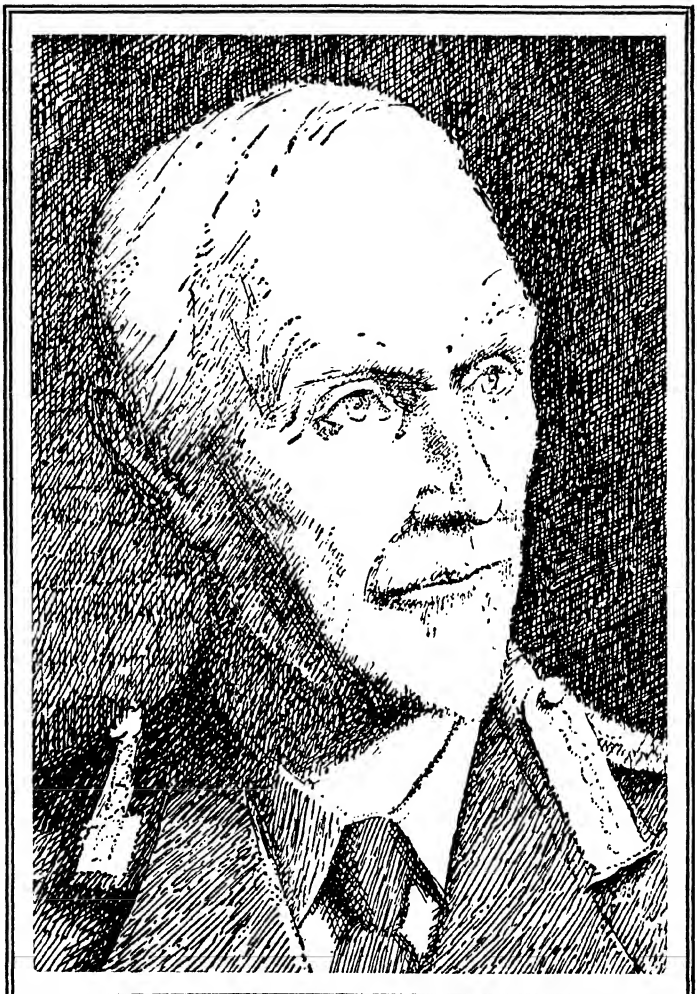
SMUTS
OF
SOUTH AFRICA



JAN CHRISTIAN SMUTS (1870-)

SMUTS OF SOUTH AFRICA

Soldier and Peacemaker

DOROTHY F. WILSON
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S.C.M. PRESS LTD.
56 Bloomsbury Street, London

To my friend and honorary secretary
WINIFRED PRIEST
without whose secretarial help, so freely and generously given, my work would have been impossible in the war years.

First published 1946
Distributed in Canada by our exclusive agents
The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd.
70 Bond Street, Toronto.
MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
MORRISON AND GIBB LTD., LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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PREFACE

SOME YEARS AGO I spent one of the most fascinating evenings of my life at an Australian animal sanctuary—Badger Creek, Healesville—in the heart of the Victorian bush. In the afternoon I had gone round with the Honorary Curator, Mr. R. C. Eadie, and watched the kangaroo and the koala bears come through the Bush to feed from his hand. He had taken me to see ' Splash ', his tame platypus, half bird, half mammal, whose ancestry went back a million years. Splash had done all his tricks for me and I had filmed him doing them. Then, perhaps because we were both world-wanderers, perhaps because (as sometimes happens) our spirits had leaped to meet each other, his master asked me to come back for a good pow-wow in the evening.

We sat in a room into which every Boy Scout in the world would have loved to go ; a man's room if ever there was one. It was a long upper room, built the full length of the house, all of beautiful Australian wood. A long table of wood ran down the centre, and a wide wooden bench ran round all the walls. Everything—walls, table, benches—was covered with natural specimens, with curios, with work of the aborigines of Australia and the Zulus of South Africa, with records of a life of adventure such as falls to few. Outside the windows a kookabura laughed, a lyre-bird sang; the gloaming in the Bush faded into the dark. Fascinated, I could not go while the adventurous story went on. I asked my host what was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to him. This is what he told me :

He had been born in South Africa, not Australia, and he was a young man when the Boer War drew to its close. The thing he would never forget was the night when the Boer leaders met in a tent by the Vaal River

to make their final decision whether they would accept the peace terms or not.

" The place was strictly guarded ", said Robert Eadie, " but I determined to get near and hear all I could, sentries or not. It was getting dark, and a mist came up from the river to help me. I crept along on my stomach, without making a sound, for I was trained in bushcraft. At last, with heart beating fast, I got to the tent—lifted a flap. Most of the men there were half-starved and in rags. A few wanted to fight on at any price, but most knew it couldn't be done and they were broken men. Then came what I think was the most wonderful moment of my life."

My host's face lit up at the very memory of it. If ever there was love and hero worship in a man's face it was in his. He described how in the midst of these broken men a young man with golden hair and erect carriage " stood up like a young god " (Eadie's words) and spoke such words of courage, truth, and faith, of realism and inspiration that the whole atmosphere was transformed ; broken men lifted their heads and squared their shoulders, the issue was faced, and the decision was taken which ended the war and brought South Africa into the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The speaker was Smuts.

" Oor Jannie," said Eadie, and went on murmuring the words softly and lovingly under his breath, " oor Jannie, oor Jannie."

As he spoke he was not only under the spell of Smuts himself ; his listener was, too ; has remained so, will remain so—though in this study she has made every honest endeavour to look at him in a detached and objective way, to see him steadily and see him whole. This man is great enough to stand on his own feet. He is great enough to sit very humbly at the feet of Another.

D. F. W.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

I DO NOT KNOW General Smuts personally, and his country only slightly ; I have therefore been dependent on published books and papers for my material and am especially indebted to the following :

GENERAL SMUTS. SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN. (*Faber & Faber.*)

This is the official biography. The author is a friend of General Smuts and has had access to all his private papers and is able to record much of his private conversation. The book is a fine and scholarly one, eminently fair and just.

GREY STEEL : J. C. Smuts : A Study in Arrogance. H. C. ARMSTRONG. (*Arthur Barker Ltd.*)

A very vivid book. It gives the impression that, while the author admires Smuts, he does not like him. The book should be read with Mrs. Millin's biography.

GENERAL SMUTS. R. H. KIERNAN. (*Harrap.*)

A clear and workmanlike little biography, fair and unbiassed. Suitable for young people.

PLANS FOR A BETTER WORLD. J. C. SMUTS. (*Hodder & Stoughton.*)

The recently published public speeches of General Smuts, very well chosen and compiled, stretching over a considerable period of time, and invaluable for the understanding of Smuts' mind and character.

HOLISM AND EVOLUTION. J. C. SMUTS. (*Macmillan.*)

Smuts' great book on his philosophy.

COMMANDO. DENEYS REITZ (a lifelong friend and supporter of Smuts).

A vivid description of the Boer War, from the Boer side.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE. SIR FRANK FOX. (*Black.*)

Brief and useful study of the Empire.

MARCHING ON TONGA. FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG.

A brilliant and terrible description of Smuts' East African campaign, by one who was with him.

I should like also to acknowledge the courteous help I have had from South Africa House and from the Royal Empire Society.

D. F. W.

FOREWORD

ON OCTOBER 21, 1942, there took place one of the most historical and unusual meetings of members of both Houses of Parliament. It was a critical time, when this country was switching over from the defensive to the offensive in the war with Nazi Germany, it was "the end of the beginning". The Prime Minister had called this special meeting to hear "an illustrious statesman" who "will have the opportunity of speaking not only to us, but to the world". There was a world-broadcast of the speech. The Prime Minister said he had "laboured hard for the prize" of getting this man to speak to the Houses of Parliament at this critical hour.

Over a thousand peers and Members of Parliament crowded the Chamber, which was lit with huge arc lamps. There was a sudden stillness as the small procession entered; the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker, Mr. Lloyd George (the Father of the House), and Mr. Churchill, then one whom Mr. J. L. Garvin called "a symbol and precursor of events", an erect khaki-clad figure, with white hair and fresh complexion, the embodiment of health and vitality. He carried a Field-Marshal's baton and sat on the right of Mr. Lloyd George, who presided.

His address, "which for nobility of language and clarity of thought has rarely been surpassed",[1] had a wide and comprehensive sweep, a perspective impossible to those living in the midst of the battle. It surveyed past, present, and future, and it ended on a high note of encouragement.

"His presence among us," said the Premier at the close of the speech, "as you have felt yourselves, is a

[1] *Daily Mail*, Oct. 22, 1942.

comfort and an inspiration. All that he has said arises from calm, quiet, profound reflection, full knowledge and a resolute, unflinching, inflexible conviction and courage."

He then asked members to stand and pay, with acclamation, the tribute which the speaker's life and work deserved. The audience burst into a thunderous volley of cheering and then broke spontaneously into :

For he's a jolly good fellow.

Who was this man whose counsel was so highly valued at such a time ? Why did his life and his work deserve such a tribute ?

This book is a brief and humble attempt to answer that question.

SMUTS OF SOUTH AFRICA

I

A SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDHOOD

THERE WAS NOTHING they loved better than to roam together the hills that rose over Stone Fountain Farm, in Cape Colony in South Africa—old Adam, the ancient, bent, dark-skinned Hottentot shepherd and little Jan, the farmer's second son. Jan was so thin and pale, so quiet and shy, that people shook their heads and said he could not live very long. So his father and mother let him run wild on the farm, hoping he would get a little stronger, and most of his time he spent with Adam. Together they used to leave Stone Fountain, with its thatched roof, red shutters, and whitewashed walls, nestling on the hillside, and climb up the hills above it, hills from which they could see the rich plain of wheat-fields running down to the Great Berg River and beyond that the great range of mountains; crags and precipices and high peaks, blue in the distance. The plain was a dusty gold under the summer sun, a grey wind-swept place in the winter, one of the

best wheat-growing districts in South Africa. But it was the mountains Jan loved and has loved ever since; always turning to them in times of trouble and need.

Roaming the hills with old Adam was very exciting, for he was full of tales of the wars and folk-tales of his own people. He told stories of the wars of the dark men before the white man came, of their wars with the white man and the white men's war with each other. Adam told Jan of his own wonderful feats of arms in the Kafir wars, for he had been a soldier himself, and Jan listened enthralled. What a wonderful thing it was to be a soldier! And now, Adam said, the white men were fighting each other, the Dutch and the English.[1]

"Which one do you think will win?" asked Jan. Adam was quite sure the English would win.

"Are the English the greatest nation in the world?"

"No," replied Adam. "There is one nation still greater who live in the farthest land in the world. They are the greatest of all nations and even the English are very much afraid of them. They are called 'The Scots'." (Long afterwards Jan told this story to the Scots when he was installed as Rector of St. Andrews' University!)

It was no wonder that Adam could tell Jan about wars, for South Africa has been a country of many nations and many wars. For centuries South Africa had been an unknown land; though long before that, perhaps, in the days of the Jewish kings, there is no doubt that there had been a great civilisation there, for even to-day there can still be seen the remains of a great mine-working system where men, hundreds of years before Christ, used to seek South Africa's diamonds and gold.[2] Arabs and Phœnicians brought tales to

[1] In the First Boer War, which ended at Majuba.

[2] Cf. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*.

Europe from time to time of ivory and peacocks, elephants and gold. For the most part men didn't believe them. Some of the Greeks and Romans, knowing Egypt and Nubia so well, may have tried to go on south from them ; but they were always stopped by Africa's dark, impenetrable, tropical forests. Ships that went down the coast were rarely seen again. When one returned, its crew telling how it had been driven by great storms round a cape in the south at the end of the world, where the stars were upside down, nobody believed them. It wasn't till the fifteenth century that two great Portuguese explorers, Bartholomew de Diaz and Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and found that the sailors had been telling the truth. After that the seamen of all European nations were glad to make it a port of call on their way to India, for the same reason that our ships have been so glad to use it in the War, because wars and enemies had blocked the trade routes through the Mediterranean. Most of the sailors to the Cape and the Indies were Portuguese, Dutch, and English. British ships sailed to the Cape in 1591 and about 1602 the Dutch called there regularly. In 1620 two officers of the English East India Company took possession of the Cape in the name of England by proclamation and hoisted the flag of King James. But no English settled there and the claim lapsed. In 1652 J. A. Van Riebeck, of the Dutch East India Company, landed at Table Bay with one hundred people. They took possession of the land where Capetown now stands, in the name of Holland and settled there. Later land was purchased formally from the Hottentot natives.

Later, when the French Protestants, the Huguenots, were persecuted in their own country, they came to South Africa looking for freedom and peace, were

welcomed by the Dutch and settled there: which is why Jan Smuts, through his mother, has French blood in his veins.

But how did the English come back? In 1795 Holland joined the Revolutionary Government of France with which England was at war, so, fearing it would fall into the hands of the French, the British took possession of it. Later they gave it back to Holland and then bought it from her for six million pounds.

No wonder the Dutch settlers in the Cape didn't like it, or the way British settlers kept coming out and making new and unpleasant laws. The Dutch were men who loved freedom and they wished to be let alone. That was why their fathers had come to settle in the Cape at all. They had quarrelled with their own Government at home in Holland when it interfered too much with them, and had moved farther from the coast to get away from any interference. They were brave men, God-fearing and hard-working. They owned large farms of wheat, vast herds of cattle; their neatly thatched farmhouses were surrounded with vineyards and dairies and they had many children. They knew little of the outside world and didn't want to know about it. They read very little except their Bibles and mostly the Old Testament at that. They kept black men as their slaves and were quite sure that they were right to do so. Sometimes they fought bands of marauding natives, fought with Bushmen and Hottentots, but mostly the men smoked their pipes of peace and were happy, settling in their quiet hamlets and their vineyards and corn-fields.

Then the English came and upset everything. The English didn't believe in slavery. The Dutch did; that was what the natives were for; they supported that belief, which was honestly held, by texts from the

Old Testament. The English offered to release the slaves by paying full compensation to their owners. The Dutch were firm. It was interference with their private property. The English, they thought, were weak and sentimental about the natives. They refused to deal properly with the savage mass raids of the Hottentots. They were annoying in all kinds of ways; they wanted the official language to be English, when it had for so long been Dutch; their way of running schools was unheard of, and their religious teaching was most unsound. There was always this fussy interference from London, where life was quiet and civilised, by people who did not know what it was to be one of a handful of whites in a land of millions of warlike savages.

The Dutch could bear it no longer. In 1836 many of them set out to leave the Cape, on the Great Trek which colonised the Orange Free State, Natal, and the Transvaal. They were like the Children of Israel fleeing from the Great Pharaoh, to find freedom in the Promised Land, and they came to be called the Boers.[1] The Boers in Natal for two years fought with the Zulus in a war which threatened the peace of all South Africa, so the British sent a force to take possession of Natal. The first troops were defeated by the Dutch, but reinforcements were sent and once more the Dutch had to endure what seemed to them the foolish and sentimental ways of the English. The same kind of struggle occurred across the Orange River, but from there the English withdrew, leaving the Orange Free State.

By December 1880 the enmity between the two races was such that the Dutch rebelled and declared a South African Republic at Heidelberg, and defeated

[1] *i.e.* farmers.

the British at the battle of Majuba Hill ; the battle about which old Adam and little Jan were talking together.

Jan had been born ten years before at the farm of Bovenplatz, near Riebeck West in Cape Colony. He was christened Jan Christiaan, in the Dutch way, but, no one knew just when or why, it very soon came to be written Christian, in the English way. It was a suitable name, for Jan Christian Smuts has grown up to be one of the greatest Christians of his generation. Jan's father, Jacobus Smuts, was a well-to-do farmer ; strong, wise, religious. He did not hate the British ; they were his fellow-countrymen and he lived in peace with them. His wife, a De Vries, was descended from the French Huguenots. She, too, was very religious, an intelligent and cultured woman who had been to school in the Cape and learned to speak French and play the piano ; rare accomplishments in those days. She was a good mother with a firm hand on her household. Jan was such a weak, puling little baby that she despaired of rearing him at all. He grew into a weedy, pale little boy, unnaturally quiet and shy—except when he was out alone with Adam and then it was all quite different. They lived now at Stone Fountain, for an elder brother of Jan's father wanted Bovenplatz. But Stone Fountain had its hills and the wonderful view of the mountains where the soul of Jan Smuts finds its home.

