '95, George Edwardes sent out a musical comedy company, the leading member of which was the delightful Marie Montrose, and with her in the same company was a pretty little actress, Daisy Melville by name, who met with a tragic fate. One evening she left the Johannesburg Theatre, where she had been playing, and proceeded to the North Western, at which hotel Miss Melville lodged. Shortly after her arrival at this hostelry the unfortunate girl took a dose of laudanum, and it was said in the town that a man who was on terms of friendship with her was seen, while she was lying unconscious, trying to pull a few jewelled rings from her fingers. When the young lady died this individual was threatened with lynching by the many people who believed the horrible and sordid story; I know that the man left the town in consequence of the general agitation, and did not return for many months. Personally, I do not believe the accused was guilty; I knew him well, and we were school chums at the Mechanics' Institute, Mount Street, Liverpool.

Theatrically, the town advanced by leaps and bounds, and many were the good artistes and entertainers who eventually visited the golden city, amongst others Mesdames Flo Hastings, Lilian Stanbridge (a Natal nightingale), Phoebe Carlo, Lilian Beddard, Agnes Delaporte, Antoinette Trebelli, Marie Loftus, Emma Chambers, Fortescue, MacIntyre, Jennie Lee, Kate Vaughan, Carrie Nelson, Emily Levettez,

Nellie Ganthony, Kate Harvey, Permaine (whose leading actor was Adolphus Ellis, a well-known advocate who had forsaken the law for the drama and its tit-bits), that quaint comedian Alec Hurley, Frank Wheeler, Grant Fallows, Lionel Brough, Avon Saxon, popular Norman Salmon, athletic Aubrey Smith and a score of others. Stuart Cumberland, Snazelle, Max O'Rell, to say nothing of Fillis, also visited the Rand and enlivened things. It was B. Wheeler, known as 'the Gov'nor,' who brought Searelle to South Africa. They quarrelled, and Searelle sent to Australia for Verdi and Miss Emelie Melville (who had a voice with melody in it), and inaugurated serious and comic opera in Johannesburg. Edgar Perkins, a really talented producer, followed suit, and presented in rare style *Dorothy*, *Falka*, *Pepita*, *Erminie*, *Moasette* and the Gilbert-Sullivan operas. With Perkins was Ada Bemmister, a fine singer, who had a habit of throwing up her part at short intervals, a practice not unknown to artistes in other civilised parts of the world.

I call to mind Odell's advent in Johannesburg under Searelle's management. Luscombe had said he was the oldest actor in the world, and one morning I met the new arrival on 'Change and asked him, out of fun, what he remembered of the Battle of Waterloo. He replied quite calmly, "Not much, except that they made rather a fuss about it."

Anna, Comtesse de Bremont, an Irish American woman, came to South Africa as assistant to Dr. Lynn, the prestidigitateur. Possessed of some personality, as well as being a trained vocalist, the lady sang a couple of songs in his entertainment and did recitations—"My Love and I" was one of them. Afterwards appointed social editress of the *Star*, the Comtesse stayed quite a time in Johannesburg; she was the authoress of *Love Poems*, also *The World of Music* and wrote a novel called *The Gentleman Digger*, which did not increase her popularity in Rand circles.

Nellie Wilson, a charming serio-comic singer, was one of

the successes on the Johannesburg boards, and the victim of a painful mistake. It appears the lady had a set of valuable ear-rings which she, desirous of selling, entrusted to a jeweller named Myers. He, in the course of business, showed them to Woolfie Joel, who immediately claimed them as his lost property, and very promptly the comedienne was arrested by Detective Ferguson at the North Western Hotel, and taken to the police station. The fair artiste was soon released on bail, the precipitate Mr. Joel discovered he had made a mistake, and that the ear-rings were not those he had missed. Miss Wilson would have been awarded substantial damages if she had gone to law, but the urbane Mr. Benjamin Lazarus came as plenipotentiary extraordinary, and by subtle arguments convinced the fair dancer of the over-whelming, piteous, and never-to-be-forgotten grief of his august master, and persuaded her not to take action.

It was Luscombe Searelle, in verity a warm-hearted fellow, who took Jenny Hill to South Africa, thinking the trip would do her good, and knowing well that the invalid's chance of singing on his stage was small indeed. Night after night, the management advertised that Jenny Hill would positively appear, and the Vital Spark did appear, but not, alas! to sing. She was too ill. But the frail, wistful little artiste—a wreck of her former twinkling self—was carried to the foot-lights on a chair and received by the audience as if she were a goddess. There the poor, fading Vital Spark, in smiling majesty, sat enthroned with her thin, white face and arch look, chaffing and chipping the boys who had come to welcome her. And soon Jenny, wishing them all a cheery good-bye in a tone gentle as a caress, was carried back to the wings and thence to her hotel.

Undoubtedly a conjurer of the most advanced type was he, who, for a brief season at the Music Hall mystified his fair beholders, and on a particular occasion fairly terrorized them. At one part of his performance he said solemnly, "Ladies and gents, I have in my hand an orange. There is, I grieve to say, a certain madame sitting amongst

you who has been unfaithful to her husband. I am about to throw this orange at that lady." He accompanied the ominous warning by raising his fruit-filled hand, as if to take unerring aim, and then—all the wives ducked their heads. The gag at once became unpopular, causing husbands to ponder deeply, and those mesdames who had been stung cursed him from the corners of their rosy mouths.

Of all the actors and actresses who visited Johannesburg in my time, Genevieve Ward was by far the greatest, the lady's performance of Stéphanie de Mohrivart in *Forget-me-not* creating something like a sensation in the Golden City. Her company, too, was an excellent one, the leading man being that sound actor and sterling fellow, W. H. Vernon. Miss Ward stayed at the Grand National Hotel, and as my wife and I constantly called at the establishment to see friends, we became acquainted with that accomplished tragedienne, who took a liking to Mrs. Cohen, and used to call on us.

The talented Americaine (daughter of an erstwhile Governor of New York), though very austere in her manner, was captivating, though scarcely cheering; a grande dame to her fingers' ends, a highly educated and cultured lady, received by the highest circles in London and elsewhere, she certainly was something very superior to any leader of fashion seen up to then in Witwatersrand. But though the actress seemed delightful to those who understood her, she was hardly so to those who didn't. She absolutely overwhelmed me with her dignity, and I always felt inclined in her presence to sit on the edge of a chair; once I tried to tell a tale—but she froze me up at the first few words.

Miss Ward was also a severe disciplinarian in her theatre, and highly censorious of men and their doings—as for the women they had to mind their p's and q's. For all that, Madame must have had a warm and emotional side, as witness the perturbation and intense grief she displayed when a member of her company, a Miss St. Ange, was killed through a carriage accident during her season in Johannesburg. The night before the disaster the poor girl had

appeared as Ophelia at the Standard Theatre. Miss Ward was, of course, a rare *artiste*, but, in my opinion, only great in *Forget-me-not*, though Longfellow, the poet, had declared, "She is the greatest actress and the most artistically faultless I have ever seen." I thought her Lady Macbeth hard as nails, her Meg Merrilies unconvincing, and when I saw the lady play Volumnia I was glad to get home; I fancied she was scolding me. Fine though her acting was, it lacked the charm and femininity of Ellen Terry or Mrs. Kendal.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

Early Racing—A Rogue in the Box—Johannesburg Turf Club—The Sport of Kings—Kruger and Sport—Some Sportsmen—Tracker—Episodes—Racing Customs—A Prayerful Punter—Mug Hunting—A "Presentation"—Natty Bost—Banks.

JOHANNESBURG'S introductory race meeting was held in 1886 and soon the sport of kings and of other noblemen developed into the greatest pastime on the Rand: all classes backed their fancy, went in for lotteries, and bought sweep tickets in galore. The course was an El Dorado for the "under and over" and roulette men, who made a pot of money at every meeting, consequently welshing was at a discount. Nearly all the jockeys were amateurs, and for the matter of that some of the stewards not less so, if you reckon how ignorant they were of the game—but a few good men cropped up as the years sped.

At the beginning the sport was a burlesque or worse, and at the mercy of a loud tongued blustering clique; even the judge sometimes betted out of the box. Talking of judges here is a racing item I must not omit. Two men, bosom friends, engaged in illicit diamond dealing at Kimberley, were arrested and tried for the offence; one was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, the other escaped punishment by the merest chance, and found his way to the Rand where he burst forth as a "sport" of purest ray serene. The convicted man after serving his sentence went into business, and *longo intervallo* also came to Johannesburg, in which saintly city his old-time mate refused to know him. Now it happened that the ex-prisoner ran a pony on an outside Rand race-course at which meeting his I.D.B. pal was the grinning and resplendent judge. The ex-prisoner's pony won, yet the rogue in the judge's box gave the race to the second animal much to the exasperation of the spectators.



But the cheated owner had his revenge, for before a crowd of sympathisers and jeering race-goers, he shouted to the distinguished sportsman, "You're a fine judge, you are! I think you'd make a better criminal. You know you ought to be where I've come from."

During one of the initial meetings a horse called Black Prince came in first, but when he went to the scales the rider failed to draw the weight by more than a pound. As all the "heads" had backed him this wouldn't do, and although a couple of stewards protested, the owner prised off the horse's shoes and put them into the scale—the burden was reached and Black Prince declared the winner.

In 1889 the Turf Club leased 160 morgen on the farm Turffontein and laid out the present course. The first Johannesburg Handicap was won by Mr. Casey's Tracker, ridden by Mr. Charles Wood, the jockey being presented with £2,000 by the grateful owner—who borrowed it back within a couple of days. From its birth the Turf Club flourished and went from success to success until to-day, thanks to the gold deposits under the course, it is the richest racing club in the world. You would hardly imagine so from its little vagaries, or if you had known some of the leading lights in my time.

When I said *au revoir* to the Rand, all racing authority seemed to be centred in the person of a "sportsman" named Charles Marx, a squire born in Germany, who introduced and directed Prussian methods flavoured with the goose-step. During a dispute with the bookmakers and others, he declared in hoch-a-doodle style, "If you do not behave yourselves I vill sthoph die racing altogether in Jo'-burg; see you."

Could the secret history of the Johannesburg turf be printed, it would make startling and thrilling reading. The plots planned were models of ingenuity, system and audacity, the projects born of cunning and deception unbelievable, the pulling of horses and old-fashioned tricks mere child's play compared with the methods employed by those whose

motto was heads I win, tails you lose, and who would sacrifice any human being to the pursuit of their schemes. They were called clever men, but criminal instinct is not the same as brains.

There was none of that camaraderie on the Rand shown sometimes on the English turf between racing magnates and "bookies." "Give us a tip, *my lord*," cried a gentleman of the pencil to Leopold de Rothschild, "a *shabbas* tip for the wife." "Buy Rio Tintos," returned Mr. Rothschild genially. The bookmaker did and made a fortune.

In Johannesburg on another morning stood, lugubrious and silent, a solemn metallician, guarding his pitch.

"Why aren't you shouting, Mossy?" enquired a magnanimous magnate. "Lost your voice?"

"Yes, ain't been able to speak since I bought your 'Golden Drops,'" replied Mossy snuffling.

"Come all right, old chap; buy some 'Silver Balms.'"

"No fear," said the other hastily. "Manny's got some of them; he's in the hospital."

Kruger was not a sport and gave no encouragement to manly, or for the matter of that womanly, recreations except smoking like Hades. He liked no music, save Leyds' Dutch fiddle, to which he figuratively danced, no books, no theatres, saw no beauty or witchery in flowers or femininity. Shown a portrait of monocled Chamberlain and told the cost of the orchid Joe was wearing, he remarked, "What folly to pay so much for so small a thing," and pointing to the eye-glass added, "And he can only see half of it, for he has only one eye." A winsome wench instead of heating his grim nature froze him four degrees below zero; his homely wife apart, there was no woman—neither Dulcinea nor Fair Rosamund—in Kruger's life, her radiant figure not even minted on his coins; that is perhaps why they did not multiply, and so practically became as dead as the dodo. Only one divinity—Evangeline *née* Mary Jane—tried to flirt with Kruger, and did so because her husband was a concession hunter. It happened at a deceptive reception held in a cloud of chatter.

"President," cooed the lady slavey, prettily putting on "side," cocking up her nose and fishing for an invitation, "I should awfully love to see your entresol—" no answer from startled Paul who sought safety in snuff, "—then we could have a putzy *tête-à-tête*."

Great Tater! His Honour glared, sneezed and grunted harshly, loudly, reprovingly, "*Blij stil!*" (Be quiet.)

The Lady of Shalott, shocked into aristocratic exaggeration, ejaculated, "Sorry, I'm shaw," as Kruger waddled away, graceful as an elephant. Her hubby at this moment made his bandy-legged appearance, and seeing the receding figure of the President, said to his perspiring and indignant spouse, "Wouldn't you like, my precious, to rejoin his Honour?"

"No damn fear!" yapped Mary Jane emphatically.

I never saw his honour at any sporting or athletic meeting, and there were many sprinters and cricketers of repute in Johannesburg, notably amongst others, Farrar and Tancred, who received no recognition at the hands of the President. Boxing was not "turned down" by the Boer Government—probably they thought it all for the better that the Uitlanders should batter one another. The old man absolutely refused to patronise racing. "Why should I visit your meetings?" he said. "I know one horse is faster than the others, why therefore should I go to see it come in first; when he does, that does not make him a better animal." Poor Kruger, did he imagine for one moment that the swiftest gee-gee always won—and he a student of the Bible? Without a doubt if Oom Paul had only chosen to taste life, been welshed at racing, diddled at faro, entertained by Cleopatra (or sweet Fat Fanny) and stopped a playful punch or two on his honourable nose while boxing, he might have become a man of the world, and the Boer war been averted.

I carry always in my mercurial mind an affectionate recollection of different racing men who lived in Johannesburg in the early nineties, and though, of course, some of them were not born in a library or free from faults, it is a

fact that many were remarkable for fair play, generosity and that instinctive kindness which somehow or other is inherent in people of sporting proclivities.

Old Billy Chauncey—I suppose he's old now ; it is such a long time ago that I have forgotten—who lately resided in Ireland, was a splendid type of a racing man. Gifted with a good heart and glorying in it, he had no rancour except for the daring individual brave enough to refuse to take a pinch of snuff from him. Len Homan, who bought Candlemas, became a leading patron of the turf ; and Grey Rat-tray, notwithstanding detractors, I found a quiet inoffensive gentleman, who loved his whisky, yet never turned a hair over a hogshead of it. The late Bob Findley, owner of Lammas, brings to memory a rattling fine chap. When he ran this crack for one of the Johannesburg handicaps, he gave me a commission to manipulate the animal as I liked, and trusted implicitly to my honour. The horse ran second ; he lost £2,000, and, refusing to go over the accounts, handed me a cheque, as well as a handsome diamond pin. Bill Stayt was also as straight as a gun-barrel ; and others, with A. C. Harris—a rotund and splendid personality—are well remembered.

Abe Bailey, though hot stuff and up at times against the wind and weather of public opinion, proved himself a keen sportsman, willing enough, so they said, to put his hands in his pockets without advertising the fact. Farrar, a silent, reserved personage, was at all time able to hold his own, and so very difficult to outwit that he earned the respect of his competitors and had a large following amongst the public. A brave, intelligent man, his name will always be recalled whenever South African politics and sport are spoken of by the fireside. Under a cold and reserved demeanour, the gentle George had yet a kindly heart built to forgive an affront or grace a gratitude. I call to mind when I had offended him quite unintentionally, but yet unjustly, that I was at the Park Station, Johannesburg, seeing some friends off. Farrar was starting that very day by the same: rain *en route* for England, and he came up

and, putting out his hand, said: "Although we have not got on very well together, I want to wish you good-bye and good luck." He could not have punished me more for my indiscretion.

The Natal division, headed by Jack Peters and Ostler, were good-natured, popular individuals, and the jockeys and trainers were not at all bad. Purcell, who rode mostly for Chauncey, was simplicity itself, thoroughly trustworthy and a perfect horseman; but when I went to Johannesburg first, the pets of the pigskin were Longhurst, Badger, and others whom I forget. No more whole-hearted creature lived than the trainer Salmon, who once told me that Godwin was all right except that his "legament" was out of order, a veterinary disease that was somewhat obscure; and as for the clever, and silently witty Jim Crow, his equal as a faithful henchman could not be found.

Barnato had bought the horse Tracker, which was a raging favourite at 6 to 4 for a Johannesburg handicap some weeks before the race, and this same Jim Crow was the trainer. Woolf Joel one morning inquired if I would do something important for him. As Woolfie was outwardly a very charming man, and distinctly esteemed in sporting circles in Johannesburg, I agreed. He then imparted the dire information that Tracker was hopelessly lame in the stable, and asked me to get what money I could out of the animal before he scratched it. At this time I used to employ two or three bookmakers to bet on my behalf on the course and in the town, each of whom I had to guarantee to the Club for two thousand pounds (I think that was the sum), and, of course, find the money for their satchels. That Joel should come to me was rather a compliment, considering that the books I controlled were all bad against the favourite, Tracker. I said to him, "Why don't you go to Benny Lazarus; he is a great friend of yours?"

"No," Woolfie replied, "I want you to do this."

I immediately set to work, and in twenty-four hours, without lessening the price of the horse, contrived to

recover a deal of his money. On the second or third day of the operation, I was on my way home to Kerk Street in a kind of bus which had just started running, when I found myself seated next to good old Chauncey, who had, as usual, a couple of horses engaged in the handicap. Billy, on seeing me, proffered the contents of his snuff-box, which I could only refuse at the risk of my life; so I took a pinch and, Washington-like, declared I liked it.

"Ah!" quoth Chauncey, tapping the little box and beaming, "I wish I knew what you know about Tracker; have another pinch?"

I did, and it nearly blew my head off.

"Have another go," advised the genial snuffer; "it will pull you round."

"No," I replied, "I can't; it makes me sneeze."

"It wouldn't make you sneeze half as much as you would make me sneeze if you would tell me about Tracker."

I said, "I'll tell you all about him; he's a very good horse."

"Great Jumbo!" exclaimed Chauncey, full of the despotism of worldly circumstances. "I knew that without wasting good snuff."

At all events, I didn't tell him, a fact I have regretted ever since, because although I got some of Woolfie Joel's money back before the horse was scratched, I never received a farthing for my pains. And Billy was such a good chap, and the Barnatos such an unprofitable crowd.

Poor Barney could never bear to lose, and if there was anything more dreadful to his soul than losing it was parting, which he never did if he could possibly help it. One day on the Johannesburg racecourse he backed a horse, I think called Friendship. As the gee-gees came tearing up the straight I, who had my glasses fixed on the race, exclaimed "Friendship's beat, Friendship's beat."

"Don't say that, you blithering idiot," exclaimed the bereaved one pleadingly, "don't say that, why *I've* backed it."

I knew a very respectable bookmaker, and in himself an

exceedingly good fellow, yclept Abe Goldman. This metallician had, in the course of his profession, laid a German brewer, called Gundlefinger, or similar name, five hundred to twenty-five about something for the Johannesburg Handicap. It seems that the Teuton had never backed a horse before, but hearing of the immense fortunes amassed by racing speculators, he had been persuaded to take a maiden dive into the lucky bag. As the German went away from the accommodating bookmaker our sporting maltster remarked impressively, "Now, Mr. Goldman, don't forget I have backed the horse to *vin*." Well, the horse lost, and when Goldman went for his money Mr. Gundlefinger was aroused to furious indignation, and smacking his two broad hands together ejaculated, as if putting a stopper on the whole argument, "Did I or did I not back that horse to *vin*?"

