GREY STEEL

A STUDY IN ARROGANCE

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Title: Grey Steel. J. C. Smuts A Study in Arrogance
Date of first publication: 1937
Author: Harold Courtenay Armstrong (1891-1943)
Date first posted: Nov. 22, 2019
Date last updated: Nov. 22, 2019
Faded Page eBook #20191142

This eBook was produced by: Delphine Lettau, Al Haines, Jen Haines & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at https://www.pgdpcanada.net

Botha and Smuts in the South African War.

GREY STEEL

J. C. SMUTS

A Study in Arrogance

BY

H. C. ARMSTRONG

Author of "Grey Wolf," "Lord of Arabia," etc., etc.

LONDON

ARTHUR BARKER, LTD.

12 ORANGE STREET, W.C.2

First Published • • *April 1937*
Second Impression • • *May 1937*

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Made and Printed in Great Britain by
Hazell, Watson & Viney Ltd., London and Aylesbury

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I WISH to thank many friends and acquaintances who have placed their personal knowledge at my disposal, but must remain unnamed, and:

Mr. A. S. Owen, of Keble College, Oxford, for much sage advice also.

I use punctuation as some people use pepper from a pot, with closed eyes, held nose, and a liberal gesture. Mr. Owen has sorted my dots and dashes and made my English as readable as he can.

Mr. B. K. Long, lately Editor of the *Cape Times*, for looking through the proofs with a jaundiced eye and marking them with a blue pencil.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
The Royal Empire Society.
The Bodleian Library, Oxford.
The Rhodes Library, Rhodes House, Oxford.
And many South African libraries.

In addition, for courteously placing much material at my disposal:

African World

Daily Mail

Daily Telegraph

Manchester Guardian

New Statesman and Nation

Nineteenth Century and After

Observer

Round Table

Spectator

Sunday Express

Sunday Times

The Times

Cape Argus

Cape Times

Natal Mercury

Rand Daily Mail

Sunday Express, Johannesburg

Sunday Times, Johannesburg

Le Journal

Le Temps

Le Matin

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN this book I have described the development of the character of an unique personality given exceptional opportunities, of Jan Christian Smuts, the South African.

I have described frankly and without bias. I claim no close friendship with Smuts. The friendship of a biographer with his subject is a disadvantage. It ties his hands. It biases his opinions. It gives him a view out of perspective, because it is too close. If he knows him only at one particular stage of his life, and not from birth to death, he sees the whole man in terms of this one stage, which is probably when he is already a grown man, and successful and set in his ways.

Without it I have been able to stand well back and to study Smuts with an unprejudiced eye. I have worked through vast quantities of books and documents, together with his own writings and speeches. I have visited South Africa and watched him in the House of Assembly, at dinners, at receptions, at private luncheons. I have visited his birth-place, his school and college, the houses he has lived in, and his places of work. I have discussed him with his associates and with his opponents, with his admirers and with his detractors in England, France, and South Africa. I have been able to talk with men and women who have known him at each stage of his career, and so to give me vivid and authentic descriptions of his manners and actions.

In South Africa politics are a personal, a family affair, and produce the intense hostility and the equally intense advocacy of a family. As coming from the outside I was, in South Africa, able to study him without being influenced by local politics or local feeling; and I have refused to be influenced by the hatred of his enemies or the homage of his admirers.

Much of what I have written will not please his admirers, but Jan Christian Smuts is a great man. The history of modern South Africa is the story of Jan Christian Smuts battling with his enemies. His influence in England, in Europe, in the British Empire, and in International Affairs has been immense.

Out of the Great War little remains. The peace treaties have been dishonoured; the ideals for which my generation died physically and morally have been found to be follies, Dead Sea fruit, ashes in the mouth; the generals, admirals, and statesmen have been written off as fools or knaves: out of all that tremendous struggle there remain untouched by the fury of the

iconoclasts only four men—T. E. Lawrence of Arabia, Marshal Foch, Mustafa Kemal of Turkey, and Jan Christian Smuts.

Much flabby nonsense has been written about him, but as a great man he does not need to have his reputation shored up, as some showy but rotten building needs to be shored up with beams, with fables of virtues he does not possess, or with unreal sentiment and unreasoning partisanship. His reputation can stand on the firm foundations of his real qualities and achievements, and those foundations are of steel.

Of documents used I have given a list at the end. Verbal informants—who were legion—I cannot quote or thank personally, for in many cases this would prejudice their interests. But if any reviewers of this book or private critics should doubt the evidence of my facts, I am willing to supply them with chapter and verse if they will write to me.

I have avoided any use of the word *Boer*. Literally it meant "Farmer," but in the war of 1899 it was used as a term of opprobrium for the Dutch, and its use in this book would therefore to-day confuse the reader. Afrikander is the modern term for a South African born of Dutch parents. This too begins to change, and the people of South Africa call themselves English- or Dutch-speaking South Africans.

In order to render them into intelligible English, here and there I have had to adjust the wording of quotations of translations from Dutch documents. These have been done in collaboration with a Dutch-reading professor.

The Orange Free State was for a short time called the Orange River Colony. To avoid confusion I have called it throughout the "Free State."

At one time there was an English party called the *Unionists*. They had no similarity with the party of that name in England, and I have called them "the English Party" to avoid confusing the reader in England.

INTRODUCTION

TO the ancients Africa beyond and below the equator was an old land, but unknown: so immeasurably old that, wrinkled and shrivelled like some witch, it had never been young: unknown like the gods themselves and veiled in mysterious twilight; and in that twilight moved horrors and monstrous primeval things.

The Arabs had tales of vast hordes of elephants; of caverns full of ivory; of gold worked by the Chinese; and mines that produced the fabulous wealth of Ophir and of the Queen of Sheba.

The Phœnicians went exploring, but their ships did not return until one, long given up as lost, came sailing in past Gibraltar, and the crew told how they had set out southwards from Aden down a barren coast, how they had been driven before great storms of angry seas until they came to the end of all land, where the sky was full of strange stars, or the old stars inverted, and the sun circled from their right to their left. Rounding a great cape they had sailed northwards, until once more, after three long years, they had come to the Pillars of Hercules and sailed into the Mediterranean. But this story was treated as a sailor's tale.

The Greeks and the Romans and the Byzantines knew little of South Africa. Even in the fifteenth century after Christ, geographers held that beyond the equator was the Sea of Darkness, which was the running together of many seas and which lay in a steep inclined plane, so that any ships that ventured on to it would slide down into a bottomless abyss.

In Central Asia there had been fierce drought. All across Asia from the Great Wall of China and the Gobi Desert the tribes had been on the move, marching westwards looking for pasture for their starving flocks; among them were the Tartars and the Turks. As they came they had conquered all the lands from the Caucasus to Egypt, and from the Black Sea down the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean to Cairo, and by the fifteenth century they had blocked all the old trade routes to the East.

With the trade routes blocked, the maritime nations of Europe were being ruined, and they sent out expedition on expedition to look for some new road to the Indies. First came the Portuguese. In their frail wooden galleys they crept cautiously down the Atlantic coast of Africa until they found the Cape of Good Hope, and, making it a station for call and to revictual, they went on to India; but they treated the Cape as of small value.

It was for them a liability only and they quickly evacuated it, leaving little trace of their occupation.

Next came the Dutch, and the Government of Holland took over the Cape and turned it into a half-way house to their empire in the Indies, and finally into a colony, built a fort to protect it, settled Dutch colonists, sent out a Governor from Holland, and imported black slaves.

In France a Catholic king was persecuting his Protestant subjects, the Huguenots, and these took ship and came to the Cape to look for a new home. The Dutch welcomed them and quickly absorbed them.

And then came the English, just beginning to build up their Empire. First they conquered the Cape of Good Hope by force of arms, but handed it back to the Government of Holland; and then bought it again for six million pounds in gold.

PART I

GREY STEEL

CHAPTER I

WHEN the Dutch, and after them the English, came to the Cape of Good Hope, they found it and the country round it good and fruitful, and they settled, calling the place Cape Town.

The Dutch built themselves—and the English copied them—white, sturdy houses with open, wide verandahs, which they called *stoeps*, and with roofs of deep thatch supported by heavy black beams of stinkwood and oak. They constructed pointed gables as in Holland, windows framed in dark wood, shady rooms tiled with red brick and panelled to the ceilings, and walls so solid that they held out the heat and the cold alike and could be used as forts for defence.

They laid out open streets and gardens and vineyards, and planted trees until Cape Town became a little city and the country round rich and pleasant—a blest land smiling in its soft air, with abundant rain, beautiful with many green hills and a luxuriant, kindly sun, and along its coasts warm seas.

Beyond the Cape the country climbed from the coast plains up to a plateau that, vast and treeless and fierce-sunned, the immense *veld*, stretched barren or covered with a little sparse pasturage away a thousand miles and more to the north, to the Limpopo and the Zambesi rivers.

At first, few of the settlers pushed out far into the hinterland, for the savage tribes, the Bushmen and Hottentots, lived there and attacked all strangers; but thirty miles to the north of Cape Town they built the village of Malmesbury, and nine miles to the north again, on a mountain, they constructed a fort to form an outpost. On the lower slopes of the mountain grew up a *dorp*, a hamlet, which they called Riebeek West.

Little by little they pushed back the natives, hunting out the Bushmen, as if they were wild animals, and conquering the Hottentots, until the whole district became safe and Riebeek West settled down into a quiet hamlet of houses standing each in its own garden, and with roads of red gravel flanked with tall trees. All round were cornfields and vineyards, and to Riebeek West the farmers came riding in from their scattered farms to see their friends and relations, or on their way to market in Malmesbury. A pleasant, sleepy, placid life of easy-going people.

Close outside the dorp was the farm of Bovenplatz, where lived Jacobus Abraham Smuts and his wife; and there in May of 1870 was born to them a

boy, the second in the family, whom they christened in the Dutch Reformed Church with the names Jan Christiaan.

Jacobus Abraham Smuts was a well-to-do yeoman farmer, great-handed, ruddy-faced, solid yet jovial, and active-witted with the rude, powerful health of one who lived in the open and dealt with primitive things, but large girthed, for among the Dutch it was still a tradition, as it was in Holland, that an ample paunch was a proof of standing and prosperity; and Jacobus Smuts was both a man of standing and prosperous. His farm was wide and well-conducted. In Riebeek West and in all the farms round were his relations, and in this area there were no poor: all were well-to-do and self-supporting. Many came to him for advice, for he was steady, sober and religious, and wise in judgment: a typical conservative Dutch farmer of the Cape.

When he had been a boy there had been much ill-feeling between the Dutch and the English. The Dutch were a dour people made even more dour and uncompromising by their intermarriage with the Huguenots. They held no allegiance to Holland or to anyone else. They were not even a people, but a holding together of individuals, each intensely proud, each refusing to accept any man as his superior and searching at any price for complete individual freedom.

The English Government was the legal ruler, but had little interest in the country except as a port of call to India, and to see that no other nation should have it. The local English had the urge to control and direct. The Dutch refused to be ruled by them and the English sturdily refused to be absorbed by the Dutch.

It was a quarrel as of relations who had different temperaments but so much in common that their likenesses increased the friction between them, and their quarrel was sharpened by a hundred little disagreements. A quarrel over the slaves: from England came missionaries who interfered and persuaded the English Government to release all slaves for compensation. The Dutch grew angry, for the slaves were their private property and they were cheated even over the compensation. A quarrel over schools, over the official language, and over religious teaching: Calvinist pastors sent from Scotland increased the ill-feeling. The English Government claimed political supremacy. The Dutch, awkward, obstinate, refused to compromise: the English officials were tactless and brusque. These quarrels had increased until at last many of the Dutch of the Cape had taken their cattle and their

goods and set out northwards, and they had gone not in a spirit of adventure, but in a spirit of resentment and, as the Jews went out of Egypt to escape the tyranny of the Pharaohs, so they went to escape the interference of the English officials. Some had crossed the Orange River and founded the Orange Free State—the Free State. Others had gone farther across the Vaal River and made the Transvaal Republic. Still others had turned into Natal, but found the English there before them.

As they went the English officials came pressing up behind them, and from the north, out of Central Africa, came pressing down in hundreds of thousands the Black Men, the Bechuana, the People of the Crocodile, and the Bantu tribes on their way southwards.

The Dutchmen fought the Black Men. They fought the English. And not satisfied with that they quarrelled continuously amongst themselves, split up into parties, and each party founded a new republic of its own and then split again and made other republics, so that by the year 1870 South Africa was all but in ruins. Away to the north the two republics of the Free State and the Transvaal, though established, were bankrupt. The Black Men had been overrunning all and destroying as they came. The Transvaal was split with civil war and threatened by the Zulus. The Free State was swamped with Basutos. In Natal, an English colony, the colonists were fighting against the Zulus, for their existence. The Cape, an English colony also, was alone prosperous, but growing poor, for the Suez Canal had been opened and the shipping to the East was going that way instead of by the Cape, and its prosperous wine trade was being killed by a treaty between England and France. The English and the Dutch were even more bitter in their quarrelling. All South Africa was sour with distress.

And Jacobus Smuts had not understood the anger nor the bitterness of the Dutch against the English. He bore the English no ill-will. He was a Dutchman first, but the English were fellow countrymen with whom he wished to live at peace. For him the country beyond the Cape was vast and inhospitable and barren, and the men who had gone there had become not farmers, but poor shepherds. They had grown, they and their *vrouens*, their wives, into unkempt, difficult people, uneducated *takhara*, shaggy-heads, dour and sullen and rancorous and sullen-browed from their life on the harsh veld. He found them completely unlike his neighbours, the placid and prosperous farmers of the Cape.

The boy, Jan Christiaan—very soon Christiaan became plain Christian, and he was called Jan or Jannie—puked and puled his way slowly into life,

for he was a weak, sickly child and only with difficulty did his mother wean him and teach him to walk, and she never believed that he would live long.

She was a capable, clever woman of strong character, come of an old French Huguenot family, very religious and tenacious of her beliefs, but lighter handed and more buoyant than the usual Dutch housewives, the solid, immense-hipped, and full-uddered vrouens, with their hair brushed severely back from their foreheads and their shrewd eyes set in wide faces. She was more cultured, also, for she had been to school in Cape Town and had learned music and to read and write French, and these were accomplishments in those isolated farms when thirty miles in a carriage or on a horse was a long journey. She brought up her children strictly and religiously as a good mother.

The Bovenplatz was a family farm, and, as an elder brother wanted it, Jacobus Smuts found himself another, some miles to the north, known as Stone Fountain, and moved.

Bovenplatz had consisted of vineyards as well as wheat, but the farm at Stone Fountain was all corn-land with a little pasturage, for it lay well out in the *Zwartland*, the Black Land, and the Zwartland consisted of hills rolling in long, smooth, bare curves like an ocean heaving in long swell after a storm, broken here and there with outcrops of jagged rock: in the summer dusty and hot; in the winter cold with sweeping winds; but at the first rains covered with emerald-green grass and myriads of tiny, sweet-scented flowers which died and turned grey quickly under the thirsty sun. The soil was rich: close at hand red to look at but at a distance black; and it was the best land in all South Africa for wheat.

The farm stood on a hill-side, the farmhouse—a low building, thatched and whitewashed and with wooden shutters to the windows—painted red. Though Jacobus Smuts was well-to-do and lived baronially with large-handed hospitality, yet the house and its arrangements were primitive and crude, without conveniences, baths, or lavatories, and the life very rough and ready and haphazard. On one side was a square, with cattle sheds round it and a few smooth-trunked eucalyptus trees to give a little shade, and on the other, a *kraal*, a yard with a mud wall; and the crops grew close up to the walls of the buildings.

