

The Romantic Career of Leander Starr Jameson

DOCTOR, PIONEER, ADMINISTRATOR,
REVOLUTIONIST, PREMIER AND STATESMAN.

(Born, 9th February, 1853. Died, 26th November, 1917.)

AMONG the distinguished men who have of late years passed away from the midst of us, few perhaps have left behind them a memory more deeply cherished, and we may add—more lasting, than that of the subject of this memoir. Remarkable alike for his skill in his profession, his brilliant attainments as a man of science, his intrepidity and zeal when engaged in arduous tasks he undertook for the weal of the country of his adoption in particular, as well as for the British Empire in general, he will be venerated by succeeding generations. We feel assured that a brief sketch of the active part he took in adding territory to our already vast Empire will be acceptable to the readers of the "British South Africa Annual."

Leander Starr Jameson, son of the late Mr. R. W. Jameson, journalist, was born in Edinburgh in 1853. Deciding to enter the medical profession, he went to London in 1870 and joined the medical school of University College Hospital. He became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and M.B. and B.S. of London University in 1875, taking a gold medal and first-class honours in forensic medicine and third-class honours in obstetric medicine. He obtained his M.D. in the year 1877. Before qualifying he held a dressership under Sir James Ericsson and also gained the Atkinson-Morley scholarship at University College. After graduation he was appointed house physician to Sir John R. Reynolds and house surgeon to John Marshall, F.R.S., and also demonstrator of anatomy to the hospital. In 1878 he became resident medical officer but his period of office was interrupted by a voyage of some months to the United States, where he was in charge of a patient, and was cut short by the fact of a good opening presenting itself at Kimberley. About this time too, his health broke down through over-work, and he decided to go to Kimberley in the hope that a complete change of climate and environment would quite restore him. He arrived in South Africa in 1878, entered into partnership with Dr. Prince a well known medical practitioner on the Diamond Fields, and soon acquired a large practice. His success as a doctor was very remarkable, and among his patients on various occasions were, President Kruger of the Transvaal, President Brand of the Free State, and the Matabele chief Lobengula whom he treated for gonit. His professional income at that time was estimated at between £5,000 and £6,000 a year. It was at Kimberley where Dr. Jameson and Mr. Rhodes first met and formed that close friendship which was maintained till the death of Rhodes.

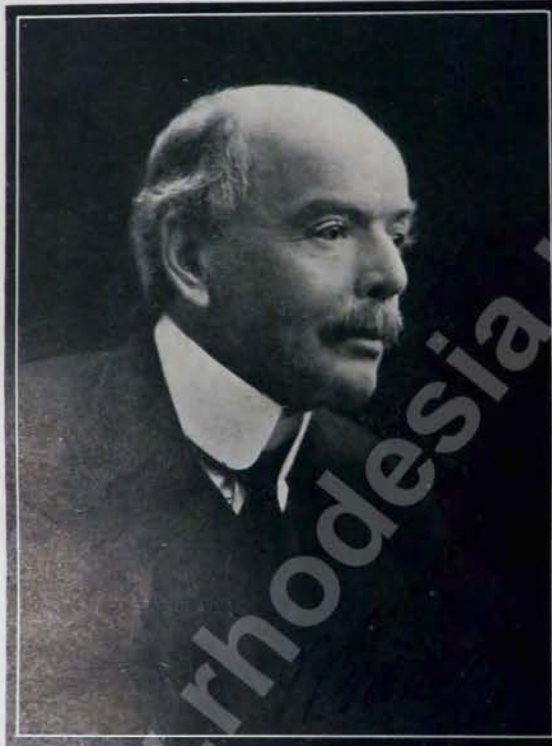
During 1888 the British South Africa Company experienced a great deal of difficulty in the negotiations of Mashonaland, and it was at this stage in the history of the Chartered Company that Dr. Jameson first lent active assistance to his friend, and

abandoned a magnificent practice to undertake an arduous and dangerous mission.