Goldman replied, "Certainly you backed the horse to win."

"Then," said the brewer, "did it *vin*?"

"No."

"Then if I backed it to *vin*, and it didn't *vin*, how could I lose—did you ever hear such tings? I did not back that horse to lose."

Goldman, if I remember aright, brought the case before the committee, and, of course, won it, but the sporting brewer always said that he had been done out of twenty-five pounds.

In the early, rosy, racy days of Johannesburg a bookie named Joe Jacobs of Birmingham, a straightforward, trustworthy man, was entrusted with an old-time commission, i.e. to lay one horse and back the other, both animals, be it mentioned, belonging to the same owner and running in the same race. This gentleman, Mynheer A. C. Harris, one of the best, kindest, and most popular of Rand sportsmen (in after years a racing partner with Mr. Eckstein, of the firm of Werner, Beit & Co.), instructed this Joe Jacobs, who was his bookmaking commissioner, to lay his chestnut horse Stockwell for all he could (and in these days a popular favourite such as Stockwell was no mean thing to have, in

racing parlance, "in the bag"), and to back Mariner, his second string, with the money he got out of his other gee-gee. Besides which Harris, who was a courageous gambler, had "a parcel" on the horse with the seafaring name. Well, the deed was done truly and worthily. Mariner started favourite, and in a desperate finish between four—heads only dividing them—Stockwell was returned the winner, the good thing being third. Needless to say, there was much gnashing of teeth, but gentle Harris, who was a Colonial Dutchman of the good old philosophical school, with his long, mahogany-red beard, brown face and sunny smile, simply shrugged his shoulders, and, remarking "Bad luck," paid up his two or three thousand pounds without a murmur or regret.

All racing Johannesburg was agog when Barnato imported a high-priced racehorse named Overveen, which was, so far as I know, by the Devil out of Mrs. Manning, but, be that as it may, it is a fact that the racing public, with their patriotic liking for everything British, backed the expensive, but unknown, equine hero for pounds, shillings, and pence. On the day of the big race, I stood with Barney on the Johannesburg grand stand to watch the struggle. As the horses went to the post, the financier, full of perspiration and prodigious anxiety, snatched a pair of race glasses from my hand and exclaimed, "Tell me, tell me, Loo, what are my colours?" Overveen was last.

For many years I went halves with a Mr. David Hart in sundry bookmaking speculations, and a more upright chap it would be impossible to find. He was mine host of the Barnato bar, and his character was such, and his honesty so unimpeachable, that he had gathered unto himself a lucrative connection. On one of the Johannesburg handicaps we had, as luck would have it, made a most disastrous book, and there seemed no hope of getting out of it. I remember a few days before the race entering his bar to have a small bottle, which I invariably did before going on 'Change, when I noticed a truly lugubrious look clouding David's features.



"I've bad news for you," quoth Mr. Hart, rubbing his forehead and mournfully wagging his head; "we're going to lose a lot of money on this book. You can reckon it all done in."

"But what's happened?" I said uneasily, expecting to hear of dire misfortune.

"Don't ask me," he replied. "It's too awful for anything; we're out of luck and I've done a bloomer, you can take it from me."

"Well, great Scott, tell me the worst."

"I will," said he, in a mysterious whisper. "*The wife had twins this morning.*" But will you believe it that on that bad book we had a "skinner," for Tester won and the pair of us drank many a bottle to the health of the twins, one of whom, a charming young lady, I met two years ago in London.

There lives in my thoughts another sportsman who was quite a good fellow, though he had four weaknesses—viz. bucking up to the ladies, rattling the dice, backing horses, and worshipping religion. He said his prayers morning and night, after going through a prodigious amount of courting, dicing and other pursuits. One evening I called on the reveller, having heard that he had been having a bad time, and when I entered his sleeping apartment he was sitting on the edge of the bed in his night-dress, cap on head, devoutly praying. As soon as my friend saw me he waved his hand as a signal that I should not interrupt, and went on chanting orisons in a full voice, as if I had not been present. After he had finished the Hebraic part of his devotions, the religious one fervently concluded thus in English: "God bless my dear father and mother, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and make me a good man, and oh, great Lord, do let Chanticleer win the Johannesburg Handicap on Wednesday."

I said, "My dear chap, that horse has not got an earthly. I'll bet you £100 to £10."

"All right," he replied, "dab it down and you may be sorry."

The horse won, and when I paid him, he said, "There you are," wagging his head to and fro solemnly. "I told you not to do it; what's the good of flying in the face of the Lord?"

Bookmakers, considering circumstances, made few bad debts on the Rand, and when they did, it was generally with the newcomers or remittance men who had boosted themselves into credit by their supposed relationship to the aristocracy, or through being temporary members of the Rand Club, and thus attracting credit. Some of these new chums, quite honourable fellows, had been made stalking horses by recognised Randite owners, who used them to boom certain animals so that they could get on the second string—the Simon Pure—at remunerative odds, and net their share of the public money invested on the other. Following their own plan, they tipped these sprigs of nobility certainties, i.e. certainties so far as *their* pockets were concerned.

Take them as a body, the Rand bookmakers may be described as not a bad lot, but their vagaries were now and again peculiar. There sojourned a man in Johannesburg who had been a very merry and liberal punter, but as usual had gone broke over "good things." With commendable zeal the Gentlemen of the Turf and Knights of the Cross, to show their appreciation of his dashing qualities, suggested the donation of an honorarium, which Mr. Bost denounced as useless as "he can't play it." However, the good-hearted bookies invited the generous though unfortunate backer to a grand dinner, replete with roasts, sparkling wines, and persiflage strong enough to make a coster blush. More than that, the distinguished guest at an interesting moment was presented by the eminent sportsmen with a gold watch, inscribed with tributes to his high character, punctuality, and deeds of daring on the emerald turf. As much overcome by the stupendous honour conferred on him as by the fumes of strong liquor, and the fact of getting anything back from his "bookies," the esteemed and much be-praised visitor talked himself silly and fell fast asleep with

the presentation watch in his inside pocket. When he awoke it had disappeared, and the bottom fell out of his world.

Mr. Natty Bost could hardly read or write, yet was good at figures, consequently soon after his arrival on the Rand he became a bookmaker. Notwithstanding his imperfect knowledge of syntax and prosody, Natty loomed large as a walking racing-calendar, could repeat all the winners of the English classic events for the last generation, and was therefore greatly in demand and regarded by his pals as a genius. Once in a saloon bar a group of gentry of the pencil were listening to a newcomer engaged in showing off, to their detriment, his varied comprehension of history to which by some strange chance the conversation had drifted. "Who knows anything about the kings of England?" he cried challengingly.

"Me," replied a shabby gin-drinking person with a cold in his nose and a heat in his eye. "George the First, George the Second, George the Third, George the Four——"

"Oh, stop that curriculum," cried the clever one, stirring a shiver, "the only one amongst you that might know something of them is Bost—heard him roll off twenty-five Derby winners yesterday. He *has* got a memory. Who succeeded Charles the First, Bost?"

Natty, feeling it was "up to him," and impressed by the ease with which the House of Hanover had been delivered, took a chance and blurted "Charles the Second."

"Righto, I knew you'd be there—and after Charles the Second?"

"Go it, Bost!" cried the crowd.

"Charles the Third, of course," replied the encouraged Natty with some dubiety.

"Wrong. Let's try French history. Who married Napoleon the First?"

"I don't know and what's more I don't care. Why the 'ell should I? I ain't a anniversary man!" protested Mr. Bost, throwing up the sponge.

Price—I think that's his name—a parachutist, made his first descent at the Wanderers' Club, to the general

amazement of the public, and more particularly of that of Bost, who screwed his upturned face into the blue sky and marvelled at the shapeless body of the professor.

"Is it a man or woman?" somebody questioned.

"For my part," said Natty, shading his eyes, nose in air, and agog with excitement, "I'll bet it's a fieldmale."

As the parachutist was dropping to earth the applause became tumultuous, and Natty wagged his black curly head in sympathy.

"How would you like to be up in that?" asked one of his cronies.

"Me? Not me. I'm not Niaggerer; I'd rather be on terra cotta anytime. I'm bumfounded!" Thus did Mr. Bost, no less than Professor Price, reach the superincumbent mass of things.

Everybody liked Natty because he was such a comical little fellow, so extraordinarily ignorant, and did such funny things without in the least realising that they were out of the common. Festive, fat and jolly, he loved to come rolling home in the morning, much to the annoyance of his wife who desired to keep him in order. A few weeks after his arrival in Johannesburg, on the evening of his initiation into the active ranks of the bookies, he returned to his abode in the early hours and crept quietly into the matrimonial chamber.

"What's the time?" asked Mrs. Bost in a tone suggestive of complaint.

"Just eleven, Rachel," replied Natty.

"But there's a cock crowing," retorted his good lady, who though half asleep was wide awake.

"They crow that way in Johannesburg," said Mr. Bost with fine effrontery, and to himself, "I'll have that 'ere cock's throat cut this very day; he's a policeman."

Here's one more tale about Natty before I banish him from these pages.

Bost was a devoted husband notwithstanding his levity, and when his better half was ill he attended to her with tender solicitude. "The greatest danger to your wife,"

said the doctor, "is a continuance of insomnia. Be sure and give her this medicine punctually at five o'clock." On the tick Natty bustled into madame's room. For the first time for days she had fallen into a placid sleep. But hubby had his orders, so he shook her gently by the shoulders and awakened her, saying, "Now, Rachel, it's time to take your medicine."

There dwelt on the Rand a young Lochinvar called Galletowski, who, one gloomy morning, while eating a basin o' klise (which is to Yid what porridge is to Scot), received a letter from a wiseacre of a bank manager informing him that £10,000 had been cabled to his credit. As Mr. Galletowski did not know of anybody in his family, though descended from the Maccabees, who possessed ten thousand farthings, he was somewhat puzzled at the Arabian night advent of ten thousand shiners. I am glad to say that our Aberdonian had honest instincts, and in obedience to them, he walked to the bank, and told the manager that he had not expected just at that moment to receive ten thousand pounds from his pa or ma or—— But the intendant cut him short and very kindly insisted that the money was his, so Galletowski, with deep emotion, suddenly remembered that somebody years ago—perhaps his Aunt Rifka—had owed him something and probably this draft was part of it.

So the bank paid over the £10,000, and Galletowski, seeing visions of Elysian fêtes, jog-trotted away singing ye "Banks and Brays" and feeling like the Bashaw of Bagdad or the Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo. Greater honour in Johannesburg had no man than Mr. Galletowski for a brief period. A few weeks afterwards the bank discovered that a mistake had been made and sent round a portmanteau to get the shekels back. But Galletowski said that he had lost them on the Stock Exchange, and the banking institution had to suffer the damage and everybody felt sorry for poor Galletowski.

Writing about banks reminds me that there was another Johannesburg chap I knew well named Otto Elkan, who,

on an historical occasion went to the Standard Bank and asked for an overdraft. The manager, Henderson, politely listened to the gentleman's request and enquired, "How much do you want, Mr. Elkan?" to which Elkan briskly replied, "How much have you got?"

Subsequently this same Teuton, who, it appears, had a great fancy for calling on banks, once more attended and demanded a further advance. But the manager this time was not so complacent and abruptly refused his request. Our Mr. Elkan at once waxed wroth and said, "Look here, Henderson, if you're not civil, I'll remove my overdraft."

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Rand Club—Utopia—Members—A Clubite in London—A Masonic Ball—The Lady of Posen—Isaac was a Welshman—Kimberley—I.D.B. Stories—Captain Von Brandis.

I DO not know much about the origin of the Rand Club, except it had been hatched in a one-storey building which later became the Goldfields Hotel, when the new ark, prospering with the gold industry, removed to palatial premises in Commissioner Street, and a new assortment of hashes, braises, ragouts and fricassees.

The Rand Club was a great institution, assumedly the Legion of Honour of the city, and neither hero nor titled person escaped it. According to many associates of Arcadia the five great powers were England, France, Germany, Abe Bailey and the Rand Club—capital R for the Rand Club, small r for the republic. But really it was like most resorts of the kind in colonial mushroom towns, suppositiously comprised of the cream of the population, but as the population, in this instance, was very skim milk, the quality, condensed or in the raw, did not amount to much.

Some of the more or less prosperous store-keepers were members, also solicitors, doctors, a sprinkling of Government officials, a few penmen of the Dormer type, company promoters, stockbrokers, sportsmen, agents, and a select coterie of distinguished visitors. A distinguished visitor was, in many cases, the fool of the family sent to sea, or the ne'er-do-well who, having failed to live without work in England, had been shipped abroad to "rough it." He commenced to do so by displaying an eye-glass, twirling his stick, talking in a Munchausen strain of His People, His School, His Relations. Here is a fat catch indeed; *O gemini!* he is carted off to *the* Club, and as his name has an historic flavour he is set up as a visiting member.

The first Yid who had entered for the Club stakes (and chops) experienced a bad start and a rotten race. He got black-balled. With lugubrious mien he sought his proposer (to whom he had done favours) and said in a hushed whisper, "Dennis, tell me the truth, did I have many black pills?" "Ye did, me bhoy, as many black pills as ye'd foind in a sheep-fold."

It was very difficult at the opening of the new club for a Jew to acquire the right of entrance into its hallowed precincts, unless his name had become Montmorency. After a while the sponsors hit upon the ingenious idea of electing a couple of the Chosen People; this was distinctly a great plan, as one of them defended the right of entry against his co-religionists with astonishing vigour, and stood guard upon the stairs like Horatius defending the bridge. Verily the surest method to keep Jews out of a club is to admit one; he will see to the rest.

At long last, as was inevitable, Israelites found their way into the magic circle, but they were mostly Germans, or of German descent, who all became Imperialists, and passed the watchword to the Teutonic small fry outside, those young Siegfrieds, who spoke as if they were descended from Boadicea. And thus it came about that Merriman (the Labouchere of South Africa) exclaimed to Lady Sarah Wilson, "Imperialist! that word and Empire have been so done to death by every wretched little Jew stockbroker in this country that I am fairly sick of them." But a few, a very few, English middle-class Hebrews found their way inside the Club, and an English middle-class Jew is one of the most trustworthy and honest of folk.

The Haunt claimed to be the headquarters of finance, law, mining, literature, medicine, sport and scandal. What the Club thought one day, the Rand accepted as gospel the next—so the head bottle-washers said. But was it so? It is true that shares were boomed that seldom rose, clients secured and legally handled, articles written but never published, patients cured who never were ill, and scandal bred in vinous fumes.



"Did you hear about Mrs. Jones and Brown? Well——"

"Oh, go on! I can't believe it."

"Don't say that. My dear sir, I got it from *the Club*. Rhodesians will soar next week; had it straight from Abey."

"Oh, my hat!" (As if he expected a gust of wind.)

The Rand Club exquisite was so obsessed with the magnitude of his position—of *my Club*—that when he visited England he sometimes had the splendid tradition inscribed on his card.

"Say Mr. Snobbleton of the Rand Club, Johannesburg, has arrived."

In verity the Rand Resort was a glorious edifice, a rendezvous of all the talents, yet it has in its long life produced few men good enough to impel another to put a bunch of forget-me-nots anywhere but on his coat tails. But I write of many years ago—perhaps all is altered now, though a bad hen lays bad eggs, cackle they ever so proudly.

Of all the merry chaps on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, none equalled poor Coffee Adams, who, you remember, fell during the siege of Ladysmith. Adams was not fond of money nor a particularly good business man, his thoughts as a rule being intent on some harmless devilry or practical joking. As is oftentimes the case, Coffee had a marked predilection for the society of Jews, and was seldom out of the company of those of the better class. One evening a Masonic ball—"a most charming affair"—was given in Johannesburg, and to it came the *élite* of the Yiddish aristocracy, their wives and daughters—which meant that you had on view flowers of feminine loveliness from the cheese-faced hoyden of Holland to the snub-nosed madchen of Prussia, from a Polish maiden of Krako to her more robust sister from Riga. Thus it was that the dark eyes of the Jewish ladies stirred the hearts of beholders, and more especially that of Coffee Adams.

It was a very well attended ball, and although the Hebrew element was conspicuous, that is not to say that Rand "aristocrats" were absent. I mind meeting at this *reunion* a young *beau* well known in London who espoused an

actress, the lady subsequently divorcing him and marrying a nobleman. Well, this beardless fellow, who had a distinctly effeminate appearance, arrayed himself in female attire, and thus disguised went to the dance, and it is said that he found his way into the ladies retiring and dressing-rooms. There was much scandal about the matter, and the prying gentleman narrowly escaped a good thrashing, which he thoroughly deserved.

General conversation ensued at the festive board. Mr. Baruch talked of his clothes store, Mr. Yechezkel of his groceries, Mr. Lazarus of his shares, Nathan Yukoff of horses, and the Mesdames Shmolski and Geetler of Dutch Debby's twins, which Mrs. Shalotten said was "undelicate."

"My trouble! But they was born in wedlock," affirmed Mrs. Shmolski.

"Nothing of the kind, so don't indiarupt—they was born in Warsaw," said Mrs. Shalotten.

"I thought he was English," ventured the other.

"*Umberufen*; can't you see, my dear, his pronunciation ain't like ours."

I have other memories of this feast. As Mr. Anton Peleg and his son Solomon left the ball-room at the end of the festivities to proceed home, they saw in the distance the flames of a burning building.

"By my life if I don't think that's Mo Aaron's place on fire," remarked Solomon to his father.

"No, my boy," replied Peleg, "he's too rich."

"Well," rejoined Solomon, a light in his eye, "I wouldn't wonder mineself if it ain't *your* shop as is afire."

"I hope so," said Peleg fervently, and his son added, "God send it."

I do not know whether you have noticed that when a clergyman falls, he falls for ever, or if a military officer should lose his probity, he invariably becomes one of the least honourable and most ungrateful of mortals. Of course, diamond and gold mining localities like Kimberley and Johannesburg, from their very birth attracted a certain number of army men, but generally they were a great deal

better out of the service than in it, and so far as my experience goes, their presence as a rule added neither lustre to the diamond town nor refined the brazen gilt of the golden city.

There was once stationed in a Cape colonial trading centre a gallant British regiment, whose dashing leaders were remarkable for their easy mode of living, and easier mode of paying. In this town of Hochstadt (the name will pass) lived a certain Jewish trader born in Wales, a decent and honest fellow, diminutive in stature but big in heart, who became quite a favourite with the military, the officers loving his company well, his money weller. It was in the prime of summer time that a certain captain, belonging to a crack battalion, visited our Hebrew friend, and telling him he was in great trouble, begged the loan of a horse as he had to clear away for monetary reasons that very night. Friend Isaac, although the gentleman of war was deeply in his debt, lent him the animal, and it was with unmixed feelings that Isaac of Hochstadt, heard the next morning that the officer had used it to enable him to run away with another man's wife. The splendid Bois Guilbert, with his stolen lady love, as might be expected, made for jocund Johannesburg, that Boulogne of the stranger who has done something wrong. Wonderful to relate, the showy warrior thrived and became a great swell, mixing with the best people, or those who thought they were the best, an observation which requires minute analysis.

In due course low-statured Isaac of Hochstadt, a prosperous man, arrived in Johannesburg, and gentle though he was, let me tell you as they say in Wales, Ike thought a very great deal of himself. One evening the kindly trader sauntered into a select billiard room, and there surrounded by the flower of the Rand, the honest merchant beheld the levanting officer in full bloom of prosperity and arrogance.