Behind the farm the hills climbed up towards the mountain above Riebeek West, which showed as a range of bare dark rock, except when the wind blew out of the south-east, when it was covered with white clouds which piled on to it and spilled down over it like the curve of a breaking wave.

Below the farm the hills, broken here and there with abrupt gorges torn out of them by the winter rains, ran down to the plain of the Great Berg River. The plain flat, yellow with corn in the harvest or grey-fallow in the winter, with here and there a dark patch of trees, the white gleam of a distant farmhouse, and the scar of a track leading up to it from where in the sunset rose columns of dust as the cattle came home, stretched mile after mile into the soft distance, away to the foot of the Drakenstein mountains. The mountains heaved themselves up sheer out of the farther edge of the plain, steep slopes into precipices and precipices into crags to peak after peak far up into the sky, peaks purple with distance, up till they reached the crest of the Winterhof, which like a cathedral spire stood out against the clear steel-blue sky, and from which at times a cloud would stream, blown out like a grey banner, from its summit.

There was in this Zwartland a great sense of freedom. Holland had been crowded, a bee-hive life. From this these Dutchmen had migrated, for they had resented its restraints and restrictions, the cheek-by-jowl crowded existence of minute farms and miniature gardens, joined like the pattern in a close-woven cloth. Here they found in the Zwartland great space, immense distance, freedom, and also the loneliness which they sought.

Bovenplatz had been close to the village, but Stone Fountain was isolated. The roads to it were tracks, deep dust in the summer, quagmires in winter. The only means of travel was by horses or by two-horsed buggy. Transport was by ponderous wooden wagons on wooden wheels with eight or more yoke of oxen to heave them laboriously along. The only contacts with the outside were a journey to the nearest church for service when the *predikant*, the Calvinist pastor, came visiting; four times a year a general gathering in the dorp for the *nagmaal*, the Holy Communion, to which all came; a formal visit to another farm; now and again a trip into Riebeek West or a pilgrimage into Malmesbury.

The whole life was that of the farm and the seasons: the ploughing, sowing, harvesting, and the threshing of the corn; the cattle; the lambing and sheep-shearing; the poultry and the pigs which rooted and fed and quarrelled noisily and sunned themselves in the kraal, close in against the house, in the porch or on the stoep, and even in the living-rooms.

It was the boy's work to look after these: at first the geese and the pigs and to herd the sheep. He helped the farm labourers, who were a black man or two, but the rest half-castes, *coloured people* they were called, the offspring of Hottentots and Bushmen who had mated with Malay immigrants and black slaves from the Guinea coast and some white blood from the early settlers mixed in. Most of his time he spent with Old Adam, the shepherd, an ancient, shrivelled Hottentot, who was full of the weird tales and the strange lore of the native people. When he grew older he helped to drive the cattle to pasture and round them up as it grew to dusk, and to lead the farm wagons down to the fields.

From a sickly baby he had grown up into a thin, rickety child, silent and reserved, listless and white-faced, with pale-blue, staring eyes. He mooned about, taking little interest in anything, dirty, untidy and unwashed, dressed in ragged clothes, a blanket round his shoulders, either going barefoot or wearing *velskoene*, shoes made of hide.

When he was ten his father decided that he must learn his letters and that he should go to a school in Riebeek West; and as it was too far to go and come daily, he should board in a house known as Die Ark, which the headmaster kept for a few boarding scholars.

Jannie went to school reluctantly. The idea terrified him. He was shy with a shyness that terrorised him. When he saw people coming his way, people very often whom he knew well, he would hide rather than meet them. If spoken to by a grown-up he would, without reason, blush a bright scarlet from his neck to his temples, so that almost at once he began to close in on himself and instinctively developed a reserved manner to avoid any chance of being hurt, as a crab develops a hard shell to protect its sensitive body.

He found school worse than he had dreaded. The discipline, the restraints, the fixed hours, the wearing of clothes, irked him after the casual life of the farm, where he could moon without interference, and the happy-go-lucky ways of the coloured labourers. He resented the discipline and, as his master said in a report, he was like "a wild bird newly caught beating its wings against the bars of its cage." At the end of the first term he had made no progress.

In his second term he began to give in. In his third term, like an inrush of water into an empty dyke, almost like a madness, there rushed in on him a

desire for knowledge, and knowledge out of books. He could already read a little and was studying English—at the farm they talked only Dutch—and he began to read books, to devour books with an amazing greed, books of every sort and description and on any subject. Not on any plan or particular subject, but books, any books he could lay his hands on. As a boarder in Die Ark he did not have to go home and work on the farm each evening as did the other scholars, and he had the run of the headmaster's library. He read all there was there, early in the morning before the classes and late at night until the hour for bed. He never went out if he could avoid it, nor did he play with the other scholars. He made no friends. He kept rigidly to himself, and the others looked on him as a stuck-up little swot.

The school was a mixed one and he was put in a class with two girls and another boy, the children of neighbouring farmers who had all been already three years in the school. He caught them up and passed them. He had a firm memory, which was like a plain sheet of paper, so that whatever he read was imprinted on it in clear capital letters without crosslines or corrections or blurred portions.

Hitherto the headmaster had looked on him as an abnormal and difficult scholar and no more, but one day he set a geography paper to the whole school and he was amazed to find Jannie Smuts far away at the top. He began to take an interest in him, and finding him above the average, he moved him up several classes in one move, and into his own special scholarship class.

The weedy, puny boy went on reading continually. He did not appear to have any particular interests nor any object or ambition except to collect facts and more facts, facts from books, facts that he saw in words on printed paper. He was solemn far beyond his age. A visitor wanted some information about Riebeek West. Jannie Smuts sent her a long and learned essay on "The Advantages of living in Riebeek West," with a wealth of local facts and dates.

When he went home for the holidays he took books with him and he read. His father grew annoyed with him. The eldest son had died of typhoid and he wanted Jannie to take over the farm after him, but the lad was useless. If he was sent with a wagon he took a book, and hours later he would be found sitting on the shafts, having forgotten all about the animals or his business. At meal times he sat silent or dreaming or was surly, would eat his food without a word, or would get up and walk out abruptly on to the stoep, where he would sit reading or walk up and down talking to himself.

To solid old Jacobus Smuts, wise in men and from his experience in practical things, this son which he had produced was a freak. Letters and figures were useful things to be learned and for practical use. Books too were good, but this was too much of a good thing. He talked with his wife and they agreed. The boy was staid and religious. If he wanted to live on books he had best be a predikant, a pastor. The pastors lived on books.

Still the boy worked, absorbed in absorbing knowledge, his nose always in a book. He had no boyhood. He was born old and serious. There was nothing of the boy about him, no high spirits, no playing, no misdeeds, no practical joking or laughter, only dogged, persistent grey work—reading. But he was the headmaster’s prize pupil and he was to sit for the entrance examination for Victoria College, the Dutch college in the town of Stellenbosch. He increased his hours of work, cutting short his sleep, working with complete and, for a boy, abnormal concentration. The strain began to affect his health. He became even more skinny, lean, and rickety. He grew queer in his manner, his pale-blue eyes often set in a wide distant stare, and when spoken to he did not seem to hear. The doctor was afraid that his mind was being affected. He was forbidden to read, but he persisted. To keep him under his own eye, the headmaster moved him out of the general dormitory into his own side of the house, made up a bed for him in his sitting-room, and locked away his books. Still the boy persisted. He persuaded the headmaster’s son to get him books from his father’s library and smuggle them in to him, hiding them under his pillow, reading them when no one was about; until he was caught and finally forced to stop, for a month. But he fretted and wandered aimlessly about, lost without books or work, having no hobbies or outside interests to fill his time, until he was allowed to study again.

He passed the examination and was accepted for Victoria College.

CHAPTER II

GOING to Stellenbosch filled Jan Smuts with some of the same fears as when he went to school in Riebeek West; and he prepared himself methodically. He took himself with an immense and portentous seriousness. Life was a grave and serious affair, and he must not lose or misuse a minute of it. He wrote to a professor at the college, asking his advice and his help. . . . "I trust you will," the letter ran, "favour me by keeping your eye on me. . . ." for he considered Stellenbosch "as a place where a large and puerile element exists," and so "affords scope for moral, and, what is more important, religious temptation, which if yielded to will eclipse alike the expectation of my parents and the intentions of myself. . . . 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?"

Stellenbosch, this sink of possible iniquity as the boy thought of it, was a quiet old town centred round the College. It lay in a valley full of vineyards and gardens of flowers. In the centre was a square where the ox-wagons on trek down to Cape Town outspanned, and from which the streets branched off, each bordered with giant oaks which arched and met so that the streets, even in the hot midsummer days, were always in deep shadow, and down each, in the gutters, ran, from the hills above, rivulets of water which gurgled and laughed their way through the town on their way to a river beyond. It was a cloistered, peaceful old place of picturesque thatched houses and professors and scholars and schools and religious missions, and it slumbered placidly in the drowsy, languid shade under its great trees. Jan Smuts found it very different from the bare, treeless sweeps of the Zwartland, but he refused to allow it to make him relax or to become lazy.

He worked as he had worked at school, poring always over books, absorbing knowledge and retaining it, for his memory had become photographic in its exactness, in its power of retention and of reproduction. There were no regulated games and no compulsory communal life. The professors were nearly all Scotsmen who encouraged work, and work to the exclusion of all else, so that he could work without interruption. For his degree he took Literature and Science. He studied the English poets, especially Shelley and Keats, and Walt Whitman the American, and, though he did not appreciate the beauty of the words or of the metres, he sought out their ideas. He learned German and studied the German poets, especially

Schiller, in the same way. And he learned High Dutch, the Dutch of Holland, fluently and exactly.

He wrote articles for the college magazine and even for the local papers, articles on subjects such as Slavery, Scenery, the Rights of the Individual—dull articles without originality; and some doggerel poetry, such as all youths write some time or other.

He was, however, still painfully shy and nervous. His physical weakness and his spindly body gave him a sense of inferiority; but he refused to be crushed down by it and he determined to overcome it. To cover his shyness he continued to develop an artificial manner which became abrupt and gauche, and the other students, not realising that he was shy, looked on him as conceited. He, in turn, avoided them, took no part in their social lives or their amusements. When asked to a dance he refused because he was too self-conscious and he was afraid of making an exhibition of himself, and his manner of refusing the invitation caused offence. But if anyone became flippant or tried to rag him or to waste his time with frivolities, his shyness disappeared; he was on his dignity at once and became indignant, short-tempered, and ill-natured.

For recreation he walked over the hills, usually alone, thinking, and often talking to himself. On Sundays he held a Bible class for coloured men and solemnly propounded to them the Word of God; and with the same immense seriousness he joined the volunteers.

So much did he shut himself away from the life of the college that he would not live in a general boarding house with the other students, but lodged in a private house, that of Mr. Ackermann, because, as he explained to a professor, he wished "to avoid temptation and to make the proper use of my precious time . . . which in addition will accord with my retired and reserved nature."

With one person, however, he could relax and be natural—with a girl, a Miss Sibylla Margaretha Krige, known for short as Isie Krige, who was a fellow student, for at Victoria College co-education was encouraged.

The Kriges were an old family which had come from Cape Town and lived in Stellenbosch. Some of them had trekked away to the north. Many of them were politicians. All of them—in contrast to old Jacobus Smuts—were

opponents, and bitter opponents, of the English and English ways. In this tradition Isie Krige was brought up.

She was a little, quiet girl with a round white face, who dressed simply and brushed her hair severely back from her forehead. She was very solemn, passed all her examinations, was steady and plodding without brilliance or attracting much attention—in every way a satisfactory student: and she was very prim and proper.

Jan Smuts fell in love with her in his own stilted way and they "walked out" together. The Kriges lived at the bottom of Dorp Street, on the corner where the road turned east to the sea, and they farmed some land that ran along the river-side below the town. Mr. Ackermann's house, where Smuts had his lodging, was half-way up the same street, where the oak trees were thickest. Every morning Jan Smuts waited at his door until the girl came by and then joined her, and each evening he saw her to her home. A queer couple they made, the little prim girl with the white round face and the lanky, spindly youth with the unsmiling cadaverous jowl, sedately side by side, their books tucked under their arms, silent or in solemn discussion, walking in the shade under the avenue of oaks up to the college gate. They found Life a very serious concern.

They were young to walk out—he was seventeen and she was sixteen—but they were not exceptional, as it was customary amongst the Dutch to marry early. Smuts made love to her in his dry way—as a fellow scholar. He did not lack sex and virility, but he repressed these as he repressed enthusiasm and any other natural youthful inclination. Being egocentric he talked of what interested him primarily—his work. He taught her the things that interested him: Greek, which he had learned out of a textbook: German, in which they read the poets together: Botany, and especially grasses, for that was his hobby.

And the girl adored him. She hero-worshipped. She worked for him. When he translated some Schiller, she wrote it out in copy-hand. But she gave him far more than that; he knew he was unpopular: he wanted to be liked, but he could not unbend, be normal and natural; but with her he could be natural. He was at heart a schoolmaster with the itch to teach and direct the lives of others: she was a ready and willing pupil. He needed applause: she gave him applause and with it self-respect.

Jacobus Smuts, however, was not so satisfied. The jovial, good-natured old man with his practical knowledge saw that he had, in some strange way, produced a son who was just all grey brain and little else. He wanted him on the farm, but Jannie was incompetent with his hands; he had no practical abilities or farm sense. He was a book-worm, and that was all there was to it. The old man accepted the fact: Jannie must be a pastor.

But Jan Smuts' outlook had changed. He was not so solidly religious as he used to be. His studies, especially of Shelley and Walt Whitman, and his new experiences had altered his outlook and he was doubtful whether he had the call to the ministry. At last he decided that he wished to read not theology, but the law and to complete his studies in England, and at Cambridge. His tutors encouraged him, for he had shown himself to be one of the cleverest students at the college. He had passed his matriculation and his first intermediary examinations with success and he was second on the passing-out list for the local degree of Bachelor of Arts.

To go he needed money, and, though he was never actually poor, he had not enough for this and his father was by no means inclined to help him in this new venture; but he won a scholarship, the Ebden, which was worth a hundred pounds a year and a number of small bursaries. Then, in 1891, taking his local degree, he collected all the spare cash he could lay his hands on, borrowed some from a tutor, shut down his Bible class, said good-bye to Isie Krige and took ship for England.

CHAPTER III

THE ENGLAND to which Jan Smuts came was the England of the early nineties of the nineteenth century—rich, imperially expanding, haughty and powerful, but it was also England at its most florid and turgid; overfat with money and self-satisfaction; a land of dowager duchesses; of top-hats and high collars; the working classes, servants, and such like kept out of sight and out of mind; the upper classes very exclusive, nose-in-air and select. It had little interest in or welcome for a colonial, and especially for a poor and unknown colonial. For Jan Smuts, with no ability at making friends, it was a very inhospitable place, but in his own lonely way he ferreted round and learned much.