Until he was twelve years old Jan never went to school or learned to read or write, but lived outdoors on the farm and hills, helping with the ploughing, sowing, and reaping, caring for the animals. He spoke Afrikaans, the language of the South African Dutch, with a few native words and sentences, but no English until he went to school. He uses the English language now in a superb and masterly fashion, but always with a slight foreign accent.

When he was twelve years old his eldest brother died of fever and it was decided that Jan must be educated to take his place, so he was sent to the village school in Riebeck West, where he stayed until he was sixteen. At first he hated it. He was desperately shy when placed among a crowd of strange children ; he was sick for the open air and freedom of the hills. He hated all the rules and regulations, the respectable clothes, the regular hours. His master said he was " like a wild bird newly caught, beating its wings against the bars of its cage ". At first, he learned very slowly, but towards the end of his first year he was seized with a wild thirst for knowledge. He read every book he could lay his hands on. His mind was so fresh and unlumbered that he could memorise a book simply by reading it through. His thinking was clear and firm. In a short time, to the master's amazement, he had passed every pupil in the school.

This, however, did not please his father. He wanted a good practical farmer, not a bookworm, for his eldest son. This lad was book-crazy, his head was always buried in one ; his father lost all patience. This boy would never make a farmer. He talked it over with his wife ; the only thing to do was to make the boy a pastor, for he was serious and religious. He was always working, play didn't seem to exist for him ; he worked late into the night, till it affected his health, almost, it was thought, his mind. The doctor and headmaster grew alarmed, forbade books, locked them up from him, but he got them somehow and fretted so much when he didn't that they gave in. He passed his examinations and went on to Victoria College at Stellenbosch, near Capetown, fully determined to become a minister of the Dutch Republic Church.

II

COLLEGE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ENGLAND

TO THE BOY brought up on a lonely farm and in a little hamlet, going to College was a big adventure and he was afraid. His fear was not in any sense a physical fear—he has always been superior to that—it was a fear which was not a bad one to have, fear of evil. In his imagination going to Stellenbosch was going out into the great world, going into a den of wickedness and idleness and temptation. Smuts wanted to stick at his work and he wanted to be good. He decided he would need help if he was to manage it. So he wrote a letter to one of his Stellenbosch professors asking for that help. The letter is very serious, very prim—perhaps, even, a little priggish—but it is brave and honest. Here it is :

KLEPFONTEIN, *June* 12, 1886.

Mr. C. MURRAY,
Professor, Stellenbosch.

DEAR SIR,—Allow me the pleasure of your reading and answering these few lines. I intend coming to Stellenbosch in July next, and, having heard that you take an exceptionally great interest in the youth, I trust you will favour me by keeping your eye upon me and helping me with your actual advices. Moreover, as I shall be a perfect stranger there, and, as you know, such a place, where a large puerile element exists, affords fair scope for

moral, and, what is more important, religious temptation, which if yielded to, eclipse alike the expectations of my parents and the intentions of myself, a real friend will bring a lasting blessing for me. For of what use will a mind, enlarged and refined in all possible ways, be to me, if my religion be a deserted pilot, and morality a wreck?

To avoid temptation and to make the proper use of my precious time, I purposely refuse entering a public boarding department, as that of Mr. de Knock, but shall board privately (most likely at Mr. W. Ackermann's), which will, in addition, accord with my retired and reserved nature.

I shall further be much obliged to you for information on the following important points.

First, having passed the School Honours Examination in April last, am I to enter the Public School of the College? Second, in case I am qualified for the Junior Matriculation class, am I exempted or not from a special admission examination into the College, having passed the aforesaid Examination in

1. Latin.
2. English.
3. Dutch.
4. Geometry.
5. Arithmetic and Algebra.
6. Natural Philosophy.

Thirdly, the time when the College or Public School, that is, the one I am to enter, commences the next quarter. Fourth, what are the school fees to be paid. Fifth, how are the requisite text-books, etc., supplied, by the committee, the students themselves, or voluntarily?

Sincerely assuring you of my deep gratitude if I may have you for a friend, and also, if informed on these points, I have the honour, dear Sir, of calling myself your obedient servant,

J. C. SMUTS.

Address :
RIEBECK WEST,
via HERMON STATION.

To pay for his education—his fees and his text-books, he sold the cattle which he had gradually earned throughout his childhood by acting as herdsman on his father's farm.

He found Stellenbosch much less gay and wicked than he had supposed. It was a pretty and sleepy old town, with its life built round the College ; shielded with trees, watered with gurgling brooks, gay with flowers. The peaceful little thatched houses slept in the mellow sun. The bare hills of Stone Fountain, with their bracing air, no longer called for energetic and austere living. It would have been easy to let go and drowse and dream. Smuts did neither. He worked with ferocious energy and concentration. For his degree he chose literature and science as his subjects, but for his matriculation he found he would have to pass an examination in Greek and he knew none. He could find no Greek tutor. He had a week's holiday before the term of the examination, so he bought a Greek grammar and went away to a farm. For six days he concentrated all his mind on that book and at the end of them he knew it from cover to cover ; vocabularies, syntax, and irregular verbs. The other students had been studying Greek for a year. Smuts returned from his six days and was top of the list. The amazed pro-

fessor was the one to whom he had written his letter asking for help.

Smuts was not very popular among his fellow-students. He was too serious and he worked too hard. He was pale and weedy and awkward. He couldn't dance and wouldn't try. His intense shyness made him seem curt and stand-offish. There was one student, however, who understood it was shyness and not pride and she became his friend. She was a girl of sixteen—there was co-education in Victoria College—and her name was Sybilla Margaretha Krige. She came of an old Dutch family, bitterly anti-British, not friendly with them as Smuts' father was. She, too, was serious and prim and she lived in the street where Smuts lodged. Every morning they walked to College together. Every evening he saw her home. He taught her Greek and German and botany. They read poetry together. Life was real and life was earnest, for them both—the tall, pale youth with his purposeful face and the little round-faced girl, with gentle eyes and neatly brushed hair. She adored him and gave him what he needed, trust and understanding. She has remained his best friend ever since.

In his spare time, Smuts wrote poetry and articles, joined the Volunteers, went to Bible Class, taught in Sunday School, read poetry (which became a passion with him), and climbed Table Mountain (which became something more than a passion). Ever since, when troubles have been heavy upon him, he has found calm and joy and inspiration on the summit of Table Mountain. At the end of the Great War he unveiled a war memorial there and told a bit of what the Mountain meant to him. He told how, since the first living creatures crawled up from their primeval slime on to

the dry land, it has been their instinct to get up higher, that that feeling gave wings to the birds, and that ascent is combined with freedom and joy, as we see in the skylark. So in man, "all moral and spiritual values are expressed in terms of altitude. . . . We speak of men who have risen, of aims and ideals that are lofty, we place the seat of our highest religious ideals in high heaven and we consign all that is morally base to nethermost Hell."

"The Mountain" (he goes on) "is not merely something externally sublime, it has a great historic and spiritual meaning for us. It stands for us as a ladder of life. Nay more, it is the great ladder of the soul and in a curious way the source of religion. From it came the Law, from it came the Gospel in the Sermon on the Mount. We may probably say that the highest religion is the Religion of the Mountain.

"What is that religion? When we reach the mountain summits we leave behind us all the things that weigh heavily down below on our body and our spirit. We leave behind a feeling of weakness and depression; we feel a new freedom, a great exhilaration, an exaltation of the body no less than of the spirit. We feel a great joy. The Religion of the Mountain is in reality the religion of joy, of the release of the soul from the things that weigh it down and fill it with a sense of weariness, sorrow, and defeat. The religion of joy realises the freedom of the soul, the soul's kinship to the great creative spirit and its dominance over all the things of sense. As the body has escaped from the overweight and depression of the sea, so the soul must be released from all sense of weariness, weakness, and depression arising from the fret, worry, and friction of our daily lives. We must feel that we are above it all, that the

soul is essentially free, and in freedom realise the joy of living. When the feeling of lassitude and depression and the sense of defeat advances upon us, we must repel it and maintain an equal and cheerful temper.

" We must fill our daily lives with the spirit of joy and delight. We must carry this spirit into our daily lives and tasks. We must perform our work not grudgingly and as a burden imposed on us, but in a spirit of cheerfulness, goodwill, and delight in it. Not only on the mountain summits of life, not only on the heights of success and achievement, but down in the deep valleys of drudgery, of anxiety and defeat we must cultivate this great spirit of joyous freedom and uplift of the soul." [1]

In Smuts' last year at Stellenbosch the great Cecil Rhodes came and spoke at Victoria College. He was full of a vision of a wonderful future for South Africa, with Dutch and English working together, and he fired Smuts' imagination and became a hero to him. The Principal of the College asked Smuts to reply to Rhodes and Rhodes was much impressed with the boy and took special note of him.

That year Smuts got his degree with honours and won a scholarship to Cambridge.

The Ebden Scholarship was for " not less than £100 a year ", but was normally worth £200 a year. When Smuts won it a bank failure had reduced it to its minimum value of £100 a year. No student could manage on this. There was only one thing to do, he must borrow money and he hated doing it. With characteristic good sense he avoided the money-lenders and went for help to one of his professors, Professor

[1] *Plans for a Better World*, p. 50.

Marais. Smuts borrowed £50 from him in February 1892 and another £50 in October. Even then he was "crippled" (his own word) for lack of necessary funds, and at last wrote to the University of the Cape of Good Hope asking for an additional allowance. None was made until February 1894 when "an additional grant of £100 was voted to Mr. J. C. Smuts, Ebden Scholar, in consideration of his distinguished success as a student at the University of Cambridge".

It was Professor Marais who made this success possible by his loans. He could not be sure of his money, but he trusted the young man and took the risk. For that the Smuts family is consistently grateful. The professor was rewarded by the distinguished success of his protégé. That it *was* distinguished there was no shadow of doubt.

Before he went to Cambridge, Smuts had given up the idea of being a pastor. Education had broadened his mind, he could no longer hold the strict and narrow religious views of his fathers. He had a period of religious doubt following his reading of Shelley, but from that he emerged and became as keenly interested in the New Testament as he had formerly been in the Old. But he now felt the call was not to the Ministry and he decided to read Law instead of Theology at Cambridge.

His legal career there was brilliant. He took a double first, heading the Law Tripos. His powerful mind was at the same time both keenly analytical and widely comprehensive; his memory was phenomenal. The Law Professor, Maitland, said Smuts was the best student he had ever had.

As at school, he pleased his teachers better than his fellow-students. The ordinary sports-loving, socially-inclined undergraduate had little use for this proud,

lonely man with his extraordinary accent, his weedy figure, his pale face and almost white hair, who swotted in libraries on glorious sunny afternoons, when all the joys of the Cambridge Backs were calling. But Cambridge with its rivers and its flat country did not appeal to Smuts who was sick for the sight of his mountains. His loneliness did not trouble him. He had his work and his beloved books. Almost his only social contacts in Cambridge were with certain religious groups, for, although he read Law and not Theology, Smuts remained a deeply religious man and in the midst of all his legal studies found time to write a book of 70,000 words on his philosophy of life, the nature of man and of personality and the life of the spirit behind it all. The book took the form of a study of the poet Walt Whitman and his ideas. It anticipated, not only his own book on Holism, but also, in a remarkable way, the psychological ideas of Freud and Adler. It was a remarkable production from a boy of twenty-four, but no publisher would accept it and it has remained unpublished ever since. "The little book will never be published now", he says, "even if someone wanted to publish it. Walt Whitman is a boy's book. I am too far away from those days. Everything is different; the whole world is different and I am different, too."

Yet in it, while the world was not yet ready for them, lay the germ of two systems of thought later to become famous, of psycho-analysis and individual psychology, and of holism.

In 1894 he was admitted as a law student to the Middle Temple in London, headed the Bar Examination in legal history and constitutional law, and won various prizes. His college at Cambridge (Christ's) then offered him a professorship, but although so poor he

refused it, for South Africa was calling him back as she has always called him back from the enjoyment of European honours.

When his ship came into the bay at Capetown a fellow-passenger noticed that the shy, quiet, reserved young man, was for once showing what he really felt, was for once lost in the emotion of the moment. His eyes were shining, his face radiant. But the next minute the veil was down again, and as if ashamed that it had ever been lifted, he slipped quietly below.

III

SMUTS, RHODES, AND KRUGER: THE JAMESON RAID

TWO MEN dominated the public life of South Africa at the time of Smuts' return; they were giants in the land and both had a great influence on Smuts, on his character and his destiny.

One was Rhodes, the Rhodes who had heard Smuts speak as a boy of eighteen and had marked him down as a lad with a future, on whom he would keep his eye.

Cecil John Rhodes, the son of the Vicar of Bishop's Stortford, had come to South Africa in 1870, as a boy of sixteen. He had a tendency to tuberculosis. His elder brother Herbert was already there, and wrote that the climate would be good for Cecil. Herbert was a born adventurer, like all the Rhodes, a born wanderer. At the time when Cecil came out he was a cotton planter in Natal and there Cecil joined him, being given fifty acres of land as an immigrant. It was to be paid for in five years. A little over a year later he followed Herbert to the diamond fields which had just been discovered when a Dutch farmer saw a child playing marbles with a white shining stone, had it examined, and found it was a diamond. Later the same farmer bought another diamond of 83 carats from a witch-doctor. It is now known as " The Star of Africa ". At once adventurers from all over the world came seeking for diamonds, which were first found along the Vaal River and then on the open veld. The Boers sold their farms on the veld for two or three thousand pounds

when under them were the richest diamond mines in the world. Kimberley grew up round the diamond workings, and to Kimberley Herbert Rhodes decided to go. Cecil went with him. Cecil very soon showed himself a born merchant and he and Barney Barnato, a little Jew from Whitechapel, made fabulous fortunes and controlled the diamond mines between them, until at last Rhodes got complete control. He lived in a hot, ugly little house of corrugated iron and spent nothing on himself, for he had dreams beyond the money-making, the gambling, and the drinking which were the main interests of the men of Kimberley. Rhodes began to dream of the power of the country that should control such wealth. Why shouldn't it be England? Then Rhodes knew what he would do; he would go to Oxford and fit himself to spread the rule of England in South Africa. The Master of University College would not admit him because his educational standard wasn't high enough. When boys in England were working at their books, he had been roughing it in South Africa. "I am not what they are", said Rhodes, "I am a man!" He was just twenty. The Provost of Oriel was not quite so particular. He took him in, grudgingly and with little encouragement.

Oxford, as she has a way of doing, entered into the very fibre of Rhodes' being. Not that he gave himself entirely to his work there. He certainly did not. He kept his terms at Oxford, but still (with the help of a partner) kept his business in Kimberley. He journeyed between the two continents. In Oxford he lived the cultured, leisured life of an English youth; in Kimberley he was a man of the world, in the thickest rough-and-tumble of it. While at Oxford he heard Ruskin speak, as Raleigh might have spoken, of England's destiny

over the seas, of how she might spread there justice, liberty, and peace. The ethics of imperialism neither Ruskin nor Rhodes seems to have questioned. They were thinking of making a garden in a desert and that was enough. They both believed that England had the highest ideals and the blessing of God and they wished to spread them. For his share of the work Rhodes chose Africa.

A chill caught in Oxford brought back Rhodes' old lung trouble. A doctor who saw him then gave him six months to live, but he weathered that particular storm, though ill-health dogged him for the rest of his life. After he left Oxford he ate his dinners at the Temple, but was not called to the bar. He went back to South Africa to make his dreams come true. He entered politics and took his seat in the Cape Parliament two months after the humiliated English had been defeated by the Boers at the battle of Majuba—wearing English tweeds, while all the other members sat in their solemn black coats. He entered Parliament just as the other European Powers woke up to the value of Africa and began to colonise it; the Belgians and French in the Congo, Italy, Portugal, and Germany in other parts of the country—the Boers spreading up into Bechuanaland. If England did not annex the territories adjoining South Africa, said Rhodes, the other nations would. The natives had no power to keep them out. One must be a realist. So he set out to ensure British communications and influence from Cairo to the Cape. He was then twenty-seven. But he was also an idealist. He would use his money, he said, for the "foundation of so great a power as to hereafter render want impossible and to promote the best interests of humanity".

