

## CHAPTER X

### PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE

EVER since the Jameson raid both the Boers and the Uitlanders have realized that a peaceful solution of the differences between the two is possible but highly improbable. The Uitlanders refused to concede anything to the Boer, and asked for concessions that implied a virtual abandonment of their country to the English, whom they have always detested. The Boers themselves have not been unmindful of the inevitable war with their powerful antagonist, and, not unlike the tiny ant of the African desert, which fortifies its abode against the anticipated attack of wild beasts, have made of their country a veritable arsenal.

Probably no inland country in the world is half so well prepared for war at any time as that little Government, which can boast of

having less than thirty thousand voters. The military preparation has been so enormous that Great Britain has been compelled, according to the colonial secretary's statement to the British Parliament, to expend two and a half million dollars annually in South Africa in order to keep pace with the Boers. Four years ago, when the Transvaal Government learned that the Uitlanders of Johannesburg were planning a revolution, it commenced the military preparations which have ever since continued with unabating vigour. German experts were employed to formulate plans for the defence of the country, and European artillerymen were secured to teach the arts of modern warfare to the men at the head of the Boer army. Several Americans of military training became the instructors in the national military school at Pretoria; and even the women and children became imbued with the necessity of warlike preparation, and learned the use of arms. Several million pounds were annually spent in Europe in the purchase of the armament required by the plans formulated by the experts, and the whole country was placed

on a war footing. Every important strategic position was made as impregnable as modern skill and arms could make it, and every farmer's cottage was supplied with arms and ammunition, so that the volunteer army might be mobilized in a day.

In order to demonstrate the extent to which the military preparation has been carried, it is only necessary to give an account of the defences of Pretoria and Johannesburg, the two principal cities of the country. Pretoria, being the capital, and naturally the chief point of attack by the enemy, has been prepared to resist the onslaught of any number of men, and is in a condition to withstand a siege of three years. The city lies in the centre of a square, at each corner of which is a lofty hill surmounted by a strong fort, which commands the valleys and the surrounding country. Each of the four forts has four heavy cannon, four French guns of fifteen miles range, and thirty heavy Gatling guns. Besides this extraordinary protection, the city has fifty light Gatling guns which can be drawn by mules to any point on the hills

where an attack may be made. Three large warehouses are filled with ammunition, and the large armory is packed to the eaves with Mauser, Martini-Henry, and Wesley-Richards rifles. Two extensive refrigerators, with a capacity of two thousand oxen each, are ample provision against a siege of many months. It is difficult to compute the total expenditures for war material by the Boer Government during the last four years, but the following official announcement of expenses for one year will serve to give an idea of the vastness of the preparations that the Government has been compelled to make in order to guard the safety of the country:

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| War-Office salaries..... | \$262,310        |
| War purposes .....       | 4,717,550        |
| Johannesburg revolt..... | 800,000          |
| Public works.....        | <u>3,650,000</u> |
|                          | \$9,429,860      |

Johannesburg has extensive fortifications around it, but the Boers will use them for other purposes than those of self-protection. The forts at the Golden City were erected for the purpose of quelling any revolution of the

Uitlanders, who constitute almost entirely the population of the city.

One of the forts is situated on a small eminence about half a mile north of the business part, and commands the entire city with its guns. Two years were consumed in building the fortification and in placing the armament in position. Its guns can rake not only every street of the city, but ten of the principal mine works as well, and the damage that their fire could cause is incalculable. Another fort, almost as strong as the one in Johannesburg, is situated a mile east of the city, and overshadows the railway and the principal highway to Johannesburg. The residents of the city are greatly in fear of underground works, which they have been led to believe were constructed since the raid. Vast quantities of earth were taken out of the Johannesburg fort, and for such a length of time did the work continue that the Uitlanders decided that the Boers were undermining the city, and protested to the Government against such a course. As soon as war is declared and the women and children have been removed

from the city, Johannesburg will be rent with shot and shell. The Boers have announced their intention of doing this, and the Uitlanders, anticipating it, seek safety in flight whenever there are rumours of war, as thousands did immediately before and after the Jameson affair.