In order properly to develop Mashonaland and other adjacent territories, it became necessary to obtain concessions from Lobengula, the Matabele chief, through whose country the pioneer forces wished to pass; and Dr. Jameson offered to carry out the mission and went to Bulawayo. Ultimately Lobengula agreed to all that was demanded of him and in 1890 the Home Government granted a Royal Charter to the British South Africa Company, entrusting it with the development of the extensive regions lying to the south of the Zambesi. An expedition was therefore decided upon and Mr. Selous, of hunting fame, was instructed to construct a road into Mashonaland. But a check was placed upon the operations owing to the renewed hostility of Lobengula, and the aggressive attitude of the Matabele. Dr. Jameson undertook another mission to the wavering king with a perfectly successful result. It now became more and more evident that his services were indispensable to the Chartered Company and to Mr. Rhodes, so he accompanied the pioneer expedition into Mashonaland and settled at Fort Salisbury as the representative of Mr. Rhodes.

In a few months he started on an exploration expedition through an unknown country to discover, if possible, a route leading to the east coast of Africa which might be constructed as a wagon-road and ultimately converted into a railway. But as the wide belt of country through which he passed is inhabited by the tsetse fly, whose bite is fatal to oxen, the idea of a wagon-road was abandoned and the Beira railway was constructed.

Dr. Jameson's next move was a mission to Gunguhana, king of Gazaland, who had been defeated by the Portuguese and taken prisoner. Gunguhana had for years asked the British government to assume a Protectorate over his country, but without avail; the Chartered Company therefore entered into negotiations with him with a view to granting him a subsidy for certain concessions. This arrangement was strongly resented by the Portuguese, who immediately asserted a suzerainty over Gazaland, and their claim was allowed by Lord Salisbury. Dr. Jameson then determined to undertake a journey to Gunguhana before the Portuguese could make final arrangements, and in company with two other Englishmen he started on his six hundred miles of entirely unexplored and unhealthy country, and made the journey in forty-three days. They endured great hardships, were nearly starved, and being constantly wet by wading through rivers and marshy ground, suffered severely from malarial fever. His companions nearly died by the way, and he himself never fully recovered from the effects of that terrible journey. Dr. Jameson had no difficulty



THE LATE RT. HON. SIR LEANDER STARR JAMESON, BART., P.C., C.B., ETC.

in getting a concession signed by the king who was glad of the opportunity of throwing off the Portuguese yoke, and although no territory was ceded to the Chartered Company on that occasion, it was entirely owing to the prompt action of Dr. Jameson that the Portuguese were prevented from absorbing Gazaland. During 1891 the administrator of the chartered territories resigned and Dr. Jameson at the instance of Mr. Rhodes, was appointed his successor. He had not been in office many months when a large body of armed Boers made an attempt to invade a portion of Matabeleland which borders the Transvaal. Dr. Jameson met them, and explained he would oppose their passage by armed force. He had a parley with the leaders and persuaded some of them to trek into Mashonaland, where they would be welcomed and have equal rights with English settlers. Ultimately the remainder returned peacefully to their homes.

About this time signs of unrest became only too apparent among the Matabele, and to prevent a massacre of whites, Dr. Jameson determined to take the field, more especially as he discovered that the Matabele had for many months been secretly preparing for war. He made a plan of campaign, foresaw the duration of the war and the speedy collapse of the rebellion, and astonished his officers by his power of organisation and tactful ability. In a few months, after several successful engagements, he completely subdued the Matabele, and having been allowed a free hand, he conducted the business with admirable skill.

Towards the end of 1894 Dr. Jameson visited England, meeting with a very cordial reception and on June 25th, 1895, a dinner was given in his honour in White Hall Rooms, by his fellow students at University College, where he had been resident medical officer for two years. A few days after he delivered an address dealing with the Past, Present and Future of South Africa, in the Imperial Institute, presided over by the Prince of Wales (who subsequently became King Edward VII) to an audience of 2,500 people. Before he left England a C.B., civil division, was conferred upon him, in recognition of his splendid work in South Africa.