To carry out this plan, he believed, British and Dutch

in South Africa must stand together. He liked the Dutch. "I have great sympathy with them; they have needs and experiences which we are all, I sincerely think, apt to overlook. I help them, as far as I can, instead of opposing them. Is not that the better way?" He made friends with Hofmeyer, the leader of the Cape Dutch, and for twelve years they worked together. "I believe", said Rhodes, "in a United States of South Africa, but as a portion of the British Empire."

But there was one man who stood in the way of all Rhodes' plans; old Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal; for he had his dreams of Empire too, but they were dreams of an Afrikander Empire.

Kruger had disliked the British ever since, as a boy of nine, he had guided the span of oxen which drew the wagon holding all the earthly possessions of his family, as they took part in the Great Trek which took so many of the Dutch away from the interfering English at the Cape, up into the lands of the Zulus and the Kaffirs. The boy's heart was sore as he left behind his dear farmhouse home and so many of their cattle. He hated the English whose interfering ways had driven them out. The Matabele warriors swept down and massacred several families that trekked with the Krugers and the young Paul Kruger took part in the battle which followed. Later he became a noted big-game hunter and later still made farms where only the barren veld had been before. He lost his first wife and baby from fever. An intensely religious man, who read little but the Old Testament, he went off alone to fight with his sorrow. When he returned he had the look of a man who had seen a vision, who had found his life-purpose. He had dedicated his life to God and to the service of his people, and to that act he was true, in his own way, for the rest of his life.

Kruger worked hard for his people, so hard that for years he saw far too little of his home and farm, his second wife and his many children. He became Commandant-General under President Pretorius (from whom Pretoria gets her name). Often he had to lead his commandos against lawless elements or in small fierce skirmishes with the natives. It was about the time that a child played with the glass marble which turned out to be a diamond. Wild and adventurous men came later to the diamond mines. They were from all parts of the world ; they had no intention of being ruled by President Pretorius and the rulers of his ridiculous little Republic, even if the diamond mines did lie within its borders. Paul Kruger went down to restore order and was told that the land was not part of the Republic but owned by native chiefs, whose claims were supported by the British Government. Says J. A. Froude, the historian :

> " Great Britain's conduct would have been less entirely intolerable if we had rested simply on superior strength, if we had told the Boers simply that we must have the Diamond Fields and intended to take them ; but we poisoned the wound by posing before the world as the protectors of the rights of native tribes." [1]

No wonder Kruger was sore against the British, and that later when they annexed the Transvaal and war broke out, he fought with all his might against them and was largely responsible for their defeat in the first Boer War which ended at Majuba. The Transvaal agreed to accept self-government under British sovereignty.

[1] Quoted in *The Pace of the Ox* (Juta), p. 28.

The British terms were fair and generous, but Kruger could not overcome his suspicion and his dislike. He planned to extend his republic towards the North, away from the British, but here his plans were frustrated by Cecil Rhodes, new Prime Minister of Cape Colony, who got the British Government to proclaim a Protectorate over Bechuanaland. Rhodes knew that all his plans for a United South Africa would be spoilt by an unfriendly Transvaal, and he set out to conciliate Paul Kruger without success. Kruger did not trust him. "That young man", he said, "is going to cause me trouble." He was right. Later he said to Rhodes, "It is my country that you want," and of him, "He is the curse of Africa".

When Smuts came back to Africa he was all for Rhodes—Rhodes with his big vision, his friendship with the Dutch, his determination that Dutch and English should work side by side in a United South Africa, which was Smuts' determination too.

Smuts, on arrival at Capetown, became a member of the Bar there and sat in his little chambers waiting for briefs. His brilliant career in England caused a momentary stir when he arrived in Capetown, the papers wrote about him, saying a grand future lay ahead of him. But somehow that brilliant barrister's career evaded him. His manner didn't go down in Capetown, with its leisurely, sociable, drinking, card-playing population. He was a good worker, there was no denying that, but he was definitely not a good mixer. His clients felt him cold and reserved and they took their briefs elsewhere. The man who had been offered a professorship at Cambridge wrote articles for a few shillings, coached pupils in languages and law. Later he became temporary editor of the *Cape Times*. This work took him to

Parliament to report the debates. At first he was only slightly interested, but soon became intensely so, until politics became the dominant interest of his life, his life-purpose.

Then came the message from Rhodes, who had not forgotten the brilliant boy who made the speech at Victoria College. He asked Hofmeyer, the leader of the Cape Dutch, to keep an eye on Smuts. Hofmeyer sent for Smuts, because Rhodes was being attacked at Kimberley, attacked for his imperialistic policy, for his native policy, for his monopoly and love of power. Rhodes knew that he had only a few short years to live, and he was in a hurry to carry out his plans to make his dreams come true. These attacks must be stopped, and who could help to stop them better than the brilliant young Dutchman from Capetown, who had such powers of speech, who knew England and South Africa and believed, as Rhodes did, that their future lay together? Smuts was invited to speak in Kimberley and defended Rhodes with sincerity and passion, for Rhodes was his hero.

Then came the crash. The hero fell; he showed he had feet of clay. Smuts was disgusted and humiliated. Bitterly he repudiated Rhodes. It happened in this way.

Trouble was brewing in the gold-mining districts of the Transvaal, among the miners, called by the Dutch 'Uitlanders' (Outsiders). They really had grievances against President Kruger and his Government. They paid most of the taxes but had no political rights. There were schools for the Dutch children but none for theirs. The officials were corrupt, there was no freedom of speech. Kruger hated and despised them as money-grubbers, loose-living men of the world. He would

do nothing to meet them. They were ripe for rebellion against him.

At the same time Rhodes found all his work stopped by Kruger. The Germans were at work building up a great African Empire and Kruger was hand in glove with them. They trained his soldiers and sold him guns, they built his forts. He refused to negotiate with Rhodes and Rhodes was desperate, for he knew death was not far away. His great world plans, which would help humanity so much were being stopped by a dirty, uneducated, narrow old man who might have stepped out of the Ark.

So Rhodes—who believed in Dutch and English working together, who hated war, whose name was so revered—Rhodes stooped to plotting. He could not openly support the Uitlanders, for he was Prime Minister of the Cape and could not support revolutionaries against a neighbouring Government, but he sent them help, encouragement, and arms, and he begged for their help from the English Government. He sent his life-long friend, Dr. Jameson, to the Transvaal border with four hundred armed police. The Uitlanders were to rise on a certain day and march on Pretoria, to get rid of Kruger. Dr. Jameson would join and support them if necessary.

The whole scheme fell to the ground. The Uitlanders talked too much, they wouldn't rise on the day chosen because there was a race meeting. Kruger, who had got to hear of the plot, redressed some of their worst grievances. They were making money fast. Perhaps the English Government would interfere too much. It might be better not to rise at all.

Meanwhile Jameson, an active, adventurous man, was dancing with impatience. Messages had come from

Johannesburg that they didn't want to rise, he must not come. A message to Rhodes from the English Prime Minister told him the plot would not have English support. Jameson sent Rhodes a message: "Unless I hear definitely to the contrary, shall leave to-morrow". Rhodes replied, "Do nothing till all is clear", later, "Things in Johannesburg I yet hope to see amicably settled, and only a little patience and common sense are necessary. I most strongly object to such a course."

It is said the messages crossed—that the telephone wires were cut. Nobody knows for certain whether Jameson got the message or not. He marched on Kruger, who had been waiting for him, and was ready. He and his much larger force rounded up Jameson and arrested the leaders of the Uitlanders. Every Dutchman in South Africa was behind Kruger. He was the hero of his people.

Rhodes fell like a comet, a blazing trail of light ending in cold, dead ash. He was utterly broken, repudiated by all decent men, by Hofmeyer, his faithful Dutch associate for so many years, by the members of the Bond,[1] by the British Government and by the bitter, humiliated, disgusted young man Smuts, who had worshipped him.

At first, when the news was brought to Smuts, sitting in his father's home, where he had gone for Christmas, he did not believe it. Later it could not be doubted. Smuts, who had defended Rhodes in public came in for his full share of contempt and abuse. He felt outraged, soiled. He felt he could not mix with his old associates. For a time he saw very little of anyone but members of his family, and his fiancée, Isie Krige. She

[1] An Association of Dutchmen in the Cape who believed in joining with the British to form a united South Africa.

was brave and loyal and she gave him back faith in himself. He was now at one with her in hatred of the English. He decided to leave Capetown, with its English associations, and go up to Johannesburg, that busy new city, and practise as a barrister there. But there he had no more success than he had had at Capetown, and the rough folk there liked him even less. He didn't drink or smoke, he didn't bet or gamble, the only girl he cared about was the one he was engaged to. He went to Pretoria and decided to throw in his lot with Kruger. He stormed up and down the country, attacking the English, attacking Rhodes. His kindly, peace-loving old father was shocked at his bitterness, but it was the measure of his hurt. He married his girl and she fanned his hatred of everything English to a flame. He became one of the leaders of the Young Afrikander Movement. They were very poor and their first two babies died. There seemed little to look forward to ; but then Destiny stepped in.

IV

SMUTS TRIES TO PREVENT WAR

KRUGER HAD FOR SOME TIME been having disputes with his judges, who, as in England, felt they should be independent of any political control. He and the Chief Justice were at daggers drawn and after the Jameson Raid had sent Kruger's credit soaring, he felt himself strong enough to dismiss the Chief Justice. At once there was an uproar among the whole legal community. The President had few supporters in the profession, except Smuts, who believed that Kruger was right and wrote a long and careful thesis to prove it. It didn't increase his popularity with his own profession, but it made Kruger send for the brilliant young Dutch lawyer and very soon he appointed Smuts his State Attorney, at the age of twenty-eight.

Smuts came to Pretoria to find corruption and intrigue in the police department. There was bribery and incompetence, there was smuggling of liquor and gold, the police practised blackmail. Into all this Smuts came, energetic and incorruptible. He wouldn't slack and he couldn't be bribed. At first the corrupt police showed contempt for the pale youth who was the new State Attorney. They didn't show it long. Smuts dismissed the chief of police ; took on the job himself. He was quite ruthless. The Jameson Raid, his disillusionment with Rhodes, the neglect and scorn of his profession had made a hard and angry man of him. He admits it. " I was hard as a young man," he says,

" hard and confident and successful." He went on with his cleaning-up, regardless of what men said, and they said a good deal. He was curt and abrupt. The men who had toadied to the old President and fawned upon him could do nothing with Smuts. Kruger himself was irritated with him, but he knew when a man was honest and when he was able, and he kept him. He knew that when Smuts gave him facts, they were correct ones, that when he gave Smuts a job to do it would be well and truly done. And, most valuable of all, Smuts knew England and the English, and Kruger knew that trouble was coming with the English. Within a year of Smuts' appointment it came.

The British Governor of the Cape was now Sir Alfred Milner, an entirely different man from Rhodes, the pioneer and adventurer. Milner was the polished, quiet, determined man of the world, proud and sensitive. To him, to be born an Englishman was the greatest gift Fate could bestow; to save the cause of the British Empire was his highest mission. He, too, was above all intrigue and bribery, above all personal considerations. He, too, believed in a United South Africa, with British and Dutch working together, but as the Dutch were so rebellious and troublesome, he did not think this could be achieved until England showed them very clearly that she was paramount. If that meant war—and he believed it did—then war must come. It annoyed him that Englishmen in mines of the Transvaal should be bullied by the Dutch and have no political rights. When they called on the British Government for help, the Government should stand behind them. It was to him, as to Rhodes, intolerable that a dirty, narrow-minded, uneducated old patriarch like Kruger should oppress subjects of the Queen and prevent the Union

of South Africa ; that, with German help, he should threaten its northern boundaries and prevent its expansion.

That was how Milner saw Kruger. It was not how Smuts saw him. " I knew him well," he wrote years later, " and the relations between us were like those of father and son. . . . He typified the Boer character both in its higher and larger aspects and was no doubt the greatest man—both morally and intellectually—which the Boer race has so far produced. In his iron will and tenacity, his ' never say die ' attitude towards Fate, his mystic faith in another world, he represented what is best in all of us. The race that produced such a man can never go down, and, with God's help, it never will."

There were many who did not want war. Neither the British nor the Dutch in Cape Colony wanted it. The British people did not want it, Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, did not want it. " A war with the Transvaal," he wrote to Milner, " unless upon the utmost and clearest provocation, would be extremely unpopular in England." The Cabinet agreed with him. Smuts did not want war. Again and again he advised Kruger to yield on minor issues. " We ourselves," he says, " the people who thought as I did, were always negotiating, always exploring, sometimes with Kruger's knowledge and sometimes without, trying to find a way of peace. We had to struggle not only against Milner, but also against our own war party." When the Uitlanders refused to do their share of military service in the commandos, it was Smuts who went down to negotiate with them, finally allowing them to pay extra taxes instead of giving military service.

In a last-minute effort to prevent war, those who

desired peace brought pressure to bear on Milner and Kruger to meet in conference at Bloemfontein.

The conference was doomed from the start. The difference between Milner—polished, dignified representative of a great Empire—and Kruger—primitive, narrow—was too great. They were alike in only one thing, neither would yield an inch. Milner went to discuss one issue, franchise for the Uitlanders ; Kruger brought in all other kinds of issues ; the Jameson Raid, dynamite monopoly, and so on. At Kruger's right hand sat Smuts, prompting him, urging concessions upon him. When the tired old man's grip failed him, Smuts began to answer for him, only to be squashed by Milner, who said coldly that he was dealing with His Honour the President. Smuts' anger against the British and their ways glowed white-hot, but he kept himself in hand and still strove for peace. But Milner was implacable. At last the weary old President cried out hopelessly, " It is my country that you want ! " The conference ended in deadlock. As Kruger drove away in his carriage, bystanders saw tears rolling down the old man's cheeks.

Even then—proud, sensitive, suffering, resentful—Smuts continued his efforts for peace. He drew up a list of reforms that might satisfy Milner, he urged concessions on Kruger, he negotiated (much to Milner's annoyance) with the British Agent at Pretoria, Conyngham Greene. Indeed, the Dutch said it was his over-eagerness for peace that made the coming of war inevitable. There was one place where the British replies seemed to Smuts to be ambiguous and it was the one place where no ambiguity could be tolerated—the question of the freedom and independence of his country.

" We decided ", he says, " that we could not go on any longer with this uncertainty. We were determined to make it clear, once and for all, that unless England abandoned her claim to interfere with us, no agreement had any value. . . . There was the suzerainty. The suzerainty meant a permanent interference with all our affairs—any sort of interference at any time could be worked directly or indirectly through the suzerainty. As long as England had the suzerainty we were not independent. We felt we wanted it absolutely clear that our concessions were contingent on England's giving up her claims to interfere with us. Our first consideration had to be our independence."

That was the issue in one word—suzerainty. To Milner it had to be British ; to Kruger it had to be Dutch. There they stood and that was the end of the matter. No negotiations had any chance at all. The British sent troops to South Africa from England and from India, but not enough and not in time (" too little and too late "). The Boers imported guns and ammunition from Germany ; German experts taught them how to use them. At last the Dutch Assembly voted for war, before the many British reinforcements could arrive. On October 9, 1899, Kruger sent an ultimatum to England, demanding that all British troops on the borders of the Transvaal should be instantly withdrawn, that no more should be landed in Africa, that those already landed should be re-embarked. A reply was demanded in forty-eight hours. When the English refused the terms, Kruger declared war and his commandos invaded the British Colony of Natal. Great Britain and the South African Republic were at war.

What were the factors that led to the war ? They were many. The successive waves of immigrants of

different races, the century-old enmity between Dutch and British, always live and active ; the discovery of gold and diamonds and their control by a primitive and unworldly people ; the greed, licence, and disorder of the fortune-hunters ; conflicting ideals of life, the imperialism of England under Victoria, the dream of Rhodes, the Jameson Raid, the disillusionment of Smuts, the bigotry of Kruger, the pride of Milner—they were all contributory causes. To no one alone can anyone attribute the blame.

But, to the Smuts of that day, the responsibility was clear. It was England's. He poured forth this passionate conviction in a pamphlet, which his wife translated into English and which W. T. Stead published from *The Review of Reviews* office, called " A Century of Wrong ". It was written when passion had swept him off his feet, in many ways it was unjust, and later Smuts bitterly regretted it. It was read throughout the civilised world and it turned world opinion against Great Britain. It was Smuts' apologia for the war.