At Cambridge he went to Christ's College, but he got little out of university life; he did not like it or the undergraduates. He did not understand them. He was older than the average and had another viewpoint. He came to work with a specific object. They, with their lackadaisical drawling ways, appeared to him to have come just to pass time. He did not understand that no man in England of their class should be openly serious or show that he was making an effort: he must succeed without apparent effort or there was no virtue in his success; the undergraduate who worked openly was a "nasty little swot"; he might work as hard as he liked, but he must not be caught working. To Smuts, not knowing these things, these languid young men seemed to be only frivolous time-wasters, wasters of "my precious time." He kept away from them lest they should corrupt him. He worked hard and openly. He remained lonely, aloof, and lost, reserved even to ill-nature. He repelled or ignored advances and attempts at friendship or intimacies. He wished to be noticed, but if anyone took any interest in him he played the part of being unconscious of the interest. His original sense of inferiority and his shutting himself in himself had made him introspective and self-centred.

He was still thin and weedy, with a big forehead, a long jowl, a slight chin, and pale-blue eyes in a pasty, drawn face; and he grew pastier, for he worked all day and far into the night. Like many of the Dutch of South Africa, he had a flair for the law, for its intricacies and its dry subtleties.

Of the joy of living, of the pride of the body and of physical fitness, of the thrill of sport and of competition with others—he shrank from competition—he knew nothing. The heart-leap of revolt against accepted

things, the fire in the blood, the follies and the inconsequentials which are the privileges of youth and which if a man has not felt and suffered he has never lived, were outside his comprehension: he despised them.

In return the undergraduates disliked him, this lanky, stand-offish, nose-in-air, self-opiniated colonial with the amazing accent—he had the broad accent of the Dutch from the Malmesbury district, which was nasal and sing-song—who was either silent or spoke with an air of contempt; a brusque, uncouth fellow; a dull dog, a prig. They felt that some kicking and bullying in the rough and tumble of an English public school would have done him good. They would have liked to rag and torment him, but there was something about him which made them sheer off, and they left him alone.

At his work Smuts was very successful. He had no difficulty in passing examinations, for when asked a question he could, with the eye of his memory, see the answer with page open in front of him, the exact wording with chapter and verse. And he could, if it was necessary, still in the eye of his memory, turn over a page and read on.

He took superlative honours in the Cambridge finals. Maitland, the Professor of Law, said of him that he was far the best student he had ever examined. He was admitted to the Middle Temple in May 1894 and passed the Honours Examinations with exceptional success and won a number of special prizes. He was offered a professorship at Christ's College, but refused it, without waiting to be called to the English Bar he set out back to Cape Town.

He went back to South Africa with joy in his heart. He was homesick. Africa was his home and Africa called him back insistently.

One who stood near him as the ship came into the harbour of Cape Town told how the silent, reserved young man became suddenly alive and vibrating as he saw before him the city along the shore and behind it Table Mountain towering up with the clouds spilling down over it and collecting towards the peaks of the Twelve Apostles. For a while he stood staring out, his blue eyes shining and alive, rejoicing. For a minute he had ceased to repress himself. He was natural and unconscious of anyone looking at him. He was human and a young man rejoicing simply. Then quickly, like the sudden dragging down of a steel shutter over a lighted window, the light

went out of his eyes and the joy out of his body, and as if he were ashamed that, even for one minute, he should have shown himself and his inner feelings, he turned abruptly away and went below deck.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN JAN SMUTS landed in Cape Town, the local newspapers welcomed him back. They spoke of him as a brilliant young man: a credit to South Africa. They quoted his success at Stellenbosch and his phenomenal success in England, at Cambridge and in the Middle Temple; and they predicted a great future for him as a barrister. He was called to the Bar in Cape Town, went into Chambers, and began to practise in the Supreme Court. He was for a while a big splash in the small pool of Cape Town life, and then, as time passed and people grew used to him, he became an unnoticed member of the community—and, despite all that the newspapers had predicted, no briefs of importance came his way.

For a barrister, especially in South Africa, a pleasing personality and an engaging manner were more important in getting clients and briefs than academic and examination successes—and Jan Smuts had a bad manner. He worked as hard as ever, searching out and absorbing knowledge out of books and musty documents, but he could not hob-nob with the other junior counsel, do the casual passing-the-time things they did, playing cards, swapping drinks, sitting in the casual, sociable manner of Cape Town to talk by the hour. He was constitutionally unable to get on to familiar or intimate terms with the other men. He had a hesitating and reserved manner, with a haughty look, and his pale-blue eyes looked past or through people and held them at arm's length, so that the juniors liked him as little as the Cambridge undergraduates. The older men and the solicitors wanted someone more human and pleasant to handle the cases of their clients and one who could influence juries—and this Smuts could never do.

Having little legal work he undertook odd jobs. For a fee he examined in High Dutch, in which he was very proficient. He wrote articles for the Dutch and the English newspapers, and especially for the *Cape Times*, on all manner of subjects—on the Native Problem, the Scenery of the Hex Valley, on A Trip to the Transvaal, on Immigration, a review of a book on Plato, a criticism of the Transvaal Government because it employed Dutchmen from Holland instead of local Dutchmen in its government offices, and he demanded that young South Africans should be given a chance before foreigners; and a study of Walt Whitman, about whom he had written a book, for which he could not find a publisher.

The *Cape Times* was going through a bad period. The editor had given himself an indefinite holiday. After a time the staff met and elected a temporary editor from amongst themselves—one Black Barry, one of the journalists. Black Barry had been a trainer of fleas in a circus and knew much more about training fleas than editing newspapers, so that the *Cape Times* became a burlesque of a newspaper and was rapidly going bankrupt when a committee of important men took it over and engaged a number of young men to write for it. Amongst these they engaged Jan Smuts. He worked conscientiously, producing a steady stream of ponderous leaders on such subjects as The Moral Conception of Existence, and The Place of Thrift in the Affairs of Life. As part of his work he attended in the Press gallery and reported the parliamentary debates, for Cape Colony had become a self-governing colony and had its own parliament.

At first he did this work as part of the routine of journalism. Then he became mildly interested. His interest increased and grew rapidly until it began to absorb him. All other interests became secondary. His religious convictions had become weaker. The idea of being a pastor had long since faded out of him. The law was his profession, but he had had no success in it. Philosophy and learning appealed to him, but he needed more action and not the life of a student or a professor.

Steadily politics took a grip of him. They became the centre and the co-ordinating force of all his thoughts and all his actions. He had worked at school, at Victoria College, at Cambridge, in London, and in his chambers in Cape Town hard, but without a concentrated central plan. He had been wandering. Now he had concentrated on to one point. He had a definite objective—politics.

At that time politics in South Africa were electric with possibilities. While Jan Smuts had been growing up all had been changing. Away back in 1870, despite its troubles, South Africa had been a sleepy old land, and the people, whether of the Cape or of Natal or of the Dutch Republics, the Transvaal and the Free State, had been farmers, traders, and shopkeepers—all decent, solid folk. The English and the Dutch had continued to quarrel, but had kept their quarrels as those of relatives. They had stood together against the common enemies, the invading Black Men, to establish their common safety. They had intermarried and worked together and defrauded each other in amicable rivalry. They had disagreed, but lived side by side in

disagreement. England had been far away and the English Government had had little interest in the country except in the Cape as a naval base, and it begrudged any money it had to spend on administration.

But in 1871 diamonds had been discovered in Kimberley; and then in the Interior, a thousand miles from the Cape, was found gold: gold in quantities near the surface; reefs of gold in the Witwatersrand, and the Witwatersrand was a bare ridge of hills high up on the veld, in the territory of the Dutch Republic of the Transvaal.

With the finding of gold South Africa changed and woke from sleep into a vicious mood. The gold begat trouble. Instead of the farmers and the traders, all solid, ordinary folk, there came gangs of adventurers from all parts of the world and of all nationalities—Turks, Greeks, many English, Germans and Americans, and the worst type of internationalised Jews, with their noses close down on the gold trail. The Dutch of the Transvaal resented their coming, called them *Uitlanders*, Outsiders, but they themselves became greedy for quick wealth and their officials became corrupt and dishonest. Foreign governments became interested: the Dutch of Holland; the Germans, who annexed Namaqualand, some four hundred miles to the west on the Atlantic seaboard, and who planned to make themselves a great African empire which should contain the gold area. And the English Government suddenly realised that South Africa was valuable and made up its mind to control its gold. The quarrels of the English and the Dutch ceased to be the squabbles of relations and became a vicious quarrel for wealth, with the English Government behind the local English. The Dutch, convinced that the English Government had decided to annex their republics, though not looking to Holland for help, were equally determined to defend their independence to the bitter end. The leader of the Dutch was Paul Kruger, an old Dutchman and the President of the Transvaal Republic.

Amongst the first adventurers had come a young Englishman—by name Cecil Rhodes. He was from a good middle-class English family, but in England he had few opportunities, for the England of 1870 was rigid in its social classes and even more rigid in its distribution of wealth and opportunities, so that a young man without money or family connections had few chances of getting out of the rut in which he was born, however capable or ambitious he might be, and Cecil Rhodes was born with vast ambitions and exceptional capabilities, though with weak health and diseased lungs.

He had come to South Africa for his health and to find a career. At once he had shown a remarkable ability for choosing useful friends, for business and for gambling; and in an incredibly short time he had amassed a vast fortune out of diamonds and gold and an equally enormous reputation. He had amalgamated the diamond industry into a company, the De Beers, and become the managing director, and he had gained control of a large portion of the gold output of the Transvaal. With this wealth behind him he had gone into politics, with wide views and high aims, and become Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.

His aims were clear cut and defined. His methods were vigorous and he was held back by no scruples. He believed that South Africa, consisting of the two colonies of the Cape and Natal together with the two Dutch Republics of the Transvaal and the Free State, must remain as one indivisible whole, and that within it, the Dutch and the English should work shoulder to shoulder as one white nation. Such a South Africa should rule itself, free of the government in England and of the politicians in Downing Street, but, above all, free of the officials in the government offices. Beyond this again he saw a tremendous vision, not merely of a united white South Africa, but of all Africa away up far to the north, to Egypt and the Mediterranean coast, as one great state still within the British Empire. Money, as the means of buying luxury or ease, meant nothing to him, but it meant power. And above all things he loved power, the power to achieve his ambitions and realise his vision.

But in his way, across his path, preventing expansion to the north, preventing a union of South Africa, controlling the gold that Rhodes needed, and in touch with the Germans—thwarting all his schemes and thwarting them with deliberate and bitter pugnacity, was Paul Kruger.

Paul Kruger hated the English. He had been taught to hate them since he was a child. He had been born in the Cape as a British subject, but his father had been one of those who had trekked away north to get away from the control of the English. As a youth he had lived hard. Naturally dour and a strict, an extreme Calvinist with a harsh outlook, his life had soured him so that his hatred of the English had become part of his mentality.

Paul Kruger had aims as clear as those of Cecil Rhodes; he was equally unscrupulous and as determined to succeed. He too believed in a united South Africa, but one that was wholly Dutch, and he hoped to drive all the English into the sea. Finding that impossible, he set to work to unite the two Dutch republics and to make them into an isolated Dutch country, independent of the English-ruled Cape Colony and Natal, and with its own

government, laws, tariffs, customs, and its own separate railway system and its own seaport.

For Rhodes he had a special hatred. As the Englishman who was Prime Minister of the Cape, Rhodes was the agent of the interfering English Government. He hated him also as one of the foreigners, the *Uitlanders*, the Outsiders, who were profiting from the gold of the Transvaal—of his Transvaal. *Aasvogel*, dirty vultures, Kruger called them, who had found a dainty morsel in the Transvaal and sat down to gorge themselves. Rhodes was the King of the Aasvogel, with his evil Jewish assistants; his evil friends who made his money for him. He was, for Kruger, the incarnation of Capital, of Evil: of Capital lying, bribing, treacherous, bullying without conscience or moral sanction, using politics to rig the market and then using the money so foully made to debauch politics. Rhodes had already with his bribes debauched many of the officials of the Transvaal. The gold itself was a cancer rotting the heart of the people, and Rhodes and his friends were no more than stinking corruption and a vital danger to the liberty of his state. He could not see Rhodes' virtues, mighty though they were, but only his gigantic vices.

At first Rhodes tried to come to terms with Kruger, to persuade him, to buy him into complaisance—and Rhodes believed that, if offered enough, any man could be bought—but Kruger would neither be cajoled nor bribed, and he drove Rhodes to fury. To Rhodes the President was a dirty, uneducated old Dutchman, backward, primitive, and impossible, an anachronism, a throw-back to the times of Moses, who ought to be cleared away, and who blocked all his great schemes and all progress and advance.

Like two primeval monsters they faced each other. Kruger hard, rugged, a fighter, brutal, dictatorial and overbearing: a fanatic, who ruled his people as a patriarch by the power of his personality. The Old Testament taken literally with its exact wording was his guide. Rhodes, ruthless, unscrupulous, an ourang-outang of a man, unkempt in appearance, uncouth in manner, huge head with sleepy eyes, turbulent and volcanic in his rages, tearing at opposition and tearing it down without pity with great, grasping hands.

At the time that Jan Smuts was reporting the parliamentary debates from the Press gallery in Cape Town and learning the elements of politics, across the hard brutal land of South Africa these two immense, primitive men straddled, squared up, face to face, grim, hostile, and snarling; they dominated all South Africa and their quarrel dwarfed all other issues.

CHAPTER V

THE quarrel between Rhodes and Kruger appeared to be identical with the quarrel between the Englishmen and the Dutchmen of South Africa—for domination. In reality, many of the Dutch were not behind Kruger. In the Transvaal many thought that the old man—he was now well over seventy—had grown so obstinate and dictatorial that it would be good to replace him with a younger man. Martinus Steyn, the President of the Free State, a big-bearded Dutchman, jealously proud of his race and their independence, did not want close union with the Transvaal: the Transvaal was becoming rich and the Free State was poor, and he was afraid of being absorbed by his neighbour or at least overlaid; and in the Free State the English and the Dutch lived happily together and had no reason for disagreement. In the Cape a large percentage of the Dutchmen, solid, sound men of standing, like old Jacobus Smuts, had no ill-feeling against their English neighbours.

These Dutchmen, the Dutchmen of the Cape, had formed an organisation known as the Afrikander Bond—*the Bond*—to look after their interests. It was led by W. P. Schreiner, the son of a German missionary, but the organiser and the real director from behind was a Dutchman, J. H. Hofmeyr. The Bond members also wanted a united South Africa; to them Kruger's policy of creating an isolated Dutch country cut off from the Cape was folly. It would injure the Cape and the trade of Cape Town and it would ruin all the Dutch.

Hofmeyr and Rhodes found much in common. Both were enthusiastic South Africans: Hofmeyr by birth, Rhodes by adoption. Both were convinced that South Africa could exist only in union, with common laws, tariffs, customs, and a common railway system. Both were imperialists, wishing South Africa to remain part of the British Empire so long as the English Government did not interfere in its local affairs. Hofmeyr had proposed a tariff in favour of England and against other nations, the proceeds to be paid as an annual contribution to the British Navy.

The two men became close friends. Hofmeyr brought the Bond in behind Rhodes, and backed him both inside and outside the House. When Parliament was sitting they met almost daily and discussed all problems without restraint. Each morning they rode for exercise on the downs outside Cape Town. Rhodes relied on Hofmeyr's judgment and consulted him on all

occasions, and Hofmeyr believed in Rhodes. Both he and Schreiner realised that if Rhodes succeeded it would mean a South Africa ruled by the Dutch, for they were in the majority. Rhodes on his side encouraged Dutchmen to take office and position under him—there were several Dutchmen in his cabinet. And he showed an open preference for men born in South Africa and employed young Dutchmen born in South Africa, *Afrikanders* they were called, whenever he could.