Doornkop.

Towards the end of 1896 the discontent and agitation of the Uitlander population of Johannesburg took a serious turn, and they secretly armed and determined to force the Boer government to grant them constitutional rights. On December 28th a letter was sent to Dr. Jameson, who was then at Mafeking, asking him to come and help them, and on the following day he started to their assistance with the Bechuanaland Police, eight hundred strong. Major Sir John Willoughby was in command of the force, and they took with them eight maxim guns, and after having cut the telegraph wires, they crossed the Transvaal border and passed on to Krugersdorp.

As soon as the news reached England Mr. Joseph Chamberlain ordered the High Commissioner of South Africa to publicly denounce Dr. Jameson's act of proclamation, and, at the same time, Sir Hercules Robinson sent a despatch to Jameson ordering his immediate return. Dr. Jameson, however, disregarded the message and at Krugersdorp he was met by a force of one thousand Boers, and fighting ensued. He then passed on to Doornkop, hourly expecting some promised assistance from Johannesburg. Meanwhile, the Boer force had been considerably augmented and Jameson at last hoisted a flag of truce and gave in, on the condition that the lives of his followers were spared. They were taken to Pretoria where they were arraigned before a Boer tribunal charged with being the leaders of an armed force who invaded the Transvaal with the intention to overthrow the government of the Republic and were each found guilty of the charges preferred against them, and at the conclusion of the trial were sentenced to be shot. Instead of executing the sentence, however, it was ultimately decided upon by the Transvaal government that the prisoners should be handed over to the

British government to be dealt with, and early in February, 1896, they sailed for England in a man-o'-war to stand their trial before Sir John Bridges at Bow Street, but it was not until the 18th of June that Jameson was committed for trial. The trial "at Bar" took place before the Lord Chief Justice (Lord Killowen), Baron Pollock, Justice Hawkins, and a special jury, and eventually Dr. Jameson was sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment.

His Health Affected.

The long strain while he had been under examination and awaiting trial, had told upon his health, and the news of the Matabele rising at that time added to his uneasiness of mind. His health suffered so much that he had to undergo a surgical operation in prison, and, his life being in danger, the doctors ordered his release and he went—a broken man—to a nursing home.

German Interference.

During the trial of Jameson at Pretoria, the German Emperor sent a telegram to President Kruger congratulating him upon successfully resisting the invasion, and this interference of the German Emperor caused the most widespread indignation in England.

In spite of the disastrous consequences of what has been termed "an illegal raid," Dr. Jameson on his arrival in London met with a popular ovation.

Not so Insane as Represented.

Of his share in the raid, it is perhaps, a case of "the less said the better." It was a black responsibility that Jameson took when he crossed the border; but it was a still blacker risk and he knew it for he and his followers took their lives in their hands and their great haste was to get beyond recall. Had they ever thought of turning back, then they would never have started; they rode lightly in with a price on their heads, a mark for the Boers to shoot at. There is something in the audacity of the thing that disarms criticism, but it did not disarm the Boer commandos.

Instead of sending assistance that Jameson expected, there was intense excitement in Johannesburg when it became known that Dr. Jameson with a force of eight hundred men had crossed the Bechuanaland border, and the movement was universally condemned. Jameson himself never attempted to defend his conduct; the most that he did in his apologies at Kimberley was to demonstrate that the scheme, though bungled in execution, was not so insane as it had been represented, since it was based on the theory of a surprise and the seizure of the arsenal at Pretoria before the Boers could mobilise. The uncomplaining fortitude with which he bore the consequences of his blunder is a matter of history.

During the sitting of the South African commission which had been appointed to enquire into the causes of the raid Dr. Jameson was called as a witness; and in his evidence made use of the remark: "If I had been successful I should have been forgiven."