"Hullo, Bois Guilbert," exclaimed Isaac, "how are you?" holding out his hand in cheery anticipation of a grip.

The grateful captain extended not his hand in return, but with a far-away look went on playing, and then on second thoughts suddenly tapping the floor with his cue, he turned to Isaac and said, impertinently thrusting out a jewelled finger, "Ah, do you recognise this ring that I bought at your store in Hochstadt?"

"Yes," replied Isaac, of Cardiff, with a sweet smile, and a voice loud enough for all the company to hear the words roll off his palate, "I remember perfectly well, for you never paid me for it, nor for my horse that you bunked away with."

I do not know much about the police court, criminal procedure, or prison in Johannesburg, but I do know that all three were a distinct advance for the better on the methods and practices which obtained in Kimberley during the seventies. The Diamond-Field's police of that period were inefficient, the magistrates untrained, prejudiced, and the jail a sink of inequity and insubordination, though in 1877 the authorities, to prove they understood their business, kept a tread-mill there.

In those pioneer days, illicit diamond dealing was punished by fine, and the diggers, rightly feeling that their interests were neglected, took the law into their own hands. So evening after evening, as the suspects were smelt out, there were burnings and floggings galore, niggers almost beaten to death, and I have frequently seen white men thrown across a barrel and thrashed unmercifully.

The detective force was represented by a solitary individual called Spurgeon, whose long brown beard was his only claim to notoriety, and though his name conjures up oratorical distinction, *our* Mr. Spurgeon's reticence was angelic, his nose being his principal organ of speech. Soon imprisonment was substituted for fines, and the detective force augmented, but I.D.B. (almost regarded as a venial offence) had taken a firm hold of the community, and as it expanded, so did the penalties become more severe, and the officers more numerous and alert.

Without a doubt it was a difficult organisation to tackle,

and the heads of it were quite a match for the trappers who had yet to learn their vocation. Giddy, a right good man, was chief magistrate at the time, 1872, I first set foot on the diamond-fields, but I.D.B. was new to his legal training, as it well might be to all the world. Succeeding him came D'Arcy, Truter, Scholtz, Buskyes and McKenna. Dear me, but McKenna was something to wonder at ; he had been a sergeant of police, and his claim to the magistracy was founded principally on the solid fact that he had, like Captain Cook, bravely voyaged to Australia, and brought back an old fellow of sixty named Lyons, charged with some trivial offence against the Diamond Act. Absolutely ignorant, the new official had a fixed idea that every human being who stepped into the dock was a first class criminal.

"Are you guilty or not guilty?" menacingly questioned McKenna, with a lying-in-wait sort of expression.

"If you please, Sir——" quaked the prisoner.

"Not another word," roared the erudite judiciary, "I heard all about it last night. Two months hard labour."

Law is uncertain in all countries, but you couldn't trust it in open daylight on the diamond-fields: here are stories.

There flourished in those golden times a certain well-known detective, named Tommy if you like, whose conspicuous ability as a thief catcher was marred in a measure by his short-sightedness. To follow my tale, it should be borne in mind that in the very early days of Kimberley there was neither a space nor yard adjacent to the police court, wherein prisoners could await their turn to appear before the learned magistrate. Consequently they had to line up in the street, as in a queue, and await the dread summons.

It happened one morning that our short-sighted Jonathan Wild was in charge, outside the court, of two Kaffirs charged with I.D.B. The wily natives, all docility, patiently watched their captor, and seizing an opportunity, decamped, and were not missed for some minutes. That same evening,

Tommy the detective was relating the occurrence to a commiserating adherent.

"Yes," said the 'tec, "I had removed my goggles for a second, and when I turned round the skellums had taken their blooming hook."

"My eye, you must have been in a funk," remarked the other.

"Well, I didn't like it, of course, as just as that moment their names were called for the beak."

"What did you do?" enquired his friend.

"Well, the only thing I could; I collared the first two niggers who happened to be passing by *and bundled them into the dock.*"

In the garden of my memories there dwells this daisy of a tale.

Herr Smidt, whose buxom wife kept a restaurant, had in a manner, contravened the diamond laws, and in consequence, like any other honest citizen, had to stand his trial. He was being tried by a jury, and in this respect was extremely fortunate, as trial by jury for I.D.B. offences did not long obtain in Kimberley. However, Herr Smidt was in the dock and looked as if he'd like to be out of it, for the case was going against him. During the interval allotted to luncheon, the jury by some chance, repaired to Mrs. Smidt's juicy restaurant for solid refreshment, and light potations. Not only were the roasts and the stews, on this auspicious day, of succulent quality, but they were served by Mrs. Smidt herself, who with her own fair hands inserted a forget-me-not in each blushing juryman's button-hole.

At the reassembling of court, one by one the flower-bedecked jurors filed into the box, all roast beef and forget-me-nots. But the funny thing about it is that the prisoner, prodigally beaming, also wore a forget-me-not, and he got off.

As Kimberley developed into law and order, some care was expended in training a special corps of detectives to cope with the prevailing industry. At the head of this

corps was a disagreeable person yclept Fry, whose chief object in life appeared to make himself generally disliked. As a Vidocq he was an utter failure and eventually got his congé. Among his subordinates were Fox (a ferocious bandy-legged cobbler of courage and resource), Izdebski (an honest man), Chadwick (who squinted yet walked straight), Charley Wilson, a decent chap, who crowed like a cock with a froggy throat at sight of a bad egg, and a sleuth-hound known as Collins, half a policeman and half a detective, except when throwing dice, then the Lord only knows what he was. There were others in the force like Mackintosh, Human, etc., but I never met them, so history is the poorer. As a general body they were fairly honest officials and did their duty to the best of their ability, but the black sheep of the flock accepted bribes, others bought illicitly themselves, while a couple became regular bandits.

If any reader imagines that only members of the underworld indulged in illicit buying, he may at once disabuse his mind of such an impression. Some of the "best people" had a shy at the pastime, and either went up like a rocket or came down like a stick. I call to mind one of these "best people," a Russian nobleman and a great swell to boot as all noblemen are, who was very much down on the illicit fraternity. He joyously acclaimed every I.D.B. conviction, no matter the circumstances, and affirmed with glowing enthusiasm that if he could have his way he would hang every man jack of them. A pedigree as long as a pig-tail is of no use to an empty stomach, so the patrician, who thought it dishonourable to work for money, finding himself short, went in for "the game," and one fine morning Beau Brummell himself was trapped. At his trial he made a freemason's sign to the magistrate, but the worthy functionary on that occasion was as blind as Nelson at Copenhagen, and sent the unfortunate nobleman to languish on the breakwater, where no doubt he had a pleasant rendezvous with the boys of the old brigade.

Many decent fellows drifted into the waters of Lethe from sheer lack of occupation, or from drink. But these

did not last long, it was the ferret-faced foreigners who mostly triumphed and eluded the breakwater. Youngsters again courted disaster through crass ignorance and a desire to get rich quick.

I recollect a new-comer to the Land of Diamonds who, suffering from this obsession, resolved to start business without further delay. So the day after his advent in Kimberley he set out on a voyage of discovery. Full of hope, he wandered around and about the City of Crooked Ways, until he came upon a compound which seemed to him a likely place, as it harboured several niggers of an ingratiating appearance. So in amongst them popped Mr. Get-Rich-Quick, and eventually purchased a diamond from one of them. As he was departing with his bargain, a bearded white man sprang up from goodness knows where, and accosted him. "I say young fellow," said Chadwick the detective—for he it was—"you've bought a diamond from my Kaffir." "And suppose I have," rejoined the would-be gem merchant in an aggrieved tone, and with contempt unfathomable, "*I paid him for it, didn't I?*"

Will it be believed that the pilgrim, for his initial diamond transaction, had invaded the headquarters of Kimberley's chief detective? The unlucky one got convicted.

Some of the diggers got I.D.B. on the brain, and saw a thief in every bush, whilst other erratic characters indulged in diamondiferous hallucinations, and owned a ton weight of gems in their imagination.

Everybody who was in Kimberley during the seventies knew the wild Irishman Paddy Murtha, the once proprietor of the Cavan Hotel, who used to go racing like a mad huntsman through the streets, to the discomfort and danger of pedestrians and the delight of dogs. He was a small thick-set chap, with a brogue of terrific flavour, always fighting, quarrelling, arguing, and never out of the police courts. Paddy would invoke or break the law on the slightest pretext, and became a periodical nuisance to solicitors, who pronounced him as tight-fisted as he was litigious. One day a large diamond was found on a Kaffir who had evidently



stolen it, and of course there was a long report of the case in the local newspapers. In due season the Kaffir was convicted, sentenced, and the diamond sequestered by the Crown. Then in stepped Murtha, who was also a licensed digger, into the law courts, and claimed the gem as his property. The judge listened solemnly to Pat's rigmarole for some time, and then addressing the voluble applicant, said, "But, Mr. Murtha, how do you know the diamond is yours?" "Shure, your Honour," returned Pat Murtha, "*I dreamt it.*"

I.D.B. indeed flourished nearly everywhere, and in the most unlikely places. Once there was a diamond floating about Kimberley gaol amongst the prisoners, and the detectives were informed. So they marked down the man who had the stone, but instead of looking Mo up in the cells they made him a trap without his knowledge. They reckoned that on the first opportunity he would sell it to one of the visitors. Now nearly all the I.D.B.'s in Kimberley were labelled by the detectives, and as one of the most daring—Rube—was a bosom friend of Mo who had the diamond, the d.'s waited in patience for his visit to the gaol. And sure enough, in a couple of days Rube and a pal drove up to see the prisoner.

Rube, a regular son of a pawn-ticket, had an interview with the martyred Mo, and after an affectionate farewell, joined his companion, who was waiting in a Cape cart for him outside the prison walls. Rube had hardly taken his seat in the vehicle when he winked at his friend, and opening his mouth, displayed a nice diamond therein. But almost before he could close his lips on the gem, there was a rush of men, the cart was surrounded by officers, and the two occupants seized. Rube, however, on catching sight of the police had, with rare presence of mind, spat the diamond into the road, where it was picked up by one of the detectives. The unfortunate Rube, chattering and showing his teeth like a prim monkey of ten, was taken back to the prison and awaited trial, but he gained his acquittal on the great day as there were two occupants of the car, and the prosecution

could not prove to which of them the gem belonged. So Rube escaped, and prospered exceedingly ever afterwards, which is a special blessing only vouchsafed to successful I.D.B.'s.

I knew a man, relative of a devil of a pot—a devil of a pot is a fellow with lots of money, and who thinks he has a hold of infernal life—who was tried for I.D.B. The accused pleaded, "I didn't buy," but was found guilty, on a certain Saturday, of the crime (which wasn't a crime at all, only a joyous and universal custom of the country), and was to come up to receive sentence on the following Monday, bail for his final appearance being fixed at £5,000.

Always a sensible chap, he said his holy prayers on Shabbas, and took, through the gentle winds of summer, his holier hook on Sunday—and who wouldn't? Which is to say that his prophetic uncle arranged with a credulous and venturesome mortal that he should, by the divine aid of a fast mule train, escort the distinguished delinquent to Delagoa Bay, and then ship him to Europe like crooked specie or a special goniva—goniva, my poor innocents, is the polite term used amongst the learned professors of the game to denote a stolen diamond. For this service, if successful, the land pilot was to be paid £1,200. It is a long way to Tipperary, but a longer and more expensive way to Lourenzo Marques, with twelve mules and sundry niggers to complete the equipment. Besides, there was the risk involved of conspiring to defeat the ends of justice.

However, the fugitive got away all right, landed in Europe disguised as a gentleman, was not recognised, and in course of time became a nabob. His saviour—I mean the gull who engineered his escape—received six hundred pounds on account of the job, and was told to call another day for the balance. He got tired of calling, and when some time after he wrote demanding what was due to him, the applicant was threatened with arrest for *blackmail*—and subsequently blew his brains out.

In connection with this case I should mention that during the trial of the gentleman who broke his word, the same

prophetic uncle of my story contrived a secret rendezvous on the veld with a public official, as false and wicked as Satan himself, who had much to do with the prosecution. They were soon as familiar as two fleas, spoke about the weather, Mrs. Smith's twins, and ordinary topics, but refrained from mentioning what was uppermost in their minds. Just before separating, the prophetic uncle, feeling the effects of "nothing doing," pointed to a ten bob scarf-pin which the other displayed on his manly bosom, and said, "That's a nice pin you're wearing, Mr. So-and-So; I'll give you five thousand pounds for it." But the P.O., having tender gills, refused to bite, didn't see the ready, and perhaps had a prophetic vision that the prophetic uncle might do to him what was done to the guide, philosopher and friend of the runaway. Again he might have thought that Uncle John was larking, the dear soul had a penchant that way, but none for carrying oof on his person. Moral: never do a good turn until you get the cash down, or you may find yourself in the pools of silence.

Trial by jury having died almost before it was born, the illicit planted their flag, which was as black as the Jolly Roger, on the fair slopes of Christiana and Oliphantsfontein, and, with the aid of fast horses and fast women, did a gorgeous trade as exempt from danger as the Germhuns in their dug-outs.

Oliphantsfontein, which drips of history, is about six miles from Kimberley, and, being in the Orange Free State, was immune from the I.D.B. laws. Consequently a certain notorious firm, consisting of a triumvirate of brothers, made this place their headquarters for the purchase of illicit diamonds, and the safe-keeping of others (bought in Kimberley) until such time as they were taken by a confederate (in a cape cart) to Colesberg, to be shipped thence to England.

In the meanwhile the success of the terrible three as illicit diamond dealers was such that other I.D.B.'s took up their quarters at Oliphantsfontein, and to the trio's great consternation set up a serious opposition in the hurly-burly. It was the new cat meeting the cat of the house. To combat

this sacrilege the learned brothers hired three desperadoes to waylay, on the road, those of the rival faction travelling to the Orange Free State village, and rob them of their diamonds. The highwaymen, for a period, were quite fortunate in their operations, the proceeds of which, at a considerable discount, they sold to their employers. This daring band, too, on several occasions stuck up the opposition I.D.B.'s in their own wigwams in Oliphantsfontein and fleeced them with impunity.

In time the persecuted I.D.B.'s got wary, the plunderers less persistent and prosperous, yet the baneful brothers, having the field to themselves, were doing a roaring business. It happened that a more than usually valuable parcel of illicit diamonds was to be forwarded from Oliphantsfontein, and a relation of the terrible three, a picked and chosen soul, was entrusted with the job of taking the precious charge to Colesberg for the usual shipment to Merrie England.

But the highwaymen, dissatisfied with themselves and their masters, and affairs being bad, conceived the idea of robbing the blood relation of the terrible three while on his way to Colesberg. The enterprise was eminently gratifying, and after wounding the aforesaid blood relation, they got clear with the swag. The terrible three made an awful ado when they heard how they had been despoiled, and set their wits to work how to recover their "own."

To make a long story short, they succeeded by devious methods in frightening the thieves, so much that they threw the stolen parcel of diamonds out of a railway carriage window. More than that, the highwaymen were arrested, tried, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, the Crown claiming the diamonds. After their conviction, the condemned made an affidavit against a resident of Kimberley, charging him with being an accessory in a robbery committed at Oliphantsfontein. The accused was acquitted.

Many tragical occurrences took place in those pirates' lairs, the fugitive shadows of which float before me but they are best left buried in oblivion, so I will content myself with a couple of humorous episodes.

Big Mike, an old and comical Irishman, whose patron saint was Johnnie Walker, had a big mouth, his daughter Bridget had a bigger mouth, but his wife had the biggest mouth of all—when she said that she wanted a mouthful, her husband would put a whole duck on her plate. Mike used to assert in his witty way that a big mouth was a blessing, if you have the wherewithal to fill it, that a man with a big mouth was ordinarily silent, keeping it shut for fear of catching cold or flies. A big mouth on a woman had all the advantages enumerated and an extra one if kissable—you couldn't have too much of a good thing.

Mick's habit was to buy diamonds, and not be particular from whom, so having collected a moderate sized parcel, he made up his mind to take them to Oliphantsfontein where he felt safe in his dealings. So late one evening, he and his daughter Bridget started in a cape cart for the sacred spot.

The pair had completed about half their journey when they were held up by a brace of bandits, who handled the father and daughter roughly; indeed they ended the outrage by beating Mick into insensibility and finally making off with the cart and horses. It was some little time before the father was restored to consciousness by his devoted daughter.

"Och, Bridget!" he whimpered, between uncomplimentary allusions to the virtue of his despoilers' female relations, "after the pains and risks I took to be getting those diamonds together, to be bate, and half kilt and robbed—Lorrgorramighty!" "Beaten, yes, father," interrupted the fair and heroic Bridget, "but glory be to the saints, they didn't get no dimints; I hid them in my mouth." The old man's eyes glistened with pleasure and pride as with ironic wit he exclaimed, "Bridget me darlint, what did I always tell ye about a big mouth? 'Tis a godsend! Holy St. Patrick, if your mother had been here, perhaps *we'd have saved the cart and horses.*"

Honesty among thieves—the abuses of which formed their best policy—was not a tradition held in special reverence by the put-and-take gang, some vermin crooks of which would rob a blind man of his false teeth. When they trusted one

another, they soon regretted it, as this little yarn of two of a kind, who took in each other's washing, illustrates.

A Polander of the bluest blood, called Fliminsky, was very friendly with another Polander of bluer blood, who kept a store on the borders of the Orange Free State, and was thus in blissful safety from the Cape Colonial laws. So Mr. Fliminsky, who lived at Kimberley, having acquired, strictly under I.D.B. rules, a nice parcel of diamonds value about £400 from his Kaffir customers, felt rather uneasy having them in his possession, consequently he entrusted the gems for safe keeping to his friend. This friend—Iscaiot's son—whose name was Shloma, and hailed from Cracow, accepted the deposit with due solemnity and a dignity worthy of a better cause.

A couple of weeks after this sacred trust had been deposited, Fliminsky returned to the store to claim his treasures. With the alacrity of an honest man, Shloma pretended to search for them, and as the exploration seemed prolonged, his friend showed unequivocal signs of distress.

"Mein Gootness cracious, where can the blessed dimints be? By yours and by mine I see 'em 'ere only last week!" declared Shloma, scratching his head. And so he rummaged and rummaged, the while Fliminsky groaned and sweated in agonised uncertainty.

"By Jimmy!" ejaculated Shloma, "this is a nice how de doo; I feel 'orrible."

"Me too!" echoed Fliminsky, as moody as King Saul.

"Vere *can* they be?"

"Do I know?" whined the other, wagging his head, and looking wildly about.

"I never see sich things," observed Shloma consolingly.

"I vish you never did," bawled Fliminsky, cocking round an angry eye.

"I have it!" suddenly cried the storekeeper, inspiration in face and hands.

"Thank Gord!" his companion exclaimed, like Wellington at Waterloo.

"I know vere the damn tings is gone," added Shloma.

"*Gone!*" shouted Fliminsky, gloom returning to his brow. "Vat you mean?"

"I've a damn cow here vot swallers everything, she's eat 'em."

"Vell den, show me that cow," howled Fliminsky, "*and I'll buy her.*"

From these little happenings it will be gleaned that from a juridical and administrative point of view Kimberley was not a happy land, and that the Rand had little to learn executively from Diamondopolis. In Johannesburg, few complaints were made as to the prison regime, and none as to the system of things ordered in the Police Court, thanks to the methods adopted by the Landrost, Captain Von Brandis, a clean, high-souled gentleman who, eschewing harshness and prejudice, ruled with kindness and common-sense. Illicit diamond dealing on the Rand was not punishable by law, but gold stealing, a rank crime, was rampant, and one of the principal manipulators, I remember, met his death from the fumes of a furnace while engaged in handling stolen amalgam.