> " Up to the present " (he wrote) " our people have remained silent ; we have been spat upon by the enemy, slandered, harried, and treated with every possible mark of disdain and contempt. But our people, with a dignity which reminds the world of a greater and more painful example of suffering, have borne in silence the taunt and derision of their opponents.
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> " Our people have been represented by influential statesmen and on hundreds of platforms in England, as incompetent, uncivilised, dishonourable, untrustworthy, etc. etc., so that not only the British public, but nearly the whole world, began to believe

that we stood on the same level as the wild beasts. In the face of these taunts and this provocation our people still remain silent. As the wounded antelope awaits the coming of the lion, jackal, and the vulture, so do our poor people all over South Africa contemplate the approach of the foe.

" Every sea in the world is being furrowed by the ships which are conveying British troops from every corner of the globe in order to smash this little handful of people."

V

THE BOER WAR: GENERAL SMUTS

WHEN THE BOERS rode in to attack Natal their method of warfare was a very different thing from the conventional, cumbrous methods of the British, advancing slowly with their infantry and their heavy supply columns, their drill and discipline. The Boers on horseback were highly mobile, each man carrying his own rifle and ammunition, his own food supplies. The British had 25,000 men at the commencement of the war, the Boers 60,000. They were far more numerous, better equipped and trained, than the American colonists who had cast off the British yoke and driven them into the sea. Why should they fail where the Americans had succeeded? Most of them had no thought of failure. They set off in joyful hope and confidence. One of their wisest and bravest leaders, Louis De la Rey, warned them that the talk of driving the British into the sea was empty, that they were dealing with a great Power, but Kruger only insulted him for his plain speaking, calling him a coward. De la Rey answered quietly, "I shall do my duty as the Volksraad decides, and you will see me, old De la Rey, in the field fighting for our independence long after you and your party, who make war with your mouths, have fled the country." The majority of the Boers did not share De la Rey's doubts. They set out, in confident hope, to drive the British into the sea.

They were organised in commandos—mobile units each responsible for a certain district, able to act with

independence and initiative. (The writer remembers hearing Lord Baden Powell say that it was the thought of these commandos that gave him the main idea of founding the Boy Scouts, after he had watched a large contingent of the Boys' Brigade at drill. He said if a British officer were killed in South Africa, his men. used to unthinking obedience, were at a complete loss. But the Boers, used to freedom and independence, acted swiftly on their own initiative when they lost an officer.)

As usual at the beginning of any war, the British were quite unprepared. A blitz warfare, carried through ruthlessly and swiftly, before the British reinforcements arrived, would probably have won the war for the Dutch. All the first successes were theirs. They cut the railway to the Cape, drove the British back into Kimberley and Ladysmith, and surrounded them there. If they had left a small force to cover these places and pushed on swiftly to the Cape, the Dutch there might have joined them and all would have been over. The younger men begged that this should be done, including Louis Botha—tall, brave, quiet, humorous, a born leader of men. Smuts, who at this time was still State Attorney, tremendously busy with legal questions and decisions, with propaganda, came down in an ammunition train and supported Botha and the younger men in their plea for a swift advance. It was in vain. The old generals were cautious. They sat down to besiege Mafeking, Ladysmith, and Kimberley, and in doing so they lost the war.

For the British had got what they most needed—time. Reinforcements arrived steadily ; Roberts and Kitchener arrived, the British in seven months had relieved the besieged towns and were advancing up through the

Transvaal, the Boers fleeing before them back towards Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal. Kruger and his Government left Pretoria and later the old President was sent to Germany and Holland to plead the cause of his country there. Smuts and the Acting President stayed behind in Pretoria to keep order. When the retreating Boer soldiers arrived in Pretoria there was no food for them. Things looked quite hopeless. Smuts set his jaw. While his burghers held Roberts off for a few hours longer, he set off for the Bank where the Government money was stored. The timid Bank officials refused to give it up ; Smuts seized it and, with volunteers' help, loaded it on to the last train out of Pretoria, while the shells screamed overhead. That half-million pounds kept the Boers going for two years, says Smuts, against an expenditure of two hundred million pounds by the British Treasury !

With the loss of the capital a spirit of surrender spread among the Boers, but some of their leaders—Botha, De Wet, De la Rey—determined not to give in. Smuts had been driven away from his office and his legal duties. With relief and determination the administrator turned into a soldier, the scholar into a man of action. Smuts joined De la Rey, and in his new life found physical strength and mental happiness. His pale face took on the ruddy glow of health, his stoop gave way to an upright and confident carriage, his thin frame filled out till he weighed 12½ stone, where his weight has remained since. He was no longer clean-shaven, a golden beard covered the lower part of his face. He began to feel the thrill of superb physical health and action. " I prefer ", he said, " the active to the passive qualities." He thought he would probably feel physical fear. He felt none whatever. His care-

lessness of danger distressed his men. "Oh, nothing will happen," he said, "nothing ever has."

He found he was a born leader of men in action. They gave him their complete confidence, looked up to him, followed him unquestioningly. He gave them no reason for his decisions, nor did they ask for any. He was still a silent man, but he was for the first time a completely happy one, with a new-found mastery over himself. He enjoyed fighting with rain and cold, with danger and death. He enjoyed pitting his wits against the enemy. Brave, clever old De la Rey taught him all he knew about raiding, which was a very great deal. Smuts was a brilliant pupil. Continually he harried the English and got away. Long afterwards, in July 1940, when his South African troops were going north to fight, he told them what the life of an active soldier had done for him:

> "From personal experience I know what awaits you. I know what war means—seven years of my life have been spent in wars. They were among the hardest years of my life, but they were also full of the richest experience that life can give. I would not exchange my war experiences of the Anglo-Boer war and the last Great War for all the gold of the Rand.
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> "You are going to face danger, hardship, and sacrifice—perhaps death itself—in all its fierce forms. But through it all you will gather that experience of life and enrichment of character which is more valuable than gold or precious stones. You will become better and stronger men. You will not return the same as you went. You will bring back memories which you and yours will

treasure for life. Above all, you will have that proud consciousness that you have done your duty by your country, and rendered your contribution to its future security and happiness. You will not be mere items in the population ; you will come back as builders of your own nation, of its best traditions, of its lofty national spirit and of its national pride. Your children will be proud of you. A nation is never proud of its ' hands-uppers ', its fence-sitters, its players for safety. We South Africans reserve our respect and pride for the bitter-enders, for those who go all out ; who take their life in their own hands for Country and People."

The Boer warfare in which Smuts learned to be a soldier was a guerilla warfare, a matter of raids and forays, of swoops on convoys, of cattle driving, of plundering stores, of sudden attacks and sudden departures, of sniping and ambush. Civilians took part in it as well as soldiers, women and children as well as men. Much later in the new century English soldiers were to become familiar with such total warfare in Europe, but in 1900 they knew nothing of it and it exasperated them. The Boers didn't keep the rules of the game, they didn't play fair. The truth was, of course, that the Boers knew nothing of the rules of the game, of the conventions of civilised warfare. They wore the British uniforms of their captives, because they themselves were in rags and not because they wanted to trick the enemy. Deneys Reitz tells in *Commando* how his only clothing, in winter, was a pair of rough home-made raw-hide sandals and a threadbare blanket ; his clothes had fallen from his body. " So ", says Smuts of British prisoners, " we gave them our rags, our torn

clothes and our unwearable boots, took their uniforms and boots and sent them back again. What else could we do with prisoners?" But to the British it was abominable perfidy, contrary to all the rules of war. So was the sniping by women and children. Kitchener set out to stop it. He burned the farms and seized the cattle, rounded up the women and children and herded them in concentration camps, where they could no longer help their men. There was some military justification for it, but the results were deplorable. The leaders of the camps lacked experience; epidemics were rife, twenty thousand women and children died in the concentration camps. Is it any wonder that Botha said that it was the *British* whose methods were contrary to the rules of civilised warfare? They were condemned by a large party in England itself. Campbell-Bannerman condemned them as "methods of barbarism", and Lloyd George supported him. It was this fact that later gave the Boers the heart to make peace.

The Boers' guerilla tactics went on. They neither won the war nor lost it. Kitchener was anxious to make peace and get his men out of South Africa, but the negotiations broke down. The struggle went on. It was then that Smuts made his desperate, famous, and glorious attempt to bring the war to a victorious conclusion.

Smuts was now a general, thirty-one years of age, strong and confident. He had always believed that their one hope was to get the Dutch in Cape Colony to rebel against the British and to join up with the Dutch of the Transvaal. Now the other leaders agreed with him. They chose him to make the desperate attempt and sent him off with his commando to cross the Vaal River into the Orange Free State and then to head for the Cape.

It was August, winter in South Africa, and the river was flooded with icy water. British troops were everywhere, all on the watch. Smuts got half his men across the river and then returned with a small bodyguard for the others. Native spies gave his position away to the British. He had taken off his soaked icy boots and was asleep in the middle of some thorn bushes, his head against his saddle, his blanket over him. He was awakened by shots and shouts ; his camp was surrounded by two hundred British soldiers. Smuts drew his blanket round him and in the confusion mixed with the soldiers and escaped, without horse or boots. Two or three of his men joined him, and one tore up a towel to wrap round Smuts' frozen, bleeding feet. Next day a horse was found for him, but it was weeks before he could walk.

Then, before they could get away, Boer women and children joined them, fleeing to Smuts and his commando for protection. Once again, in the darkness, Smuts had to go back across the river, helping the women and children to escape, with all their bundles of possessions.

Kitchener sent French to stop Smuts, but Smuts found a gap in his defences and got through into English territory. There the Dutch, and sometimes even the English, helped him, but the natives always gave him away. The British were everywhere, hunting him.

" We escaped from one to the other ", he says, " as through the teeth of a machine. The teeth closed on us and we squeezed through, some of us lost, to the next teeth and the next teeth. Columns of British. We could not move without meeting columns of British."

When British troops were reported, Smuts never sent his men to investigate. He always went himself,

without any consideration of danger. In rain and cold they rode, often without food, often without clothes, often without sleep—sometimes lost, sometimes utterly exhausted, but never giving in. All the British Army was after them, but always they evaded them, harried them. It was, said one exasperated British trooper, like trying to catch a flea.

One farm, where they had paused for rest, was surrounded. It seemed like the end. Smuts would not surrender. They must fight to the end. At night the British stopped firing. They were sure of their quarry; but through the darkness came a hunch-backed cripple, telling them he knew a way through an unguarded bog. Silently they crept by the unsuspecting British, slithered down a precipice in the darkness, and got away.

But now the men were in rags, half-starved, soaked with rain, dropping in their tracks, begging to be left to die, but always in the end kept going by their inflexible leader, whose wits and whose courage seemed inexhaustible.

At last, almost without ammunition, food, clothes, or horses, they heard that a detachment of the 17th Lancers, nearly two hundred strong, was waiting for them. "If we do not get those horses and a supply of ammunition", said Smuts, "we are done for." Under cover of mist he surrounded them and gave the order to attack, taking them by surprise and expert marksmanship and then rushing the camp. The remaining British fled, leaving nearly one hundred casualties. Smuts had one man killed and six wounded. At one blow he had secured all the horses, ammunition, food, and clothing that he wanted. He made off while the going was good, his men following him with new heart and hope.

After a year he was still raiding and his numbers had

increased. The Dutch had not risen, as he hoped, but many volunteers had joined him. He decided on an offensive against Capetown and decided to reach it by the Atlantic Coast. Many of his men had never seen the sea and rode into it laughing and singing their delight. They even fired gaily with their rifles at a British cruiser lying close inshore, galloping off when she turned her guns on them.

Smuts led his men on southward; captured the villages of Springbok and Concordia and the town of Ookiep, which he took from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He planned to go on from there to Capetown, but he never got to Capetown, for before he could start, a cart with a white flag above it brought a message from Kitchener. Would General Smuts meet him with other Dutch leaders at Vereeniging, in the Transvaal, to discuss peace terms? Smuts talked for a short time with the British officers who brought the message, then walked away alone into the veld to fight the battle with his soul. He came back with a face grey and haggard, gave the order to cease fighting, told his men they would have a big disappointment to face, and set out to board the ship that was waiting for him at Port Nolloth.

The official *History of the War in South Africa* says there was no more impressive feat of daring in the whole war than Smuts' ride to the Cape.

His men would do anything for him. The admiration of his enemies was no less. One British prisoner said, " No Bayard ever behaved better to an enemy ".

Once, in a charge, Smuts found himself facing an English boy of seventeen " with the face of an angel ". The boy fired at Smuts, wounding him, then, in terror,

threw away his gun and said, " For God's sake, sir, think of my mother ! " Smuts sent him away unharmed.

Another time a hot-headed war correspondent was brought in. He had, against all the rules of war, fought in defence of an armoured train. The penalty was death. Smuts sent him away to an officers' prison camp. His name was Winston Churchill and the British Empire owes Smuts something for his clemency.

Another time his men ambushed a train. They wished to wreck it, but Smuts thought it might contain civilians and let it pass. In that train was General French.

Smuts says of those days, " These were very difficult and strenuous days—days in which one learnt many valuable lessons, good for all one's life. One of the lessons I learned was that, under the stress of great difficulties such as we were then passing through, the only things which survived were the simple human feelings, feelings of loyalty to your fellows and feelings of comradeship and patriotism which carried you through danger and privation."

Something else carried him through, something *he* carried ; a book in his saddlebag which he read whenever there was any opportunity. It was the Greek New Testament.

VI

A GENEROUS PEACE

THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT had intervened with the English Government on behalf of the Boers, saying that they themselves had no means of approaching the British Government directly. The Netherlands Government offered to mediate between the two peoples at war. The British Foreign Secretary did not accept the offer, but did offer instead to arrange for direct communication between the representative leaders of the two opposing parties in South Africa. Kitchener made the offer to the Acting President and arrangements were made for the Boer leaders to meet the British. Among them he invited Smuts to meet him.

Smuts travelled to Capetown on a British ship and was treated with the greatest respect and consideration, also on the train up to the Free State, where Kitchener came to meet him, riding up on a black charger, surrounded by a glittering staff and a bodyguard of Pathans with drawn swords. This did not awe Smuts, who has always cared little for display.

Kitchener came into the railway carriage and was very friendly. He told Smuts that he had 400,000 troops in South Africa, and the Boers only 18,000; that he himself was very anxious for the war to be over, and that if they surrendered he was sure they would be granted very generous terms.

When Smuts came to the place fixed by Botha for the meeting of the Boer leaders, he was shocked at the look of them. They were half-starved, clothed in rags, near

the end of their endurance, but yet with unbroken courage and spirit. But facts had to be faced. There were no horses, there was hardly any food, the men were without any warm or decent clothing, they were being crushed by the weight of the British military power. They were willing to fight on, but it might only mean the destruction of their nation. Steyn, the President of the Orange Free State, wished to fight on, but the men of the Transvaal, where there was a large British population, saw things differently. Smuts faced the facts and accepted them, as Botha did. They knew peace had to be made. Representatives of both Boer Governments went on to Pretoria to meet Kitchener. Steyn spoke at once of independence.

"Must I understand from what you say," asked Kitchener, "that you wish to regain your independence?"

"Yes," answered Steyn, "the people must not be reduced to such a condition as to lose their self-respect and to be placed in such a position that they will feel themselves humiliated in the eyes of the British."

There was a fine sensitiveness in Kitchener's reply: "But that could not be; it is impossible for a people that has fought as the Boers have done to lose their self-respect; and it is just as impossible for Englishmen to regard them with contempt."

Kitchener submitted the terms on which the British were prepared to make peace and a month later supplied the delegates with large tents for their discussion at Vereeniging on the banks of the Vaal River. Thirty delegates each represented the Governments of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic.

Botha spoke for the latter. There were only 7500 mounted men available, there were 2500 families starving in the area. Beyers told how the natives were all in

rebellion against the Boers. De Wet spoke for the Free State. Smuts told of the situation in Cape Colony. His men were in better fettle, but they had achieved no general rising or support.

By and large, the Free State wished to continue the war ; the Transvaal was for peace.