Hand in glove, Cecil Rhodes and Hofmeyr, with Schreiner and the members of the Afrikander Bond, with their English and Dutch supporters, ruled the Cape and worked for a united South Africa.

Jan Smuts joined the Bond. Already he had become a strenuous and restless politician. Politics were in his blood as they were in the blood and in the mouth of every Dutchman. His father had been elected member for the Malmesbury district and was a whole-hearted supporter of the Bond and a follower of Hofmeyr—and he encouraged his son to join. Between himself and Jannie he had at last found an interest in common.

Though Jan Smuts was of little importance, both Rhodes and Hofmeyr were glad to have him as a recruit. Rhodes had already marked him down some years before, when he had gone on an official visit to Stellenbosch—it was part of his policy to encourage the Dutch colleges and schools—and Smuts was a junior student there. Smuts had been chosen to reply to the address which Rhodes had given, and Rhodes had been so struck by his speech—which echoed all Rhodes' own ideas—that he had asked Hofmeyr to keep an eye on the young man for future employment. Rhodes knew too his record at Cambridge and in London. He was exactly the type of clever, serious young Afrikander he wanted working for him, and one who had been to England, knew something of the outside world and what the British Empire meant: a man with the right ideas, as his articles in the newspapers showed. "Keep an eye on that young man," he said one day to Alfred Harmsworth; "he will do big service for the Empire before he is finished."

Hofmeyr knew him too. He had a great respect for old Jacobus Smuts and he recommended young Smuts in the strongest terms to Rhodes. To help him and to put him financially on his feet, Rhodes was thinking of employing him as one of the legal advisers to De Beers, his diamond combine.

For Jan Smuts it was his chance. As a barrister he had done no good. Briefs still did not come his way. The little work which had come had been haphazard and unsatisfactory, a little devilling, pot-boiling, and without any future. Politics! It was politics he wanted. As a lawyer and a journalist he had been unsure and hesitating, but when dealing with politics he was becoming sure of himself and confident. He had found the thing he could do. He knew he would succeed. His ambition woke: he determined to become great. The Bond and its policy appealed to him. Paul Kruger's policy of isolation was mean and little: he despised it. The idea of a united South Africa caught his imagination. It was the big idea, the big conception; and the big thing, together with power and success, appealed to him. Rhodes spelt success and power: he was the symbol of the big idea: the *Colossus* over-riding, towering above everyone else.

He became an ardent admirer and supporter of Rhodes. He opened out, loosened the stiff joints of his awkward manner, became more human, began to warm with enthusiasm. He supported Rhodes the man, and the ideas and aims of Rhodes. He worked whole-heartedly for Rhodes, absorbed his ideas, and expounded them in articles. He had in England seen the might and power of the British Empire. He wrote and spoke in favour of the English, the people from whom Rhodes came. He compared *Afrikaans*, the local dialect of Dutch used by the Dutchmen of South Africa, unfavourably with English as a language. He explained in an article in the *Cape Times* that the English were unpopular "not because of their pharisaism but because of their success," especially their success as organisers of colonies.

Rhodes! He became obsessed with Rhodes. He lived Rhodes. He made Rhodes his hero and his leader. He saw an assured future with Rhodes leading the way. He worked and talked Rhodes and the climax was a meeting in October of 1895 in the Town Hall in Kimberley, where he made a long speech on his behalf.

To this meeting he was sent by Hofmeyr, who primed him. There was trouble brewing in Kimberley, the centre of the diamond industry. It was encouraged by Olive Schreiner, a South African novelist. She suspected that Rhodes was preparing some treachery against the Dutch, that the Uitlanders in the Transvaal were up to something, preparing something also: all through South Africa there was talk that Rhodes and the Uitlanders were plotting together against Kruger and the Transvaal Government, and about to take some action, a *coup de main* of some sort. The Dutch were becoming suspicious and awkward. The De Beers' Political and Debating Society were holding a meeting in Kimberley, in the Town Hall, and wanted someone

direct from headquarters to speak for Rhodes and contradict the rumours. Hofmeyr schooled Smuts in what he was to say and he went with enthusiasm. He was no more the dull, reserved student. He had found an inspiration. He was in his element. He was on the high road in politics.

In the Town Hall in Kimberley, before a large audience, he defended Rhodes against all criticism: his Native Policy, which had many faults; his scheme to unite all English and Dutch into one people. Some said that Rhodes had no right to be the Prime Minister of the Cape, an English Colony, and to hold vast interests in the Transvaal, an independent Dutch republic, which might conflict with his political duties: Smuts stoutly defended the dual position. Others attacked Rhodes' private character, charged him with corruption, bribery, and dishonest opportunism: Smuts denied these vigorously, and criticised the handling by the Transvaal officials of the foreigners who worked in the mines; and ended off with an enthusiastic panegyric of Rhodes.

He was attacked and laughed at by some of the newspapers and by Olive Schreiner, but he did not care. The future was assured. He was on the road to success, with Rhodes leading the way. And he returned to Cape Town full of enthusiasm.

CHAPTER VI

BUT OLIVE SCHREINER and her supporters were right. Rhodes was plotting with the Uitlanders and there was trouble ahead. His quarrel with Kruger was coming to a climax, for he was in a hurry. He was agitating to get his aims quickly. His lungs were growing worse. He knew he had not long to live, and he trusted no one to carry out his work, once he was gone. A dozen new difficulties had arisen. Steyn of the Free State had at last made an agreement with Paul Kruger to protect both republics against the English. The centre of South Africa was shifting from Cape Town to the Transvaal, to Johannesburg, which had been the camp for the gold-miners and was now rapidly growing from a town into a rich city, and Rhodes wanted to control Johannesburg. The Germans had come interfering in earnest. They were at work on their plan for a great central African empire from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean which would cut the Cape off from the north and have control of the republics and the gold mines. They had come to some terms with Kruger, though no one knew exactly what, and Kruger was using them—as Sultan Abdul Hamid in Turkey at that same time was using the Germans—to counterbalance the English and so protect himself. He had given the Germans special freight rates for their goods. He had allowed them to open banks in the Transvaal. He had engaged German officers to train his regular soldiers and his State artillery. He was building a ring of forts round Pretoria with the technical advice of Germans. He boasted that he had the promise of help from Germany if he called for it and that he would welcome such help—and to back up his statements there were lying in the harbour of Delagoa Bay, the harbour he proposed to use instead of Cape Town, two German cruisers.

As Rhodes grew impatient, Kruger sat back. He put his trust in God and so had unlimited patience. “I wait,” he said, “until the tortoise puts out its head, and then . . .” Rhodes put his trust in no one but himself and hence could not wait. Again he tried to negotiate with or to bribe the old Dutchman, but Kruger would have nothing to do with him. And as the precious days went by, Rhodes became maddened with impatience. He was not used to being opposed. He was used to elbowing men roughly on one side, but Kruger remained impassive and immovable and would not be elbowed aside. At last Rhodes determined to defeat Kruger by force.

The Uitlanders, the foreigners who owned and worked the mines in the Transvaal, were also at loggerheads with Kruger. They had many legitimate complaints: they paid seven-eighths of the taxes, but they had no political rights and no say in the expenditure of the money. For the Dutch children there were State schools, for their children none; the State officials were greedy and corrupt, the municipal officials of Johannesburg even worse; the administration was very inefficient; they were harassed by vexatious taxation; the concessions which Kruger gave his relatives, bled them of their profits; they were allowed no freedom of Press, public meeting, or speech. When they complained to Kruger he told them to go to the devil. He hated and despised—and he feared—the Uitlanders. He was convinced that if he gave them any political power, they would swamp the republic and probably call in the English Government as well. They were in the Transvaal, he told them, on sufferance: they said that they could not get justice in the courts or from the police, that they were being fleeced. Well! they could go away when they liked. He would not stop them, but, if they stayed, they must put up with what they got.

The Uitlanders saw that they could get no redress by bribery or persuasion, and they too decided to upset Kruger and his Government by bluff, or, if necessary, by direct action.

They combined with Rhodes, but they had different objects. They wished to eject Kruger and replace him by another government which would be more amenable and in which they would have a share—perhaps the dominant share. The last thing in the world that they wanted was for the English Government to take over or to fly the Union Jack in Pretoria. They wanted to be like the foreign subjects in the Turkish Empire—to live under a weak foreign government and to have special privileges, their own consuls to help them, and even their own consular courts to try them. In this way they would get the best of both, being able to flout the local government and yet not be hindered by their own nationality.

Rhodes wanted to get rid of Kruger and his government, for they were the stumbling-block to his plans, to his great dreams, to his vision of the great united Africa of the future, and now he was convinced that he must force the hands of the English Government. He must jockey the English Government into taking a hand direct. The Germans were too close and too ready to interfere at the first opportunity. He knew that there was a definite treaty of defence between them and Kruger. A weak move, and they would be in the Transvaal as champions of the Dutch and the way to the north would be blocked for ever. They were already acquiring land, buying

concessions, and getting control of the railway that ran from Delagoa Bay through Portuguese East Africa to the Transvaal. The English Government must be forced to come in to keep the Germans out.

He sent help and encouragement to the Uitlanders, and he sent to Pitsani, a village on the Transvaal frontier close to Mafeking, his most intimate friend, Dr. Jameson, with four hundred armed police, on the pretext that they had gone there to protect the workmen on a new railway that was being built up to Bechuanaland; but with orders to be ready to cross the frontier if necessary.

The general scheme was simple. On a fixed date the Uitlanders should march out of Johannesburg on to Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal and only thirty miles away, take the arsenal and forts and eject Kruger, and form a new government in the Transvaal. If Rhodes thought it necessary and gave the order, Dr. Jameson should advance over the border from Pitsani and join the Uitlanders.

The plot was a complete fiasco. The Uitlanders boasted and talked openly. The scheme became an open secret. When Smuts was in Kimberley in October defending Rhodes in the Town Hall, the preparations were being freely discussed in every club and bar and public place throughout South Africa. Olive Schreiner had a shrewd suspicion of the facts. Kruger knew and waited his chance. The plotters could not agree. The Uitlanders had little desire to use force. They wished by the threat of force to bluff Kruger into giving way. They also wanted to be sure that the English Government was not going to interfere and that Rhodes was not going to use them for his own plans. Every arrangement was so mismanaged that it was more like a crowd of schoolboys playing at Red Indians than grown men risking their lives for big stakes. Rhodes, not understanding the attitude of the Uitlanders, went on arranging details, but found himself continually held up. He asked what flag the Uitlanders intended to fly when they reached Pretoria: he wanted the Union Jack. After much discussion they decided on the Transvaal republican flag, but flown upside down. He tried to fix the date. They kept postponing and finally refused to act on Christmas Day, not for religious reasons, but because there was a race-meeting that day in Johannesburg and they wished to attend.

Jameson and Cecil Rhodes

Jameson and Cecil Rhodes

Meanwhile Dr. Jameson sat at Pitsani. He was naturally hot-headed. He was ill. His nerves were on edge. He had imagined himself to be a second Clive or Warren Hastings adding a province to the Empire with a bold advance. His men were getting weary of the delay and deserting, and he grew angry. Colonel Willoughby, the senior officer with him, constantly urged him to act. He decided to force the issue. Anyhow he refused to go tamely back to Cape Town and be laughed at. Rhodes sent him orders to stand fast, as he was still arranging details. He believed that Rhodes was bluffing and meant him to go ahead. Sending a message to the Uitlanders to tell them that they were cowards, on the twenty-ninth of December of 1895 he crossed the frontier from the Cape into the Transvaal.

Kruger was ready for him. The tortoise had put out its head, and he cut it off. He rounded up Jameson with his men, and turning to Johannesburg he arrested the leaders of the Uitlanders. All the Transvaal went up. The commandos came hurrying out, the men with their rifles ready to fight. Every Dutchman in South Africa blazed up with anger. They believed that England was behind the raid, England and Rhodes, and had meant to destroy the independence of the Dutch republics and make the English dominant in all South Africa.

CHAPTER VII

SMUTS had gone to Riebeek West, to his father's house, for Christmas and the New Year. He was sitting on the stoep of the house, when the news was brought in—vague, excited news that had increased in the telling. An army of English soldiers was said to have marched from Mafeking on Pretoria. Johannesburg was up in revolt. . . . All the Dutch of the Transvaal were out, and the commandos on the move. There had been fighting. Many had been killed and hundreds wounded.

At first Smuts did not believe it. A scare story! One of the many that were flying round at that time. He knew, as everyone knew, that the trouble between the Uitlanders and Kruger had become very bitter, but it was full of big words and threats and there was little danger of any real action. There was no English army near Mafeking. But as more reports came in, he realised that something serious had happened.

Cape Town was buzzing with excitement. The facts were clear. Dr. Jameson with a party of police had raided into the Transvaal, been surrounded, and, after some fighting, captured by the Transvaal General, Cronje, and was likely to be shot in Pretoria. Prominent Uitlanders from Johannesburg had been arrested for plotting to join with Jameson to upset the Government by force, and were in the civil prison in Pretoria charged with treason. And Rhodes must have known all about it. He must, in fact, have himself, and secretly, organised the whole plot and the raid. That became more obvious as more facts came out. He had sent his brother to help organise the Uitlanders. Arms had been smuggled to them by the officials of the De Beers company under his orders, in cases and tins addressed to the company, and had been stored in the mines. The secretary of the company had been his principal confidant and had handled the correspondence and used special codes to send instructions. Dr. Jameson was his closest friend, and letters and telegrams showing his part, with most of the details of the scheme, had been captured by the Dutch amongst Jameson's luggage. The sending of Jameson to Pitsani to protect the railway had been just bluff. Men sent by Rhodes had mapped out the route from Pitsani to Pretoria and made depots for food and fresh horses, and one party had made a depot at Irene, a farm a few miles from Pretoria. Without a doubt it was a plot by Rhodes to make the English dominant in the Transvaal, and he had not given one word of warning to his Dutch friends and supporters.

The Bond met. The leaders, Hofmeyr and Schreiner, boiled with indignation. They had been fooled and betrayed by Rhodes: they had believed his talk of a united South Africa with Dutchmen and Englishmen working together as brothers. Brothers! And all the time he had been plotting this thing with Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary of the English Government, and with the Imperialists in England, to smash the Dutch Government of the Transvaal with English soldiers and to make England supreme in all South Africa! He had planned it right under their noses while he was leading them the other way with his talk of co-operation. It was treachery! Black treachery! They became again simple Dutchmen and angry Dutchmen, hating the English. They demanded that Rhodes be hounded out; that all the English be ejected from South Africa. They must get clear of Rhodes, denounce him, cut all connection with him as quickly as possible and before they were themselves involved in his ruin.

Hofmeyr cursed Rhodes publicly. “Now he has done this thing,” he said, “he is no friend of mine,” and telegraphed his congratulations to Kruger and demanded that the High Commissioner should repudiate Rhodes and outlaw Jameson.

The Bond followed their leaders; but this did not explain their close friendship and their enthusiastic support of Rhodes either to their followers or to the rest of the Dutch. In the heat of the moment, with tempers rising, they were attacked from every side and treated as traitors.

For Smuts it meant more. He had followed Hofmeyr, but of Rhodes he had made a leader and a hero. He had overcome his natural reserve, allowed himself to become enthusiastic openly, publicly, exposed himself, come out of his shell; and being still very thin-skinned, he had suffered accordingly. His hero had shown himself an unprincipled and treacherous adventurer. His hero-worship had been destroyed as by a sudden, scorching flame. His pride was hurt, for he had been publicly made a fool of, and he had been cheated. His enthusiasm for Rhodes, which had been the drive and the spur for months of all his actions, dried up and shrivelled. He tore Rhodes out of his life and out of his consciousness, but it left him empty and lost and leaderless.