The approaches to the mountain passes on the border have been fortified with vast quantities of German and French ordnance, and equipped with garrisons of men born or trained in Europe. The approaches to Laing's Nek, near the Natal border, which have several times been the battle ground of the English and Boer forces, have been prepared to resist an invading army from Natal. Much attention has been directed to the preparations in that part of the republic, because the British commanders will find it easier to transfer forces from the port of Durban, which is three hundred and six miles from the Transvaal border, while Cape Town is almost a thousand miles distant.

But the Pretorian Government has made many provisions for war other than those enu-

merated. It has made alliances and friends that will be of equal worth in the event of an attack by England. The Orange Free State, whose existence is as gravely imperilled as that of the Transvaal, will fight hand-in-hand with its neighbour, just as it was prepared to do at the time of the Jameson raid, when almost every Free State burgher lay armed on the south bank of the Vaal River, awaiting the summons for assistance from the Kruger Government. In the event of war the two Governments will be as one, and, in anticipation of the struggle of the Boers against the British, the Free State Government has been expending vast sums of money every year in strengthening the country's defences. At the same time that the Free State is being prepared for war, its Government officials are striving hard to prevent a conflict, and are attempting to conciliate the two principals in the strife by suggesting that concessions be made by both. The Free State is not so populous as the Transvaal, and consequently can not place as many men in the field, but the ten thousand burghers who will

answer the call to arms will be an acceptable addition to the Boer forces.

The element of doubt enters into the question of what the Boers and their co-religionists of Cape Colony and Natal will do in the event of war. The Dutch of Cape Colony are the majority of the population, and, although loyal British subjects under ordinary circumstances, are opposed to English interference in the Transvaal's affairs. Those of Natal, while not so great in numbers, are equally friendly with the Transvaal Boers, and would undoubtedly recall some of their old grievances against the British Government as sufficient reason to join the Boers in war.

In Cape Colony there is an organization called the Afrikaner Bond which recently has gained control of the politics of the colony, and which will undoubtedly be supreme for many years to come. The motto of the organization is "South Africa for South Africans," and its doctrine is that South Africa shall be served first and Great Britain afterward. Its members, who are chiefly Dutch, believe their first duty is to assist the develop-



ment of the resources of their own country by proper protective tariffs and stringent legislation in native affairs, and they regard legislation with a view to British interests as of secondary importance. The Bond has been very amicably inclined toward its Afrikaner kinsmen in the Transvaal, especially since the Jameson raid, and every sign of impending trouble between England and the Boers widens the chasm between the English and Afrikaners of South Africa. The Dutch approve of President Kruger's course in dealing with the franchise problems, and if hostilities break out it would be not the least incompatible with their natures to assist their Transvaal and Free State kinsmen even at the risk of plunging the whole of South Africa into a civil war. W. P. Schreiner, the Premier of Cape Colony, is the leading member of the Bond, and with him he has associated the majority of the leading men in the colony. Under ordinary conditions their loyalty to Great Britain is undoubted, but whether they could resist the influence of their friends in the Bond if it should decide to cast its fortunes

with the Boers in case of war is another matter.

Of such vast importance is the continued loyalty of the Dutch of the two colonies that upon it depends practically the future control of the Cape by the British Government. Being in the majority as three to two, and almost in supreme control of the local government, the Dutch of Cape Colony are in an excellent position to secede from the empire, as they have already threatened to do, in which event England would be obliged to fight almost the united population of the whites if she desired to retain control of the country. With this in mind, it is no wonder that Mr. Chamberlain declared that England had reached a critical turning point in the history of the empire.

The uncertainty of the situation is increased by the doubtful stand which the native races are taking in the dispute. Neither England nor the Boers has the positive assurance of support from any of the tribes, which outnumber the whites as ten to one; but it will not be an unwarranted opinion to place the

majority of the native tribes on the side of the Boers. The native races are always eager to be the friends of the paramount power, and England's many defeats in South Africa during recent years have not assisted in gaining for it that prestige. When England enters upon a war with the Transvaal the natives will probably follow the example of the Matabele natives, who rebelled against the English immediately after Jameson and his men were defeated by the Boers, because they believed a conquered nation could offer no resistance. The Boers, having won the last battle, are considered by the natives to be the paramount power, and it is always an easy matter to induce a subjected people to ally itself with a supposedly powerful one.