F. W. Reitz supported a compromise between continuing the war and abject surrender. Let them ask for independence under British protection, ceding the goldfields to the British and allowing the latter to direct all foreign policy.

These terms were submitted to Milner and Kitchener. The former would not hear of them. It must be the British terms or nothing. A complete deadlock seemed likely, but Kitchener gripped Smuts' elbow and whispered, " Come out for a little." They walked up and down the verandah.

" Look here, Smuts," said Kitchener, " there is something on my mind that I want to tell you. I can only give it you as my opinion, but my opinion is that in two years' time a Liberal Government will be in power ; and if a Liberal Government comes into power, it will grant you a Constitution for South Africa."

" That is a very important pronouncement," answered Smuts. " If we could be sure of the likes of that, it would make a great difference."

" As I say," replied Kitchener, " it is only my opinion, but honestly I *do* believe that that will happen."

These words made the peace. They went back and arrangements for peace were concluded.

They had to go back to Vereeniging to report results. It was a meeting of sorrow and dignity, of courage and beauty. It was the end of the Boers' independence and they knew it, but they knew, too, it was an honourable,

not a dishonourable, end. They began their meeting with prayers and it was their religion that upheld them, bitter as was the cup they had to drink.

But it was Smuts who put new life and hope into them.[1] He spoke with passionate sincerity, as one inspired.

> "These are great moments for us, perhaps the last time when we meet as a free people and a free Government. Let us rise to the magnitude of the opportunity and arrive at a decision for which the future Afrikander generations will bless and not curse us."

He spoke of the sufferings of those who had fought and died for their independence, of the women and children in concentration camps, of the threat of extinction to their people, of the promises of help from Europe which had never matured.

> "Let us now, like men, admit that the end has come to us. . . . For each one of us death would have been a sweeter and more welcome end than the step which we shall now have to take. But we bow to God's will. The future is dark but we shall not relinquish our courage and our hope and our faith in God. . . . The result of the struggle we leave in God's hand. Perhaps it is His will to lead the people of South Africa through defeat and humiliation and even the valley of the shadow of death to a better future and a brighter day."

But for Smuts the brighter day was long in dawning and his sojourn in the valley of the shadow sore and

[1] See Preface.

protracted. The happy, confident days of action were over. He was now thirty-two and he went back to Pretoria, but as a Junior Barrister once more. He came back to a house much smashed up by British troops, who had taken pages out of his precious books to light their pipes. He saw Milner (now Viscount) come back as Governor of the new Crown Colonies. He brought a group of brilliant young Oxford men to help him ("Milner's Kindergarten"), and the services of the clever young Dutchman were not required. When, later, Milner asked Botha, De la Rey, and Smuts to sit on his legislative council, they refused. They said they didn't feel ready; the country wasn't ready. They didn't like Milner's policy, didn't like the introduction of Chinese labour into the mines.

Smuts forced himself to work at his profession, but fierce reaction had him in its grip and depression rolled over him in waves. Like Job, he was weary of his life. "We are so miserably weak," he wrote to a friend, "so utterly helpless . . . we go down to ruin. . . . I see no ray of light for the future." Neither his country, nor life itself, seemed to have any great need of him. There is great suffering in great powers frustrated.

It was Botha who began the process of cure; Botha with his solid strength and sanity, his friendship and kindness. He came to live near Smuts and they spent long hours together, made new plans for their country. He and Botha formed a People's Party called Het Volk. Botha had been on a tour of Europe to try to get help for his stricken countrymen; he got plenty of flowery bouquets but precious little else. Except from England; the English made a grant of eight million pounds for relief. He was treated everywhere in England with honour and kindness. He began to believe that there

was a future for South Africa within the British Empire. Smuts caught his spirit of confidence and hope, which in a very short time found itself justified.

In England the Liberals had come into power. Kitchener's words had come true. Many of the leading Liberals had consistently opposed the war; Mr. Lloyd George had almost risked his life in going to speak against it in the Conservative stronghold in Birmingham. Botha and Smuts felt their opportunity had come and Smuts was sent at once to London to get into touch with those Liberals who had declared their sympathy with the Boers. He asked for responsible self-government for South Africa within the framework of the British Empire. Some—Lord Morley, Winston Churchill, and others—were not prepared to go so far; Lloyd George was.

Smuts went to see the Premier, Campbell-Bannerman. He explained why nothing but self-government would work. "I went on explaining," he says. "I could see Campbell-Bannerman was listening sympathetically. Without being brilliant he was the sort of sane personality—large-hearted and honest—on whom people depend. He reminded me of Botha. Such men get things done. He told me there was to be a Cabinet meeting next day and he said, 'Smuts, you have convinced me'. That talk settled the future of South Africa."

Later, Lloyd George described that Cabinet Meeting to Lord Riddell. "It was done in a ten-minute speech to the Cabinet[1]—the most dramatic, the most important ten-minute speech ever delivered in our time. . . . At the outset only two of us were with him, John Burns and myself. But his speech convinced the whole Cabinet. It was the utterance of a plain, kindly, simple man.

[1] *i.e.* in a speech of Campbell-Bannerman.

The speech moved at least one member of the Cabinet to tears. It was the most impressive thing I ever saw."

Smuts is not an emotional man, but the feeling that swept over him then bound him to the English in love and honour for the rest of his life. "They gave us back—in everything but name—our country. After four years. Has such a miracle of trust and magnanimity ever happened before? Only people like the English could do it. They make mistakes, but they're a big people."

In 1935, speaking to members of the Imperial Press Conference in Capetown, Smuts summed it all up :

> "You must have convinced yourselves that here, indeed, is one of the most loyal supporters and co-operators in our Commonwealth system. But only a generation ago this country was locked in a grim and deadly struggle with the old British Empire. We Boers fought for freedom and independence. We found it in a strange way, where we least expected.
>
> "It is, indeed, one of the miracles of these latter days. British statesmanship gave us our freedom as a free gift. We accepted that gift, and with it as key we then proceeded to help you to unlock the doors of the old Empire, and to reconstruct it in the free co-operative system under the Crown, which it is to-day.
>
> "Your great gift of freedom to us we return to you in the form of the new conception of a freely associated Commonwealth, in the shaping of which South Africa has played a foremost part. It has been a great transaction, a great exchange in freedom, in which we have mutually benefited each other, and the enemies of yesterday are the firm and loyal friends of to-day and to-morrow; and, one prays, for ever."

VII

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN KEPT HIS WORD. Self-government was given to the Transvaal. A general election was held. Botha and Smuts toured the country, explaining their policy, sleeping in bad hotels, speaking in little village halls. Their party was returned by a big majority. Botha became Prime Minister ; Smuts his Colonial Secretary and Minister of Education.

Botha was the more popular ; Smuts the driving force. Botha was dark and heavy, not healthy. He was very human, friendly, and approachable ; the soul of hospitality ; a man of great tact and good sense. Smuts was strong and wiry, grave and courteous, but still not a good mixer. People felt they could not get near to him as they could to Botha. Both men were too large to feel the slightest jealousy of each other. A strong and tender friendship bound them together. When Botha died, Smuts said, " I have the right to call him the largest, most beautiful, sweetest soul of all my land and days ". People of all nationalities agreed with the verdict. The two men both believed that the white races of South Africa must work together in friendship and brotherhood, and for a dozen years Botha and Smuts worked together towards that great end, in perfect harmony and friendship.

But things weren't easy. To begin with, there were not only white races in South Africa. The natives, the black races, outnumbered the white by four to one. The native problem is an enormously difficult one, not

simple as it appears to those living at a distance from it. Smuts has been severely criticised, on liberal and on Christian grounds, for his attitude to the natives. Are they not human beings and should they not have equal rights? Smuts recognises that they have rights in South Africa. "Africa is the Negro home", but so far, he feels, they have the rights of children. To treat them as adults is to court disaster. He believes that to extend the full franchise to them would be to swamp civilisation in South Africa and feels that cannot be allowed. He has an intense desire to be just to them, he says that the basis of their treatment must be "the bedrock of the Christian code", but he adds:

"It is useless to run black and white at the same moment, and to subject them to the same machinery of legislation. White and black are different, not only in colour but also in mind. They are different in political status and their political institutions should be different." The natives on his own farm love him as a father.

There was the related problem of the Indians and of Indian immigration. Thousands had been admitted to the country as a source of cheap labour. Soon there were more Indians than Europeans in Natal. Immigration laws were passed to restrict further immigration. There was trouble with the Indians in the Transvaal, too. They said that as subjects of the British Empire they had the right of entry to another part of it and rights of equal citizenship there. Their champion was Mohandas Gandhi, a barrister trained in England. When he appeared in court he was ordered to remove his turban; when he travelled first-class on the railway he was asked to sit in the van. In Johannesburg a hotel refused him admission. There is little doubt, and there

can be no surpise, that this kind of treatment made Gandhi feel there was something wrong with official Christianity and with the claims made for the rights of citizenship in the British Empire. But neither must one forget that far more rigid distinctions were in force in India itself, made not by the British, but by the Indians themselves, through the caste system.

Gandhi became the leader of the Indians in South Africa. He began to practise his methods of passive resistance. He was gentle and allowed no violence. But he would not co-operate with Smuts and his government. Smuts felt that to open the doors of South Africa to unlimited cheap Asiatic labour would be fatal to the life of the country. He stood by the immigration laws. Those Indians who would not obey the laws went to prison. Gandhi went with them. He asked to see Smuts and Smuts refused. " It would serve no useful purpose." But he changed his mind and began to negotiate with Gandhi by letter. There was an agreement for which Smuts was severely criticised.

" The position I take up in all my public life," was his reply, " is that the man who cannot climb down is a small and contemptible man. . . . And if one has made a mistake the sooner one climbs down the better."

He could not give way on the question of mass Indian immigration, but he did repeal the harsh elements in the laws and the word " Asiatic " was removed from the Immigration Laws.

Later, Smuts said, " The men I venerate are not those who can arouse a nation's enthusiasm, but those who can do what they think right in the teeth of a nation's opposition. Such a man was Wilson, standing alone, dying, against the American people for what he knew to be the salvation of the world. Another is Gandhi.

But all Indians are not Gandhis. If Gandhi was right to consider his people, I had to consider mine."

It was hard for Smuts not to be impatient with the Indians, for their agitation was holding up something far bigger—the Union of all the South African States. It had been Smuts' dream ever since the British had granted self-government to the Transvaal—indeed, long before that, for it was a dream he had inherited from Rhodes. The more Botha and Smuts tried to govern the Transvaal well, the more they found that every one of their problems was bound up with those of the other States of South Africa. The problems were one and indivisible ; the artificial divisions of the States made it impossible to solve them. Practical politics demanded Union. To Smuts, there was something else that demanded it. At the centre of his philosophy of life is the belief that all things are striving for unity and harmony, striving to become whole, that there is a principle at the heart of Reality making for Wholeness. It is the big and the wide conception that always inspires Smuts.

He worked for Union as one inspired. Into that cause he threw every gift, every scrap of energy he possessed. He travelled all over the country to try to persuade his people, now with quiet and patient persuasion, now with burning and passionate faith.

To those who, in the Transvaal, the rich state, did not want to be burdened with the poorer states, he gave a call to forsake the small and selfish point of view :

> " We who love South Africa as a whole, who have our ideal of her, who wish to substitute the idea of a limited South Africa for the lost independence,

who see in breadth of horizon and in a wider and more embracing statesmanship the cure for many of our ills and the only escape from the dreary pettiness and bickerings of the past, we are prepared to sacrifice much ; not to Natal or to the Cape, but to South Africa."

" When, on the bloody battlefield " (he said another time) " I saw Dutch and English dead, my old ideal came back to me. These men who had been killed by each other should have stood together and fought together for one cause, a great South Africa.

" Let us have a union, not of top-dog and under-dog, but of brothers."

The campaign had its effect. In all the States union was discussed, plans were made. In 1908–9 a convention of all the States voted for the Union on the basis of a draft constitution prepared by Smuts, after careful studies of other constitutions of Federal States including the American. He took the advice of the brilliant men Milner had brought out with him, including Philip Kerr, Patrick Duncan, and Lionel Curtis. Smuts felt that their joint work was not their work alone. " The constitution is not a man's work. It bears the impress of a Higher Hand."

In 1910 the Union of South Africa was ratified by the Imperial Parliament and Botha was chosen by King Edward VII as first Prime Minister of united South Africa. He made Smuts Minister of the Interior, of Mines, and of Defence. One appointment he made against all his personal feelings, because he felt it would please the extreme Dutch party ; he made General Hertzog, a lawyer trained in Holland, Minister of Justice.

The power in South Africa lay mainly in the hands of these three men. Because Botha was often away, at the Imperial Conference in London or through illness, the power lay often largely in the hands of Smuts. In the old days men had toadied to Kruger, begged personal favours from him. In indolent good nature he had too often given in to them. They found they were up against a totally different proposition when they came to Smuts. Even his worst enemies have always had to acknowledge that he was incorruptible, that he never used his public office for his own personal advantage. They might as well have tried to bribe Gandhi.

> "What do I want with money?" asked Smuts. "What could I do with it? Rhodes needed money for his work. But I don't. Money would be a nuisance to me. Nothing but a nuisance. I should always have to be wasting my time thinking how to use or invest it. My children would be tempted to become loafers. Have I not burdens enough? . . . Besides, I don't find money interesting."

He and his family live very simply. Because the blood of his farmer forefathers is in him, because of his deep feeling for the land, he bought a farm at Irene, ten miles from Pretoria, on the open veld. For a house he bought an ex-British army hut of corrugated iron for £300, which has been from time to time enlarged. It is a single-storeyed house, painted green, with a wooden verandah running round it. The furniture is of the simplest, except in Smuts' large library: its high walls lined with thousands of books, all of which he knows; its captured flags; its native weapons; the rifle and bandolier he used in the Boer War. Here are some magnificent pieces of furniture, all presented to him.

The house is full of children and grandchildren. Smuts loves children, is bewitched by them. They fill the rooms of his house, play about his farm, but all of them, even the youngest, know that when he goes into his library no one must follow him and that he must not be disturbed.

Outside the house there is quietness, except for the songs of the birds. Both Smuts and his wife love birds and the trees outside have fruit put to attract them. The farm has a manager, who has married Smuts' eldest daughter.

Visitors continually come and go. Mrs. Smuts has all the hospitable instincts of her race, but no special fuss is made of them ; they share the family's simple Dutch food. " They like our Dutch food," says Mrs. Smuts.

It was well Smuts found peace in his home, for there was not much peace for him outside of it. The Union brought its problems. There were many petty rivalries and disputes to be smoothed out, but the really big trouble was with General Hertzog. He was always up in arms about some slight to the Boer language, to the Boer people. He and Botha disliked each other personally. Smuts was perpetually trying to keep the peace between them, but Hertzog lost his temper and was impossible. Against Smuts' advice, Botha left Hertzog out of his next Cabinet. From that day he led a bitter opposition against Botha and Smuts and their policy. Once more the Dutch and the English were at loggerheads. The Union was seriously threatened from within.

Very soon it was also seriously threatened from without.

VIII

THE GREAT WAR

IN 1914 THE CAULDRON of European politics, of international rivalries, boiled over and the Great War began. The repercussions of that were at once felt in South Africa, although it was so far away. One of the things on which Germany had set her heart was a great African Empire. Other nations had taken great slices of Africa. Why shouldn't she? There was no international law to stop her. The old Elizabethan charter allowed exploring sailors to " take any remote barbarians and heathen lands not possessed by any Christian prince or people ". There was still no law against it. Unfortunately for Germany, other nations had got to Africa before her and when she came, in 1884, she secured only the barren country which became German South-west Africa, and a great tract of country, very unhealthy for white men, in the East. She wished, naturally, to link these up, so creating a great Middle African Empire and capturing all the rich land to the south. In 1917 the German Colonial Office published a map of " Mittel Africa ", giving details of this plan. But Rhodes had foreseen it and frustrated it by taking Bechuanaland.

The Germans had acquired a terrible reputation as colonists in Africa. In thirty years of their rule in German South-west Africa they had reduced the native population (the Hereros) from 85,000 to 15,130 by a campaign of ruthless extermination. The evidence of

flogging, raping, murder, burning villages, slavery is overwhelming and incontrovertible.[1]

Smuts and Botha were well aware of all this. It is not surprising that Smuts said, "From the point of view of South Africa's future, the German Empire is no desirable neighbour".