He had to pay too, for he had been one of the most vigorous of Rhodes’ supporters: canvassed his ideas; spoken for him; extolled the English and England. And that speech at Kimberley was thrown in his teeth; Olive

Schreiner laughed at him: at his defence of Rhodes, the great man, the incorruptible; and at a time when every barman was talking of what he was preparing; and Smuts could not bear to be laughed at. It was for him like cutting into raw quick beneath a finger-nail. His Dutch acquaintances looked sideways at him, avoided him, and spoke against him. What explanation had he of that speech at Kimberley? He had no explanation. And he had no explanation because he had counted on Rhodes to give him a start in life. With that start and Rhodes to back him he could have built up a practice in the Cape and gone into Cape politics. All that was gone. His future, his career, all that he had counted on. He had nothing to look forward to except to be treated by his people, the Dutch, as a traitor, or to be patronised by the English.

There was nothing left for him. He decided to lie low and hope that the storm would pass. He slid back into his old life and his reserved ways. For several weeks he kept very quiet and spent much of his time at Riebeek West. He went frequently to Stellenbosch to see the Kriges and to get what the girl alone could give him—the recovery of his belief in himself. Though often attacked, he made no attempt to defend himself. The idea of writing to the newspapers or appearing on a public platform made him go hot all over. He could not face ridicule.

For a time he was in despair. There seemed nothing for him. He had been badly hurt both in his belief in men and in his ambition. But he was young and not easily crushed, and the girl, Isie Krige, urged him on. She was stout-hearted and she believed in him. At last he took a grip of himself and started to replan his life. Politics seemed closed to him. He could not stay in Cape Town. Its associations, its life, and the English, who still upheld Rhodes, filled him with nostalgia. Farming was not his line. He must go elsewhere. To Johannesburg? Johannesburg was the place with chances for a young barrister, with its wealth and its movement and its quarrelsome mixed population. Cape Town was dead beside Johannesburg. The centre of South Africa had moved to Johannesburg.

He made a tour to the Transvaal to have a look round, and made up his mind. He would go to Johannesburg. In the autumn of 1896 he closed his office in Cape Town, applied to be admitted to the Transvaal Bar, ignored his British nationality, and, as soon as he was admitted, opened an office in Commissioner Street in Johannesburg, and began to practise.

CHAPTER VIII

VERY soon he found that he disliked Johannesburg—and its inhabitants. He had nothing in common with it—or with them. Though now grown into a town it was still a mining camp: shabby, dusty, the discomfort of little water, tents, wooden shacks, corrugated-iron huts mixed in with new brick buildings, the indecent smudges of the dumps on which nothing would grow, where the mines threw out like offal the rock that they did not need, the bestial slums of the workers. On one side were some plantations of young gum trees which had been planted by the mine magnates. In the rest, not a garden nor a tree nor a piece of green to rest the eye, a dingy ants' nest of a place lying obscenely, rump in air, along a ridge bleak and desolate, six thousand feet above sea-level, in the middle of the vast treeless veld of the Transvaal—Africa, harsh and materialist as it had been since the dawn of time.

And the people, the native labourers in the mines, the white workers, and the rich men, the mine magnates—all adventuring. Smuts cared nothing for money except for enough to give him necessities and the opportunity to work, but these men thought of, dreamed of, fought for, nothing but money, money in hard diamonds or in gold, money in vast, fabulous, fantastic quantities. Stumbling in their haste, rushing one against the other, pushing each other aside, the weakest down to be trodden out, they worked and strove and cheated for money, crooks and lesser crooks and adventurers all in one mass. A wild, feverish life, uproar and rush, gambling, continuous rattle and strain of high pressure, dirt, fighting, drunkenness, the many nationalities, the fierce passions made keener and fiercer by the air of the high ridge, the vicious evil life, full of quarrels, fights, and of litigation. It was a place for a young, eager barrister, if he had the right mentality—but Smuts had not got that mentality.

Brought up on the farm, near quiet, shady Riebeek West, and in the peace of the rich, rolling downs of the Zwartland, where every farmer being related to his neighbour stood by him in time of stress, and where there was no crushing and treading down of the weakest and no feverish rush: trained under the great oaks at Stellenbosch and in the silent, cool library at Christ's College, Cambridge; and then back to work in the pleasant life of Cape Town, he was appalled at Johannesburg. He was used to books, to study, and deep thought on great subjects, and here there was none; only rush and scramble and straining, belching effort: effort without reason: effort not for

ideas or the things that mattered, but for cash. He was ambitious. He had tasted his first blood in public success in Cape Town, in politics. He was eager to get on, to succeed, but not for the things for which these people cheated and fought each other.

He began to practise, but with even less success than in Cape Town, for whereas there a good manner was a primary asset, here a man must be even more free and easy, hail-fellow-well-met, drink, gamble, go to the horse-races, mix well, or he had no chance; and Smuts did none of these things. Of the unfriendly virtues he had many. Of the vices that are companionable he had none. He did not drink or smoke tobacco. For light women he had no time. Horse-racing, lounging in bars, gambling, he looked on as sinful or even worse—as wasters of his time. The freedom of manner he had begun to develop under the influence of Rhodes reacted back into reserved self-centredness. Having once laid himself open and been hurt, he became even more stand-offish and self-protective. He was again a studious, awkward, stiff, unlovable fellow. He made no friends and he found no work.

To make both ends meet he continued to write articles for the newspapers and he coached students for their law examinations, but this work only depressed him. He became sunk in depression. Full of suppressed energy, as restless as a hyena pacing up and down, aching to put his whole self into some real work, he could find no work, or even an opening for work. "We do not seem," said the *Law Journal*, in commenting on his transfer to Johannesburg, "to have heard anything lately of Advocate J. C. Smuts."

With depression he became morose, ill-natured, a man with a grievance. He either sat in his office, his nose deep in textbooks, or he stalked about the streets of this town which he disliked and despised, a lanky, weedy, cadaverous, hollow-cheeked young man, with short, stubbly hair, a pale face, and ill-natured angry eyes, either staring ahead or keeping them on the ground and ignoring the people he met. As a barrister he was a failure and resentful at his failure, not understanding why some cheerful hail-fellow-well-met young rival with half his brain was always full of briefs and work and he went idle.

With little work at the bar, he looked round and once more decided that politics and not the law was his métier. He moved slowly at first, for he found the Dutch suspicious of him as one of the Bondmen from the Cape, one of Rhodes' supporters. He went to Pretoria to see how the land lay and decided that his future lay with Paul Kruger and the Dutch, who were against the English.

Before the Raid by Jameson a majority of the Dutch, even of the Transvaal, had half sympathised with the Uitlanders. It would be wiser, they had considered, to treat them with justice, and compromise with their demands, than to refuse to listen to them. Kruger's obsession against the English; his fear that the English Government meant to annex the Transvaal; his persistent insulting of the Dutch of the Cape; his policy of isolation; had been the follies of an old man. If he retired it would be easy, they had thought, for the Dutch and English to work together.

The Raid, the plotting of the Uitlanders, and above all the treachery of Rhodes, changed all that. Every Dutchman had come hurrying to back Kruger. He had been right, they said: the English *had* plotted to seize the Transvaal. The old antagonism between English and Dutch had flared up and swept across South Africa like a veld fire. The Dutch were ready to fight for their independence. The Free State under Steyn renewed its alliance with the Transvaal. The Dutch of the Cape, the Bondmen, sent promises of help, of arms and ammunition, and money. Kruger's old war-cry, "Out with the English! All South Africa for the Dutch! Africa for the Afrikander!" became the watchword of every Dutchman.

Smuts, though he had not got on either with the undergraduates at Cambridge or the English in Cape Town, had no inherent dislike of the English, but now his personal interests and his feelings made him hostile to everything English. He determined to stand in with Kruger and to tear out of his own mind, and out of the minds of his acquaintances, every trace of his support of Rhodes, of his hero-worship of Rhodes.

Having decided on his line, he swept from one loyalty to the other extreme with an energy which mounted up into a fury of bitterness. He became more hostile to the English than the staunchest of Kruger's supporters. He attacked the English, but especially Rhodes, fiercely and on all occasions. "It is the English who have aroused the national hatreds. They have set the veld on fire," he preached. Rhodes was a monster and unforgivable. No Dutchman ought to have any truck with him.

He wrote bitter articles in the newspapers. He contradicted all he had said at Kimberley before the Raid and much of what he had written in Cape Town: Rhodes was crooked, he never meant to unite the Dutch and the English; he was bent on making South Africa all English. He spoke of Rhodes' "double elasticity of conscience," of his "treacherous duplicity." A few of the Cape Dutch still supported Rhodes: he cursed them as traitors to their blood. Afrikaans, their home tongue, he said, was the language they should all learn, and not English.

Up and down the country he went, raging and cursing, speaking at meetings in the Paarl and in villages round Stellenbosch. Old Jacobus Smuts was distressed to find his son so fierce and uncompromising, for he still wished to live in peace and fellowship with the English, but he took the chair when Jan spoke in Malmesbury. His father's attitude made no difference to Jan Smuts: he toured down to Philadelphia, close to Cape Town, and up across the Transvaal, speaking in towns and villages, cursing Rhodes and cursing the English.

In the middle of all this he decided to get married. The Dutch favoured early—and fertile—marriages. Once decided he would not wait. He would marry at once. He sent word to Miss Krige, took the train to Stellenbosch, arrived at five o'clock in the morning, when none of the family, except the girl, expected him, and at top speed obtained a licence and persuaded the Rev. Murray, an old friend and tutor at the college, to marry him in the front room of the Kriges' house, and set off almost in one breath back to Johannesburg with his wife.

At this time he needed courage and belief in himself. The girl gave him both, and she could rouse him out of his depressions. When he needed advice, she showed him with cool judgment where his interests lay. She was capable and clear-headed, and had she not married would have made an excellent schoolteacher. With the tradition of her family, she consistently and passionately, with an active personal hostility, hated the English. She agreed that his future lay with the Dutch and he must stand in with the Dutch; and she kept his new-found hatred of the English at fever heat.

He returned to his writing and speaking with renewed industry and he began to make a name for himself. He kept in touch with Hofmeyr and Schreiner, who wished to keep contacts with the Transvaal. As well as speaking against the English and the Uitlanders, he also spoke against the Hollanders.

Kruger, who had little belief in the business capacity of the local-born Dutchmen, had engaged men from Holland. Several of these held important posts both in the State departments of the Transvaal and in the Government itself: the *Hollanders*, they were commonly called.

Smuts attacked the employment of the Hollanders. He criticised Kruger. There were, he said, many local-born Dutchmen, Afrikanders, quite capable and sufficiently educated to run any of the State departments or to be members of the Cabinet: the Hollanders ought to be sent home and replaced by young local Dutchmen, young Afrikanders. Kruger also kept round him many old men as his advisers. Smuts was very contemptuous of the old men: they also, he said, should be replaced by young men.

Soon he became identified with a policy and was one of the leaders of a *Young Afrikander Movement*, which pledged itself to work for the retirement of the old men and the ejection of the Hollanders and the employment of young Afrikanders.

But these efforts did not bring him legal work, nor money on which to live; and, though never without money, the first months of his marriage were lean and full of difficulties. He had a house in a poor suburb and lived quietly. Two children were born and died and then a third. He had heavy expenses all round and little coming in, and even fewer prospects—when suddenly, and unexpectedly, came his chance, and, with both hands, he seized it.

CHAPTER IX

KRUGER was nominally President, but three times in succession he had been elected and gradually he had made himself all but Dictator. All departments, the police, the detective and secret services, were under his hand. The *Volksraad*, the Assembly of the Representatives of the People which sat in Pretoria, obeyed his orders: any Bill he placed before it was passed with little discussion and no opposition. Only the Courts of Justice refused to be controlled by him, and he was determined to control the Courts and their findings.

The Chief Justice, Judge Kotzé, however, opposed him. For many years the two had quarrelled. Kotzé had stood against Kruger for the Presidency and had been defeated. Both were stiff-necked and uncompromising old men, and neither would give way. Kotzé was determined to keep the Courts free from the President and the politicians. He demanded permanent salaries for the judges: Kruger refused them. He demanded that judges should be dismissed only by a full vote of the Volksraad: Kruger refused to place such a proposal before the House.

Kruger began to interfere direct with the Courts. Two men were fined for beating a native: the Government refunded the fines imposed on them by the Courts. A third was found guilty and punished for a similar offence: Kruger issued a statement—"Notwithstanding the judgment of the High Court we think the accused to have acted rightly." Another was charged with a serious criminal offence: Kruger gave orders that the case was to be withdrawn and the man released without trial. More than once he sent for the Chief Justice and instructed him what he should find in cases before him, but Kotzé refused to take such instructions.

The quarrel grew more intense. It had been Kruger's habit to pass "resolutions" rapidly through the Volksraad and to give these the force of law, though the full procedure laid down by the Constitution had not been carried out. He ruled mainly by these "resolutions." This led to insecurity, for new "resolutions" could be passed in a few hours: it made the law shifting and unstable; it upset business and trade, for no business man could plan for the future if his liabilities and the regulations by which he worked were suddenly changed without warning.

Kotzé maintained that "the Constitution must be protected against hasty alterations by resolutions. . . . A written and fixed Constitution is the sheet-

anchor of the State . . . and a protection of the minority in political hurricanes," and advised the judges to test the validity of "resolutions" quoted in the cases before them. Kruger forbade them to do so. "Any resolution of the Volksraad," he said, "is equivalent to a law." The judges persisted. Kruger passed a law through the Volksraad that no judge had any right to test the validity of any law or resolution, and that all judges must take oath to this effect or be dismissed.

The quarrel became very personal. Kotzé said publicly that he did not trust Kruger, and called him an "oily old Chadband." Kruger retaliated in a presidential address by saying that "the Chief Justice is a lunatic and I would put him in a lunatic asylum and bring him back to the Bench only when he is cured." Kotzé stood his ground and all the judges stood behind him and threatened to resign, and every lawyer, solicitor, and barrister backed them.

Though to the outsider it seemed to be a quarrel over a legal point, in reality it touched the whole basis of the security that the law could give to the citizen: the control of the Courts by the President and the politicians; and it touched the interests of every judge and every lawyer and of the whole legal profession.

Kruger was not sure of his ground and compromised temporarily. He was standing for the fourth time for the Presidency. The elections were to be held in a few months. He realised that he was less popular than he used to be, that opposition to his methods was increasing. His friends advised him to act with caution: he could not afford to put himself in the wrong with the Courts. He decided to wait and see the results of the elections.

While he waited Dr. Jameson made his Raid: South Africa went up in a flame of race-hatred, and Kruger became the national hero of all the Dutch. The elections were held, and he was nominated President for the fourth time by an overwhelming majority. At once he dismissed Chief Justice Kotzé from his post.

The result was an uproar. In the Cape the lawyers and judges were as angry as in the Transvaal. They protested against this "arbitrary and tyrannical step." Even the *Law Journal* spoke in its staid, formal language of the "President's ill-advised action." The Bar and the Side-Bar of Johannesburg gave Kotzé a complimentary dinner and five thousand pounds, and passed a strongly worded resolution denouncing the "irregularity of the dismissal." Every lawyer down to the smallest attorney was angry and up in arms.