A Blunder Righted.

During the last conversation the writer had with him at the Hotel Belgravia, Kimberley, when the raid was referred to, Dr. Jameson said: "I blundered, but I have since lived it all down." This admission coincides with an article on the career of the late Sir Starr Jameson in the *Daily Chronicle*, which, *inter alia*, says: "He was unfortunate in the fact that the public long remembered him chiefly in connection with the greatest mistake of Rhodes' career. However, he was more fortunate than his chief, as he lived to see that great blunder forgiven and forgotten in the co-operation between Dutch and



AN UNIQUE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LATE CECIL JOHN RHODES AND "DR. JIM" (SIR STARR JAMESON, BART.) TAKEN JUST BEFORE THE "RAID."

British in building up a better South Africa on a happier and more sure basis. In that new era, with all it meant for the Empire during the recent war in the help and comradeship of such men as General Smuts and General Botha, Sir Starr Jameson played a great part. Not every statesman or warrior has been given such opportunities of righting a blunder committed in an ill-advised moment, and not every warrior or statesman would seize the opportunity so manfully."

We are assured that the majority of true South Africans will agree with the statement that for South Africans, Jameson's real greatness shines in the spirit of humility and conciliation in which he returned to South Africa after his imprisonment, and that spirit of wisdom which enabled him subsequently to become Prime Minister of the Cape, one of the framers of the Constitution of the Union, and a far-seeing, sagacious leader of the Opposition.

The Convention.

Sir Starr Jameson was one of the delegates to the Union Convention as a matter of course, and he played a great but characteristically unostentatious part in smoothing over difficulties. All praised his tact, while he himself declared that it was "an eye-opener" which helped him to understand far better than he had sometimes done in the past the point of view of his political opponents.

The passing of the Act of Union was followed by the first general election, in which Dr. Jameson took a very active and strenuous part. Many people will recall his arguments in favour of a best-man Government, and many will still regret that they failed to convince the South African Party. Jameson was elected both for his old seat of Albany and for the Harbour Division of Cape Town. He elected to sit for Albany.

Leader of the Opposition.

For two years he worked as leader of the Opposition, seeking hard to bring about the reconstruction of the parties on lines of principles, not race. This made him, of course, a very active opponent of General Hertzog. During these two years, however, his health was continually giving way, and more and more he had to leave the leadership in the hands of Dr. Smarrt, till early in April, 1912, he was obliged to retire definitely. His withdrawal from the political life of the Union drew forth tributes

He sailed for England in April, 1912, and in June of the next year (1913) he became President of the Chartered Company, in succession to the Duke of Aberdeen, in which capacity he visited Rhodesia late in the year, and at a large public meeting at Salisbury he went thoroughly into several questions which were troubling the minds of the people.



MEMBERS OF THE B.S.A. POLICE HAULING THE GUN CARRIAGE BEARING THE COFFIN TO THE GRAVE ON THE SUMMIT OF THE WORLD'S VIEW.

Later in the year he visited India, and in the following year, as he had foretold, the British South Africa Company's charter was reviewed and extended for the coming ten years.

Then the European war broke out, and Dr. Jameson immediately gave all the energy he could spare from his position as president of the company to war work, and his wonderful powers of organisation and his keen business qualities were of immense value to the Empire. As chairman of the Prisoners of War Committee he organised the relief sent to prisoners of war in enemy countries, preventing overlapping and seeing that no man was neglected.

Dr. Jameson strongly impressed everybody with whom he came in contact with a sense of his quiet power and capacity. "He was easily head and shoulders above all the others," said one who knew him well, "and he recalled how his departure for South Africa was mourned by the English medical world as a loss to their profession. 'He is throwing away his life,' they said in regret for the career which promised so brightly had he remained to practice in London."