The Zulus, still stinging under the defeat which they received from the British less than twenty years ago, might gather their war parties and, with the thousands of guns they have been allowed to buy, attempt to secure revenge. The Basutos, east of the Orange Free State, now the most powerful and the only undefeated nation in the country, would

hardly allow a war to be fought unless they participated in it, even if only to demonstrate to the white man that they still retain their old-time courage and ability. The million and a half natives in Cape Colony, and the equal number in the Transvaal, have complained of so many alleged grievances at the hands of their respective governments that they might be presumed to rise against them, though it is never possible to determine the trend of the African negro's mind. What the various tribes would do in such an emergency can be answered only by the chiefs themselves, and they will not speak until the time for action is at hand. Perhaps when that time does arrive there may be a realization of the natives' dream—that a great leader will come from the north who will organize all the various tribes into one grand army and with it drive the hated white men into the sea.

It is impossible to secure accurate statistics in regard to the military strength of the various colonies, states, and tribes in the country, but the following table gives a fair idea of

the number of men who are liable to military duty:

|                               | Dutch. | English. | Native. |
|-------------------------------|--------|----------|---------|
| Cape Colony.....              | 20,000 | 10,000   | 175,000 |
| Natal.....                    | 7,000  | 5,000    | 100,000 |
| Orange Free State.....        | 10,000 | .....    | 30,000  |
| Transvaal.....                | 30,000 | 20,000   | 140,000 |
| Rhodesia.....                 | .....  | 2,000    | 25,000  |
| Swaziland and Basutoland..... | .....  | .....    | 30,000  |
| Total.....                    | 67,000 | 37,000   | 570,000 |

To him who delights in forming possible coalitions and war situations this table offers vast opportunities. Probably no other country can offer such a vast number of possibilities for compacts between nations, races, and tribes as is presented in South Africa. There all the natives may unite against the whites, or a part of them against a part of the whites, while whites and natives may unite against a similar combination. The possibilities are boundless; the probabilities are uncertain.

The Pretorian Government has had an extensive secret service for several years, and this has been of inestimable value in securing the support of the natives as well as the friendship of many whites, both in South Af-

rica and abroad. The several thousand Irishmen in South Africa have been organized into a secret compact, and have been and will continue to be of great value to the Boers. The head of the organization is a man who is one of President Kruger's best friends, and his lieutenants are working even as far away as America. The sympathy of the majority of the Americans in the Transvaal is with the Boer cause, and, although the American consul-general at Cape Town has cautioned them to remain neutral, they will not stand idly by and watch the defeat of a cause which they believe to be as just as that for which their forefathers fought at Bunker Hill and Lexington.

But the Boers do not rely upon external assistance to win their battles for them. When it becomes necessary to defend their liberty and their country they reverently place their trust in Providence and their rifles. Their forefathers' battles were won with such confidence, and the later generations have been similarly successful under like conditions. The rifle is the young Boer's primer and the grand-

father's testament. It is the Boers' avenger of wrong and the upholder of right. That their confidence in their rifles has not been misapplied has been demonstrated at Laing's Nek, Majuba Hill, Doornkop, and in battles with natives.

The natural opportunities provided by Nature which in former years were responsible for the confidence which the Boers reposed in their rifles may have disappeared with the approach of advancing civilization, but the Boer of to-day is as dangerous an adversary with a gun as his father was in the wars with the Zulus and the Matabeles half a century ago. The buck, rhinoceros, elephant, and hippopotamus are not as numerous now as then, but the Boer has devised other means by which he may perfect himself in marksmanship. Shooting is one of the main diversions of the Boer, and prizes are offered for the best results in contests. It is customary to mark out a ring, about two hundred and fifty feet in diameter, in the centre of which a small stuffed figure resembling a bird is attached to a pole. The marksmen stand on

the outside of the circle and fire in turn at the target. A more curious target, and one that taxes the ability of the marksman, is in more general use throughout the country. A hole sufficiently deep to retain a turkey-cock is dug in a level plot of ground, and over this is placed a piece of canvas which contains a small hole through which the bird can extend and withdraw its head. At a distance of three hundred feet the bird's head is a target by no means easily hit.