At that moment Smuts saw his opportunity. Alone among the lawyers he backed the President and the politicians against the Chief Justice and the legal profession. He wrote a thesis, carefully argued out, based on his study of English, American, and International law, proving that Kruger was in the right. The thesis was clever, the logic was excellent; but it was completely partisan and played gallery to Kruger. "The President," wrote Smuts, "exercised the powers entrusted to him with singular patience and forbearance." Even his best friends would not have accused Kruger of "patience and forbearance"; and he had shown neither quality in this quarrel. Smuts maintained that the only error Kruger had made was his dismissal of the Chief Justice instead of having him tried for insubordination before a tribunal. Smuts did not touch the vital issues: the maintaining of the freedom of the Courts from the control of the politicians and the upholding of the stability of the law and the Constitution against sudden changes.

The thesis brought down a storm of abuse on Smuts. He was attacked for helping "a corrupt government to declare itself above the law." He was accused of being a renegade to his cloth. The other lawyers showed their disapproval of him by avoiding and even boycotting him; but the thesis had done its work. It had lifted Smuts out of the ordinary ruck of briefless barristers in Johannesburg into the limelight. President Kruger needed some lawyer to back him. He took an interest in Smuts and found out all about him. He sent for him several times to come to Pretoria so that he might talk to him and sum him up—and he marked him down as a useful man.

And Kruger had learned a lesson. He had realised how unpopular he had become: how, in fact, had it not been for Jameson's Raid and Rhodes' treachery, he would have probably been defeated at the presidential election. He realised too the dissatisfaction with the old men round him and above all the intense hostility, which was increasing, to his continued employment of the Hollanders. The Hollanders held many of the most important offices. His Secretary of State, Leyds, was a Hollander, and his Foreign Secretary and State Attorney were also from Holland.

He began to weed out the Hollanders. He sent Leyds as travelling Ambassador to Europe and finished his contracts with the other two and with many of the junior officials. He made Francis William Reitz, a Dutchman from the Free State, his State Secretary, appointed Piet Grobler, a

nephew of his own, a Dutchman and a young man, his Foreign Secretary, and he chose J. C. Smuts to be his State Attorney, his Attorney-General.

The appointment aroused surprise and some ill-feeling: ill-feeling because the legal profession looked at Smuts askance and treated the appointment as a slap at them by Kruger; surprise because Smuts was so young, only twenty-eight, and had shown little ability as a lawyer. “A young colonial barrister with no experience,” was the best one paper could say, but pointed out that he was diligent, had been successful as a student, and was not known to have been mixed up in any of the dishonest deals of the Transvaal politicians; and that this new move by Kruger was possibly a sign of better things.

Smuts was the man Kruger wanted. His opponents were shouting that he ought to employ local Dutchmen and young men: Smuts was both young and Dutch, and one of the leaders of the Young Afrikanders. Kruger was sure that trouble with England was close: Smuts would be useful: he knew England and English, and he was clearly very hostile to the English. Kruger wanted all the allies he could get, especially the Dutch of the Cape, and he wanted a direct link with the Bond. Schreiner, who was now Prime Minister of the Cape, thought well of Smuts. Hofmeyr had recommended him. He had summed Smuts up for himself as dour, hard-working, resourceful—a man after his own heart. He was satisfied with his choice of Smuts as his State Attorney, and he kept him.

In June 1898 Smuts left Johannesburg and took up his post in Pretoria. Given the opportunity, he was sure, as his wife was sure, that he would make good. He had his opportunity.

CHAPTER X

SMUTS came to Pretoria in grim, in grey determination, ready for work, his whole being yearning for work. He was now the head of the Law Department, responsible for all prosecutions, with some control of the police and the detective service. He knew there were many abuses, and his experiences in Johannesburg had taught him where reforms were necessary: the illicit buying of gold; the liquor ramp, by which fortunes were being made by selling drink to the natives; the police and the detectives of all grades dishonest and misusing their powers; officials of all sorts being bribed to stultify the laws and to give concessions and special privileges, the rich Uitlanders of Johannesburg doing the bribery. But there were many difficulties in his way.

Pretoria, though it was the capital of the Transvaal and close to the hustling, international, expanding-into-a-city mining-camp of Johannesburg, was still a sleepy country town. In the centre a wagon-square of gravel and earth, dusty and hot in the summer, mud after rain; a bleak Calvinist church of red stone in the middle; and edged by the building of the Volksraad, the Palace of Justice, and offices. Here in the evening the population, the grave conservatives of a Dutch country town, or the even more conservative farmers of the country round, the Government officials, and the elected members of the Volksraad, also mainly grey-bearded farmers, came to sit and talk earnestly. Great respect was shown to age and experience.

At the farther end of the main street, Church Street, was President Kruger's house, a little one-storied house with a tin roof, a stoep back and front with tin roofs also and ugly iron struts to hold them up.

This house was his office and his home. In the one half, in four small rooms with a primitive mud-floored kitchen and pantry attached, rooms decorated with cheap wall-paper, with drab yellow drugget on the floors and oilcloth in the hall, he lived with his second wife and begat some of his sixteen children. In the other half was a long, narrow room for his Executive Council when they met, and three minute rooms as offices.

Here was the centre of the State, for Kruger lived in the middle of his people. He ruled them as some old patriarch, as absolutely and personally as an Arab king in the opening of his tent or Moses among the People of Israel. His door was always open and anyone might come to see him. In the early dawn he rose, prayed, and then sat on a front stoep that was divided from the

street only by a low open fence, and smoked his big Dutch pipe—it was a regular joke in Pretoria that "the President's pipe was never cold"—and drank coffee with all who came to see him. Occasionally he sat in the back stoep to warm his old bones in the morning sun. Below him was a yard where his wife kept dairy cows and sold milk to the neighbours, and from here he was able to look out across the plain to the Magliesberg Hills, where they were building the new forts to protect the town, in case the English tried any more raids.

All manner of people came to see him; delegations from distant townships, old grey-bearded farmers, many pastors of the Dutch Reformed Church—for he was very religious—individuals with complaints or requests, foreign representatives, curious visitors, rich men. He saw them all, without distinction of rank, wealth, or position. His government was personal, direct, individual, and he kept everything close between his own two great hands, discussing with his Executive Council—a Council of Elders—but making his own decisions. Neither here nor in the Government offices up in the square was there any office system, card-indexes, letters in files or cases, but all was man to man, haphazard, in that much depended on words spoken and not written and so liable to misinterpretation and later denial. An Englishman came to see the Secretary of State on a matter of importance. They talked in a room with children romping on the floor: no secretary present and not a word recorded in writing. Another had an urgent subject to discuss. The President talked with him on the front stoep of his house, breaking off continually to greet or speak with passers-by in the street.

Kruger was himself, by his own lights, honest, as Jacob and Moses in the Bible were honest by their own lights. He was rigidly, gravely religious: the Bible was his only reading and his guide; his God was Jehovah of the Old Testament and his Dutch the Chosen People, and he had been appointed by God to lead them as Moses led the Israelites. As the Israelites despoiled the Egyptians so his Dutchmen should despoil the English and Uitlanders: in that he saw not dishonesty but rather merit.

Round him collected many of his relatives and men looking only to make money. He gave them posts and concessions, which they sold. The rich men of Johannesburg brought money to bribe them and they took it, so that the moral fibre of the Dutch officials was rotted and the Government became dishonest and corrupt—a "Calvinist Tammany," it was called by an American on a visit. Members of the Government and the Volksraad and

officials also took up government contracts and made huge profits from them. In all these things Kruger saw no harm.

It was into this that Smuts came, the sleepy, conservative atmosphere with old men in control, the haphazard, crude muddle of a government run by word of mouth and personal contacts and dominated by one old man, the corrupt hangers-on who were increasing in numbers and in greed. He came bustling in to wake up, to reform, and to clean up.

He did no tactful waiting. All his pent-up, clamped-down energy burst out. He set to work at once on his own department—on the police. He ejected Schutte, the head policeman, and then Ferguson, the head of the detective force on the goldfields, and routed out the worst scoundrels in the Force whom they had failed to check. He brought the detectives directly under his own control, whereas previously they had been loosely administered by the Chief of Police from Pretoria. To do so, he had to get a Bill passed in the Volksraad and he had to fight it through against big opposition, but he succeeded. He set agents, and agents of the worst type of blackguard, to ferret out the abuses of the liquor and the illicit gold-selling and tried to lay the big racketeers by the heels. He brought in, one after the other, a series of criminal laws with drastic penalties, persuaded the President to back them, and fought each of them through the House. And in doing so he made a host of enemies.

The staid, dignified old Dutch burghers and farmers disliked him as an ill-mannered, graceless young cub. He could not disguise his contempt for the old men: he had no humility before age and no respect for them. He had only an arrogant disdain. He was frequently rude and ill-natured to his seniors. A delegation came to see him. They expected the usual courtesies, coffee, a pleasant talking together, dignified speech. Smuts kept them waiting, hustled them, and dismissed them brusquely. They waited for him outside, followed him when he got into a tram-car, tackled him, and made him apologise. The old men took a relish in getting their own back on him. One day he came to the Volksraad in a grey suit and they promptly sent him home to get into regulation black.

The Hollanders left in the offices looked on him as the leader of the local Dutch, come to turn them out and send them home.

The President’s cronies, the bribe-taking crowd of officials, and the members of the Volksraad were enraged that this uppish young barrister from the Cape to whom the President had taken a liking should dare to come butting in to touch their vested interests.

The Uitlanders, seeing him clear up the police and setting his face against bribery, thought that he was going to help them. He listened at first to their grievances with some sympathy—though even to Schreiner he would not admit that the Transvaal Government was not all that was perfect—but the minute they touched on politics, he was their fiercest enemy. They demanded that as they paid taxes they ought to have political rights: as a protest they refused to go on commando or to pay a special tax instead. At once Smuts drafted a law to make them "fight or pay."

Many who had no axe to grind disliked him for his manner. He had developed early, so that his brain was far in advance of his character and of his judgment; and he antagonised men by his contempt of them, his sour looks, and his abrupt ways. A well-known English journalist was talking to the President while Reitz sat listening. Smuts walked in wanting the President and, turning to Reitz, asked audibly, "Who is this fellow who wastes His Honour's time?" He had no knowledge of how to handle men. He still preferred words on paper to direct talk with men, and to see the President talking with everyone irritated him as a needless waste of time.

Often Kruger tried to steady him down, and give him advice on the handling of men, but he also at times grew irritated with Smuts. Smuts would come in with a scheme. Kruger would settle down to consider it carefully and methodically, drawing placidly on his pipe. Smuts would get impatient; try to hustle the old man, who would get rattled and annoyed, so that after Smuts had gone it would take him a couple of hours to cool down and get collected and placid again. "That young man," he said on one occasion to the Executive Council, as they sat in the long room and Smuts went past the window along the stoep, "you must watch him. He will do much, but he must be watched also."

The opposition to Smuts began to concentrate: they were determined to get rid of this jackanapes, but they could not catch him out, for he was honest. In the middle of the corruption he remained untouched. Money meant nothing to him.

But they worked against him. They stood together and covered up so that he could not get to the bottom of the liquor racket or the illicit gold buying, nor stop the bribery. They tried to prejudice Kruger against him, but the old man was very shrewd. He believed in Smuts. He knew of the corruption round him. It was something he had to accept; and he knew that Smuts was honest. Smuts was useful too. He gave him facts, and correct facts, when he needed them; not vague generalities as the others did. He was also that rare thing in Pretoria, a good office-man with a knowledge of

English, one who could write excellent letters and dispatches in both English and Dutch. Kruger stood by Smuts and would not listen to his opponents.

The opposition tried to trip Smuts up, but he was not afraid of them. As often with a thin-skinned, shy youth, he had as he grew into a man reacted from his early feeling of inferiority into truculence. He was, moreover, too clever for them. They could not catch him, and they began to call him *slim* —“crafty”—and henceforth he went by the name of “Slim Jannie.”

CHAPTER XI

KRUGER looked on Smuts' efforts at clearing up and reforming with some of the same patient benevolence with which he accepted the bribe-taking and concession-selling of his relatives and supporters. Internal affairs were of value, but the quarrel with England was far more important to him. He was sure that a crisis was at hand: that England meant to annex the Transvaal; and he was as determined as ever to defend its independence, and also to drive the English out of South Africa.

The English Government had sent as High Commissioner of the Cape Sir Alfred Milner, a clear-headed, strong-willed man with a sound sense of values. Milner quickly realised the facts. He saw, as both Rhodes and Kruger had seen, that South Africa was an indivisible whole. He saw also that Kruger planned to make it Dutch. He had no desire to annex the Transvaal, but he was equally determined that South Africa should remain in the Empire and that the Dutch Republics should not sweep out the English. The English had as much right there as the Dutch. He saw that Kruger was bent on making the Dutch supreme and that he would not compromise. The English must therefore remain paramount. He did not want war, but he faced the fact that there came times in history when war alone seemed able to decide a problem. If this was such a time, he would not shrink from war. He set to work to stiffen the local English and the Government in England. He believed that if at once, and without delay or hesitation, England put out a strong hand, all would be well and Kruger would draw back. He asked for more troops to be sent out, but the English Government havered and hesitated.

Kruger also continued to stiffen his people, and in this he needed Smuts, with his knowledge of England, his honesty and his energy, and his intense hostility—the hostility of the newly converted—to the English. And Smuts, with the same grim intensity that he put into his internal reforms, worked for Kruger's policy.

Milner.

Milner.

All through the early months of 1899 the friction between the two sides increased. Rhodes was out of it, Jameson’s Raid had destroyed him; he had tried to stage a come-back, but neither Dutch nor English would have him. From Cape Town he still roared, but he had no bite to back his roaring. But once again two great figures dominated South Africa. This time it was Milner the Englishman and Kruger—and Milner was of finer metal than Rhodes. It was now not Rhodes the rich man, his life complicated and defiled with his business aims, his unpleasant friends, and his questionable methods, the immense bully blustering his way towards his great vision, but the quiet, dignified, high-collared, reserved official, whose vision was as wide as that of Rhodes, but whose driving force was his sense of duty, who neither corrupted others nor was corruptible himself, and who was the representative of the might of the British Empire, who now opposed Paul Kruger.

Smuts and Kruger.

Smuts and Kruger.

Previously war had been a possibility; now it began to become a probability, and many tried to prevent the catastrophe. The Dutch of the Cape did not want war. Since Jameson's Raid they had been much in sympathy with Kruger; but they looked on a war as folly. A Liberal Government, they said, would soon replace the Conservatives in England, and the Liberal leaders had promised the Dutch what they wanted. Hofmeyr, Schreiner, and de Villiers, who was the Chief Justice of the Cape, tried to reason with Kruger. De Villiers made a special journey to Pretoria and saw Reitz and Smuts as well, but reported failure. "I am afraid," he said, "that neither Reitz nor Smuts is the man for the present crisis." Steyn of the Free State tried his hand and at last persuaded Kruger to meet Milner. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary in England, gladly agreed. A Conference was arranged to take place in the Free State, in its capital at Bloemfontein. There was still the possibility of compromise and agreement.

An office had been arranged in the railway department, a freshly whitewashed room—for the offices were newly built—bare except for a large table and some chairs.

Across the table the heads of the delegations faced each other: Milner carefully dressed, tall, erect, dignified, and vigorous, the Proconsul of a great Empire, with clear-cut features and the voice and the manner of an aristocrat. Kruger sagged down, crumpled up in his chair, his faded frock-

coat buttoned up tight, his enormous body grown shapeless, slack, unwieldly, and monstrous with age and disease, a fringe of unkempt beard below his chin, his face worn into deep creases and lines, his eyes narrow and crafty, the mouth large and crooked, repellent in its ugliness, the ugliness of a worn gargoyle, yet giving the man a sense of vast strength and determination; a rugged, brutal, powerful, dirty old peasant, yet a personality accustomed to power and to being obeyed.