Now, with the outbreak of war between England and Germany, she was a still less desirable neighbour. She not only intended to annex all the rich territory of her neighbours, but also to train in Mittel Africa "one of the most powerful black armies in the world" which, said Smuts, "under proper leading might prove a danger to civilisation itself".

There was another, and more immediate, danger. In German South-west Africa were German battleships in German ports and large wireless stations. On the outbreak of war Botha at once telegraphed to London offering to be responsible for the defence of South Africa and so to set free all the imperial troops stationed there. The British Government gratefully accepted his offer, but asked him to go further and invade South-west Africa, especially to put the big wireless station there out of commission.

Botha had hardly bargained for that. Many of his countrymen still hoped for a Dutch republic and England's war gave them their chance; many of them looked upon the Germans almost as their cousins, many others who had fought England only twelve years before did not see why they should now fight her enemies at her behest.

Botha and Smuts saw it differently.

"England has treated us well," said Smuts, "given us back our liberty, and now she needs

[1] Cf. Millin's *Life of General Smuts*, vol. i. 294-6.

> our help. . . . The British Government has said, 'There is much for you to do,' and I ask Parliament to let us do it. It is a duty we owe to ourselves also. The Germans are bad neighbours."

A large majority in Parliament supported Botha and Smuts, but many of the Boer leaders did not. Hertzog opposed them, and Beyers, Head of the Union's Defence Force; De Wet opposed them and old honest De la Rey was persuaded by the others to lend his support to a rising against the British. The old man felt it as a call to a crusade, though his wife and daughter begged him not to dishonour the pledge he had given at Vereeniging. Botha and Smuts pleaded with him, argued with him, prayed with him. They prayed for guidance, they read the Bible together to find it. All three were deeply religious men, though they seldom spoke of it, but at times of crisis it controlled them.

"Oom Koos," said Botha to De la Rey, "you may be right, but I will not believe that God, even to save His people, will direct you by the way of dishonour, and the road you take is the way of dishonour."

Old De la Rey hesitated; agreed to wait. But the other side got at him and persuaded him. He set off in a car with Beyers for Johannesburg, but by a tragic misunderstanding was shot on the way by a policeman looking for bandits.

"He came," said his wife, "to where his road parted in two. He did not know which to take, so God called him away."

Botha and Smuts were in no way responsible for his death, but their enemies suggested that they were; indeed Beyers and De Wet openly accused them of

murder. Soon ten thousand men were in rebellion against the Government, led by Beyers.

Botha took to the field against them with his commandos; Smuts remained in Pretoria, organizing supplies, carrying on the Government. At Rustenburg, Botha defeated the rebels and their leader, Beyers, was drowned as he fled across a flooded river.

The death of their old comrades was agony to Botha and Smuts. When the news of Beyers' death was brought to Smuts in his office, he went suddenly rigid, then sat down to write a note to Mrs. Beyers, his left hand covering his eyes. "See Mrs. Beyers gets this at once," he said, "she must not hear it officially, a friend must tell her."

By January 1915 the rebellion was over. Smuts called it the "Five-Shilling Rebellion", because, when De Wet was asked what was the grievance that made him rise against the English he answered that a magistrate ("one of those pestilential English") had fined him five shillings for assaulting a native servant.

With the rebellion at an end Botha invaded German South-west Africa and soon Smuts was taking part in the campaign. The South African forces were much larger than the German, but the country was vast and arid, suitable for guerilla tactics. Smuts hunted as he had once been hunted, delighted to be doing an active, open-air job again.

The German commander, used to discipline, drill, and routine, said that the South Africans reminded him, not of a war but of a hippodrome. Often he tried to bluff the hippodrome performers by reminders of the power of Germany and her present victories in Europe. But Botha and Smuts called his bluff and in July he capitulated.

Throughout, the men of the hippodrome had behaved to their opponents as Christians and as gentlemen. The Germans, without a tremor, left their wives and children in their enemies' care. Botha said, when the Germans surrendered, " We should not unduly hurt their pride ; you will remember how keenly we ourselves felt such matters ".

The German South-west African campaign was the first military success for the British Empire during the Great War. Botha and Smuts were given great receptions at Capetown and Johannesburg, but their friends warned them that trouble was brewing and would probably come to a head with the October election. Smuts was now accused of imperialism, that, like Rhodes, he wanted to conquer all Africa. In Europe the war was going badly for Britain ; German agents promoted trouble throughout South Africa. Wherever Botha and Smuts went to speak there were Nationalists to howl them down, to pelt them with rotten eggs, to fire shots at them. At one meeting they were nearly murdered and only the high personal courage of the two unarmed men saved their lives. When a man shouted that there would be no peace for South Africa till Botha and Smuts left it, Smuts said how much he wished he could.

> " I would like nothing better than to be out of this hell into which I have wandered. . . . But the Government cannot leave you. . . . You can take my assurance that I shall work with my last breath for the good of South Africa."

Every type of personal abuse was heaped upon him: " Judas, traitor, bloodhound, Oriental despot ". It

was not just electioneering, it seemed to be personal hatred. Smuts went about his work with a face drawn and haggard, but he never once flinched from his duty.

The election went largely against Botha and Smuts. They were only just kept in power by the English vote. The abuse from his own people, their desertion, broke Botha's heart. He died in 1919, only fifty-seven years old. Smuts was more able to hide his hurt, to stand up against it. Besides, circumstances suddenly relieved him of the burden which Botha, hereafter, had to carry alone.

While all this was going on in South Africa, a German force under Lettow-Vorbeck had crossed from German East Africa into British East Africa and kept raiding the important railway from Nairobi, the capital, to Mombasa, its port. The British Government decided this must be stopped and also to invade German East Africa at the same time. Smuts was offered the command, but refused it as he felt he could not leave Botha. General Smith-Dorrien was given the command but was taken ill and had to relinquish it. The British again offered the command to Smuts, who now felt unable to refuse it. He was gazetted Lieutenant-General, the youngest Lieutenant-General but one in the British Army. Volunteers flocked to his banner from all over the Union. But there was the usual howl from his enemies. Smuts was going to draw two salaries, one from South Africa, one from the British (in fact he took no salary from Britain); he was " escaping his difficulties ", " we don't care whether he goes or not ". The British, on the other hand, were immensely touched and grateful that their old enemy was now commanding their troops as well as his own. Stories of his courage, wisdom, experience were told on all sides.

Late one night Smuts left his home, walked with his

wife and healthy bare-footed children to the nearest little station, picked up and hugged his eldest little son and then boarded the train. He did not see his family again for a year, then only for a short time before leaving them for another two and a half years. It is little wonder that his children (as he said) treated him " like a distinguished stranger in the house ".

The campaign on which Smuts now set out was very different from anything in his previous experience. He was used to the bare open veld, now he had to fight in unhealthy, overgrown tropical country, with a visibility of a few inches most of the time, in a " green hell ". The country was in its way superbly beautiful, with its great lakes, its tropical colour, its snow-covered, 19,000-ft. high Kilimanjaro. There were wonderful and beautiful insects, others far from beautiful, like mosquitoes, locusts, and tsetse fly. Every kind of wild animal filled the country, it was " like fighting in a Zoo ". In the end it was the land and not the enemy that nearly defeated Smuts and which he only defeated by superhuman efforts.

The German general was a skilful commander. He only had about eight thousand troops, the South African forces were vastly superior in numbers. But most of the German troops were black and most of the South African ones, at first, were white ; and it was no country for white men. The German commander did not mind giving up territory—there was plenty of it, it was twice the size of Germany itself. He only wanted to keep his force in being, as a guerilla army to harry Smuts and the British, and this he did so well that at the time of the Armistice he was still uncaptured and surrendered with his men.

Smuts and his men went by sea from Durban to

Mombasa and he started his campaign from Longido, on the Northern frontier of German East Africa. He skilfully outflanked the strong German positions and they had to withdraw southwards. Smuts drove on and captured Morogoro, on the main railway. The opening of the campaign was swift and successful.

But now he had to face that part of the country that meant disease and death to white men, and as he faced it came the tropical rains. Smuts had known nothing like them ; they flooded every river, swept away all communications, large lakes would appear in a night. The men went down with malaria in thousands. Smuts got it ; dosed himself with iron and arsenic pills and refused to give way. He drove his men hard, but they did not resent it for he drove himself harder. He shared every privation with them—heat and rain, hunger and forced marches, danger and sickness.

" He always," said one of his men, " comes out early in the morning and gives the men on guard at his quarters a cup of coffee from his own hands. The fellows dote on him. We might have marched twenty miles, and if he happens to pass along the lines the fellows stop and cheer him like the deuce. He lays himself open to the hardships of the men. We once saw him jump off his horse and put on a poor fellow who had dropped out on account of fever, while he walked beside him and chatted to him the whole way. . . ."

Said another, " He is the idol of his army. The men will do anything for him and endure anything. They admire him as a military leader and respect him as a man ready to bear what they bear."

Francis Brett Young, the novelist, who worked with the R.A.M.C. in this campaign and has written a terrible and thrilling account of it in *Marching on Tonga*,

says they had only to see " the big Vauxhall in which Smuts daily risked his life " to have new life put into them. " The more I think of it, the more I realise how the personality of that one man dominated the whole conduct of the war in East Africa. And I sometimes wonder what would have happened if fortune had not carried him safely through the risks he faced daily. . . . We should have lacked the enormous psychical asset which his masterful courage gave us. . . ."

The casualties from sickness were terrible. At one time more than half his men were down. Often they were near starvation, for in such a country nothing could ensure continuous supplies. Concern and criticism swept South Africa. Botha begged him to go slow. His enemies said he ignored all advice, was inhuman and cocksure. There was even an Army enquiry, but it justified Smuts. For, although he had been unable to destroy the German force, he had rendered it harmless—" by the genius of a great soldier the position was completely reversed ". Such was the position when Smuts was called to other work.

In January 1917, soon after Lloyd George had become Premier, he decided to have an Imperial Conference in London of the Prime Ministers of the Dominions. Botha was invited, but felt he could not leave South Africa. He sent Smuts.

Once again there was an outcry amongst his enemies in South Africa. Smuts was going ' Home '. Let him ! " South Africa is too small for our Jannie." " He must have an empire ; must have the world ! " Smuts suffered severely. In spite of his courage and self-control the unfairness, the ingratitude stung and hurt him.

England healed him. She welcomed him with admiration and acclamation. While, in Europe, she had suffered defeat after defeat, here was a general who was victorious—fresh, hopeful, resilient. People had everywhere become weary and cynical. But Smuts called them back to the vision and high determination of 1914:

> "The cause I fought for fifteen years ago is the cause for which I am fighting to-day. I fought for liberty and freedom then and I am fighting for them to-day."

They crowded to hear Smuts and always he left behind him fresh confidence and steadiness. He helped the people to believe again in themselves and in their cause.

Winston Churchill wrote an article about the "new and altogether extraordinary man from the outer marches of the Empire", and said if England did not use Smuts as he should be used, she deserved to go under. Lloyd George agreed with him. When the Imperial Conference was over he asked Smuts to remain as a member of the British War Cabinet—something quite without precedent, for Smuts was not a British Minister, not even a British Member of Parliament. It was one of those daring and original steps which made Lloyd George the man for the hour of his country's need. He was determined to have Smuts and so were the common people of England, whatever sticklers for etiquette might say. At his first War Cabinet meeting, Smuts found himself sitting next to Milner. The two men began this association with mutual respect and ended with fast friendship.

Smuts was invaluable in the Cabinet. His point of

view was fresh and detached, he was free from departmental routine and personal anxieties, his mind was clear and incisive, his courage and hope without limit.

He brought to the people of this country a new conception of the British Empire and a new name for it. The occasion was a dinner given in his honour, in May 1917, by both Houses of Parliament. Smuts said :

> " I think that we are inclined to make mistakes in thinking about this group of nations to which we belong, because too often we think about it as one State. We are not a State. I think the very expression ' Empire ' is misleading, because it makes people think that we are one community to which the word ' Empire ' can appropriately be applied. Germany is an Empire. Rome was an Empire. India is an Empire. But we are a system of nations. . . . This community of nations I prefer to call ' The British Commonwealth of Nations '. . . . What I feel in regard to all the empires of the past, and even in regard to the United States, is that the effort has always been towards forming one nation. All the empires we have known in the past and that exist to-day are founded on the idea of assimilation, of trying to force human material into one mould. Your whole idea and basis is entirely different. You do not want to standardise the nations of the British Empire ; you want to develop them towards greater, fuller nationality. These communities, the offspring of the Mother country, or territories like my own, which have been annexed after the vicissitudes of war, must not be moulded on any one pattern. You want them to develop freely on the principles of self-government,

and therefore your whole idea is different from anything that has ever existed before. That is the fundamental fact we have to bear in mind—that this British Commonwealth of Nations does not stand for standardisation or denationalisation, but for the fuller, richer, and more various life of all the nations comprised in it. Even the nations which have fought against it, like my own, must feel that their cultural interests, their language, their religion, are as safe and as secure under the British flag as those of the children of your own household and your own blood. . . . If you had to elect a President, he would have to be a President not only here in these islands, but over the British Empire — in India and in the Dominions — the President who would be a real representative of all these peoples ; and here you would be facing an absolutely insoluble problem. The theory of the Constitution is that the King is not your King, but the King of all of us, ruling over every part of the whole Commonwealth of Nations ; and if his place should be taken by anybody else, that somebody will have to be elected under a process which it will pass the wit of men to devise. Let us be thankful for mercies. We have a kingship here which is really not very different from an hereditary republic." [1]

His ideas formed the basis of the Statute of Westminster twelve years later. Millions of copies of his speech were printed and circulated throughout the world. Smuts was called the " Orator for the Empire ". He

[1] The whole important speech can be read in *Plans for a Better World*, pp. 31 ff.

also became "The Handyman of the Empire". Because of his detachment, because he was not tied to any Department and had no personal axe to grind, Lloyd George used him for one important mission after another. He sent him on European diplomatic missions, sent him to settle strikes and labour disputes, he asked him for reports on the Army, the Navy, and the Air, sent him hither and thither.

> "I had no time for anything but work," says Smuts. "There was no end to the work they wanted me to do. I have never worked so hard in my life. My hair became white at fifty."

One of the things he did was to help to found the Royal Air Force and to plan the air defences of London.

The older services had little use for the new one and the few aeroplanes there were, were controlled independently by the Army and the Navy. Each had its own.

"Say what you like," wrote Milner to Smuts, "the soldiers and sailors at the War Office and Admiralty do not yet grasp the fact that there is a new kind of warfare before us, and that, besides the help they have to give to the Army and the Navy, the airmen will have to fight battles of their own." Smuts *did* grasp it and the Prime Minister left the matter in his hands.

It became urgent when German aeroplanes raided London in daylight, killing women and children—195 people were killed and injured. The German planes returned undamaged to their own country. The British defences were useless. The people were frightened and they were angry; the House of Commons was indignant. Lloyd George put Smuts in charge.

Smuts set to work with tremendous energy and speed. In eight days he had his plan for the defence of London ready. He made plans for the defence of the whole country and carried them out. He planned a united Royal Air Force to work independently of Army and Navy, and Parliament made his plan law. His suggestions for the protection of London were so effective that the Germans abandoned daylight bombing altogether. To counter night-bombing, Smuts pleaded for far more powerful searchlights and for a balloon barrage, so anticipating the London defences of the next war.

IX

THE PEACE OF VERSAILLES AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

VERY SOON AFTER Smuts landed in England the necessity for some sort of league of the nations, to keep the peace when it should come, began to take shape in his mind. The kind of league of nations which was already in existence in the British Commonwealth of Nations, when each nation was free to be itself and yet united in friendship to others, he wished to see extended till it included all the nations of the world. He says, quite frankly, that he found his ideal in the words of the prophet Isaiah :

> " And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people : and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain."

Unless something like that came out of the war, he felt, all the suffering and sacrifice would have been in vain. He believed it could be done if men made up their minds to do it.

> " We know that this war is not the work of some supernatural agency ; this war is man-made. It is human forces that lie at the basis of it : human intelligence, human stupidity, human greed and ambition—they are all at the basis of this calamity that has overtaken us. . . . And what the human intelligence has done, the human intelligence can undo."