Military men are accustomed to sneer at the lack of generalship of the Boer forces, but in only one of the battles in which they have engaged the British forces have the trained military men and leaders been able to cope with them. In the battle of Boomplaats, fought in 1848, the English officers can claim their only victory over the Boers, who were armed with flintlocks, while the British forces had heavy artillery. In almost all the encounters that have taken place the Boer forces were not as large as those of the enemy, yet the records show that many more casualties were inflicted than received by them. In the chief en-



agements the appended statistics show that the Boers had only a small percentage of their men in the casualty list, while the British losses were much greater.

| BATTLES.           | MEN ENGAGED. |       | CASUALTIES. |       |
|--------------------|--------------|-------|-------------|-------|
|                    | British.     | Boer. | British.    | Boer. |
| Laing's Nek .....  | 400          | 550   | 190         | 24    |
| Ingogo .....       | 300          | 250   | 142         | 17    |
| Majuba Hill .....  | 600          | 150   | 280         | 5     |
| Bronkhorst .....   | 250          | 300   | 120         | 1     |
| Jameson raid ..... | 600          | 400   | 100         | 5     |

It is hardly fair to assume that the Boers' advantages in these battles were gained without the assistance of capable generals when it is taken into consideration that there is a military axiom which places the value of an army relatively with the ability of its commanders. The Boers may exaggerate when they assert that one of their soldiers is the equal in fighting ability of five British soldiers, but the results of the various battles show that they have some slight foundation for their theory.

The regular British force in South Africa is comparatively small, but it would require less than a month to transport one hundred

thousand trained soldiers from India and England and place them on the scene of action. Several regiments of trained soldiers are always stationed in different parts of the country near the Transvaal border, and at brief notice they could be placed on Boer territory. Charlestown, Ladysmith, and Pietermaritzburg, in Natal, have been British military headquarters for many years, and during the last three years they have been strengthened by the addition of several regular regiments. The British Colonial Office has been making preparations for several years for a conflict. Every point in the country has been strengthened, and all the foreign powers whose interests in the country might lead them to interfere in behalf of the Boers have been placated. Germany has been taken from the British zone of danger by favourable treaties; France is fearful to try interference alone; and Portugal, the only other nation interested, is too weak and too deeply in England's debt to raise her voice against anything that may be done.

By leasing the town of Lorenzo Marques from the Portuguese Government, Great Brit-

ain has acquired one of the best strategic points in South Africa. The lease, the terms of which are unannounced, was the culmination of much diplomatic dickering, in which the interests of Germany and the South African Republic were arrayed against those of England and Portugal. There is no doubt that England made the lease only in order to gain an advantage over President Kruger, and to prevent him from further fortifying his country with munitions of war imported by way of Lorenzo Marques and Delagoa Bay. England gains a commercial advantage too, but it is hardly likely that she would care to add the worst fever-hole in Africa to her territory simply to please the few of her merchants who have business interests in the town.

Since the Jameson raid the Boers have been purchasing vast quantities of guns and ammunition in Europe for the purpose of preparing themselves for any similar emergency. Delagoa Bay alone was an open port to the Transvaal, every other port in South Africa being under English dominion and consequently closed to the importation of war ma-

terial. Lorenzo Marques, the natural port of the Transvaal, is only a short distance from the eastern border of that country, and is connected with Pretoria and Johannesburg by a railway. It was over this railway that the Boers were able to carry the guns and ammunition with which to fortify their country, and England could not raise a finger to prevent the little republic from doing as it pleased. Hardly a month has passed since the raid that the Transvaal authorities did not receive a large consignment of guns and powder from Germany and France by way of Lorenzo Marques. England could do nothing more than have several detectives at the docks to take an inventory of the munitions as they passed in transit.

The transfer of Lorenzo Marques to the British will put an effectual bar to any further importation of guns into the Transvaal, and will practically prevent any foreign assistance from reaching the Boers in the event of another war. Both Germany and England tried for many years to induce Portugal to sell Delagoa Bay, but being the debtor of

both to a great extent, the sale could not be made to one without arousing the enmity of the other. Eighteen or twenty years ago Portugal would have sold her sovereign right over the port to Mr. Gladstone's Government for sixty thousand dollars, but that was before Delagoa Bay had any commercial or political importance. Since then Germany became the political champion of the Transvaal, and blocked all the schemes of England to isolate the inland country by cutting off its only neutral connection with the sea. Recently, however, Germany has been disappointed by the Transvaal Republic, and one of the results is the present cordial relations between the Teutons and the Anglo-Saxons in South African affairs.