In the higher courts I do not think Rand justice was quite what it should have been. Like a sausage, the less you knew of its interior, the easier would be your mind. Some day, perhaps, there will be no necessity for the dismal ordinances which lawyers are forced to learn before they can fleece, for an accommodating client, their fellow creatures with impunity. I'd rather deal with a thief that calls himself a thief than a "respectable" one that steals under a lawyer's tongue.

South African annals have not produced a more picturesque or heroic figure than the golden hearted Von Brandis, who was a near neighbour of mine, and a personal friend for many years. Born in Hanover in 1827, the Captain took part in the battle of Novara; as a member of the German Legion fought throughout the Crimean War, and at its conclusion emigrated to South Africa, where he distinguished himself in the Kaffir risings of the period.

Acting as *Landrost*, during the first Boer call to arms, at or near Pilgrim's Rest, it was there he first met Lord Roberts.

In 1881, at the time of the Bronkhorst-spruit disaster to the British force, he warned Colonel Anstruther of the impending attack, and after the massacre, he tended the wounded and dying soldiers. About 1886 Kruger appointed Von Brandis *Landrost* to Johannesburg, and from that period to the year of his death, the kindly grey-beard endeared himself to every member, high or low, of the community. He banged no political drum; his forbearance, tact, popularity, and courage quelled many a disturbance, humoured the Dutch, pacified the Uitlanders. When the big Boer War darkened the land, Von Brandis declared that he would lift neither voice nor sword against the British, but even thus Kruger could not dispense with him. So he stayed at his post at the Rand through the flaming years, a patriarch of the people, tenderly guarding the welfare of the women and children, no matter of what nationality.

It was grizzled, hazel-eyed intrepid Von Brandis who, on the capture of Johannesburg, stood at his door and received Lord Roberts and his staff. "Lord Roberts," the veteran said, "I surrender the *Landrost's* office." The commander of the British forces grasped the other's hand and replied, "Dear old friend, keep the keys and remain in your place."

Von Brandis' reverence for womanhood had the flavour of the days of chivalry. Never would the Captain give judgment against the softer sex, and many of the fines he inflicted were paid out of his own pocket. These secret donations were carried to such an extent that they impoverished himself and his family. After thirty-six years hard work, this friend of Britain departed full of age and honour in 1903. Von Brandis had the spirit of a crusader, the tender heart of a woman, the honesty of a child, a soul in which there was not a grey hair, and he will go down to posterity as the Grand Old Man of Johannesburg.

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I left Johannesburg a rich man, at the end of 1895, with my wife, three children and a governess, voyaged home via Delagoa Bay, Beira, Tanga, Dar-es-Salaam, Mozambique Zanzibar, landed at Naples, and after visiting Rome, Pisa Florence, etc., travelled on to Paris, thence to London.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

London—A Visit to Birch's—The Raiders—Throgmorton Street—The Gentle Art of Finance—Twenty Millions—"The Thieves' Kitchen"—Some Members—Speculations—A Snob's Retreat—Paris—Mannequins—Staggering the Parisians—The Hôtel de Riche—Money and Misery.

I ARRIVED in England a day before the Jameson Raid took place, and the next morning, as I toddled down Throgmorton Street, one of the first of the old brigade I met was Barney, who received me, as he always did, with open arms. My friend seemed full of the Raid and its consequences, and said sagely, nodding his head, "Don't bother, I've got full information that Jameson is through," which shows how little he knew of the matter. It was bleak December weather, so he considerably remarked, "Let's walk a little way and I'll give you something you've never tasted before, something to warm you."

I had tasted many things in my life, some of which had left a bitter flavour in my mouth, and others that had warmed me to boiling point—still I ventured. He led me to Birch's in Cornhill and ordered two hot whisky jellies which were quite to my palate. "Hurry up," he mumbled, wiping his mouth after gulping, "I've got to catch the so-and-so train to Brighton."

"All right," I returned. "I'm ready; have you paid?"

"No," quoth he, "I've got no money; you settle."

"I'm sorry, but I haven't a farthing in my pocket."

"Well, that's a nice thing," he ejaculated, gyrating his pince-nez. "What am I to do?"

"Change a cheque."

After a little hesitation he bent over the counter, and said to the lady attendant—a Miss Atherly—"Will you change a cheque for £2 for me."

"Sorry, but we don't change cheques here," she answered decidedly.

"It'll be all right, I assure you," asserted Barney protestingly. "I'm Mr. Barnato."

"I can't help that," replied the assistant—then suddenly, "but I'll try, though I don't think it will be any good."

Whereupon Barney wrote a cheque for two pounds, Madam took it to the rear of the shop, and in a trice returned.

"I told you so," she said, as if she'd spotted a winner, "we don't change cheques here."

Barney gingerly took back his cheque, adjusted his glasses, pinched his nose, and in his whimsical way snuffled, "Well, this is a damn fine how-de-do, ain't it? How can I pay?"

"There's only one way now," I said. "Offer to leave your watch."

"Would you?" he queried, throwing up his eyes.

"Certainly."

It is true, as I hope for salvation, that he put his fingers in a waistcoat pocket, and was fumbling for his ticker when I interrupted. "Don't be such a child. I have plenty of money, but why the devil will you always do these silly things?"

On we drove to London Bridge Station, where he took a Pullman ticket for Brighton; I paid, and off to the office I went, warm and cold with the remembrance of that hot drink and the frozen Pullman fare. Strange man was Barnato.

It is said that the dominant plan of the Jameson conspiracy, if the Raiders had successfully entered Johannesburg, was to abduct Oom Paul and boil him. Once on board the lugger I can do what I like with the girl. Instead of which old Kruger carried off the plotters and put them up to auction. The leaders fetched £25,000 each; Bailey was let go—a bargain—at two thousand, with a job lot of martyrs of the mutiny who really expected to be fined not more than forty shillings and costs. Some of those who had relatives in the hands of the Boers, posed as heroes even

after the braves had stumped up and were free. It is something to get a niche in the history of England, however small; they felt 'twas better to have mucked a little than never to have mucked at all.

The night I went to the London Alhambra—the Raid being the sensation of the hour—an actor chap dressed in romantic top-boots, dashing blouse and wish-I-may-die sombrero, an enticing costume seen anywhere but in South Africa—advanced, as bold and wicked as the devil himself, to the centre of the stage, and defiantly throwing his cinema hat on the boards, folded his arms, paused as much as to say, “Another fourpence and up goes the donkey,” and then howled:

*“Wrong! Is it wrong? Well maybe.”*

Thus the opening lines of the poet laureate’s Raid poem. But worse was in store. The reciter proceeded (as rendered by Shakespeare):

*There are girls in the golden city,  
(Also a swell bunch at the Alhambra)  
There are mothers and children, too!  
(Strange coincidence)  
And they cry, “Hurry up! (Gee up, Tishy) for pity!”  
(Of this ditty)*

The last verse ended nobly:

*We were wrong (a sob), but we aren’t half sorry (not ’arf),  
And, as one of the baffled band (Raffled?),  
I would rather have had the foray (good old Rob Roy)  
Than the crushings of all the Rand.*

Fine fellow! Them’s just my sentiments, as Messrs. Phillips, Bailey and Joel would say; the crushings were a mere item; after all, the woman pays, the girl’s the thing, not the gold.

In consequence of this poetical outburst, some of the aggrandised Petticoat-laners, of Throgmorton Street, commenced to think imperially (in pint bottles), while a few

corkers taking courage (and pots) in both hands posed as bards and penned poems. One commenced historically :

Said Abraham Baileigh  
Like Sir Walter Raileigh,  
" Drake, upon my soul,  
(Drake being Solly Joel)  
Let's——"

I interrupted the author. "What rot, Isaac, that's not poetry." "Well," replied Ike ruffled, "it's as good as Mr. Austin's, ain't it?"

Throgmorton Street, which leads straight to an almshouse, in '96 wore a different aspect from what it does at present. In those days the thoroughfare bubbled with excitement, merriment, money-making, and dry monopole. It was the daily bowling-green of brokers, jobbers, clients, scribblers, reporters, newsboys, of a drove of dandies in glossy hats, gardenia decorated swells who were mobsmen, and highly polished mobsmen who were swells. Aristocrats with long pedigrees and short purses took the air, while usurers on the prowl avoided them, and flat-catchers settled on your nose before you knew where you were.

Outside commission agents, allied to evil spirits, hovered round, prepared to lead you to the slaughter for a slight salvage. (The half-commission man knows everything, but take my advice and enquire within—for nothing.) If you had any money you'd be surprised to find how many friends you had, what a very good fellow you were, and how really willing everybody was to oblige you—especially the nice chaps with no hats, who by this bare-headedness advertise to the envious their undisputed distinction of being in "the House," of "the House," and part of "the House." When these swells present themselves as "in the House," a stranger might imagine from their tone that they meant the House of Commons. A subsequent knowledge of the gentleman would confirm one in the belief that their ambiguous claim was not so misleading as appears on the face of it.

Boches, with names as British as Aldgate Pump, were

running about like rats ; Throgmorton Street and Mincing Lane had almost been annexed, and the Schwindsteins, Snotchskys, Bostheimers, Vogtbergs, Yukoffskys imagined that already the goose step reverberated throughout England for ever and for ever. Many of them disappeared during the hot time of a certain August, but the Huns will come back, for it is an accepted fact allowed by Dick, Tom and Harry, that if you kick a German out at the front door, he will come sniggering down the chimney.

Thus the Rialto literally stank with Germans and a select crowd of East End Yiddisher shop-keepers, who scenting meat from afar had gone West, in more senses than one, to snatch a mouthful. Some weeks after my advent in London there was a bit of a slump and consequent great alarm and torturing cacophany amongst these Yidden. An oleaginous white waistcoated German huckster, Mr. Mannie Geetheimer, of the oldest and most matured "Kultur," as one says of "Scotch," was the centre attraction of a small flock of aliens who evidently looked on him as their shepherd.

"What *do* you think of this 'ere, Mannie?" asked a drab featured individual, moving his head in a perpendicular manner, the while shaking himself with synagogal penitence. A pack of pious punters ostriched their necks to hear Sir Oracle speak.

"Vat a *schlermazzel*," cried a fat man with no stomach.

"Vat a vonder," agreed a thin-faced man and all stomach.

"Vat's the vheese, Manny?"

Mr. Manny Geetheimer pulled his white waistcoat down, took three deep puffs of his gold-banded cigar and regarded his hearers with treacly eyes. There was a still and sudden silence.

"I tink," said Geetheimer with an important air. "I tink, but for Gord's sake don't mention me, I tink if this 'ere market goes up, prices will be much better, but if this 'ere market goes down"—he paused and added, "prices will be much worsen."

His disciples looked at one another like canaries in a cage.

"By my life and yours, he's right," said an old Jewish

tailor, tapping his breast. "It's mine opinion as 'Arry Barnato will come to the rescoo," continued the snip. "See if he don't."

"I ain't no hoptimist or pessimist, but——" grunted Geetheimer.

"What's that?" interrupted Baruch the butcher, putting hand to ear, and turning up a greasy, insolent face.

"You don't know what them means—hoptimist and pessimist," responded Geetheimer witheringly. "Stoopid."

"I'll bet you a fiver you don't neither," exclaimed Baruch, flashing a fiver.

Mr. Manny Geetheimer looked sternly at his challenger as he replied pitifully, "*Shemah beni*; how could you expect me to know when I only heard of 'em myself the last few days."

It was at this propitious moment that I espied Barney, spick and span, a money-spinner to the last button. "Hallo," said he, "come and have lunch with me; I know a nice place." We went to a restaurant in Tokenhouse Yard and sat down to an inexpensive meal, which he punctuated with many remarks, shrewd and otherwise, but always kindly. During a pause in the conversation, while I tackled my mutton chop, he beamed benignantly through his glasses and blurted suddenly, "Loo, would you like to know what my firm is worth?"

"I'm not curious, but I hope a lot."

"Ah, that's it," he returned, "that's why I want to tell you. I know you'll be glad. Guess?"

I protested that I hadn't the slightest idea. B. B. inclined towards me, his eyes dancing with elation, as triumphantly smiling he said, "Twenty millions."

I suggested that with such a sum he should retire from business.

"If I did, how could I pass my time?" he questioned.

"Oh, I don't know. Yachting, racing, travelling—a hundred ways."

"No fear," said he. "I'm going to make it twenty-five millions."

" Nothing is certain, but suppose you did, what would be the use of it, the object ? "

He paused for a moment, thought, and then replied quickly, " Oh, when I'm dead, I want my boys to point to my portrait and say, ' He was a clever little ——, wasn't he ? ' "

" Don't you think they'd say so at twenty millions ? "

My host laughed, as if he agreed that they should, and suddenly grew pensive ; the waiter was approaching with *la note de l'aubergiste*, which he presented to me. I motioned to the meditative one, who, much engrossed, took no notice.

" Barney, there's the bill," I pointed out.

Intently studying the ceiling, he waived my reminder aside with his hand, and observed, " Ssh, ssh, Mr. Barnato's thinking."

" That's nothing—the waiter's waiting."

" Don't interrupt. Mr. Barnato's busy," he mused mysteriously, pressing fingers to forehead.

" So am I, it seems," I said, as I paid the score ; it amounted to nine and fourpence.

Barney's vivacity returned at once, and he quitted the table for a minute, re-appearing with a cigarette.

" Hallo," he remarked, seeing me in a brown study, " what are you thinking about—my twenty millions ? "

" No," I returned sententiously, " my nine and fourpence."

The City Athenæum Club, known to fame, finance and fortune as the " Thieves' Kitchen," was in the heyday of its prosperity a great institution in the eyes of worshippers of Mammon and 'igh life. The honour of its inception belongs to " Pelican " Ernest Wells (" Swears "), a jolly enough fellow with a husky voice and unlimited anecdotage of varied colours, who, as well as being a *Grimod de la Reynière*, made the stomach of his members his central idea of a dinner. Here was the home of red, yellow, green—lobster, ale, salad—a merry place to chew venison, swallow claret, and buy shares.

Barney, an influential patron and admirer of the Club, proposed me as a candidate, and after my election, the



pleasance was the scene of my daily dalliance, and decadence. Notwithstanding its nickname—or perhaps because of it—the Club attracted, either as visitors or members, some of the best, and worst, of the South African financiers, who produced such reams of scrip, and got rid of it, and which as time went on became so considerably reduced in price as to almost vanish altogether.

Amongst others with whom in this club one rubbed shoulders, and felt none the worse, were Barnato, Woolfie Joel, Isaac Lewis, Bailey, Friedlander, H. J. King, Neumann, Ehrlich, Whitaker Wright, etc. Journalists, penmen, *littérateurs* with their clever twaddle, browsed in plenty: MacRae, Marks, Pot Stephens, Jimmy Davis, Newnham Davis, Bill Yardley, Dudley Hardy, Melton Prior, Haddon Chambers, Stuart Cumberland, Lowry. And, of course, actors: Charles Warner, Wyndham, Terriss, Danby, Waller, Abingdon, Shine, and kindred lights, had a look-in at the peep-show, which was really in a very interesting condition when things were booming, and brought forth special babies for men to dangle.

There were many jolly fellows—honest Injuns—good sports, true and charitable men, who flowered (sometimes withered) in this garden of gold: Lewin Cadogan, Brownlow, Billy Fitzwilliam, Bulteel, Paxton, Dody Pattinson, Tommy Marks, Bailie Guthrie, etc. Sartorial youths in immaculate head-gear skipped about like troutlets in a pool, a few betting men—the observant, the lax—and miscellaneous gold makers said the right thing at the right moment, particularly if they thought you wanted a glass of summut. “Oh father, father,” murmured my visiting little son, who now sleeps under the poppies in Flanders, “you do get thirsty soon.” Well-known people: Sam Lewis, Sir Alan Young (who discovered here something hotter than the North Pole), Bucknill, Colonel Talbot, and sundry noblemen, were members or visitors, amongst them Lords Lurgan, Athlumney, Shrewsbury, Douglas, Ava, and other people of title who lent a distinction to the Angel Court place that it would not otherwise have possessed; thus in this haven

below were more lords than in the Heaven above, if one inclines to biblical tradition. Also were there cheek by jowl, in this Punters' Paradise, a few perfect prodigals from Potsdam—Prussian and pestilential—fat, guttural Germans, full stomached, full lipped, full lunged, vile enough to give the British lion the mange, and mean enough to sneak a canary's sugar. It was said that the Club was christened the "Thieves' Kitchen" by an ornament of this Teuton tribe—goborener Schnitzberg—who launched the dire epithet after dropping an unrecoverable sixpence on the classic carpet. He was one of those who denied his religion, though 'twas written on his face, so I said to him—like Brillat Savarin—"Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you what you are."

"Well," he answered, "my favourite dish is roast pork."

"By the Prophet Mahomet, I knew it. You're a Jew."

I nicknamed this fellow Knuckle of Pork, and one day mentioned mischievously that if ever I wrote a book I would describe him as a knuckle of pork. He glinted at me with hard animosity through his glasses, the while stroking his chin, but about an hour afterwards he motioned solemnly to a corner of the saloon and whispered gravely, "Cohen, mein friend, if you put me in dat book as a knuckle of pork, mark me dat book von't take." He evidently thought he was bad vaccine.

And then there was the Yiddisher Major, originally from the Mile End Road, a South African self-promoted Major of diamondiferous distinction, whose only right to a commission was based on what he had earned—or otherwise—on jam and bully beef. His ears were tickled to ecstasy in the Club by hearing himself dubbed Major. The newsboys called him Major, the crossing-sweeper came to attention as the Major strutted by, and glory of glories, the club commissioner opened the door with military precision to the smokeless Major, who accepted the honour as if he had eaten chutney all his life in "Injia." His errand lad saluted him *à la militaire*, his wistful clerk chortled "Major no" and "Major yes" with unblushing reiteration, and the fat

housekeeper had a rooted and fixed idea that "our Major" had led the British troops to triumphant success in the battle of the "Crimeary." A seedy-looking relative with intent to cadge visited his office.

"Is the Major in?" he asked.

"He am," said the stout housekeeper pompously.

"He are," chorused the errand boy.

"No, he ain't," bawled the gallant Major from a safe retreat at the top of the stairs.

In this brilliant manner was the siege of Mafeking duplicated, Loo Moss routed, and the Major once more victorious. But somebody—perhaps I—gave the Major away at the Club, and his "military" rank is now only mentioned in Maida Vale at 'Omes, or among those present at a public Yiddisher party on the grab.

When the slump came and ordinary silk-hatted members were busted, and in despair took to bowlers, the club lost its old and festive ways, and many influential upholders deserted the shrine, so the "remainders" played dominoes and tossed, or clustered round the wine bar with moody faces and anxious mien. Swears, the one and only Swears, sat upon the fire screen like a thoughtful parrot on its perch, regarding everybody with sympathetic gestures. He was a trifle huskier than usual as he wagged his well-groomed head to and fro and assured Walter Pallant, in a foggy voice, "he loved his members," and like Mrs. Micawber, would never desert them. The amount of business transacted in the City Athenæum Club during the booming times was enormous, and not always profitable to the punter by a long chalk.