He did not foresee that human intelligence could be so stupid, so much at the mercy of ignorance and selfishness and laziness, that it would refuse to do it. For Smuts has an unconquerable faith in men. But he did foresee that force would be necessary against a determined aggressor.

> " A nation which has got off the rails, or intends to go off the rails, must know that in the last resort the League of Nations is going to use force against her."

Directly the war ended Smuts saw that the League could no longer be merely an inspiring plan, it was now " a sheer practical necessity ".

If a thing is a practical necessity to Smuts he gets to work on it right away. A month after the Armistice, his plan for the League was published, dealing with its powers and its constitution.

President Woodrow Wilson of America was already

an enthusiast for the League of Nations, and when he saw Smuts' plan he gladly adopted it. From that moment the two men worked together for what was, to each of them, the biggest cause of all—the cause of world peace and justice. To both of them the League was not to be only a means of punishing aggressors; it would also work for all kinds of social and political reforms. In this latter side of its work the League was remarkably successful.

When Germany suddenly collapsed and the war ended, Smuts resigned from the War Cabinet and turned all his thoughts to the coming peace.

> "We must conclude a good peace," he said. "I do not see how you are going to have a perpetual peace in future if this war is going to be ended like so many other wars, as a mere patchwork compromise between conflicting interests. The war has carried us to the depths, let us build from the depths."

When the Armistice was concluded, Mr. Lloyd George in thanksgiving and awe, said, "We must not allow any sense of revenge, any spirit of greed, any grasping desire to override the fundamental principle of righteousness."

But it didn't work out like that. The leaders themselves, the Big Four—Clemenceau of France, Orlando of Italy, Lloyd George of Great Britain, and Wilson of the United States—were all tired men, who had borne an almost intolerable strain. Tempers were frayed and nerves on edge. There was anything but unruffled agreement between them. Even if there had been, they would have found it next door to impossible to withstand public opinion in their own countries. For public opinion was out to make Germany pay to the last

farthing; every country was out to see what it could get for itself.

Botha came over from South Africa to attend the Peace Conference; an older, tired Botha, with death looking out of his eyes. He and Smuts remembered the generous peace of Vereeniging, and, even before they got to Paris, were shocked and distressed at the different atmosphere now, and the desire for fierce revenge.

In Paris itself they were two desperately unhappy men. "It was", says Smuts, "the unhappiest time of my life. . . . I saw nothing of Paris but a few picture galleries. I was busy all the time and in despair all the time." . . . "Then was I powerless, and not only in despair, but desperate."

In the middle of the negotiations he wrote, "We cannot destroy Germany without destroying Europe. We cannot save Europe without the co-operation of Germany."

"My fear", he added (prophetically), "is that the Paris Conference may prove one of the historic failures of the world."

Long afterwards (1934) he spoke of:

> "the deep and poignant failure of the peace, when at a vital moment, a critical occasion for Western civilisation, human goodwill appeared to be unequal to its task, and the great hopes for the better ordering of the future were rudely disappointed. Such a chance comes but once in a whole era of history, and we missed it. The politics which is founded on despair or desperation which covers many European countries to-day with dangerous political experiments, and in others endangers peace and paralyses disarmament, has sprung largely

> from this second policy and the slaughter of ideals which it involved, a slaughter no less grievous than that of millions in the war. There was this double human failure, which has wounded, so to say, the very soul of mankind, and left it with insufficient faith and confidence to sustain the causes and the institutions which are essential to our civilisation."

Smuts did not allow these things to happen without making every possible effort to prevent them. He pleaded with Wilson and Lloyd George to keep the reparations down to a possible figure, that the most objectionable clauses should be removed from the Treaty. He wearied Wilson and Lloyd George with his importunity and made the latter angry. Smuts wrote to him assuring him of his personal friendship, but, he said, " this is no time to mince matters. When you are up against a position so terrible in its possibilities for good and evil, you can do only one thing, even if you fail utterly, and that is the right thing, the thing you can justify to your conscience and that of all other reasonable fair-minded people."

Botha supported him. Speaking to the delegates in the Great Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, he said :

" We have triumphed because Justice has triumphed . . . but you must not, in revenge, destroy a nation. . . . I and my colleague, General Smuts, alone of all here have fought a war and lost all, government, flag—all. We know the bitterness of defeat. . . . It was a bitter peace for us, but we turned our efforts to saving our people ; and the victors, they helped us. The English gave us a peace without vengeance. They helped us to rise again . . . and that is why we stand beside them to-day."

He greatly moved the delegates, but failed to make them revise the treaty.

When the time came to sign it, Smuts at first refused to sign. But Botha pointed out that they must both sign as the representatives of their country. In the end Smuts decided to do what Hertzog had done at Vereeniging, to sign under protest. The day after the treaty was signed he published his protest :

> " The spirit of the new life, the victory of the great human ideals, for which the people have shed their blood and their treasure without stint, the fulfilment of their aspirations towards a new international order, and a fairer, better world, are not written in this Treaty, and will not be written in treaties. ' Not in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth,' as the Great Master said, must the foundations of the new order be laid. A new heart must be given, not only to our enemies, but also to us—a contrite spirit for the woes which have overwhelmed the world : a spirit of pity, mercy, and forgiveness for the sins and wrongs which we have suffered. A new spirit of generosity and humanity, born in the hearts of the people in this great hour of common suffering and sorrow, can alone heal wounds which have been inflicted on the body of Christendom."

Not only was the Peace Treaty a failure, but so was the League of Nations, which Smuts hoped would put matters right. It was killed (and so was Wilson) by its rejection in America, mainly owing to party politics. Smuts believes that Wilson was one of the greatest and noblest of American presidents and that one day

Americans will see it, when they become great enough themselves. "It was Wilson's reputation that was murdered. They murdered it with ridicule. Nobody remembered that Wilson was a man with the hand of death upon him, standing alone against his country's betrayal of principles to which it was pledged."

> "What is it that ruined the League from the beginning—yes and ruined the world, too? The selfishness of parties—the selfishness of little people. The party system in America beat Wilson and it beat the League, it has beaten Lloyd George in England, and it fights all hopes in South Africa. . . . What do they all really want? Their own little selfish ends. As it happened in the Old Testament, so it happens to-day. Look at those Jewish statesmen in the Bible. Look at Isaiah and the other prophets. Think of their enormous vision. What became of their vision? The small fry always beat them."

Wilson died, a broken man, in 1924. Smuts lived to see the far greater tragedy of the League; its defiance by one aggressor nation after another, its wobbling and its powerlessness, finally its complete breakdown.

The fault did not lie in the minds and motives of the men who planned it, but in the nations who selfishly refused to support it.

Winston Churchill, writing in 1944 to Lord Cecil, the great British protagonist of the League, on his eightieth birthday, said, "This war could easily have been prevented if the League had been used with courage and loyalty".

X

SMUTS' DOWNFALL IN SOUTH AFRICA

AFTER THE SIGNING of the Peace Treaty, Botha eturned, very seriously ill, to South Africa. He had ıearly died in the great influenza epidemic and it stirred ıp an old internal complaint. He longed for the unshine of his home country

England did not want to spare Smuts. Lloyd George ıoped he would be British Ambassador to America. Smuts himself wished to watch over the infant League of Nations. It was, he says, the hardest decision he had ever had to make.

> " It meant coming back to a land where too often my countrymen hated my ideals and despised my larger hopes.
>
> " On the other hand there were my English friends saying it was crucially necessary for me to remain in England. You can believe me there was some temptation not to come back."

But the temptation was not so strong as the pull of the country he loved best in the world, whose servant he was. And there was his family—" I am a man that loves home. I do not care for social life. I am not really happy except on the veld. South Africa is never out of my mind. But I had already been an absentee husband and father for four years."

And there was Botha, his friend, in desperate need of support and friendship. Smuts went home. He was

hardly home when Botha died, broken by the opposition of his own people.

" Great in his life, he was happy in his death," said Smuts by his graveside. For his friend was reserved the hard fate to bury him and to remain with a task that even for him was too much.

For the task did remain with him. The Governor-General called on him to succeed Botha as Prime Minister. Smuts was humbled by it.

" I have neither tact nor patience," he said to his Cabinet. " You must take me for what I am worth."

He found a strong Republican movement had sprung up while he was away. He found many of the British in South Africa against him because he was a Boer, many of the Boers against him because of his loyalty to Britain. His enemies said South Africa was too small to interest this man who had been arranging the affairs of the world.

Said General Hertzog, " It is the sole object of General Smuts to form a great British Empire. South Africa is too small for him. He wants to stand on a mountain instead of an ant-heap, and to have his feet in two continents."

Is it any wonder that Smuts asked, " What can you do with South Africans ? It is our history to hate ! We *want* trouble. The people *want* to misunderstand me."

A photograph of the marriage of a black Hottentot and a white Frenchwoman was published, with a poem of welcome by Smuts, and circulated throughout the country. Both the photograph and the poem were fakes.

Many South Africans, white and coloured, felt a deep shame at these attacks and assured Smuts of their loyalty and support.

Besides all this Smuts had to contend with the industrial slump of the post-war years. People in other

countries were too poor to buy South African diamonds and ostrich feathers. The price of gold was falling. Wages were reduced. More black workers were introduced in an effort to make the mines pay. The white workers proclaimed a general strike. Riots broke out in Johannesburg, with murders and violence. Unarmed natives were brutally attacked. Smuts was forced to arm the police. In a clash between the police and a mob of strikers three men were killed. Thousands followed the coffins at the funeral, with a banner, "Our Comrades Murdered in Cold Blood by the Police". The people of Johannesburg appealed to the Government for help, for the revolutionaries were in control of half the city. Very reluctantly, after all other possible means had been tried and failed, Smuts proclaimed Martial Law. He called on the Defence Forces and loyal burghers to come to his help. At once they came riding in.

Smuts, without telling even his wife, set off by special train for Johannesburg. His brave lawyer friend, Esselen, went with him. The strikers got word that Smuts was on the train and tore up the track ahead of it. Smuts was warned in time and went on to Johannesburg by car. A crowd of roughs fired as the car drove on by Smuts' orders; bullets went through the chauffeur's cap and punctured the tyres. Smuts and Esselen got out. Esselen fired as the men attacked, Smuts sat quietly by the roadside. He sat so still, so unmoved, looking straight at the men with those eyes which men often say seem to look right through them. The men stopped, dared not come nearer. As he went into the Drill Hall, it was just the same. A sentry with fixed bayonet tried to stop him. Smuts just pushed the bayonet on one side and the astonished man let him pass.

Johannesburg had been in a panic, but this quiet, fearless man took hold and at once his confidence spread. A series of pitched battles was fought and the rebels were defeated; 251 troops and police were killed, 157 revolutionaries and 87 non-combatants. The rebellion was quelled.

Smuts was much moved at the promptness of the burghers in answering his call.

> "We made the call. We did not give you much time, but loyal burghers, we knew we could rely on you. . . . You had nothing but horses and saddles and bridles, but your one thought was to do your duty. . . . The revolutionaries are broken."

The revolutionaries were broken, but so was Smuts. It gave the opposition its chance, which it was not slow to take. The cost of quelling the revolt had been very heavy. It would never have been necessary, said Hertzog, if Smuts hadn't mismanaged the whole thing. He had purposely waited till it was necessary to shed blood. "The Prime Minister's footsteps drip with blood!" Hatred against him was fanned and grew. "I am down," he confessed to a friend, "down, body and spirit."

A brief respite came to him when he had to go to London in 1923, on imperial business. Once again the English welcomed him with affection, begged him to stay. But he went back to face his enemies in South Africa.

He had paid one other visit to England during his Premiership.

Troubles had broken out in Ireland and had not been wisely dealt with. They were followed by rebellion

and the activities of the hated Black-and-Tans. Britain's enemies rejoiced, America was shocked.

A new Parliament was to be opened in Ulster and King George V was asked to go over and open it. The King's household was anxious for his safety. The King himself was only anxious to use his opportunity in the best way for the country. He sent for Smuts to go to Windsor Castle.

When they talked it over Smuts reminded the King that he was not only King of England, but of every separate country in the British Empire. Although opening the Ulster Parliament it could be a message to them all—a message of peace. The King asked Smuts to draft a speech. Next day he was summoned to a Cabinet meeting to consider the draft of the King's speech. The speech was his own, but he told them nothing of that! The speech had a great and good effect.

A messenger came from the Irish leaders, asking if Smuts would meet them secretly in Ireland. Smuts went over as plain " Mr. Smith ".

The leader said they wanted a republic. Smuts said he had once been Attorney-General of such a republic. He told how there was no peace or freedom till settlement was made with England. Would they not make a similar settlement? They would find complete freedom if they did. If they were not careful they would lose the real things for a shadow. He suggested they should arrange an immediate armistice and then discuss with England the relative merits of a republic and of Dominion status. Smuts said he believed Ireland was travelling the same painful road South Africa had had to travel, but with wisdom and moderation he hoped for the same success.

The following December, Smuts, now back in South Africa, received a cable that agreement had been reached and the Irish Free State had come into being. This was one of the greatest achievements in Smuts' career.

Throughout the war with Hitler's Germany, England has pursued the same policy of patience and forbearance with Ireland so that the special correspondent of *The Times* has recently written, "Thanks to British wisdom and forbearance, the old suspicions are dying by degrees. Anti-British sentiment will last as long as those who still cherish it, but its fires are in sore lack of fuel." [1]

Smuts' enemies in South Africa cared nothing for his peace-making in Ireland. They would allow him no peace at home. His government majority was now down to nine. Wherever he went to speak, booings and interruptions haunted him. Smuts asked for a General Election; the other parties combined against him and he was overwhelmingly defeated.

> "Well," he said, "if my Party was sick of me, so was the country. That is the truth. I had been in Government, first in the Transvaal and then in the Union, for eighteen years. Too long. All the other war-time leaders were gone. One comes to that. People want a change. I had to go, too."

He was glad to be going back to the peace of his own home and of the veld. "He didn't care, you could see he was pleased", they said. So he was, at first, but then it distressed him to see the things he had worked for going to pieces before his eyes.

"I decided it was no use succumbing to the temporal. The only safe foundation was the eternal."

He did not succumb to the temporal. Even his

[1] *The Times*, Oct. 20, 1944.

enemies now were conscious of his greatness. He bore all insults in silence and with quiet self-control. Shame, humiliation, frustration, must not conquer him. He turned to the eternal. He began to think through again his philosophy of life.

"When I was young", says Smuts, "I saw a light, and I have followed that light ever since. We all feel we have to be guided by some light through the maze of life."

Out in the peace and quiet spaces of his farm at Irene, he set himself again to think out what had been the light of his life, to think out its implications and ramifications, to explain it to others. Each morning he was away early riding round the farm, coming back to intense reading or study in his book-lined room, where no one disturbed him. Or, for hours, he walked over the veld, or climbed the mountains, thinking, thinking actively. He realised how his life and his philosophy were bound up together; you could not separate the one from the other. The events of his life had led him to a certain philosophy; his philosophy had given the whole set and direction to his public actions and life.

His thought went back to the day when he had discovered the poets. They had taught him more than the philosophers. He remembered the day when he read Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and what it had taught him of the grandeur and majesty of the free man. And then at Cambridge he had discovered Goethe and Walt Whitman. He realised that there was something greater in them than their works, something greater in their personalities than in their works. Their personality was a whole that had its own laws of

development and that could be followed from the beginning to the end of their works.

> I am an acme of things accomplished
> And I am encloser of things to be.

Walt Whitman had written.

Smuts had felt then that personality was the key to the riddle of the Universe. If it was a great personality it was a whole one; all its activities, experiences, thoughts, ideals welded into one pure, harmonious whole. All men, mostly unconsciously, are striving to make themselves whole, to take their part in ever larger wholes, of family, society, nation, and universe itself. There was a Principle at the heart of the Universe calling them to do it, never being satisfied with anything less, a " Principle which makes for the origin and growth of Wholes in the Universe ". " It is as if the Great Creative Spirit hath said: ' Behold, I make all things whole '." [1]

This Principle, Smuts calls " Holism ", from the Greek " To Holon ", the Whole. It is the name of his philosophy and of the book he wrote about it in those days of political retirement, *Holism and Evolution*.

The whole of evolution is, to his mind, the story of the progress and development of wholes, of " ever more complex and significant wholes ".