The English press and people in South Africa have always asserted that by isolating the Transvaal from the sea the Boers could be starved into submission in case of a war. As soon as the lease becomes effective, Mr. Kruger's country will be completely surrounded by English territory, at least in such a way that nothing can be taken into the Transvaal

without first passing through an English port, and no foreign power will be able to send forces to the aid of the Boers unless they are first landed on British soil. It is doubtful whether any nation would incur such a grave responsibility for the sake of securing Boer favour.

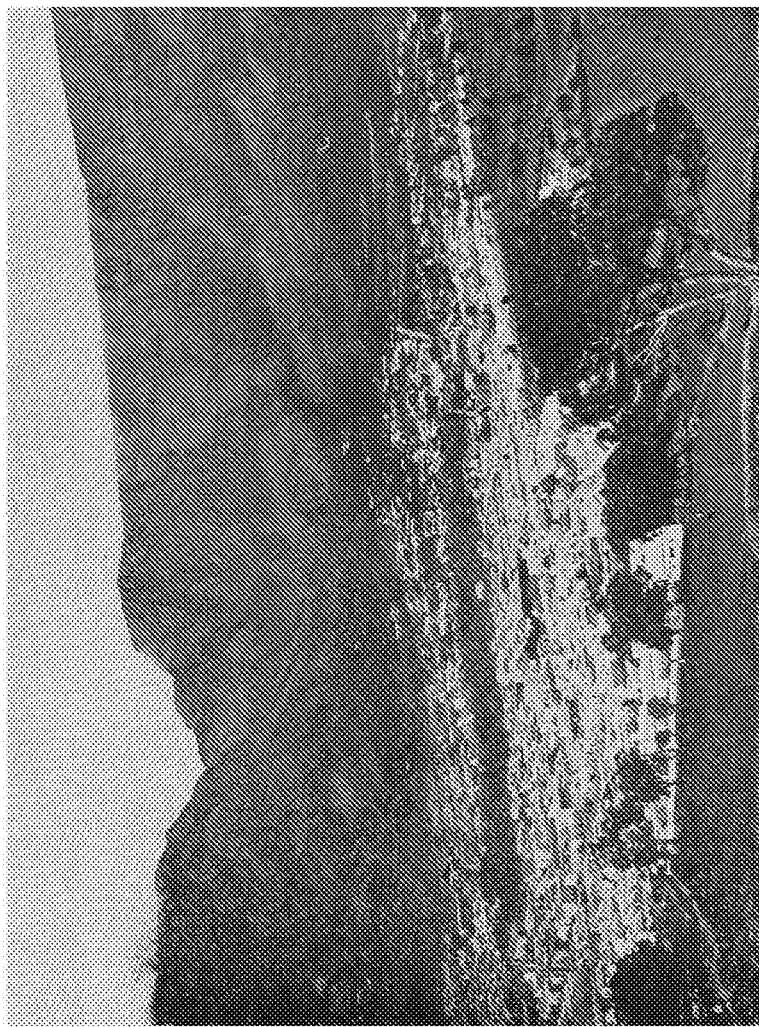
Both the Transvaal and England are fully prepared for war, and diplomacy only can postpone its coming. The Uitlanders' present demands may be conceded, but others that will follow may not fare so well. A coveted country will always be the object of attacks by a stronger power, and the aggressor generally succeeds in securing from the weaker victim whatever he desires. Whether British soldiers will be obliged to fight the Boers alone in order to gratify the wishes of their Government, or whether the enemy will be almost the entire white and black population of South Africa, will not be definitely known until the British troop ships start for Cape Town and Durban.

Whichever enemy it will be, the British Government will attack, and will pursue in no

half-hearted or half-prepared manner, as it has done in previous campaigns in the country. The Boers will be able to resist and to prolong the campaign to perhaps eight months or a year, but they will finally be obliterated from among the nations of the earth. It will cost the British Empire much treasure and many lives, but it will satisfy those who caused it—the politicians and speculators.







Cape Town and Table Mountain.