Here is an instance. One evening Woolfie Joel, while standing at the bar with another man, gave me a tip to buy Johannesburg Waterworks. I went in the street to purchase them, Woolfie's companion followed me, and I bought a thousand at 72s. 6d. from him. On my way home with Alfred Goldberg, the latter, who had seen the transaction, said "So-and-So sold those shares for Woolfie," and I found that such was the case. I lost over two thousand

pounds on that little jaunt, *rien n'est sacré pour un sapeur*. Goldberg, however, had done much worse than I, for, inspired from the same quarter, he had bought previously 2,000 Rielfontains at £6, and eventually lost the whole twelve thousand pounds. But not all my deals were of that kidney, and there is a pleasant atmosphere around this one.

When I left Johannesburg I had been a member of the Johannesburg Turf Club almost from its inauguration, but on arriving in England I felt uncertain whether I was entitled to a proprietary share or not; it seemed to me that the Club officials did not want to part, at all events, they would give me no satisfaction. The current price of these Turf Club rights was about £200 when I came home in '96, at which figure I would have sold if I had had any tangible ownership. It was just before the Boer War that I received, for the first time, a notification from Schwartz, who was the secretary of the Club then, giving me notice of a meeting. Then I knew that I owned a share.

A few days after I met Mr. Abe Bailey, as he was then, in the City Athenæum, where I sold him my share for £3,000, and next morning got a cheque for the amount, without my having to display a document, show my ownership or give any written paper or receipt. Mr. Bailey did not want any guarantee; he said that he "knew Mr. Cohen," which is a tribute to be taken anyway you like. Perhaps in those days anybody would have trusted me, as I had an undeniably good name; but it is a sad commentary on human nature that the first time I trusted a bosom friend substantially, he attempted to rob me of all I had.

Well, that was three thousand pounds made, I take it, though it is a fact that a fortnight afterwards I was offered £6,000 for the same share.

Another hour I remember well was the morning I sold to a firm, who had an office facing the Bank of Africa, some claims in the Rooderand district for £8,000, which cost me nothing. My failures were many. I lost £4,000 in a night through buying Midas Black Reefs, £20,000 on Colenso

Day, while on one sunny morning, Saturday of all days, I was deliberately cheated of £8,000.

From these deeds of days of other years you can see that a speculator's life is not altogether a happy one even though he belong to the "Thieves' Kitchen."

I crave pardon from whom it may concern for writing so diffusely of finance and financiers, but in extenuation plead that the main mission underlying this book is to expose some of the methods of company promoters, their touts and jackals, and thus warn the unsophisticated against the unholy art of indulging in Stock Exchange gambles when the medium is mining or bowel-less money-or-your-life scrip. Whether what I have set forth in jest or earnestness has any serious message is left for others to decide. The mining share "industry" is to ordinary speculators a snare and delusion. It is infinitely worse than horse racing and more soul wrecking—one is a drug, the other a poison. There is a limit to betting losses; your risk is your stake. In mining shares, on the contrary, there is no limit, and one is never safe from absolute ruination. You buy a Coronation share say for £3,000, with the idea of selling on a rise—and you lose the whole of your investment. It's backing horses backwards—the laying price reversed.

But look at the chances of earning a competence, says somebody. Where are they? Broken Hill, Premier, I hear murmured. They are the Sir Hugos, the Jeddhas, the Dutch Ovens of mining speculation. If one must gamble why not buy a Calcutta Sweep ticket. A man has a better chance—a poor one enough—of making a fortune on the outlay of a pound here, than he has if he risks thousands in mining speculative scrip.

The promoter, the jobber, the broker, form an unhallowed trinity, so far as an outsider's profit is concerned, compared with which the bookmaker is a perspective Golconda. You have no "earthly" in a sea of commissions, contangos, and swindles, except to be sweated to the bones in stock-jobbing pools made for fools. The share speculator, like the backer of horses, minus his fun, goes without boots at the finish, but

the prim and preened promoter, that is to say the book-maker, is never without silk socks, a doxy or a Rolls Royce. Sometimes the wily one glories in a yacht, in which he swims, while the Stock Exchange punter drowns.

Show me one share punter who has successfully escaped wreckage and I will show you a hundred poor devils, legions of the lost, fallen in the dust like a broken egg-shell, that haunt Throgmorton Street, in search of vanished treasure, with neither a penny in their pocket nor a meal in their stomach. I, myself, as a travelled punter, have had considerable and expensive experience, Colonial and Cityish, and if I—the sentence will sound pretentious—though gifted with some shrewdness, armed with inside knowledge (?), and blessed (at one time) with a bagful of shekels, got on the rocks, the chances of the novice are small indeed. The first success, like the first betting coup, is the luring bait that matters. Barnato once complained to the late Alfred Beit—an estimable man—that the public were making too much money. “Oh,” answered Beit, “let them, it will all come back with interest.” Another financier, whose “good things” had ruined a friend, when asked to assist him, replied, “I’m a midwife, not a wet nurse.” Young man, if you want a baby, get married, don’t seek one in Throgmorton Street or you shall nurse it all your life in bitterness, in bankruptcy, and the parents of the foundling will have had all the frolic and profit. They breed them, sell them, and you keep them, while the brat in return keeps you awake for many a long and weary night. Like Peter Pan, the scrip thing will never grow up.

For several years Barnato tenanted Spencer House, St. James’s, but although chosen by the committee of the Carlton Club as a member, he did not push himself into London Society, nor as a matter of fact did London Society run after him—unless one concedes that London Society was represented by a brace of impecunious aristocrats and a couple of hungry M.P.’s who got nothing from the millionaire but empty promises.

The construction of the Park Lane mansion took up much

of Barnato's leisure; it was a hobby and an advertisement. Before its erection, while discussing details of the building with an agent of the Duke of Westminster, who feared that the dignity of Park Lane might be offended by the creation of a shabby structure, the representative said that at least twenty thousand pounds must be expended. To which Barney grandiloquently replied, "I shall spend that on my stables." The Duke, when he accepted the plans, asked how long it would be before Mr. Barnato expected to occupy the house. When told, he declared "Too long. He will be dead first." But from the outset the building of the mansion was regarded with disfavour by many people in the City—they remembered Baron Grant's palace and Colonel North's place at Eltham.

But, bless my soul, I did get the "sicks" over that Park Lane palace. Every other day Barney would insist on my going over it until I hated the building. I asked him if he intended to entertain largely, and he replied in dubious tone, "Yes, if they'll come."

Barnato may have been fond of ostentation, but there was nothing of the snob in his varied nature—a simpler, more unaffected chap you could not meet, and if to him charity commenced and ended at home, he never snubbed an old acquaintance be he ever so shabby.

Quite the reverse panned out the demeanour of a kinsman of his who, about the same period, was preparing to enter into possession of a house near by. He confided to me his unalterable determination to attract social gatherings, not only largely, but with minute discrimination. "Each Monday," he laid down, "I shall dine alone; on Tuesday select Stock Exchange acquaintances will sit round my table; Wednesday M.P.'s and councillors; Thursday the nobility—lords and earls; every Friday my family and relatives—the Aldgate, Highbury 'push.' How they will burst their eyes."

"May I ask," I enquired, "in which category I am permitted to include myself; do I come in with the Aldgate merchants and their ladies or with the dookes and duchesses?"

The swell looked as if he must have notice of such a question, so I said, "I should be distressed beyond question if, when I arrived, you bawled to the flunkey to take this man to the kitchen and give him some bread and cheese."

Well, to my undoing, I dined at this historic house, designed in the lessee's own words to make all his friends "fall down dead with envy," but I never once during the hundred times I supped there met a single soul except my host and hostess. What had become of the dukes and duchesses I do not know. Perhaps they, wisely, preferred to dine downstairs with the cook, and partake of prime tit-bits of culinary art, instead of the tips of finance doled out to me with the *kosher* veal, well blessed by the *shochet* but cursed ever since, to roasting point, by yours truly.

It was somewhere about the time I heard once more the merry cuckoo's cry in England that my wife and I flitted over to Paris for the Grand Prix, in company with a Johannes-burg budding magnate and his better half. The day before the race, Mr. Magnate's wife proposed a visit to an eminent costumier, so to that worthy's abode of fashion we all four wandered, where I much admired the mannequins, beautiful as gazelles, adorned with the latest sweet thing in hats, walking round and showing their muscles and bustles. I don't know if they all spoke French—but one murmured "Ooo'er," which isn't. To be an up-to-date mannequin you have to learn the "perfesh" and how to move musically, a single false step on taper heel shoes, and you're done for; like swearing, it's a gift, but pays better. Thus the ladies' eyes were regaled by the splendour of the frocks, whilst mine were ravished by the sweetness they contained.

There was one disdainful divinity, tall, full-bosomed, who, though black as a prune, boasted eyes blue as the skies and the most delectable and defiant swagger of a walk ever developed. Such a red, scornful mouth, twisted impertinently corner-wise, as she gazed indifferently at the customers. Dear me, when she cocked, contemptuously and coquet-tishly, a confection of a hat on the coign of her pert little



cranium, I envied the chrome canary that nested in it. Oh, I did so want to buy that bird, put it in a gilded cage and feed it on caraway seed.

The vanilla-flavoured salesman, a small, dapper fellow all hands and bows, had no English except, "awfooly-awfooly nice?"—which he trotted out in praise of each "creation." Mr. Magnate, answering his eyes, said "We." Mrs. Magnate said "We," and imagined that they were diving deep into the Gallic language. Great stir, and an up-and-at-them costume was greeted with a fantasia of approval. "Chic?" grimaced the vendor. "Chick," as if sowing wild oats, chorused Mr. and Mrs. Magnate—particularly Madame, who likewise nodded her yellow head in appreciation, to the distress of hubby, who presumed that she was bidding for the goods. When the price was disclosed, Mr. Magnate screwed up his face, at which alarming symptom the shop-keeper, in extenuation, declared it was "*le dernier cri*," and Mr. M. looked likely to hallo "Help!"

Eventually my friend's good wife—who aimed to be a woman of style—bought, to her husband's horror, the dress for eighty guineas, with which pleasing novelty she expected to thrill all Paree.

It was a particularly gay and fashionable season—we were driven to the course from Frank Gardner's house in the Champs Élysée—and the big event seemed to have attracted all the *bon ton*, beauty, fob-drivers, lurchers, *chevaliers d'industrie* (and otherwise), millionaire uplifters, Criterionites, tufts of turf, Vandals, *demi-mondaines* (with everything in the shop window), *demi-vierges* (fair as young wheat) in Europe, and all the Yankees who were worth a nickel.

I do not remember the race so well as I do the dazzling Otero, beautiful brunette with eyes black as a guardsman's busby, who glided about the course followed by a huge and admiring mob of men and women that cried as they ogled the Spanish *danseuse*, "*Oh la, la, comme elle est belle.*"

Mr. and Mrs. Magnate (in full grandeur), my wife and self promenaded the verdant in lofty-tofty style (my toes turned

right) without, sad to record, attracting much or any attention, greatly to the ire of the financier, who regarded it as an affront to Madame, his own personality, and a libel on the eighty guinea gown, on every pleat of which bitter tears of the weary had dried. This dire state of non-appreciation continuing, Mr. Magnate glanced angrily at the crowd, and inclining towards his wife, said reassuringly, "Wriggle, Dollie, wriggle, they're all looking." And as sure as fate, the lady got a move on, and wriggled.

The moral of this is that the poetry of motion of a mannequin may be misunderstood, and that if you haven't got the grace you cannot go the pace. Lord, this *beau geste* amused me more than Arrean's win—I backed the second.

I had not been in Paris more than a few hours when I heard from Walter Lumley that Barney was staying at the Hôtel de Riche in the Place Vendome. I hastened thither, and shall never forget the meeting. I found my way to his apartments and entered unannounced; Barney was sitting on a wooden chair, head between his hands, gazing fixedly into the fire. Never had I seen a picture of more utter hopelessness and loneliness. As I closed the door, he started up and beamed prodigally.

"Loo!" he said. "Well, I am glad; God has sent you to me."

I sat down beside him, and though he seemed ill at ease, we talked of many little matters of interest to us. I told him that I couldn't stay to lunch, but he rang the bell, and a typical French waiter, holding a menu card, appeared, polite, effusive, obsequious.

"*Nous avons consommé, bisque, gibelotte, aloy—*"

Barney almost snarled. "Go away, bring some beef-steak, chip potatoes and a bottle of wine." And he bundled him out.

"That's not right," I said. "You shouldn't be brusque to the man. He's only trying his best to serve you."

"Serve me! That fellow, he's a spy. Come on, I'll bet ten to one he's got his ear glued to the key-hole—what do you say? He's always watching me." I did not realise

then that suspicion of prying was a sign of mental trouble.

I stayed and chatted of events of our past lives and current topics until I tired, but he would not let me go. Every time I rose he put his damp hands into mine, and pressed me back into a chair. At eleven o'clock I was resolute, but he implored me to stay until he got into bed. I followed him into his sleeping room, a small chamber lighted by a solitary gas jet fixed in a bracket adjusted to the wall. He threw himself, pyjama clad, wearily upon the bed, and lying on his side glanced sadly at the depressing glimmer.

"My God," he suddenly ejaculated, "this is a — fine life for a millionaire, isn't it."

As the unhappy man lay there I could not help thinking how, during my homeward visit to Paris, a few months earlier, I had on the evening of my arrival witnessed a revue at the Folies Bergère, in which the principal character was played by an actor wonderfully made up to resemble Barnato. Barney and his millions had seized the imaginations (and later something more tangible) of the Parisians, and he was their popular money idol. People followed as he promenaded the boulevards, and when one day he sauntered into the Exchange, the habitués formed into small groups and whispered to one another reverently, "*Pschut, pschut*, there is the g-r-r-and millionaire."

By jove, if what I saw upon the bed was the result of the gentle art of finance—he told me once that he had made three millions in a day—somehow I felt that I could do without it. The amassing of money for its own sake never made anybody happy yet.

I held out my hand to wish him good-night.

"Loo," he said earnestly, "do me a great favour—lie upon my bed until I fall asleep."

I had slept by his side in Kimberley for a year at a stretch, the evening was gone, and so I settled down. Time after time I essayed to sneak away when I thought he had dropped off, but at each attempt he started up, and I had to remain. He seemed frightened—like a child. There are

inscriptions on our hearts never seen except at dead low tide. At three o'clock I told him my wife would be uneasy, and that I really must go. Clever was Barney and nimble-minded even in his parlous state, for a new moon of a smile flitted across his face as he turned to me in that engaging manner, sometimes his, and said winningly, "I know you're mad on Napoleon; I'm interested in him—seen his tomb. Tell me something of his history."

He kenne'd my weakness, and had hit me on a soft spot. So I lay down again, droned of the deeds of Bonaparte, of the soul of the old Guard, and forgot Barney until a most pathetic passage was paralysed by a loud snore which restored my mental equipoise. The history of Napoleon had done the trick, and I was free.

I got home at four o'clock, puzzled and bewildered, but I did not imagine for a moment that—

Poor Barney! those twenty-five millions were but a mirage after all—what fools these money-makers are. I have lived through many things that have searched me, but our night at the Hôtel de Riche I shall ever recall. That same day he travelled to Monte Carlo, and after a brief stay in Paris I went to Strasburg.

Some months later I gazed sadly enough upon his dead body on board the *Scot* which had brought the corpse to harbour in Southampton. It was a drab finish to a clever man's strenuous career, and many a night I sorrowed—for with all his faults, Barney had his likeable qualities, and we had been boys and partners together.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Reminiscences of the Ring—Tom Sayers—Furies—National Sporting Club—Peter Jackson—Burge and Lavigne—Joe Bowker—Burns and Johnson—Charlie Mitchell—The Last of a Great Boxer—Ned Donnelly—Bertie—Sniffy the White 'Ope—Brodie—A Hit of the Season.

It may not be uninteresting to those who follow pugilism if I were, in a sketchy sort of manner, to narrate a few anecdotes gleaned from my experience around the ring side, for I have seen fights and boxing matches galore during the last five decades.

One of my earliest recollections of things pugilistic dates from 1860 when I was taken to London to see my grand-dad, and while there accompanied my father—a great lover of music—to Her Majesty's Theatre. The tenor of the opera presented, if my memory be correct, was Guigliano, who did not interest me, but in a box on the grand tier, sat two men—both much battered—who attracted some attention. They were Sayers and Heenan, and the night I beheld them was the one following their great fight.

But I had seen Sayers before in a public house in Tithe-barn Street, Liverpool. I recollect him well, and the top boots he wore on which were inscribed the magic words, "Champion of England," an emblem I regarded as somewhat higher than the Garter. Later, in the same town, I belonged to the Myrtle Street gymnasium, where Hulley was gymnasiarch and Mace boxing instructor; I once saw the latter spar with Joe Goss in the building, and many were the old time pugs. I cast eyes on, for Liverpool was a great sporting centre in those days.

As a boy, more than fifty years ago, I was witness of numerous fights with the raw 'uns. They mostly took place in Liverpool on the banks of a canal called the New Cut, and the Sabbath morning was the favourite day chosen

for these sports. No doubt some of the exponents became well-known fistic stars, but I was too young to follow their careers—if ever they had any.

On this classic ground, sad to relate, it was no uncommon thing to behold a couple of women, stripped to the waist, their dishevelled hair flying in the wind, indulge in a pugilistic combat, to which they imparted a ferocity and brutality absent from the men's battles. There they would stand face to face, fists clenched, and bash their virgin skins in the orthodox prize-ring fashion—varying the method by grabbing each other's hair after the manner rendered historic by Jackson in his fight with Mendoza. These wenches had as seconds bullies who urged their ladies to the onset with a profanity quite unsuited to feminine ears. I have seen a couple of termagants fight for half-an-hour, and, bloody and battered though they were, neither pugilistically turn a hair, as the saying is, except when busily engaged sampling the opposing damsel's tresses. Never have I beheld women kicking up a row so painfully silent; not a sound was uttered but *ssh-pish*, an occasional grunt, a gasp, and seldom did they come up smiling like our £20,000 champions grinning for the camera.

In these terrible encounters, although haphazard time was called, no watches, for obvious reasons, were consulted, and the Amazons on the New Cut did not go in for cuddling—as do boxers of to-day—whatever may have been their inclinations in private life. And when the combat was ended, the poor queans lurched away satisfied in their torn rags, red shawls and gay feathered hats, as though they had made life as full and beautiful as may be by love's adventure or the fistic art.

In London, about 1870, or as near as makes no difference, I beheld some good boxing and fights at Bill Richardson's and other more forlorn and obscure places, but it was then a ticklish cult sport to follow, and in the hands of a vicious circle. One early morning I went in a pantechnicon to see a mill, which I never saw, and had such a horrifying experience that I gave the game best.

When settled in Kimberley, I attended every fight that took place, and on my return to London in 1882 I was still keen for the sport, which was in a state of suspended animation so far as British boxers were concerned, although Jem Smith and Charlie Mitchell were twinkling in the firmament obscuring Davis and Greenfield. In Johannesburg I took a great interest, and an active hand, in all the principal contests, but of those I have already written. I saw a splendid combat, when I came back from the Goldfields, at Bob Habijam's School of Arms in Newman Street, between Jem Hayes and Hatchett. It was a mighty struggle, and you may travel many a mile before you shall see its equal. During this battle I remember that a man named Harper fell dead at the ring side.

I think it was Barnato who proposed me for the National Sporting Club, and I became a regular attendant there with him. But he was a difficult man to get on with if any money was at stake. I recollect an occasion when two men were fighting, and Barney, fancying one of the combatants, asked me to back the boxer in partnership with him, and I wagered £26 on the result with the late Joe Thompson. Our scrapper lost, and I had to stump up. With great difficulty I squeezed £12 out of Barnato, which I wouldn't have "touched" at all had the night passed without my receiving it. After getting the golden dozen from his sacred purse, I said, "Why don't you give me the other sovereign?" He replied with a sniff, "Because I haven't got it." I retorted, "Oh, yes, you have, I see some gold amongst the silver and coppers in your hand."