The same authority declared that his marvellous tact, which seemed quite a natural quality, and by no means the product of forethought or deliberate cultivation, was the secret of his success in so many spheres. He was perfectly at home with, and equally interested in, the rough miner, the English traveller, and the Dutch farmer, and equally and deeply interested in the affairs of each and all. It was this quality which gave him the sway which he so easily exercised over all sorts and conditions of men, and which enabled him to win over the bitterest opponents and most determined foes. He is remembered with respect as a most skilful surgeon, and with affection for his personal charm and kindness.

Death of Dr. Jameson. Impressive Ceremonies in the Matopos.

Dr. Jameson died in England on November 26th, 1917, and his remains were temporarily bestowed in the Kensal Green Cemetery to await a favourable

opportunity for transference to the place in the immediate vicinity of the tomb of the founder of Rhodesia, who, when directing in his will where his body was to have a final resting place, said: "I admire the grandeur and loneliness of the Matopos in Rhodesia, and I therefore desire to be buried in the Matopos, on the hill which I used to visit and which I called



Photos by

GUARDING THE COFFIN AT THE OPEN GRAVE.

[A. Raybould.

of respect and esteem from all sides; those who had been his bitterest opponents when, nine years before, he had become Premier of Cape Colony at a time when they were peculiarly sensitive, frankly expressed their wonder at the qualities of heart and brain which had won the goodwill of even the most prejudiced.

"Now it has been said that with the death of Jameson the romantic epoch in Rhodesian life came to an end, and perhaps there is an element of truth in that. The possibilities of the future are illimitable, and he would be a bold man who would say what a new Africa in general and Rhodesia in particular will produce in the future. It is true, notwithstanding, that some of



Photo by] H. F. Knapp.
HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR, SIR DRUMMOND CHAPLIN AND LADY CHAPLIN ASCENDING THE GRANITE SLOPE.

the uncertainty has gone and that now the country is settling down to its advancement in political and material progress. That is just what Jameson foresaw and what he wished to take place.

Sir Starr Jameson's Romantic Career.

"And perhaps with the ending of the romantic period it is meet to dwell for a moment upon the romantic career which he had. He started with no particular advantages as to training or finance. He made for himself a great practice as a first-class medical man in Kimberley, and he gave all that up for the sake of his friend and leader. He gave that up to come to Rhodesia at the bidding of his great friend, here to engage in work, the perils and the difficulties of which were such as we who live in these more comfortable days can hardly conceive of. There are men here I know who shared those perils and those difficulties with him, and I am quite sure they will look back with pride upon the example which he set them during the early days of the occupation. And then, after that, when he was making good as Administrator in the troublous times there were, came the great fall of 1896.

"Now there are many people who fill very high positions and who lose positions and reputations. There are few who fall so rapidly as he did at that time, and there are few indeed in the world who recovered so completely the estimation of his fellowmen. And how was that? It was not mere intellect. It was not indeed the mere gift which he had to a remarkable degree of understanding the wishes and desires of his fellowmen. It was not merely his power of work, it was not merely his power of leadership. It was, I think, because whatever mistake he made there was no one who could challenge him with doing what he did for the sake of advancement or aggrandisement. And there was no one who did not recognise that, mistaken or not, he was a man of action, and that he had for this ultimate goal—whatever steps might have intervened—the advancement of his fellowmen and the interests of the Empire at large.