Round them sat or moved their staff: the English stiff and formal—Colonel Hanbury-Williams, Lord Belgrave, two secretaries from Government House in Cape Town, and a clerk to take notes. The Boers rough and untidy—Schalk Burger of the Executive Council; Wolmarans and Smuts, who was neater than the others, from the Transvaal Government; some officials with technical knowledge; and Fischer, a member of the Executive Council of the Orange Free State, acting as interpreter and general go-between.

Milner drove straight in with vigorous, definite demands and arguments; Kruger threatened and then side-stepped, avoided, and started to bargain, but as the day wore on he grew tired. Age had sapped his mental as well as his physical vigour. He failed to concentrate or to register. He began to ramble. He fell back for safety on stock phrases and obstinate repetitions of the same arguments, or he retreated into irritated silence. Often he lost the thread of the argument, but always at his elbow, prompting him, was Smuts—lean, cadaverous, pugnacious, vibrating energy, putting new energy into Kruger and stiffening his obstinacy. Milner advanced an argument. Before Fischer had finished translating it, Smuts had facts and data to disprove it and was whispering the reply to Kruger, for with his knowledge of English and English ways of thought he knew the English case before it was stated.

As Kruger tired, Smuts took up the argument. He began to answer for the President. He tried to hoodwink Milner with clever arguments: he tried to anger him by innuendoes and veiled insults and so goad him into making some rash statement or fatal admission. Milner remained quiet and inflexible. He was as clever as Smuts and far wiser. He had none of Smuts' craftiness, but he was not taken in, and he was direct. At last he too grew tired, but of Smuts' methods. He ignored Smuts—and he was able to ignore a man with an icy dignity that hurt pride. Smuts persisted. Milner cut him short: he was dealing with His Honour the President and not with his underlings: he would have no truck with this little Dutch lawyer. Smuts grew angry. Milner continued to ignore him, and Smuts, grey with suppressed fury, returned to prompting Kruger. He tried to trip Milner up.

He produced a proposal that seemed to meet Milner's demands that the Uitlanders should have the right to naturalise within a reasonable time: but within the proposal was a paragraph that destroyed its whole value. Milner put his finger at once on that paragraph.

It was a battle of brain and determination. Kruger, with Smuts giving him backbone, refused to give way. Fischer, who, although he was benign in looks and appeared to be neutral, hated the English, and increased the difficulties. The Conference came to a deadlock and broke up and Milner realised that the Dutch would fight.

In England Milner was criticised by the Liberal Opposition for breaking off the Conference. "He should," said John Morley, a leading Liberal, to Joseph Chamberlain—" he should have shared his tobacco pouch with Paul Kruger and all would have been well." It was a dangerous, unreal remark that did great damage. It helped to weaken the support from England which Milner needed. It was the remark of a clever man and accepted by lesser men, both of them out of mental laziness and to conceal their ignorance, for a less rigid and more cordial attitude from Milner would have had no effect on Kruger and his supporters except to make them think that England was afraid and they had only to bully to win. Neither Morley nor his Liberal friends understood Kruger, or the Dutch, or the facts; and their attitude of sympathy with the Dutch only increased the possibility of war.

Smuts left the Conference in a rage. His personal pride was hurt—and his personal pride and dignity were very easily hurt—by Milner's quiet ignoring of him. He had despised his fellow undergraduates at Cambridge and they had disliked him; he had not got on with the English in the Cape; Rhodes had played him false. The Englishmen with their Jew friends, who had come to the Rand and stolen its wealth, he hated. He hated them all. They were all false and treacherous. Milner, his Oxford manner, his haughty disdain, and his precise, methodical staff, drove him to fury. He returned to Pretoria with set chin, made bitter and waspish by the hurt to his dignity, and determined more than ever to work for war.

As Kruger drove away in his carriage, those with him saw that he stared straight ahead, and down his face streamed tears. Once during the Conference he had shown intense emotion. At a reply of Milner's he had flung his hands flat down on to the table and cried out, as if suddenly hurt: "It is our country you want!" and, though Milner tried to persuade him that

it was not so, yet he was unconvinced. There was something horrible yet something intensely pathetic in seeing this fierce, relentless, ugly, hard, yet weary old man weeping openly and without restraint. He loved the Transvaal. He realised that bluff and threat would be no good. He was not dealing with Rhodes any more, but with the representative of a great Empire. Unless he gave away all that he honoured and treasured, and gave up his dream of a Dutch South Africa, he must fight. He realised that war was inevitable and he knew that, win or lose, his beloved country must go down through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

CHAPTER XII

NOW all work in the Transvaal was concentrated in preparing for war. The construction of the forts round Pretoria was hurried on. Arms and ammunition, 80,000 rifles with ample ammunition, were imported and sent up through Portuguese territory or shipped in cases marked as merchandise from Cape Town and Durban. Long-range cannon, field artillery, Creusot guns, quick-firers, were brought in and German and French experts engaged to give instructions in their use. From all over Europe free-lance soldiers came flocking into Pretoria. The commando leaders in all districts were told to prepare, and in every area, including parts of the English colonies of the Cape and of Natal, the able-bodied Dutchmen began musketry practice. The Free State followed suit, ordered big consignments of arms, and began to train the men.

Kruger, with Reitz and Smuts, worked whole-heartedly for war. Reitz was a dreamer who dreamt of “Africa for the Afrikander,” an intellectual and a cultured man, but impulsive and unbalanced in judgment. Smuts, though far the younger man, was more practical and bitter.

Their immediate object was to gain time until they had completed their preparations. While doing this, they must not provoke the English too far, as it was clear that the English were living in a fool’s paradise, being neither ready nor even preparing. They must also stave off the crisis until the rain came in the autumn and it would be possible for the burghers to find grazing for their horses and so to fight. Also somehow they hoped to jockey England into the wrong and to find some help from outside, in Europe or elsewhere.

Together with Reitz, Smuts kept in close touch with Leyds, the Hollander whom Kruger had sent to Europe as his free-lance ambassador. Leyds was doing his best to find help among the nations. The Germans seemed willing. The Kaiser made many promises. Leyds was able to plant two pieces of false information through a Russian agent in London which Joseph Chamberlain took as genuine and as so important that they nearly involved the Germans in a quarrel with the English. But soon Leyds realised that though there was much sympathy in France, Germany, and Holland, yet no practical help would be given, and he warned Kruger.

Smuts’ immediate problem was the Uitlanders. They were now a menace: the menace of the enemy within the gates; right in the heart of the State and controlling its wealth; traitors and dangerous. He determined to

stand no nonsense from them. He would make them harmless, frighten them into impotence. Some of their grievances were just, but most of them were propaganda. If they held illegal meetings, broke the law, threatened, or published hostile news in the papers, he arrested them—but he had to be careful not to go too far or give Milner an excuse for interfering. He had already experience of that, for early in May that year, before the Conference at Bloemfontein, he had arrested five Englishmen on poor evidence supplied by a detective convicted of perjury, and had to withdraw the charge hurriedly and with much loss of dignity.

Now he worked to keep things going, and this he did with such skill that he earned his nickname of "Slim—crafty—Jannie." To keep the Uitlanders quiet, he put a new franchise law before the Volksraad, but so vaguely worded and so complicated and so full of pitfalls that he had to supply a supplementary memorandum before the members of the House could understand the original, and then it still remained vague and unsatisfactory.

He arrested a number of English officers on a charge of spying and then offered to release them without trial. But Milner saw through this an attempt to give the Transvaal Government the chance to say that the English had forced them to release the officers: the Great Power treading on the little nation. Milner demanded a trial.

Suddenly, to frighten the Uitlanders, Smuts ordered the arrest of two of their leaders—Pakeman, the Editor of the *Transvaal Leader*, and Moneypenny, Editor of the *Star*. Moneypenny got warning and escaped, but Pakeman was arrested, and his arrest created such a furious uproar that Smuts promptly issued a public statement "that no instructions had been issued from Pretoria for the arrests," and left the blame with his subordinate in Johannesburg, a Dr. Krause; and the Government washed its hands of the whole affair. But the facts were known and clear, and the denial was "a demonstrable falsehood."

With Reitz also Smuts wrote dispatches showing that England was the aggressor, accusing Milner, and cursing Rhodes as the incarnation of unclean capitalism, and later the two produced a pamphlet known as *A Century of Wrong*: a bitter diatribe which they published as more propaganda for Europe.

Nearer at home he sent out agents into Natal and the Cape to rouse the Dutchmen and arranged for one of his own immediate subordinates to go to the western district of Cape Province to his own area of Malmesbury and beyond.

Time was getting on. The rain would come in October and then they would be ready. It was already mid-August. Kruger wanted to find out the English attitude. With war so near they seemed strangely quiet and unprepared. A new English representative had come to Pretoria, Conyngham Greene by name. Kruger sent Smuts to talk with Greene—unofficially, as if on his own initiative, binding no one, only to give the impression that negotiations might be possible, and so gain more time.

Smuts visited Greene one evening and made friends with him. He talked with him at the English Residency in Pretoria, in his own office, and at his house in Sunnyside on the hills above Pretoria. They discussed much. They came to various agreements—verbal agreements, nothing written at the time—about some sort of franchise for the Uitlanders, the use of English in the Volksraad, and suzerainty, whether the Transvaal was independent or would recognise a nominal suzerainty by the English. All very friendly and hopeful. Greene, thinking these talks were official and the proposals from the Transvaal Government, sent them on as such.

Hardly had he done so when the Transvaal Government produced different proposals and, attached to these, conditions that could not be accepted. Milner, who had very shrewdly summed Smuts up before and understood what he was at, refused to accept any verbal assurances from him. He gave Greene orders that all official business must be done through the official channels and in writing. Smuts wrote to Greene saying that the last proposals were final and that “it will be necessary for you to arrive at your decision on the terms stated as they stand.” Greene expressed surprise and quoted Smuts’ promises. Smuts said Greene had misunderstood him; but Greene had as good a memory as Smuts and had written down the conversations immediately after they had been made. Ten days later Smuts said that Greene had lied, had misused his friendly overtures, had “tricked and decoyed him,” and had tried to catch him out; and later he published a Green Book with his point of view, which was more propaganda for the world in general to know the crookedness and deliberate aggression of the English. But those who studied the documents remembered the denial of Pakeman’s arrest and similar cases and called it “a garbled account,” and de Villiers wrote, as his deliberate opinion: “After reading the correspondence I am by no means satisfied that the British Resident was guilty of a breach of faith.”

It was in fact a *ruse de guerre*—all things being fair in war—a means of finding out what the English intended, why they remained passive, and also to keep them talking until the rain came. Before the correspondence was

over it was mid-September and only a month, perhaps only three weeks, before the rain came and the commandos could get on the move.

And while he was talking to Greene as one trying to find a compromise before it was too late, and then protesting his own injured innocence and upbraiding Greene for misusing his friendship, Smuts was himself preparing a carefully detailed and extremely efficient report for the President, showing that the way to defeat the English was not by attacking directly in South Africa, but in the weakest parts of their Empire—by sending agents not only through the Cape and Natal, but to India and to Ireland and to every point where they could find English subjects dissatisfied with English rule and prepared to rise against England; and he was estimating the necessary organisation to carry out this scheme.

CHAPTER XIII

ZERO hour was approaching. The Free State was ready. As a member of the Executive said, “The only thing we fear is that Chamberlain will cheat us of war.” The commandos were prepared, the burghers with their rifles and ammunition and field rations; the women, bitter and resentful, urging on their men, who were itching and eager to get on the move and drive the English into the sea. They waited only for the rain: rain to start the young grass on the dry veld so that they could graze their horses: they must have rain, for “without his horse the burgher was but half a man.” Only one difficulty remained.

Among the members of the Volksraad there was a small party that had opposed Kruger on many occasions and were urgent against immediate war. Some of these were important men. There was Piet Joubert, a broad-shouldered Dutchman with clear eyes and a straight look, whom Kruger had made his Commander-in-Chief because he needed his support. Joubert had grown old, but he was still wise and influential, and he was a great and chivalrous gentleman. The young men, because of his caution, looked on him as “a drag on the wheel.” The older men respected his judgment. With him was de la Rey, a noted fighter from old wars, as taciturn, dignified, and aristocratic as a Scotch Covenanter, with kindly black eyes that became piercing at times, a nose like a hawk, and a square beard—a simple man with a streak of religious mysticism in him which cropped out at unexpected times; and he spoke his mind always with a fearless candour which made people afraid of him, so just and direct were his comments.

With them were a few younger men, including Louis Botha, the member for Vryheid, a district away on the Natal border, a muscular man, an athlete, and a well-to-do yeoman farmer who had lived all his time on horseback out on the wide open plains.

They alone had dared to oppose Kruger. They were all honourable men who would have no truck with the bribe-takers and concession-hunters round the President. Many a time Joubert had criticised Kruger for his dictatorial ways, for allowing concessions to be sold, and for not punishing and dismissing the bribe-takers.

And Kruger was not used to opposition. Reitz, his principal adviser as his Secretary of State, would shrivel up if he so much as glared at him. Piet Grobler, his Foreign Secretary, was no more than his private secretary.

Smuts he understood. The Executive Council he allowed only to assist him. As to the Volksraad, if it dared to oppose his wishes, he would ram on his top hat and drive up to the House in state in his carriage, which was built like a stage coach, with a liveried coachman driving four horses and two postillions hanging on behind, a guard of mounted soldiers before and behind. He would stump fiercely into his special seat beside the Chairman, and if that was not enough he would get up and beat on the desk in front of him with his enormous fists clenched, and the House would obey his orders.

In all their history the South African Dutch had never before accepted a master. It was a part of their character never to allow that any man was better than his neighbour, and if anyone climbed above the rest at once they set to work to pull him down. Kruger alone, because of the force of his personality, they accepted as master.

The time had arrived for the final decision. The rain might come at any minute. The final decision for peace or war rested with the Volksraad, and Kruger summoned the members to a secret session, each member pledged to silence.

The great hall was like the interior of a church, gloomy, walls panelled in dark wood, windows in coloured glass, seats like pews and set in a semicircle looking towards the Chairman. The high doors were locked and guards set. One by one the members spoke. The majority were for war, and war at once. Most of them were deeply religious men who believed that justice was on their side; that they were defending their homes and their liberty from a great oppressor, from the English; and that the Lord God of Hosts would give them victory. But they were also equally sure that they could defeat the English by the force of their own arms: they had fought and beaten the English in the old days, they boasted, and they would beat them again; there was only a handful of English troops in South Africa, and how could such a handful stand up to the overwhelming numbers of the Transvaal and the Free State combined? They expressed their contempt for the English: they looked down on them as fighters; England itself was decadent, no more a military power. Some said that the English would not fight: anyway they would not send any more troops to South Africa; the Queen of England would not let her ministers send more troops; she was old and she wished to end her days in peace; the best men in England, Leonard Courtney, John Burns, Campbell-Bannerman, Lloyd George, John Morley,

Asquith, Stead the newspaper writer, had all stated publicly that they would prevent the sending of troops: they were influential men and the great mass of the English people were behind them and would refuse to be bluffed by Milner and his master, Joseph Chamberlain.