"I swear I haven't got a sovereign on me."

"There it is," I insisted, pointing.

He replied, "That's not a sovereign, that's a louis. Oh, don't take my louis."

I said, "That's a Louis Cohen (going)."

"No," answered Barney grinning as he "parted," "that's not a louis going, that's a louis gone."

I spent innumerable pleasant evenings at the N.S.C. and made a score of friends, many of whom have, alas, passed

away. Dr. Lynch, C. Blacklock, Col. Fox, G. Dunning, I. Murray, Bettinson, Corrie, will always be kindly remembered by me.

The most agreeable pugilist I have ever met was Peter Jackson. This King of Negroes was a white man in all but the colour of his skin, and many a Britisher would have gloried in possessing the splendid independence and modesty of this black gentleman. One evening, I think it was in Pitt Street, Liverpool, the dusky hero went into the saloon bar of a high-class public house, and some of the guests present objected on the ground of his colour. Peter took their gibes and insults with equanimity, but as they increased, he rose without the slightest show of temper, with all the majesty of a king, and addressed the assemblage calmly. "I am a nigger in a white man's country, but I have been treated as a white man, and if anyone present objects to my company, I wish you all good luck and good-night." There spoke the true spirit. Yet this inoffensive mortal could be roused to much anger when he himself was not the object of insult. It is on record that he knocked down four hooligans, one after the other, for insulting a white woman, but Jackson as a civilian seldom lifted his hand in his own defence.

I met him night after night for many months, and was surprised to find how cultured he was. Once he said, "I care nothing about my colour, it does not prevent me being a British subject, and I am proud of that." The pugilist loved his profession with all his heart, and when he died in Australia, his last words, referring to the Slavin contest, were: "It was a good fight, but I beat him." A man superlative at any game deserves to be remembered, and these simple, homely words on the lips of the dying athlete are as pregnant with spirit as those that Wolfe uttered at Quebec.

One of the best battles I ever witnessed was between Connolly and Burge at Birmingham, and, in my opinion, the worst heavy-weight English champion I ever saw was Jack Palmer. When this Palmer fought Twin Sullivan,



and the referee declared the contest a draw, I think the referee made a mistake, but Mr. Douglas is such an all-round, conscientious and fair-minded man that perhaps I am wrong.

The most elusive boxer I have known was Mysterious Billy Smith, the most scientific Toff Wall, the most rugged Walcott, the most resourceful Kid McKoy, the most speedy Carpentier, the most astounding Jimmy Wilde, the most solid Langford, and the most impressive John L. Sullivan. I have seen all the American fighters, and taking them as a body, they are decidedly superior socially, physically, and in their general demeanour to English pugilists. But, alas, if they don't get swollen heads in the ring, they invariably enter the magic circle well equipped, and the generality of them train on "swank." I remember once meeting Battling Nelson at the National Sporting Club. I asked him if he meant to box in England, and the Mayor of Ketchioo, or some other aristocratic city, looked me up and down and said, in what certainly sounded like a foreign language, "Me, fight in here. Doughnuts! Why I can get a thousand dollars for showing my arm in New York."

We have all marvelled at the immense sums made at times by successful boxers—particularly those who hail from America—and wondered what they could have done with their earnings when, in the sere and yellow, most of them end without a rap. Certainly men like J. L. Sullivan and Johnson spent their money in reckless extravagance—mostly on themselves—but I do not think the majority of Yankee boxers can be accused of prodigality; just the contrary. I call to mind an American champion of world-wide renown who became so mean that he didn't sing for fear he'd lose his breath. This gent was engaged to fight at Wonderland, and got so concerned lest a fly might see his prowess for nothing, that he engaged a carpenter and a trio of men to barricade the windows and other naughty little holes. When the job was finished, in record speed, the champion inspected the work as a general would a regiment, and after the survey was over, Mr. ——— expressed his entire satisfaction to the carpenter, who assured him

that nobody could see nothing for nothing. Then the mechanic smilingly saluted the warrior pugilist, remarking as he did so that "he would be glad if he could be allowed to drink Mr. ——'s health." The Yank quivered as from an upper cut, and said curtly, "Gee whizz!"—if you don't say "Gee whizz!" you might be taken for a gentleman—"Gee whizz!" said he, "you don't think I've come over here to leave my money in England—I've come to bring some back to America."

The contest between Dick Burge and Lavigne at the N.S.C. was an unsatisfactory one, although I won £200 by backing the latter, but the fight stands out as showing the innate qualities of a really first-class pugilist. When Burge had been beaten, through unwisely wasting, he more than felt the humiliation, to say nothing of losing his money. But upstairs, after the fight, in the waiting-room of the Club, he had a look of affection and admiration in his eyes as he glanced towards the victor, and, turning to the people present, said, "Well, I don't care, he's a darn good lad and good luck to him." That is the proper way to take disappointments. Spike Sullivan, an Irishman, was the man I backed to meet Jabez White. Over that combat I lost £500, but poor Spike was more upset than I as he leaned over the ropes, and said with tears in his eyes, "Oh, Mr. Cohen, I am so sorry, I wish I could give it you back."

On the occasion that Joe Bowker clashed with Frankie Neil at the N.S.C., the Americans were so confident of victory that they had an incompleated telegram made out which ran thus: "Frankie won in ——" leaving a space for the number of rounds, but Frankie, although they laid three to one on him, lost his laurels, and Joe Bowker went victoriously home with his nose in the air.

I do not know of a better pugilistic tale than the following, showing as it does absence of rancour or bitterness in the mind of the loser. After Bowker had vanquished Pedlar Palmer and deprived him of his title, I was sitting during the same evening opposite the former, who was a great favourite of mine, in the supper-room of the National

Sporting Club. As I was chatting with Joe, and a more modest, decent, well-behaved young man I never met—the defeated, though perky, Pedlar Palmer appeared and made straight for his conqueror, with quite a kindly expression on his face, and asked considerately, “How are you feeling, Joe?”

Bowker, with that babyish face and turned-up nose, looked up innocently and said, “Fine, Pedlar, how are you?”

“Well,” replied Palmer, “I’m glad to hear that. You beat me, it is true, but I’ll give you a tip. My missus is outside—if she gets hold of you, you won’t go home undefeated.”

“Oh,” said little Bowker, looking round like a child of three years of age, “I’ll leave by the back way then.”

Eddie Connolly I have always considered a most artistic boxer. After he fought and beat Pat Daley, he drew his battle money next morning. That same night “the boys” robbed him of the lot, leaving him without a shilling. But the philosophical Nova Scotian only remarked, as if to excuse his despoilers, “Well, well, don’t talk about it; I guess everybody’s got to live, ain’t they?”

Jack Everhard, the American, fought Tom Ireland and was engaged to box at Wonderland; before the contest he put his rings, pin, watch and money in his trousers’ pocket for safety. Some light-fingered gentry annexed the lot, leaving the pugilist penniless, so he borrowed £10 from Jacobs.

“They got that boodle all right,” said the boxer. “What kind of a place is this?”

“This is Wonderland.”

“It is a wonderful land and full of wonderful hands,” rejoined Everhard, who was evidently related to Mark Twain.

But of course all boxers are not saints, which brings before my mind’s eye a terrible Irishman called Casey, who had been backed to fight Gunner Moir, and I had put £200 on him for no other reason than that he was training at Gus

Brewer's place at Barnes with my son Binks, who was getting fit for some amateur contest. Casey—Lord defend me from any other Caseys—told me in strict confidence that after he had beaten Moir, which was "a foregone conclusion," he intended to go in for politics and eventually "become President of the United States." Well, the distinguished diplomatist went down to Moir in eight rounds, I think, and on his arrival in America, he was interviewed by one of his own kidney, who wrote in a newspaper that the courageous Casey had, a few hours before the contest, been taken into a chamber at the National Sporting Club, and drugged! As a matter of fact, I saw the "boxer" after the fight, and nothing was wrong with the mighty gladiator except that he was scared out of his life.

It is unlikely that Tommy Burns, even though he had done the impossible and beaten Johnson, would ever have attained popularity in this country. He became a kind of champion in very lean seasons, though according to Mr. Burns' estimate of his own abilities, he should have been champion of champions for all time. He had a manner of entering the ring that was designed to impress the spectators, and particularly his opponent, with his importance and invulnerability, to which he added sauce piquante in the shape of fierce glances and choice remarks which increased as the contest continued. Burns possessed none of the generous instincts of the true sportsman, such as we find in men like Wells, O'Keefe, Burge, and it was quite in keeping with his suspicious nature that he, at the National Sporting Club, demanded in front of a full house, details of the stake money before he would box Moir.

These are not nice traits, and I was glad to see him taken down one night by Jack Johnson at the same club. It seems that Mr. Noah Brusso, to give Burns his right name, had been advertising himself in the newspapers, and alleging that the coloured champion had "a yellow streak." Johnson, notwithstanding opinions to the contrary, I have always found an even-tempered, inoffensive man. On the evening in question, I was talking to Fitzpatrick,

the flaming Black Champion's manager, when Burns and Johnson got to angry words, but the Canadian soon shut up at the sight of the indignant negro, who certainly would have made mincemeat of him, and quite right too, had it not been for the tact of Fitz. Johnson was terribly annoyed as he eyed Tommy Burns, with the greedy suppleness of a cat watching a bird, and was showing his golden teeth, pink-tipped tongue and crimson-roofed mouth in a most alarming manner, when a little seventy-year-old gentleman, a member of the club, stepped up to him and jokingly said, "Look here, Mr. Johnson, don't bother about him, fight *me*."

"No," said the big nigger, smiling down on his grave challenger, "I won't fight *you*, because *you* might beat me, but that Dago," pointing to Burns, "can't and won't!" Then Mr. Burns made a strategic exit.

But it goes to Tommy's credit that he did fight Johnson, and notwithstanding his vituperation he got well hammered—and well paid. I think, however, that fistic contests between whites and blacks should be prohibited. The colour problem has always been difficult, but the advent of the cinema, its increasing importance and bearing on the question, should settle the matter. The filming of ring combats wherein one sees depicted a negro belabouring a white man is impolitic from every point of view (except that of dusky agitators); it stirs racial feeling, and is pernicious and disturbing to those aborigines living in British colonial possessions who have to be kept in their place, if the white man hopes to dwell in peace and with authority amongst them.

What could be more opprobrious than a film I recently saw of a victorious nigger, leering and swaggering, surrounded by a crowd of adoring white men and *women*, the negro brimful of bravado, smoking a huge cigar with an air of indescribable impudence and superiority, as he grinned contemptuously around? As a fact the black man's temperament is neither suited nor trained to the rôle of victor; it swells his natural vanity to bursting point, excites his love of show and admiration, and he loses control

over himself. It was ever thus with black pugilists from the days of Bill Richmond and Molineaux to those of Jack Johnson. Johnson was quiet and harmless enough until his victories over white men turned his head, moulding him into a humiliating menace, and at long last caused his ruin.

Peter Jackson is an honourable exception, but one does not meet a Peter Jackson twice in a century—a splendid fellow in very way, the Bayard of the ring, inside and out.

Great fights, fights that created wide-spread interest, between white and black men were infrequent in the last century during the palmy days of the prize ring. You may count them on your fingers : Cribb and Molineaux, Wharton and Hammer Lane, perhaps Mace and Travers, and a couple more. Belcher, Mendoza, Dutch Sam Gully, Spring, Neat, Langham, Bendigo, Sayers—not one of these champions ever faced an Ethiop in the magic circle. Indeed the cult of the man of colour commenced with Johnson, and let us hope it will end with him. By all means encourage black bruisers to box one another to their hearts' content, but negro fighters have a decided disinclination to meet their own kind, and invariably put up a poor battle. The reason is obvious, and an illuminating proof why they should not be permitted to engage in contests with white men.

During the King Edward VII coronation carousals, there was a great boxing festival held at the National Sporting Club which lasted an entire week and which I attended. The entertainment for some reason or other was badly patronized but the sport was good. Tommy Ryan, Walcott, West, and many other famous pugilists showed their prowess. The *pièce de résistance* was the meeting between Sharkey and Gus Ruhlin—it was a rattling good set-to, and Ruhlin won me £200.

I was introduced to Sam Langford by Bettinson in the National Sporting Club on the morning of his fight with Tiger Smith. I had backed the Tar Baby, and, in the course of conversation with the coloured man, observed, "Now, Langford, be very careful of Smith, for he's got a fearful

body punch." The black chap waxed exceedingly indignant as he rose in all his dusky grandeur, and drawing himself up to his full height, while expanding his deep chest, exclaimed defiantly, "His punch, *his* punch, what do I care about his punch, sar," then he added proudly, moving his head approvingly, "I guess *you* don't know *Sam Langford*, sar."

I met Charlie Mitchell first in the year '82. A man of variable temperament, it was not easy at any time to feel altogether comfortable in his company, notwithstanding he waxed entertaining enough when in merry or reminiscent mood. A good and attractive boxer; but, in my opinion, notwithstanding the value he set on his prowess, a rather over-estimated one. Mitchell could not be classed with men of the calibre of Peter Jackson or Slavin, and though he always declared that his defeat by Corbett was due to illness, there can be no manner of doubt that the better man won.

About 1909 Mitchell's son Charley was a fine, tall, young fellow, and regarded as likely to follow pugilistically in the footsteps of his dad, who, thinking he had a "soft thing," was always bothering me to match my boy Binks, also a strong, well-built youth, against him. So it fell out that one night at the Café Royal I agreed that the two youngsters should meet in a twenty round contest, and meet they did at Gatti's, Villiers Street, Strand.<sup>1</sup> No doubt it was the magic of Mitchell's name that drew a crowd of two or three thousand people to the hall, and I do honestly believe that all the thieves and crooks, north, south, east and west of London, were there. Never was there seen a more mixed and lawless mob.

As I entered the building and walked up the aisle to reach the ring, erected on the stage, I was seized from both sides by half-a-dozen ruffians, who proceeded, in vulgar parlance, "to go over me," and if it had not been for Gunner Moir

<sup>1</sup> Only a few months had elapsed since I had sent for Binks (who was in Indiana at that time) to box Mr. Jerry O'Shea, and the contest took place at the National Sporting Club. In a rattling interesting book, *The Home of Boxing*, one reads anent the meeting, "The Club was crowded; there was precious little business done on the Stock Exchange on that day, and the West End was deserted for Covent Garden. A rare and memorable occasion it was, but it came to an end with the defeat of Mr. O'Shea in the fourth round."

and Rube Warnes, who came to the rescue—there were no police present—I should indubitably have been despoiled of a couple of hundred pounds which I carried that night in my pocket.

Charlie Mitchell, with other bruisers of might and muscle, seconded his son, but I fortunately had Wicks, Jerry Driscoll, Joe Bowker, Gunner Moir, in my chap's corner. They laid five and six to one on young Mitchell at the close of the first round, and ten to one on him in the second, after he had severely handled and knocked Binks down, breaking his nose. I thought it was all over, and as I could not bear to see him further punished if he ever came up for another round—I left the ring-side and wended my way to the gallery.

In the first row of the gods, his back to me, intently watching the fight, as if his life depended on it, with his head supported by his two hands, was a figure I recognised at once. It was old Jem Mace. I got next to him, but so interested was the veteran in the contest that he did not identify me, and when I asked who was likely to win, he impatiently waggled my interruption aside, but, without turning his head, pointed to Binks, who was quite unknown to him.

It was a terrific fight, so said the press, a ding-dong, manly contest—one of the best I have ever seen—and Binks, to my relief, knocked his opponent out in the eighth round. Some famous people were at the ring-side, and poor Pony Moore never got over the result. A couple of Sundays before the contest I called on the old Christy Minstrel at Wash ngton House, St. John's Wood, and over a bottle of Heidsieck he advised me not to have too much money on the fight as his grandson was sure to win. "Do you know," he said, bending confidentially forward, as if putting a seal on his advice, "Charley knocked his father down the week before last."

But the certainty came undone, and those who "kidded" me into making the match—especially a well-known sporting journalist—looked very glum as they parted with their



hundreds. Young Charley joined the Sportman's Battalion during the war and fell

Playing the game for all he knew,  
Footer, cricket and boxing true.

At the time that Mitchell was laid up with his fatal dropsy, intelligence was brought to him of the death of his only son Charley—he who had fought Binks. The old champion had a great affection for this boy, and whatever Mitchell's faults nobody can deny his splendid courage. But this misfortune was the greatest knock down blow the fighter had ever experienced. He went deadly pale when told, ventured no word, and though ill almost unto death, struggled from his bed and commenced to dress. "You mustn't get up, Charlie; what are you up to?" said someone in attendance. "Nothing much," replied Mitchell, "I'm going to kill the first damn German I meet."

I recollect taking Tommy Ryan and Frank Erne to lunch at the Cecil, trying to make a match between Tommy and the nigger, but the former would have none of it, and became quite rude over the matter. He was right to refuse. Walcott would have made mincemeat of him as Sam Langford did of Bill Laing. Ryan was certainly a most accomplished pugilist, and boxed as if he had been taught by Jem Mace or Ned Donnelly, though, be it said, the "author" of the *Art of Self Defence* was a far better teacher than Mace, who took no pains with his pupils.

Mace proved a chatty customer when you got him in the humour. He would tell all about his combats with King and Goss and Travers; also that if he had fought Sayers, "Tom never could 'ave 'it me," which is exactly what Donnelly used to say. There were others who held the same opinion about Sayers, but most of them had taken care to keep out of his way. I once asked Mace who was the best fighter he had ever met, and he replied "Bob Travers." Jem, a man of original ideas, boasted a philosophy all his own, and though very abstemious, had his weaknesses. I call to mind chaffing him about being

a lady-killer instead of a man-killer, and he laughingly retorting, "Certainly. Better increase than decrease."

Ned Donnelly was a funny h-less cove, with his round rubicund face, raw chin, bright eyes, top hat, innocent ignorance and worldly wisdom. Often on a Sunday he drove Barney Barnato and myself to Hendon in an old dog-cart. One morning, the horse, on passing under a railway arch, took fright, so did I, and the jaunts to the "Welsh Harp" ended. I remember Barnato on that occasion asking Donnelly into his house to "have a glass of champagne," and the golden liquid being handed round by the beaming host. Ned took a liberal gulp of his portion, and expressed his emotions with a red silk handkerchief, a disappointed twist of his war-worn nose and mysterious lip movements.

"Why, guv'nor, it's corked, the top's orf!" commented Donnelly, eye-cocked, reprovingly.

"Well," replied Barney, not a bit abashed, but with a vexed laugh, "it was only opened on Saturday by the servant; Jews never cut anything on their Sabbath."

"So I've 'eard," replied the pugilist sagely, "likewise as 'ow they never cut anybody, but themselves."

"Cut up?" I queried.

"*Cut* I said, guv'nor," expostulated Donnelly eagerly. "*Not cut up*; far from it. The idea; I know they wouldn't do such a thing."

We possess no instructors at present of the calibre of Ned Donnelly and some of his contemporaries; big purses have extinguished them, though boxing to-day is an honourable profession and a necessary one; it keeps the old flag flying, and cranks who attempt to stifle it are national nuisances, busy doping youth.