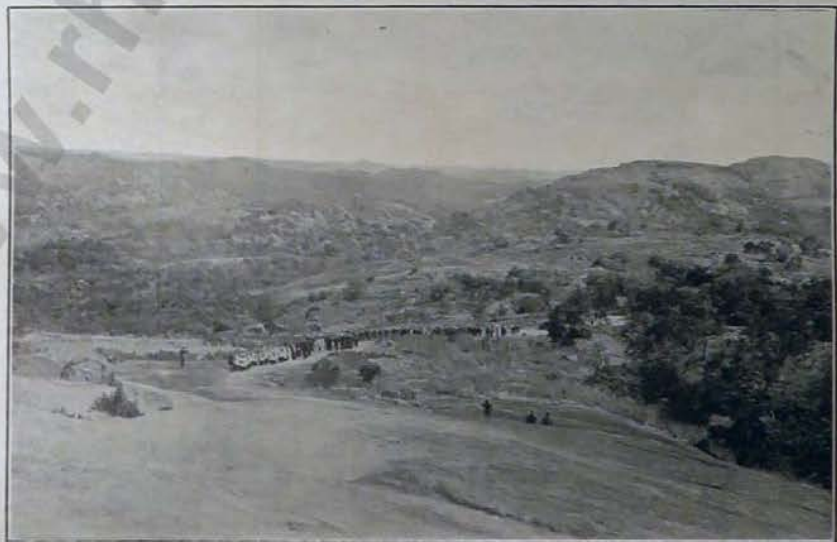
"We all know how he rose after the days of adversity, through the silent days of his first year or so in Parliament, to be the leader of his party, to be the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony; and we know how in that strenuous life he gained the respect, not merely of his political opponents of his race, but the respect and even the affection of those who might well have been

tempted to look upon his action with undue severity. We know from the splendid tribute General Smuts has paid to him how the value of his work appealed to him, and we know, those of us who had the privilege of serving with him in the Union Parliament, something of the regard they had for him, and of the genuine affection which he inspired in the leader of the rival party. We know, too, how in the early days of 1910 he worked for the unity of South Africa, and how truly he may be regarded as one of the greatest founders of the Union as it stands to-day.

"And so I think it is meet that we come here to-day to do him honour. We are laying him here to rest, thinking of him with affection, with admiration, with a kindly feeling. As regards any faults he might have had, few, I think, except those who were privileged to be intimate with him, knew how deep a vein of sympathy, kindness and charity lay below what sometimes seemed to be not far short of cynicism. I know that to the day of his death he was working in the interests of Rhodesia, side by side with the work which he was doing on behalf of the Empire in connection with the war.

"I think, perhaps, the most wonderful tribute that has ever been paid to a man who during part of his life had been an active politician, was the great gathering of all that is best in England at the funeral service which took place at Westminster. And yet I feel, if he could tell us, he would think more of the honour which is done him here. He would feel the supreme satisfaction of knowing that he lies here in the ground which at the wish of the great founder of the country has been set apart for those who deserve well of it—lies here in the midst of many others who knew him by name only, but who are thoroughly sensible of the work he has done for them. And so we leave him here in peace to-day, and we know that his memory will not fade, and we know that his name will live for evermore."

A telegram from General Smuts read: "I wish to express to you how much I regret my inability to come up to Rhodesia to attend the burial of the late Sir Starr Jameson. Nothing but the state of public business in Parliament would have prevented me from accepting your kind invitation and doing the last honour to the memory of this great South African. Besides his great human qualities which endeared him to all who knew him, Sir Starr Jameson played a very distinguished part on the public stage of South Africa. With the exception of Rhodes, no man has a better right to be called the founder of Rhodesia, and his subsequent work at the National Convention entitles him to the further distinction of being one of the makers of new South Africa. In this solemn hour of his burial, when his dust is finally mingled with the land he loved and served and made for ever an integral and indivisible part of British South Africa, we



Photos by] LA. Raybould.
UNDER THE BLAZING SUN, THE SHINING CROSS IN THE VAN, THEN THE SURPLICED CLERGY AND CHOIR AND THE LONG TRAIN OF MOURNERS WINDING UP THE FACE OF THE GRANITE.

who remain behind, of whatever race or speech, can only unite in remembering his great service and in doing honour to his memory. On behalf of the Union, in whose public life he occupied so great a place, I wish to express to you and the people of Rhodesia our feelings of reverence for the dead, and of sympathy and fellowfeeling in our common loss."