There is the tiny whole of the atom, perfect and complete in itself, combining with millions of others to form material objects, yet retaining its individuality.

There is the living body, its parts co-operating and functioning jointly, as in a plant.

Later there comes the central nervous control of the whole, still largely unconscious, as in the animal.

In man, this central control " becomes conscious in mind

[1] *Holism and Evolution*, p. 105.

and culminates in Personality ", it begins to form groups in society. It becomes " super-individual in the State ".

Finally come " the ideal wholes. . . . Ideals, Absolute Values, creative factors in the upbuilding of a spiritual world. Such are the Ideals of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, which lay the foundations of a new order in the world." [1]

There is something more here at work than Evolution, says Smuts. It is a fundamental principle of wholeness and it is gradually building the City of God. " The inexhaustible whole is itself at work . . . its bow is bent for distant horizons, far beyond all human power of vision and understanding." [2]

And that is " the greatest guarantee that failure does not await us, that the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness are firmly grounded in the nature of things and will not eventually be endangered ".

It is this belief that is at the root of Smuts' unconquerable optimism, unquenchable faith. It has, itself, its roots in his religion. He thinks himself that this guiding principle of his, this light, is perhaps what Jesus really meant by the Kingdom of Heaven being within you. It is the vision of God, he says, that is the real lure of the human race.

Smuts' own life has been the result of this philosophy and faith.

When he came back to South Africa from Cambridge he found a country torn by racial strife, needing desperately to be made whole.

> " We were left the fragments out of which we were to make a whole, and it was the problem of

[1] *Holism and Evolution*, p. 105. [2] *ibid*, p. 219.

South African statesmen to follow up the ideal in the evolution of our political problems. We did so, and I think not without some success. Gradually we have seen emerging out of these discordant elements the lineaments of a new South Africa. We have not yet the whole, we have not yet a really unified South Africa, we have not yet attained to the unity which is our ideal. There is still too much of the old division and separation in our national elements, but still the effort has been made, and you see to-day in South Africa the biggest problem facing us being solved along holistic lines."

The same problems were to be seen in the world at large. Morbid nationalism, desire for aggrandisement brought about the crash of the Great War. At its end Smuts set himself, and others with him, to the task of bringing unity out of division and discord. That unity, still unachieved, lies ahead. And ahead of that still "I believe there will be evolved far higher forms of spiritual wholes than we see before us to-day".

Smuts' call to us is to be ourselves with perfect honesty, integrity, and sincerity, to let the Universal Whole realise its highest in us, to transform the great evils of life—pain, suffering, and sorrow—into the flame of a pure and free soul, to lose our small selves in the great whole, to co-operation and sacrifice.

> "The warfare in the Soul", he says, "issues either in the attainment of Wholeness and Freedom and membership in the immortal Order of the Whole, or otherwise in defeat, enslavement, and death." [1]

[1] *Holism and Evolution*, p. 313.

XI

SMUTS' RETURN TO LEADERSHIP IN PEACE AND WAR

EVERYTHING WENT RIGHT for Hertzog at first. Platinum was discovered and prosperity came back to the mines; rain fell and prosperity came back to the fields. The locusts departed. Trade revived. The Government basked in public approbation. Hertzog felt strong enough to do the things he wanted; to cut off trade concessions to Britain and give them to Germany, to make Afrikaans the official language, which debarred many British from public appointments, to print stamps without the King's head, to plan a new flag, to do everything to fan the fires of hatred of Great Britain and of her servant Smuts. He and his party sneered and jeered at Smuts, attacked him with violent personal abuse. Smuts bore it all with silence and dignity. "When I cannot control my temper", he said, "I walk away." From time to time he toured the country, pleading for moderation. He was howled down. Rioters smashed up his meetings, threatened to kill him. "A thousand men", said Smuts quietly, "will not make me change my mind."

Smuts was now free enough to accept invitations which for years he had refused, invitations to lecture in England and America. In 1929 he was appointed Rhodes Memorial Lecturer at Oxford, where he spent the last term of the year. Then he went on to America. He was treated with the greatest respect and honour, received by the President at the White House, and

received many honorary degrees. There, also, he sponsored the unpopular causes of the negroes and of the Jews. He has always stood by the Jews, without faltering, throughout his life. His book, *Holism*, had attracted the attention of British scientists and philosophers, and in 1931 the British Association asked him to be its president that year, which saw its centenary. He gave his presidential address to five thousand leading scientists from all over the world. Great overflow meetings had to be held. It was the same wherever he went throughout the country. Smuts called the invitation of the British Association " the crowning honour of my life ".

While he was in England, she went off the gold standard. Recovery from the slump began. Other countries followed suit. But Hertzog and his Finance Minister refused to go off gold. Smuts sent urgent cables begging them to come off the gold standard. His enemies called it a political manœuvre. When Smuts returned to South Africa he was denounced by everybody. " Look at the British jingo ", they said. " Smuts is only for the British Connection. If England does a thing we also must do it." [1]

But the Government's policy spelt disaster, as Smuts knew it must. South Africa could not sell her goods abroad or compete with foreign prices, bankruptcies increased. Johannesburg and the mines saw ruin ahead. To make matters worse the drought returned. A few people knew that Smuts was right, but Hertzog and his advisers wouldn't listen, neither would the general public. It took someone else to make them listen—a man who had always supported Hertzog and bitterly opposed Smuts—Tielman Roos. He had been a judge

[1] *Plans for a Better World*, p. 232.

of the Appeal Court and he begged Hertzog to go off gold. Hertzog retorted that a judge should take no part in politics ; Roos resigned his judgeship and began a lightning political crusade. He was a good mixer, with much energy and charm, also with a great thirst for power. He soon had a large public following and succeeded where Smuts had failed. Hertzog came off gold. " Once more," says Mrs. Millin, Smuts' friend and biographer, " once more the fate of Smuts was exemplified : that he saw things too long before others saw them ; that he spoke before others were ready to hear."

Prosperity returned at once, there was a boom. The mines, the cities, and the farms prospered. The Government took great credit to itself. It conveniently forgot that all this prosperity might have come over a year earlier if it had listened to Smuts. But the people remembered. They began to turn to Smuts again, away from the Government which had mismanaged their affairs. Smuts believed that if he forced a General Election, he would be returned as Prime Minister. He was tired of inactivity, tired of seeing his country misgoverned and the things he cared for in peril.

He returned one day from climbing a mountain where he made this decision to fight, only to find someone waiting to see him, a negotiator from Hertzog to see if Smuts would form a Coalition Government with him.

At first Smuts felt he couldn't do it. How could he serve under the man who had treated him with such bitter insults ? He suggested that the leaders of his party should go into the Government as Ministers, but that he himself should remain outside. The answer was that they would never go in without their leader. Smuts asked for the right to think it over.

He could choose to play his own hand, to seek supreme power for himself. It was within his grasp. But the country would be torn. There would be strife and enmity.

Or he could serve under a lesser man, one who would constantly do the unwise thing. He would have to take the blame if things went wrong—all the kicks and none of the ha'pence. Which was best for South Africa with all her differences of race, colour, origin, tradition? There could only be one answer. Peace was best for her, and unity and co-operation. She must be made whole.

Smuts put all his personal ambitions and advantages on one side, and he went to serve under Hertzog. The Coalition swept the country at the elections. Following that there was peace in the country itself, and its influence in the world at large was increased.

Trouble came from the extreme Nationalist, Dr. Malan, who wished South Africa to declare its neutrality in case of war. Smuts answered that neutrality would not be decided by legal documents, " but by the ordeal of facts and of grave events ". He believed that if Great Britain were attacked and South Africa left free to choose, she would assist the British. After Munich, Hertzog believed with Chamberlain that there might be a long time of peace ahead in Europe. Not so Smuts. " We are moving rapidly ", he said, " to a new and unknown order of things."

He had had some sympathy with Hitler in his claim for Sudetenland, which he believed rightly belonged to Germany. But he had none with the invasion of Czechoslovakia, which was an innocent foreign country. This was just naked aggression.

When, after the British guarantee to Poland, Hitler invaded that country, Smuts knew that Hitler's intention

was to smash Great Britain. "To my mind it is perfectly clear, and it would be clear to any sensible person, that Hitler's move was in effect a declaration of war against England. No other construction can be put on the matter." . . . "If Germany wins, then not only England, but South Africa as well is lost. We will first become a Nazi country and then our independence is lost."

Hertzog, however, determined to keep South Africa neutral and proposed this in the House. Smuts moved an amendment that she should sever relations with Germany and take part in the War.

> "It is not only a question of loyalty and self-respect, which I assume we all feel deeply. It is a question of the gravest importance and deepest interest for the future of South Africa."

His amendment was adopted by 80 votes to 67. Hertzog and his friends resigned and walked out. The Governor-General asked Smuts once more to be Prime Minister.

When the war was only six months old, and again after the fall of France, Hertzog proposed that a separate peace should be made with Germany. But Smuts did not waver, even in those dark days. "I say that this is going to be nothing more than a repetition of what happened in the time of Napoleon."

The nation, as a whole, supported Smuts and has supported him since. Smuts' first task was to see to the defences of South Africa, then to train troops to go to the assistance of the other British Colonies in Africa. A magnificent army of volunteers responded to his call and 70 per cent. were Afrikanders. The South African troops took a large part in freeing Abyssinia, in guarding

the Suez Canal, in the battles in Egypt. Of this army Smuts has been the official Commander-in-Chief and has constantly visited his troops on the battle-fronts. He was immensely proud when a British general called them " tanks among men " and when he reflected that they were all volunteers.

> " They are the happy warriors of the New Order, the champions of that spiritual order of the Universe which in the end is more deeply founded and more secure than these ancient hills and craters. The New Order will not arise under the Swastika, which is the symbol of past tyrannies and the moral enslavement of the human spirit. It can only arise under the sign of the Cross, in the spirit of service and self-sacrifice which has carried man from his brutal, bestial past, to the height of his spiritual vision. Not in mastery, but in service, not in dictatorship, but in freedom, lies the secret of man's destiny." [1]

[1] Broadcast Address, Nov. 4, 1940.

XII

THE EMPIRE'S ELDER STATESMAN

BUT WHILE SMUTS as Prime Minister of South Africa and Commander-in-Chief of her armed forces, has been of inestimable value to the Empire, he has made for himself a much larger and more valuable place than that. It is the place of the Empire's Elder Statesman, recognised throughout the Empire, but perhaps most of all in its heart. In dark days, in days when critical decisions have to be made, in days of destiny, the British people want Smuts, his advice, and his leadership. They want his honesty, his clear thinking, his wide vision, his long experience as soldier and statesman, his unwavering courage, his steadfast faith. There are, of course, some who do not. He has his detractors and he has his enemies. "A man who never made an enemy never made anything worth making." But the majority of British people, from their leaders downwards, know what they think; they respect and honour Smuts and give him a supreme place in their national and international councils. From time to time both Houses of Parliament, in public and in private, ask him to speak to them. Why? To the writer's mind, it is because his whole life, action as well as thought, is built round certain great and creative ideas, to which he has been consistently loyal, and which have in them seeds of hope for the future of the world.

(1) *The Idea of Freedom.* It was born and nourished in him by the free, untrammelled life of the open

veld. It was the ideal of his youth, for which he fought and suffered. For it, he fought against the British in the Boer War and with them in the two wars with Germany. It was nourished in him by the great poets, and lies at the heart of his philosophy and his religion.

"Freedom is the most ineradicable craving of human nature. Without it peace, contentment, and happiness, even manhood itself, are not possible. . . . More and more will to freedom should have real motive power. . . . The mere freedom and harmony of the soul: social freedom and equality before the law as the foundation of the State; international freedom in the rule of peace and justice; these should be the creative ideals of the new age."

The second great idea of his life follows from the first. Because he believes that he and his country have found complete freedom within its bounds, he supports and works for:

(2) *The British Commonwealth of Nations.* "My view is that the British Empire is an alliance of free states." It "gives us complete freedom". "Freedom, equality, are the essence of it." . . . "Surely people all over the world will look to this group of peoples comprising one-fourth of the human race, and see how they guide their destinies in peace and war along human lines of mutual helpfulness. Surely such a spectacle must have a far-reaching influence for good. I look upon this Empire and Commonwealth as the best missionary enterprise that has been launched for a thousand years. This is a mission to mankind of goodwill,

good government, and human co-operation, a mission of freedom and human helpfulness in the perils that beset our human lot." [1]

Again, it is the desire to keep such a heritage intact, to spread such benefits far and wide, that lies behind his third great creative idea of :

(3) *The League of Nations.* " We are many partners, great and small and we realise that no success can be achieved . . . unless there is unity, unless the advantage and welfare of all are kept in view . . . the spirit which looks to the wider human welfare and not to the advantage of our own particular group." [2]

He realised that the new World Organisation must have power behind it. " Peace unbacked by power remains a dream." . . . " I think it was largely because, in the League of Nations as constituted after the last war, we did not recognise the importance of leadership and power that everything went wrong in the end. What was everybody's business in the end proved to be nobody's business." He does not think there was anything wrong with the League in other respects. Something like it, working not only for world security, but also for world reform, is a necessity for the future. It would not " concern itself particularly with the past and with penal and revengeful action against old enemies. And in this way, in due course, the world may forget its bitter wrongs and once more move in the paths of peace."

From April to June 1945 representatives of the nations

[1] Speech to Parliamentary Association, Nov. 25, 1943.
[2] Speech at Imperial Conference, 1944.

of the World met at San Francisco to form the new world organisation subsequently called "The United Nations". They drew up and signed the full legal document known as "The Charter of the United Nations".

Knowing full well that the majority of men and women in all nations would not read this whole document, Smuts felt that something more was needed, a short preamble which should summarise in simple language its hopes and purposes. The delegates agreed and, by common consent, Smuts was asked to write the preamble.

He introduced it to the Conference on May 7, 1945—the day after VE day—"one of the greatest moments of history," he said. He felt the preamble should not be just legalistic, but express what was in the hearts of the people of the world. The spirit which underlay the struggle should be put on paper; it should give the spiritual background, the human background of the vast struggle, a struggle for the human person, for the soul of man, for fundamental rights basic to our civilisation. People would want a statement of their position, their faith, their ideals.

Here is the text of the Preamble, drafted by Smuts and adopted, with minor amendments, by the Conference:

PREAMBLE TO THE UNITED NATIONS' CHARTER

We, the people of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

— to reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and value of the human person, in the equal

rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

— to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

— to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, AND FOR THESE ENDS

— to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

— to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

— to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

— by the employment of international machinery for the promotion of economic and social advancement of all peoples—HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS.

As to the Charter itself, Smuts said that although it was not perfect, it was a very real advance on all previous plans for security against war. It provided for " a peace with teeth ", for the unity of peace-loving peoples against future aggressors, for unity among the greatest Powers, backed by the forces of the smaller Powers.

Because he believes that is the will of the Great Creative Spirit who wishes to make all things whole, Smuts cannot be content with any vision less than :

> (4) *A Whole Wide World " bound with gold chains about the feet of God "*—a " consistent world-picture which would do justice to the immensity, the profundity and the unutterable mystery of the Universe ".

We ought to realise that the day of small things is past, he thinks, the day of small groups and small nations. The great principle at the heart of Reality which is striving to make all things whole is active and creative in our day. But it is the same spirit and the same principle which has been working in the past, which has been seen in " that great faith which has nourished our civilisation ".

> " Fundamentally the world has no need of a new order or a new plan, but only of the honest and courageous application of the historical Christian idea. . . . Let us hold on to the eternal message. Let us follow the light which once shone before us, the greatest light that has ever arisen on the human horizon and which can surely lead us to that better world for which we are longing. In the twilight of to-day I see on that horizon—not the man of Moscow, not the man of Munich, not the man of Rome, but the Man of Galilee. I see Him going round villages and districts teaching and spreading His message of a new Kingdom, healing the sick and suffering. And His message is: Cherish in love your fellow-man irrespective of race or language; cherish and keep the divine idea in your heart as the highest good. This is the message also for the Church of to-day and for mankind milling round like frightened sheep without a shepherd. The Man of Galilee is, and remains, our one and only leader. And the Church, as the carrier of this message, should follow Him alone."

* * *

" I am ", says Smuts, " a Christ-man."