Around the National Sporting Club many memories revolve. Years ago I had a son, a pupil at the Gower Street University. Bertie was a splendid little fellow, and on one of the university sport days he won five events out of six, running second in the last. One morning I took him to the N.S.C. and matched him to wrestle a page boy who

was employed there. The lads contested in the ring under the eyes of a referee, and Bertie won. A short account of the bout appeared in a sporting newspaper in which was mentioned the Gower Street University. Soon I received a letter from the school asking me to explain the horrible happening. The headmaster, I think it was the headmaster, gave me an awful wiggling on the iniquity of my proceeding. During our interview, I happened to mention Binks. The pedagogue at this waxed excited, and ejaculated as if smelling pepper, "Binks! Binks! And who may *Binks* be?" The upshot of the matter was that I had to take Bertie from the school. I wonder if his name is on their scroll of those who fell in the war—or did my sacrilege disqualify him? The page boy with whom he wrestled was Matthews, who afterwards fought Criqui for the feather-weight championship of Europe.

Fathers should see to it that their sons are taught the noble art, no matter how delicate they may be. It grows on them, gives them self-control, confidence, reliance. It is much more useful and profitable than a surfeit of Greek and Latin rigmarole. A pleasant pastime, too. There is really nothing more exhilarating than, if you are right, to stand up to a chap with whom you have an equal chance, and fight your quarrel out. It is thrilling, more exciting than a honeymoon—and far less risky. Thrown as a youth on my own resources on the diamond-fields, I should have fared badly indeed if I had lacked spirit or inclination to defend myself.

But I never sought a fight—oh no, I was out for love and the ladies, wanted to keep a straight nose instead of a straight left, felt there was no ring like a wedding ring for combats and close quarters; time is never called therein, for love goes on for ever, and if you get disqualified it is not for cuddling, but the lack of it.

Sniffy had paid no rent for a year. The old and trusted collector of the estate agent had worn out his boots calling

on him, chucked up the job, took to bed and died of his soul's anguish. Mr. Nipper, the new collector, terror of debtors and backsliders, a grim determined little dun, with the tenacity of a ferret, received on the morning of his appointment a list of the firm's defaulters, a black cross being traced opposite the names of the most recalcitrant. Against Sniffy's cognomen were three suggestive marks, which Nipper saluted with a like number of grunts—which might have meant a good deal or might have meant nothing. "I'll give this chap, this Sniffy, a bit of my mind, see if I don't," he declared frowningly. Determined to please the firm and prove his quality, Nipper with resolute steps, made a bee line for Sniffy's abode, and gave a smart rat-tat, which said plainly, "There's no nonsense about this visitor, understand."

A small stout female, perky and rosy-faced, hands under apron, answered the summons.

"Mr. Sniffy at home?" asked Nipper sweetly, as if he wanted to present a valentine.

"Yes, sir, he are. 'Op inside."

Like a bird, the collector skipped past the doorway and was shown into the parlour. "Will you give Mr. Sniffy my card," he said with some asperity.

Nipper, left alone, tugged at cravat, pulled down waistcoat with the air of one on his mettle, and cocked his eye, bailiff-like, around the room, bountifully adorned with pictures and photographs. The central attraction was a portrait of a rabbit-eared, scowling fighting man, strong as an ox, stripped to the waist, huge fists resting on his knees and guarded ferociously by small fierce eyes, almost hidden by high cheek bones, all the more prominent because of a shapeless nose. The remainder of the cheerful prints depicted the Paisley Pet (a "White Hope") slaughtering Blinking Bill, pulverising Sloppy Walker, or pounding into a jelly other gentlemen's gory faces. Nipper paled, scratched his troubled head in puzzlement, glanced appealingly toward the poker and then at a diminutive clock which seemed to mock him with its tick, tick, tick, as if recording Mr. Sniffy's

failing. At this moment the aproned matron entered the room.

"Pardon me, lady," says Nipper, mildly and insinuatingly, "who do these pictures represent?"

"Them! Lordee, why Sniffy, of course, my 'usband, the White 'Ope. He fights Savage Sam Toosday fortnight. There's no fancy tricks about my Bill, he just ins and bashes away! 'Ave a bit on 'im?"

A fierce angry voice from upstairs rang out. "Why the 'oly 'ell don't you bring the — towel?"

"That's Bill—he'll be down in a minute, allus up to time; he do get his rag out through shaving," remarked Mrs. Sniffy, clicking her tongue.

Shaving!

Nipper bred a cold sweat. "Don't let him hurry on my account, marm," returned the alarmed rent-gatherer hastily. "I've a call to make next door—back in a minute," added Mr. Nipper, moving quickly, like Napoleon after Waterloo, treading on the cat and tip-toeing out of the room.

Once in the street he jumped like a broncho, and did a mile in surprising speed, making a record unequalled in sporting story.

Mathew Brodie, excellent actor, in his way a decent chap, was egotistical to the point of eccentricity and fussy about his personal dignity and aptitude almost beyond endurance. He played Napoleon in my *Drummer of the 76th* for about two years, that is to say, almost to the day he died. Brodie had never visited me, but once when I experienced a slight attack of influenza he called, and I introduced him to my wife. A few evenings after, I was passing the Shepherd's Bush Empire, where my sketch was being presented, and encountered the redoubtable Mathew in Napoleonic attitude, standing admiringly before an unframed three-quarter length portrait exhibited in front of the music-hall.

"It's grand, isn't it?" he observed, pointing to the dauby oil painting.

"Who is it?" I asked.

"Who is it, ye ask, man? It's Mathew Brodie, painted by Mathew Brodie and exhibited by——"

"I'm sorry, Mat, but I didn't know you could paint."

"Can I paint?" he replied, curling his lip. "Can I write?"—more curling—"Can I write poems?"—still more curling—"Can I write plays—can I act, ye gods! Ah, ah, my friend, the world shall know what Mathew Brodie has done after he's dead. But let that pass; how is your wife? Ah, 'tis well. Remember me to her; I cannot express to you how her sunny smile and gr-r-acious presence cha-r-med me when I saw her on my visit; 'twas like a r-ay of sunshine to my wearied he-art."

"Glad to hear it."

"But you yourself, you look ill—*very* ill."

"Oh, I'm all right, Mat."

A pause during which Brodie aped Napoleon more than ever.

"*Laddie, d'ye know if ye were to die, I'd marry Mrs. Cohen.*"

I sold a sketch to a captivating, beautiful, emotional actress, and one of the conditions of the sale was that my name as author should appear on the posters. This agreement was not always fulfilled, and one evening when passing the M—— Music Hall, I noticed that my cognomen had been omitted. I happened to be with a solicitor friend, a perky well-groomed young gentleman, and one of the best in the world. When I pointed out the exclusion, the wee swell, seeing visions of a glorious *tête-à-tête* with a bewitching beauty, goblets of champagne, and other sweet allurements, enquired, "Is she a nice woman?"

"Rather! she's as nice as she's charming."

"All right," he returned, adjusting his topper at the right angle and fixing his monocle, "I'll see her as your solicitor—will you come too?"

"No, I'll wait."

I had not long to wait. In less than ten minutes the stage door was violently opened, and my dapper friend hove

in sight, glossy tile displaced, and holding hand to cheek as if he had the toothache.

"What's up?"

"Well," he mumbled, caressing the sore place, and pulling himself together, "I sent in my card and when the lady appeared, and I told her quite politely my mission, instead of inviting me to her dressing-room for genteel discussion, she said, 'Then damn well take that,' and caught me such a wallop on the jaw, and look at my hat. Damn nice woman, damn charming actress, I don't think."

"Anyhow, she's a splendid artiste—she gets there."

"Yes," said Don Juan, re-adjusting his eyeglass, "she struck me as the hit of the season."

The Eccentric was purely a Bohemian Club, free, jolly, bibulous, strong-languaged. The highly seasoned conversation of the lesser lights amongst the mummers in the sanctuary was mostly spirituous, erotic, and above all theatrical—treating in a vivid, tumultuous, and vastly interesting manner of the histrionic successes of the narrators; how they paralysed this town, laddie, dominated the other, and Don Juaned every district they were in to the unbounded delight of millers' daughters, and the terror of husbands. Everybody, so they declared, acclaimed their genius, pretty wit, and admitted their charm, except the innkeepers and the village idiot. Our heroes all drank deeply and spent sparsely, determined, as it were, to give nix of their entertainment gratis.

However, I got on very well at the Eccentric, until one late night I found my way to the bar. The dispenser of liquid encouragement prophetically enquired, "Whisky and soda, Mr. Cohen?" I pleaded guilty and took my punishment. The Eccentric was a place wherein I oftentimes entered as a good Jew, and came home a thorough Scotchman—for their Dewar's was excellent.

On this particular evening a youngish gentleman, of daring volubility, attached to a white vest and red silk

handkerchief, whom I had never seen before, was at the head of the table in the dining-room, entertaining a select party of tippling actors who were bibbling and kow-towing to him in most exuberant fashion. Walter Beard, the solicitor, invited me to join the roysterers, and in a friendly manner pulled my reluctant self into the 'appy circle. The presiding Nabob, in all the glory of crimson and white, rose from his throne and said aggressively, "Mr. Cohen, Mr. Cooing, or Cowing, if you don't have a drink I shall — you, and if you do have a drink I shall — you." Dreadful alternatives. Now, if he'd been a perfect lady instead of a perfect gentleman, I would have forgiven him. But I resented such liberties from a stranger, pushed the proffered glass aside, and returned to the wine bar for consolation. Beard joined me and said, "Oh, don't mind him, he's just been presented with a grand piano at the Trocadero; he and his wife are going to America to-morrow."

At this moment the recipient of the grand piano, and owner of the white vest and red silk handkerchief, sauntered up swankily, and addressing me enquired: "Do you know what you are?"

I replied that I didn't, and had often wondered.

He said, "You are a —"

I had never heard the expression in Africa, hyper-civilisation and decadence not yet having reached that continent, but it was so revolting that had I been a kitten and he a bull-dog, I would have stood up. I warned him, but he repeated the word.

I fought the gaudy one from the dining-room all round the grand "salong," lugged him back to the scene of his festivities, vest and *mouchoir* uniform colour, and administered a pommelling not forgotten to this day.

I left Johannesburg with the intention of staying twelve months in Europe, but twenty-six years elapsed before I saw South Africa again. During that generation I travelled much on the Continent, and saw all there was to be seen in England, seldom missing a big theatrical, boxing,



or racing event, speculated (with the usual result), got old in years before I realised the fact, but by God's mercy, lived to see the Germans smashed, and the British march in triumph through the Mall.

The passing of those years, full of incident and variety, happiness, misfortune, deep sorrow, sunshine and storm, would only be of interest to others if I were a person of eminence or importance. Yet maybe the real adventures of real people will not prove altogether dull, and if I have at times daubed my efforts with a lack of reticence it is because the atmosphere of the subject enjoined it. This book will probably rear me a crop of enemies, but not half so many as one full of flatteries would have furnished. So shall I hear : wrong to write of the dead, unjustifiable to mention the living, egotistical to scribble about myself ; I should rather have described a mining town with bleak propriety, and humdrum modesty as a City of the Saints.

Such a gospel would be difficult to better if it were true. To have no enemies, however, is a poor boast, and sounds like a cracker at Christmas time—he who has no enemies needs no magic in his friends. But my friends have all passed away, and there isn't much the waves can do for me, except to bear me into the presence of the Incorruptible One, where I shall tell my story, and those who like may tell theirs. I am not soured, hardened or dejected by years of hard work, suffering, and fret. I have been a very happy man, joyous, buoyant, sometimes riotous, effervescent, for I never thought it necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy the next. I have tasted life with all its flavours, sour and honeyed, have had successes which charm me still and failures that stagger, but there are memories that haunt, daunt and taunt, and some so sweet they mingle in my prayers.

What Fate has in store for me I cannot guess, but the past is inscribed on my heart, part of it lovely, radiant and sacred, leading in the future to quiet though the heat and noise be long. When misfortunes came I met them philosophically, except the death of my son Bertie at

Passchendale. Other disasters cropped up, of which I could say much, but to what purpose? Never explain; friends don't require it, enemies will not believe you, so it may be as well to bring this chapter curtly to an end, and "what's left unsaid, feel."

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### JOHANNESBURG IN 1921

I REVISITED Johannesburg in 1921, after an absence of nearly twenty-six years.

It was an interesting moment as the engine, puffing and blowing, steamed into Park Station, and I contrasted existent impressions and conditions with those I had experienced in 1887 (the year of my initial appearance on the Rand), when the mule waggon carrying me and my fortunes trotted into Commissioner Street and pulled up opposite the Central Hotel.

Our train arrived at Johannesburg after passing thriving suburbs, villages, and miles of substantial brick and stone buildings, instead of the seemingly barren land, treeless country, dotted sparsely with miserable hovels, and depressing cuttings of long ago.

On alighting at the railway station—alive with porters, policemen, motors, and hotel vans—I could well have imagined myself at the terminus of a busy English centre, had it not been for the many natives and rickshaws flitting about. As I strolled through the town the morning after my advent, I found it difficult to realise that this well-built city of light, bustle, civilisation, was the same ramshackle place of squat shambles and eccentric chimneys that I had with a faint heart entered thirty-four years ago. Could this be the tin town of mud and filth I knew in 1887, the pestilential settlement I was warned against, the waterless region in which there was nothing but dust, fleas, objectionable characters, and an early grave?

I was prepared for great changes, but the sight of the magnificent shops and spacious streets completely surprised me. Hail Johannesburg, townlet of yesterday, now city

of prosperity and plenty, risen from the veld! Magical Jo'burg, rich as Carthage, majestic Jo'burg, wicked as Chicago, whose name had diminished while itself had grown as if by enchantment. The transformation was amazing as I wandered through the highways and tried in vain to find old landmarks and thoroughfares that I had known in past times. Occasionally, in the tin shanties, I saw phantoms of days long vanished, but old Johannesburg had died in giving birth to the new one.

In truth, if the splendid shops, solidly and nobly planned, with their effective window dressings, enthused me, the paucity of customers inside set me thinking. Perhaps trade was bad; the fact loomed there; financial waters undoubtedly disturbed, for there were more sales and gales about than I have ever seen on any ocean.

To my mind, the aspect and manners of the people of Johannesburg have changed nearly as much as the town. I do not think the men are so well-dressed as their predecessors were when I left the Rand, nor are they their equals socially, although a novel race of bashaws has sprouted of which I know nothing. Camaraderie, cordiality and geniality seem to have disappeared, giving place to a studied air of indifference and mellowed selfishness quite different from the charming bonhomie and almost boyish recklessness of the middle nineties. Festive humour is apparently dormant—if it exist at all—and challenges to a jovial glass are few and far between.

"Come and have a drink," said a journalist to an actor.

"Aye, laddie, 'tis the witching hour, but who's going to pay."

Gone are the merry groups of well-groomed men who broached a bottle or a dozen in the thronged bars of Mrs. Jardine, Reid and Campbell, the Bodega, or those cosy nooks presided over by stylish Hebes. Not once did I hear the popping of a champagne cork from the time I set foot in Johannesburg to the day I left; there is no soul in ginger beer, though it cost but sixpence.

Of the present day barmaids I am too gallant to speak;

perchance they are the identical beauties I left behind in '96, or perhaps I do not see them through the eyes of youth. I am old, and wish that a generous baboon would permit me to get young and frisky again at his expense.

It is possible that all the jolly fellows I missed so keenly foregather in these mellowed days at the different clubs which have cropped up; or has conviviality found an abiding-place in the multiplicity of elaborate tea-shops which now grace the principal streets? Progress and democracy, fashionable flappers and jazz bands are the leading feature of the town. Smart policeman regulate the traffic with Piccadilly precision and stern earnestness, while natives jostle one on the pavements. Tale-pitchers, beggars, loafers, are likewise in evidence; postmen, shoeblacks, and charitable girls with collection-boxes are numerous, as alas! are the many wounded and maimed soldiers of the war. People in queues await their turn at the tram terminus, and seats (marked "Ladies only") are at the disposal of expectant passengers.

Pennies—sure sign of progress and struggle—are plentiful, and newspapers to be had at every street corner. The shopkeepers are quite up to date in independence and brusqueness, though erratic in their prices. One establishment thinks nothing of charging 25 per cent. more than his next-door neighbour for the same article. I saw a few drunken men at night, but no ladies of the pavement, and the town is well kept and orderly. The Salvation Army sings joyous hymns in the Market Square, cheap jacks shout their bargains to wandering crowds, boy scouts are keen and healthy, lads of the village coo, maidens blush, the band plays in the park, the actor struts on the boards—or near the boarding-houses—the brand-new aristocracy swaggers, and the Union Jack floats proudly over the Town Hall.

Yes, civilisation has arrived, and with it the patrician, the pauper, and above all the pretty young lady.

So folk go in for every species of fashionable social functions, even morganatic marriage, which is, of course, a different kind of thing from magnetic marriage, in itself

such a tremendous ceremony as to be above or below writing about.

All the same that does not deter some of the Johannesburg high life ladies, very rosy and white in cheek, from dressing a great deal younger than they did twenty years ago ; the older they get the more flashing buckle and alluring hose they show, and the less one wants to see. But the Rand flapper is a dainty and comely little thing, pretty as a butterfly ; no need to paint her gorgeous wings, nature has done that in dazzling mode—and make-up is at a discount, especially amongst those who have good complexions.

Johannesburg undeniably has a roving eye for fashion, and visitors arriving, say, from Bulawayo, no doubt would be struck by the chic and varied costumes of the Rand belles and matrons. The effect is, however, not so convincing to newcomers fresh from Piccadilly pastures and Regent Street realms. There is a want of style and finish apparent, and some expensive frocks I saw at a leading hotel were certainly (if I may be pardoned) out of date. The fruit had been plucked too late. Yet no belated fashions, nor careless dressing, can take away the fresh and natural beauty of the Johannesburg girls, though they may obscure it.

One very hot day, I caught a glimpse in Eloff Street of a very charming young lady, wearing a provocatingly pretty flop hat to guard against the sun, a set of furs to encourage it, and oh ! such lovely white boots and silk stockings (it had been raining) to distract the mud. King Solomon, or, if you like, Mrs. King Solomon, in all his glory was not more bountifully arrayed. But now that the mannequins have put in an appearance in this city (I don't know why, but I dearly love mannequins) all that will be altered, and possibly when the New Zealanders look down from St. Paul's on the ruins of London, Jo'burg will be setting the modes to Paris and New York.

Friday is not a fashionable night for theatre goers in London, only dead-heads muster, but in Johannesburg it is quite the thing to attend the play house the evening before Shabbas.

Prices run high for most luxuries, though South African wines and tobacco are cheap and good. I have bought a bottle of colonial claret for two shillings, much superior to many a brand purchased at four times the cost in England. And, really, the tobacco is delicious; home made cigars not at all bad, equal to any procurable elsewhere at the price. The tram fares are simply outrageous—every time I buy a ticket I think I'm paying my fare to London, especially on alighting at (Jo'burg) Brixton, ye old familiar name.

When Kruger first visited England he was asked what most struck his admiration amongst the wonderful sights he had seen, and he replied that the sheep were very large. In the same manner the Johannesburg charge for shaving and haircutting (one shilling and two shillings respectively, as against threepence and sixpence in England) appeared to me abnormal. A local barber explained that they were Union prices (whatever that may mean) and that they looked, in Stock Exchange parlance, like rising. (I had at that moment the same sensation.) One might do worse than buy a few scrapes for future delivery. The Rand professor also assured me that barbering was a much more gentle and scientific profession than dentistry, that shaving took much longer than pulling a molar, and that dentists received far larger fees for extracting a tooth. I pointed out timidly to the artist with the razor that whereas a man required a shave regularly, he did not want a daily crucifixion. But the barber was unconvinced, and declared that he would stick up for his rights if he died (or was it dyed?) for them. I trembled, thought of Sweeney Todd and saw myself growing a beard like Garibaldi, King Lear or Solly Joel.

Of course I visited the old Stock Exchange, and though Johannesburg had prospered, the discarded shameless building looked mournful enough, disreputable and frayed like a broken-down rake who had rooked his friends, lost his name, and was avoided by everybody.

“Between the Chains!” How cheerless and desolate

Simmonds Street seemed ; my heart grew sad as I gazed on it and thought of the happy years I had spent therein, and of the many fine fellows passed away, whose footsteps perhaps now haunt its precincts. Since then I have had my days of sorrow, gladness, disappointment, and triumph, but amidst them all I have never forgotten the sunshine and comedy of the "Chains." I see it now as it appeared in its palmy days, when champagne was fizzing and hearts were young, a quarter of a century ago.

In those merry days a sweltering crowd of brokers, dealers, and gentlemen of unspecified vocations, were wont to muster in this place of enchantment and offer to buy or sell shares—mostly with feminine names—until a stranger might have thought that it was a slave market, and grieved over the fate of Edna, Ida or Louise.

I felt as I contemplated the dismal place that if I came down one night to Simmonds Street and played the "Moonlight Sonata," that the magic quadrangle might become alive with the spectres of the people who once foregathered there. How they would caper along with their old time fickle companions whom they had bought and sold.

What a rush there would be for the Princess, the Lily, Aurora, Flora, Emma, and that fickle jade Bertha—all fairies of the aristocratic Main Reef family. And is there not Beatrice? Her history was a sad one, and she went north. Such bewitching, amorous, clinging, bewildering belles they were. And all the ghosts which attended this weird ballet of spectral scrip, and didn't dance, could count their sweet-named shares and console themselves by the thought that though they'd bought good ones it would be all the same to them now.

But if the old Stock Exchange struck a melancholy note, the new establishment and its surroundings were funereal. An immense structure, forlorn and despairing (like a giant man without vitality), stately as a museum, hungry as a work-house—a hopeless centre busy doing nothing. It reminded me of a huge hospital (the members appeared sick enough to warrant the belief) or a synagogue on Yom Kippur day, as



the few peckish dealers and brokers lounged in front of its entrance. Perhaps like a Spanish opera house, it is only dull outside, inside all bustle, hustle and animation.

Johannesburg is a wonderful city, perhaps the most wonderful interior city in the world. This is the thought that would occur to a stranger within its gates, no less than to the travelled man ; but to one who lived on the Rand a third of a century ago, the once city of plains is more magical still. That nascent place of the past fades into the land of dreams when one looks on Rissik Street, Pritchard Street, President Street, on the capacious Town Hall, Carlton Hotel, Standard Bank, Corner House and other stately buildings. Then there are the tall policemen in white gloves, noble niggers on bicycles, and pretty flappers with their powdered noses and dainty bottines. One must pass a heartfelt tribute to the Governmental or Municipal authorities who have transformed, as if by enchantment, a collection of shoddy shanties and tumble-down buildings into a beautiful healthy city. In 1896 the mortality was 58 per thousand.

Yes, Johannesburg is marvellous, yet I tire somewhat of her emporiums and thoroughfares. I do my daily pilgrimage through Eloff Street, Pritchard Street and President Street, but oh, it does become so dreary after a while ; one cannot live in tea-shops or cinemas, and the saloon bars seem dismal enough to please the most rigid teetotalers. Honestly, I think I could promenade Leicester Square and Piccadilly for a century and never feel jaded. I could live within their bounds and never go beyond ; you meet the world and his wife there (sometimes by appointment), the great and little men and women of the day, and the ghosts of illustrious ones of the past. Near by lived Pitt and Gladstone ; in King Street, Napoleon III ; in Bond Street, Nelson ; in Leicester Square, Reynolds, Hogarth and kindred great ones ; their shadows feed the imagination. Ah ! Piccadilly, musical with equipages, radiant with lovely women, is there anything in the world like it on a shining summer's afternoon ?

In the Johannesburg days-to-come shall not dour Kruger

in stone or bronze smile grimly over the people he once frowned upon, for that old Dopper, that shaggy meteor, was a man the world shall not soon forget. And De Wet, stout Delarey, vanquished Cronje, all wrong if you like, but patriots and sons of the soil. A different kind of paladin to be honoured and remembered is old-time Johan van Riebeck, the South African serene William the Conquerer. Botha, too, a king of men, the very soul of truth and honour of whom it may be said he was the *preux chevalier* of his race. Then Rhodes should have a site; his was a well-meaning but wayward heart, that loved the continent, in which he sleeps, with all his soul. Jan Smuts!—orator, warrior, statesman. his monument should be a magnificent one. South Africa has not seen the best of this patriot of all the talents: his genius shines as a glorious sun rising in splendour and radiating north, south, east, and west.

Again, fronting eastwards in majestic splendour, worthy of its glory and sacrifice must rise a memorial to those South African heroes who fell at Delville, "on a fair field." It will always be singing a song of the lad that is gone.

And why not an expiatory tribute to the magnates? There are to be sure on view this day two stealthy guns mounted in front of the Town Hall in Von Brandis Square. Whether they are allegorically dedicated to Ali Baba or to Rand millionaires is not clear. But guns are guns all the world over. Be that as it may, the public conscience would demand the raising, as a warning to the young, of a brazen statue dedicated to an Unknown Magnate, symbolical of the virtues of those of the fancy who throve on greed, avarice and mendacity.

Again why should not some modest obelisk, a pillar of stone, be offered to the hard-worked nigger, for is it not to the nigger that millionaires owe their wealth and prosperity? Niggers and gold; niggers and diamonds.

I sat out a couple of boxing shows, and didn't think much of them. In England the weight of the purse has destroyed the punch, but in Johannesburg the value of the purse is so very light that it is only worth dodging.

In my opinion things theatrical have not greatly improved on what they were a generation ago. It is true I saw one or two excellent performances—Miss Gertrude Elliot's to wit—and witnessed several indifferent ones. The Empire Music Hall at times provides good entertainment, and presents first-class artistes, though speaking generally the cinema palaces are much more advanced than the theatres.

Fine golf links and beautiful tennis courts abound and are well patronised by polite society. Sports and pastimes prosper, though "high life" is none the less the keynote. Recognised recreations were "At Homes" and "All Outs," receptions and deceptions, marriages and mis-marriages, celebrations of births and berths, garden parties (even in the back yard), *conversaziones*, where young and old 'ens cackle, durbars ("to meet" the Hon. Fitznoodle), public functions performed by a local grandee, and opening of picture exhibitions by a grandshe. There stood forth no Elizas, Janes, or Mary Annes; they had all been to that magic land where flies go in the summer time, and had reappeared as Fays, Daphnes and Christabels.

I am told that the ascending scale on the Rand from a social point of view is well defined. It commences at Vrededorp, bounds to Fordsburg, on to Doornfontein, then straight ahead to Parktown, where the people dress for dinner, frolic fashion, and otherwise enjoy themselves. Things are arranged on somewhat corresponding lines in London. Petticoat Lane, Maida Vale, Park Lane.

I peeped at Doornfontein before I left, and had to pinch myself to realise what a gloomy and decadent place it had developed into. Neglected streets, howling mongrels, lazy Kaffirs! To be sure a huge school reared its educational head and beckoned uninvitingly to those folk who could neither read nor write. At the lower end of the town was a small building, with Princess's Theatre in large half-obliterated letters printed across its front. Evidently the structure had been converted from a place of entertainment into a synagogue. The afternoon I happened that way the door of the holy place stood open, and inside I discerned

four or five learned Israelites expounding the Talmud to one another.

Really that interior scene was the only interesting feature about drowsy, dismal Doornfontein, of which I had expected better things. The little nook, during my early days in Johannesburg, used to be such a devil of a place, such a naughty, fashionable village of the dale—the male—the female—of which I could tell thee tales of Araby. And not only of Araby! At one time it was quite an aviary, so full was it of blue birds which sang, but never told their loves, so why should I? But now all is changed, and the gentle village to-day looks too dolorous either to dwell or die in. It may be for the better, but all the same I wish I were young again and Doornfontein as it was, a part of a joyous and regretted past.

Johannesburg is very British; I doubt very much if any English provincial town is more loyal to the Empire than the Rand. English manners and traditions appear to be lovingly enshrined in the hearts of the citizens. In a small way this is seen in the nomenclature adopted when christening their favourite city resorts and suburbs: Tattersalls, Thurston's, Langham, Grand, Victoria, Palladium, Richmond, Piccadilly, Melrose, Houghton, Kensington, Sydenham, Hampstead, each strikes a sympathetic chord in the heart of an Englishman. Nowhere shall you find a more patriotic, and in many ways more sensible, people than in Johannesburg. There is not that hopeless aspect of despair on their faces which is so common in the streets of London. All the same, I heard that a great deal of poverty was prevalent in the outlying districts, and that no fewer than six hundred families were in receipt of relief from the Rand Aid Association monthly. A sorry state of affairs, but I saw nothing of them; I could, however, descry that business was bad and money scarce, but dire poverty, except in rare individual cases, was not apparent.

At the Kazerne, where I went to claim my luggage, I found the sheds packed to the roof with huge cases of merchandise. Three or four railway employees were

regarding them, a look of derision and disgust on their faces. Exclaimed one of these men, jerking his thumb scornfully in the direction of the crates, "And is it for that our boys in thousands are lying dead in France?"

"Perhaps they're artificial limbs," answered the one addressed, grimly.

"Or street organs," snorted a third man disdainfully.

The cases, I understood, contained newly imported German goods, and each looked big enough to carry a church or a dozen hurdy-gurdies. Thank goodness, there were no street organs in Johannesburg, and more merciful still, no German bands—but that is not to say there were no bands of Germans, as noisy, arrogant and square-headed as ever.

After its feverish and dissipated youth Johannesburg has now reached a placid respectability. A prime and dignified future seems to be assured were it not for the dangerous unskilled labour, cocksure fellows of leather lungs, imbued with socialistic ideas about strikes and the rights of men.

I do not presume to understand South African politics, certainly not to the degree that Sir Abraham Bailey professes in the Cape Parliament. His frothy Imperialism is as much worn out as the imaginary mantle of Rhodes. Ye gods, Rhodes and Bailey, Ormonde and Tishy, Gold Trumpet and Penny Whistle. No counteracting influence to Socialism is there; only an irritant. I noticed while on my visit to the Rand that the eloquent Abe had been rattling his sabre. But Imperialism is to all intents and purposes dead in South Africa, and though Rhodes is yet revered in many circles as intellectually a big and spacious man, his early policy would have little chance of acceptance to-day. His Imperialism lies buried in the fields of Flanders, and South Africa wants no more Bonapartes, even in the delectable shape of Bailey.

Art in Johannesburg is still at a very low ebb, even if it exists at all. The picture dealers apparently do not possess a soul above photography, tawdry coloured prints and oleographs, with which their shop windows are filled. One hardly ever sees an oil painting or water colour displayed.

I was consequently much gratified on visiting the gallery of art to see a fairly useful collection of pictures and statuary housed there. Some of the canvases have been well chosen, and form a useful nucleus for what should develop, under discreet management, into an important and instructive selection. There are no works by the old masters, but that is hardly a fault to be tilted at in the newly formed collection of a young city. In teaching music the professor does not commence by introducing Beethoven to his pupils. The gallery, though poor in Dutch examples (Maris and Jongkind are represented), is rich in the possession of specimens of the French School; Boudin, Monticelli, Harpignies, Ribot, Fantin-Latour and others. Here are temperament, mind, emotion, and understanding. There is also a gorgeous landscape by Falquieres, and another nice picture by the same artist. The studies by Sargent and Orpen are mostly queer things; good names, surely, but mediocre panels. One of Orpen's efforts, the "Fairy Ring," shows a figure, without clothes or shoes, rehearsing something, I know not what, to an audience of several Dickensian dead-heads. She or he—looks as if she—or he—had been speculating, and gone bust and bootless. The "Fringe of the Moor," by Millais, is a magnificent piece that would do honour to any art exhibition. Maclise's "Othello and Desdemona" is quite in the artist's best stereotyped manner, and there are a couple of inferior works by Raeburn and Wilkie. Frith is well to the front, also Etty, Watts, Rosetti, and a dozen other Victorian masters. Three examples of the art of Mancinis are very attractive, his "Swiss Guard" being an especially showy tableau, vigorous and of fine colour; while "Roses," by Lavery, is a gem, but the "Girl with the Pork Pie Hat" looks more like a bad poster than a good picture. It gave me nightmare. Perhaps the creator of the wonderful hat has found a new school of beauty and fashion all his own. A chap has only to get drunk and stand before the "Girl with the Pork Pie Hat" to see one of the finest futurist pictures in the world.

I make no claim to be considered a connoisseur, but in

the course of my life I have visited more than once nearly all the picture galleries in Europe. Cuypp's cows, Potter's bulls, Herring's horses, Cooper's cattle, Greuze's girls, Rueben's women, Watteau's carnivals, Hals' cavaliers, Claude's landscapes, Tenier's interiors, Turner's fantasies, Constable's landscapes—I have seen and like them all. But, oh! I do love Romney's women and Boucher's bright nude, rude things, in which you may see not only all there is to see, but all there isn't. For myself, I do not care much about the very old masters, especially those who treat of biblical subjects. As for the traditional Madonnas, I hope I shall never look on one again; the flesh tints and drawing are invariably magnificent, but how terribly monotonous and depressing! I delight in a noble Murillo, Velasquez, Vandyke, while Rembrandt has a flair that no other painter possesses. Hobbema and Ruysdael are always entrancing, and Reynolds' stately era is as superb as any. On the whole, I prefer comparatively modern pictures to the great classics, which sometimes, to be honest, seem awful daubs.

With all respect to the residents of the Rand, I cannot say that I found them either genial or polite, although as a body they are good natured and charitable. There is a brusqueness and conscious insincerity about their ordinary demeanour which repels, while they are disobliging to a degree in the customary amenities of life. If you should ask a stranger in the street the time of day, it is an even money chance that he will disregard the question, or tell you approximately without troubling to look at his watch. On enquiring the way, say to Fox Street, I have often been misdirected, and sent far out of my road. The assistants in the shops were anything but courteous; they serve as if doing the customer a personal favour. Errand boys in the different offices are the limit, some of them must have come from Sussex—they "wun't be druv." If you leave a message with the best specimens they will listen to it, and say "Right O"; they have a sturdy (is it?) independence; and by no chance do they so far forget themselves

as to address a caller as "Sir." Perhaps the plethora of knights and baronets in the town, no less than their quality, has bred contempt in their young bones. And who can blame them? The tram-conductors, a useful lot of men to look at, are, I presume, the aristocracy of labour. Wages nine to ten pounds per week! I enquired from one, "Is this the car for Yeoville?" and he replied: "Can't you read?" Another put me wrong, a third regarded my figure with contemptuous silence, and gave me the ten-pound look. No wonder! What could one expect from men who were paid almost as much for punching a ticket as Carpentier is for punching a pugilist? "Too much meat" had spoiled them.

The local newspapers are well printed, distributed and edited; readable, interesting, sensible; perhaps too much space devoted to sport, but, no doubt, the powers that be know what's wanted. All the journals, anyway, appear to be run in the capitalistic interests, and there is no opposition organ. I doubt if there exists another important town in the whole world where such conditions would be tolerated. It's enough to make the editor of the *Eatanswell Gazette* turn in his grave. I should advise no English journalist—no matter how high his merit—to try his luck in this city; better let him float about the smoke of London. The three leading newspapers are seemingly surrounded by an invisible fence, and though a new arrival might manage to get over it, he'd lose his soul in the feat. And the pay?—well, it's much more remunerative to be a tram-conductor or barber than a bard, as a fact it's a good ten to one on Sweeney Todd *versus* Shakespeare. For journalists there is not even Grub Street and a glass of beer; a novice would be all whiskers and no boots in a month, and get more for stitching, stitching a shirt than writing a song about it, even though he were Tom Hood come to life again. And if the scribe died of a broken heart or too much whiskey, both luxurious deaths in Johannesburg, the capitalists might laud his genius, exalt his bonhomie, extol his tact, and send his widow—their very good wishes.



Taxi-drivers in this part of the world are, make no mistake, quite up-to-date, and a bit over. They seemingly charge what they like, and dismiss you with the gesture of a monarch sacking his chamberlain. As to the Jehus I say nothing. I never felt tempted to get into one of their hearse-like conveyances, drawn invariably by a couple of starving quadrupeds.

The residents of Johannesburg do not cultivate their laborious inclinations in a marked degree, and are, I should think, the least hard-worked townsmen on earth. They take a holiday every few minutes, and a half-holiday every afternoon; their business hours are uncertain, and I sometimes believe that they shut up their shops before they open them.

I have promenaded Piccadilly, meandered along the Champs Élysée, strolled through the Corso, taken the sun in Puerto del Sol, and walked through Unter den Linden, but have never seen prettier girls than those in Johannesburg. They represent all types of beauty from the grey eyes of Ireland to the black eyes of Israel; here you may meet English roses, Scotch bluebells, Welsh daffodils, blondes from Scandinavia, brunettes from Italy, *la jeune fille bien élevée* from France, and a few red-headed maidens with dewy lips who appear to have escaped from Rossetti's pictures. Not only have the Johannesburg damsels fine faces, but what is better still, they are blessed with fine figures and glorious health; splendid young women, joyous with air and sunshine, all eager to fall in love and get married. Elinor Glynn has said that "French women are the only women in the world who know exactly what men want." She evidently had not visited Johannesburg.

I cannot tell whether there are fewer doctors than solicitors, or fewer solicitors than doctors abiding in this city, but there is an army of both cults; I think they form together half the floating population. Useful members no doubt; they direct man how to leave this world (and his belongings), likewise direct him into it. Man howls on both occasions!

I am convinced that Johannesburg holds a great future ; it has everything in its favour. As the Thames drew to its banks millions of inhabitants, so shall the magnificent climate of the Rand assuredly attract a mighty population, the tramp of whose feet is even heard now. Taking it all round there is no climate from China to Peru superior to it ; there are few counteracting influences such as you find in other regions of acknowledged salubrity—no tornadoes, blizzards, eruptions, earthquakes, tidal waves and what not. Its position as a central city is unique ; the greatest gold yielding region in the world ; a leading factor in the production of coal, to say nothing of its agricultural potentialities, which are immense. Its power of expansion, too, is colossal, with its boundless veld and illimitable acres of ground of a quality as good as can be found anywhere under the sun.

This may well be conceded when we come to consider that the agricultural production of the Union of 1917-1918, with only 3 per cent. of the ground cultivated was enormous. Capitalists only require proof that industrial investment has a chance of success and money will be readily invested. Not even America in her most promising days possessed greater potentialities than South Africa. Gold, diamonds, coal, copper, iron-ore, tin, asbestos, tobacco, coffee, tea, sugar, fruits, hemp, maize, corn, barley, cattle, sheep, pigs—what can South Africa not produce ?

The earth does not grow, but populations do, and this country's wealth lies in her 220,000,000 acres of ground (and such ground) waiting to be cultivated and partly peopled. Long before the awakening of South Africa as the world's producer of raw materials, Johannesburg, having developed its immense industrial and agricultural possibilities, will have been acclaimed a queen among cities. A tremendous era of expansion and development is at hand !

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