Moreover, the Dutch of the Cape would rise to help them and the Germans would come to their assistance; the Germans would never allow the English to have complete and sole control of the gold mines. If the worst came to the worst they would threaten to blow up the mines, and then the financiers would also prevent the English Government—the Conservative Government—from attacking the Transvaal, for the financiers could do what they liked with the English Government.

"The time has come," member after member repeated—the Great Day for which they had all waited. All the odds were in their favour: they had only to choose the right minute and then attack and drive the English into the sea and make all South Africa Dutch. They quoted Kruger's dictum: "From the Zambesi to Simonstown, Africa for the Afrikander."

When all the rest had spoken, de la Rey rose. He spoke for the group in opposition and he spoke with his usual pithy, brief, direct candour. He was against rushing into war. He told the President and the Volksraad that this talk of driving the English into the sea was empty blather: England was a great Power, a monster perhaps, but a Power, and would not be defeated so easily; nor could they count on Germany or any other nation coming to their help. He was for a completely Dutch South Africa, but this was not the moment to rush into a war to get that end. Let them wait and time would help them. . . .

Before he could finish, Kruger, grasping the desk in front of him, hauled himself up on to his feet, interrupting de la Rey with a great growl. He beat on the desk with his gnarled fists. He was furiously angry. His voice boomed and roared with passion as he denounced de la Rey and the critics of immediate war as cowards. He insulted de la Rey, his patriotism, his honesty, and his courage.

De la Rey remained quiet and still to the end, with the peculiar sense of stillness that was his. Then he spoke, and as he did so his black eyes flashed and his voice became icy with contempt. "I shall," he said, and his voice cut like the east wind, "I shall do my duty as the Volksraad decides," and then, turning to Kruger, where he sat up in his special seat beside the Chairman, and speaking directly at him as no man had dared to speak to Kruger for years, "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."

For a while there was silence in the Volksraad. Then the motion was put to the vote. The voting was for war, as soon as the best opportunity arose. The decision for that was left with the President. Kruger, with Reitz and Smuts, the fanatical Afrikanders, had won. With an invocation calling on the Lord God of Battles to act as arbitrator in the struggle ahead, Kruger closed the Volksraad and the members hurried away each to his own district to prepare the commandos.

Reitz, with his usual impulsiveness, promptly prepared a curt ten-line ultimatum to England, saying that the Transvaal was tired of negotiating, and declaring war forthwith. He wished to send it off at once, but Smuts tried to hold him back. Fischer, as soon as he heard of the ultimatum, telegraphed from Bloemfontein begging for delay. Neither he nor Smuts was as impulsive as Reitz, but both exceedingly crafty and shrewd, and they pointed out that with a little more time they could jockey England into the wrong instead of themselves being the aggressors. When Reitz persisted Joubert put his foot down: as Commander-in-Chief he needed more time; the old commando system had been good enough for the small native wars, he said, but it would not do for a big concentration, and he must create a new organisation. He insisted on more time until Reitz gave way, and once more with Kruger and Smuts worked for time. They held up replies to dispatches from England. They made counter-proposals with no intention of carrying them out. The Liberals in England, with John Morley and Leonard Courtney still ignorant of the facts, pointed to these as proofs that the Transvaal authorities were searching for a last-minute compromise. They were, in fact, working desperately to get ready for war, and the ultimatum lay waiting in a drawer to be dispatched the minute they were ready.

They concentrated the main force of the burghers on the Natal frontier and sent some to the west to Mafeking; established depots; distributed arms and ammunition; dispatched spies into Natal and the Cape to watch troop movements and inspect bridges and points of vantage; accumulated gold by holding up the export from the mines and by taking fifteen pounds from every citizen of the Transvaal; and increased rolling stock by commandeering all trucks that came over the frontier from the Cape.

For many weeks, for months, Milner had warned the English Government, but in the play of the complicated tactics of home politics South Africa had become no more than a pawn, and they held their hand. At last and suddenly, they realised that war was on them and that they were unprepared. There were only a few troops available in Natal. They started to prepare. They sent reinforcements from India—the reinforcements that Milner had asked for months before, and which he maintained would, if they had been sent out earlier, have prevented war altogether.

It was too late. The time was come. Reitz and Smuts realised that at last the English were waking up and they must act before more troops could reach South Africa. The rains had begun to fall. There was grass on the veld. Joubert was ready. For a minute old Paul Kruger sat back to think, and hesitated. Reitz and Smuts pressed him not to tarry, now that the decision was made. Steyn of the Free State also was eager to be at it. At last Kruger gave way, gave instructions to Reitz on the 9th October to sign and send the ultimatum, which demanded that all troops on the borders of the Republics should be instantly withdrawn, and all troops which had landed in South Africa during the last years should be re-embarked and no more allowed to land. It gave forty-eight hours for a reply. Two days later England refused to accept the terms, whereupon Kruger ordered Joubert to move forward with his massed commandos into the English colony of Natal. The die was cast. It was war.

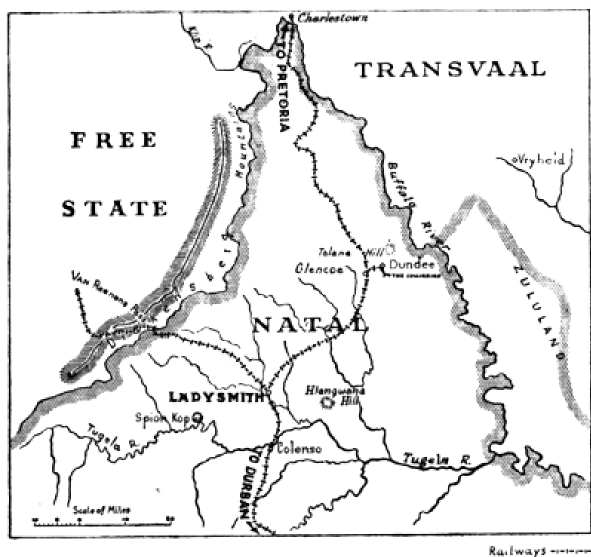
CHAPTER XIV

THE minute the ultimatum expired at five o'clock in the afternoon, the Dutch came riding over the frontier into Natal and into Cape Colony—into English territory—riding in loose commandos, each man in whatever clothes he thought best, working clothes from the farms mostly, with his horse and saddle and bridle, with rations slung from the saddle, a rifle and ammunition, and sometimes a blanket, groups of men and youths from the same district under some recognised leader whom they had themselves elected.

One body under Cronje, with de la Rey to help him, made west for Kimberley on the direct rail-route from the far north in Rhodesia to the Cape, and where there were the diamond mines and a small English garrison. Two smaller bodies went south and over the Orange River and the Free State frontier into Cape Colony at Bethulie and Norvals Pont. The main body concentrated on Natal.

At its northern end Natal narrowed to a strip with the Transvaal on one side and the Free State on the other. Down the strip ran the railway from Pretoria and Johannesburg to Durban, and in it were coal mines at Dundee. There was an English force across the railway concentrated at Ladysmith, beyond the Tugela River, with an advanced body at Dundee and at Glencoe to guard the mines. The English main force under General Buller was being slowly landed and prepared at Durban.

The Dutch came forward confident in their success: they were going to sweep the English helter-skelter in front of them into the sea. "From the Zambesi to Simonstown, all Africa for the Afrikander." Their leaders told them that they were vastly superior in numbers to the English troops against them and their artillery better; their Creusot guns could outshoot the English; the Germans had promised them help; their cause was just. As they came out of the high, barren steppes of the Transvaal and the Free State they saw before them the green fertile land of Natal. It was to them like the Promised Land to the Israelites, and they came on singing the Volkslied, the national hymn, cheering with excitement and filled with a high exaltation as if they were Crusaders.



Joubert's advance into Natal.

Joubert's advance into Natal.

The main body under the Commander-in-Chief, Joubert, came straight down the railway, a smaller one in which Louis Botha was a junior field-cornet from Vryheid on one flank and a second from the Free State side concentrating straight at Ladysmith; it beat the English out of Dundee, looted the place, fought the English back through Glencoe to Ladysmith, and surrounded the town.

Cronje likewise surrounded Kimberley and cut the railway to Cape Town. The two smaller bodies which had crossed the Orange River into Cape Colony drove the English back some way and sat down opposite them.

For the English the position was critical. If the Dutch came on there was nothing to prevent their overrunning Natal and the Cape before Buller had his men ready. If Dutch commandos came into Cape Colony, the Dutch of the Cape might rise to help them. There were English troops coming, but they were in transports which were still at sea, and only a few had arrived.

Joubert decided to sit down round Ladysmith and besiege it. The younger men begged him to push on; leave a screen of men to cover Ladysmith; thrust the commandos on forward at full pace. Louis Botha did his best. Smuts, who had come down on an ammunition train, backed him up; they urged this was their chance; time was now their enemy; given time the English would bring up reinforcements; this was the chance they had manœuvred for; they must take it and push on. But old Joubert would not

hurry. “We have done well,” he said; “let us be content.” “When God holds out a finger, do not grasp the whole hand,” he quoted. His commando leaders were old men also and agreed with his caution.

The chance went while he sat round Ladysmith. Buller formed his army, took the initiative, and advanced to relieve Ladysmith, while up from Cape Town went Lord Methuen to save Kimberley; and English troops were pushed into the gap between the two main forces to hold the invaders back. Each day from over the sea came more English troops.

The Dutch had lost their chance of driving the English out of Natal and the Cape, but they prevented these English from advancing. Their organisation and discipline were improved. Their commando leaders were changed: the older men were replaced. Joubert had been injured by a fall from his horse. Louis Botha had shown such ability that he had been elected to lead his commando, and then he was made Commander-in-Chief. Joubert had recommended him. Several of the old leaders had objected because of his youth: he was only thirty-eight. Kruger had hesitated, but Smuts had persuaded him to agree.

Botha had no office or book training and no scientific theories, but he had a natural genius for handling men and for war. Tall and strong, always composed, never flustered, using humour and good nature instead of force or bullying to get men to work for him, quiet in manner, he inspired confidence: his men trusted and liked him. He had an eye for ground, for a position, an instinct for knowing what his enemy, the man beyond the hill, would do; and he could, out of the mass of vague, contradictory reports which his patrols and spies brought him, make quick and accurate deductions.

Buller tried to cross the Tugela River and save Ladysmith. Botha pushed him back, beating him by skill, judgment, and tactics in battle after battle, so that Buller telegraphed to England that he had failed, he could not get forward, and sent word into Ladysmith advising White, its commander, to surrender, but White ignored the advice. Meanwhile Cronje held Methuen and kept his circle round Kimberley, and the two central forces pushed the English facing them farther back.

Again for the English it was a crisis. They had lost five hundred miles of railway; been beaten with heavy losses in several battles; Ladysmith and Kimberley were both besieged and getting desperate; they could not advance; it was likely that the Dutch of Cape Colony might rise behind

them. Disaster in South Africa meant a great moral disaster for the whole of the British Empire and no one could foresee the ultimate result.

Now that disaster threatened, the English Government acted, at last, with vigour. Troops were hurried out to South Africa at top speed. Buller, though personally brave, and popular with his men, had failed: he was not up to his responsibilities, lost heart, became pessimistic, even defeatist; his tactics had been bad: he had shown neither vigour nor initiative. The English Government chose their two best, Lord Roberts to command and Lord Kitchener as the Chief of his Staff, and sent them off hot-foot to save the situation.

Roberts and Kitchener arrived in the middle of January of 1900 with fresh troops and with fresh determination and vigour. Ignoring Natal, they decided to strike up from Cape Town straight at Pretoria. Quickly ready, they advanced, relieved Kimberley, chased and captured Cronje and his force, and turned on Bloemfontein.

The effects were electric. The Dutch were seized with panic. Old renowned Cronje captured! Kimberley relieved! They could not believe it. They began to desert. Buller pushed through and relieved Ladysmith and the whole Dutch force went streaming back, a mob in panic.

Roberts pushed on at once, keeping the enemy on the run. It was late summer on the veld: the heat was terrific. Food and forage ran short. Men and horses dropped under the blazing sun. But Roberts drove them relentlessly on. Botha tried to re-form and to take up a position to cover Bloemfontein. Presidents Steyn and Kruger hurried down to encourage the burghers to stand and fight. Roberts outflanked Botha’s position, drove him back, and took Bloemfontein.

In Bloemfontein he sat down to reorganise. His troops were worn out: many were ill with enteric. His animals were unfit to march. Stores, ammunition, and forage had to be brought up. Some of his staff and the newspapers in England urged him to push on and finish the enemy. Botha and de Wet, one of the Free State leaders, cut at his communications. He drove them off and continued to prepare solidly.

During these swings of the pendulum of war Smuts was principally with the Government, in his office in Pretoria, helping the President, making a few visits to the various fronts, but taking little part in the active fighting.

The big guns had been taken out of the forts round Pretoria and sent to the front. He had taken the first gun down to Glencoe and an Englishman reported that he saw him striding impatiently up and down the station platform, a thin, cadaverous man dressed in an old raincoat with a felt hat pulled down over his eyes.

He had much work in his own department: the usual legal problems of war; spies and treason cases; the expulsion of English subjects and the internment of others; debts; sequestration of goods; the adjustment of the ordinary legal procedure to war time; the handling of the mines. But in addition there was a mass of new problems. In accordance with the policy of making all South Africa into a Dutch State, the commando leaders were told to annex as they advanced; to ride into each village and read a formal proclamation and force the people to give up English nationality or to eject them and seize their property. The commando leaders had to be instructed how to act and supplied with forms and proclamations; the legal position of the population in these new areas had to be decided; the annexation given some semblance of legality.

Not satisfied with this work, Smuts did everything he could lay his hands on—collection and sorting of information; helping with the President's dispatches, his letters, his telegrams to his commanders; propaganda to mislead the enemy, for the newspapers, for world-consumption; advice to the generals at the front; organisation of the commissariat and ammunition supplies. Fiery and angrily energetic, grimly concentrated, he became under the strain even more harsh, tactless, and more hatchet-faced in looks. Constitutionally unable to delegate work to others or to trust others to act for him, doing all he could personally, he was always at work, tireless, pushing, shouldering his way up against the haphazard officials of Pretoria and the casual commanders, trying to create some organisation, urging without respect of persons or caring whose feelings he hurt or who became his enemy, forcing things to be done by his very persistency.

CHAPTER XV

AT the beginning of May 1900 Roberts advanced. Botha took up position after position to hold him back, but Roberts had now plenty of troops and without weakening his centre, which remained based on the railway, he felt for Botha's flanks and turned each position. With only a few skirmishes he took Kroonstad and was in front of Johannesburg. With his back up against the town and the mine stacks showing clearly close behind him, de la Rey took up a final position, but with little hope of holding the English off.

Smuts saw all he had worked to build up crumbling. All his calculations had proved incorrect. Military defeat had followed military defeat. The English were half across the Transvaal. The burghers were in a panic. All seemed lost. But these things, so far from making Smuts lose courage, made him set his jaw the harder, and he became more determined and bitter. A sudden ruthless desire to destroy came on him. He decided to destroy the gold mines. The English had come for the gold: they should not get it so easily. He had proposed before to destroy them, but Botha had opposed him, and even threatened to resign if it was done, for he looked on it as a useless piece of wrecking; and Reitz had issued a public assurance that it would not be done. But he would do it now. The Assistant State Mining Engineer, Mr. Munnik, had prepared twenty-seven shafts and fitted them with dynamite charges in position. Smuts sent post-haste from Pretoria a Judge Koch with a party of men to do the wrecking before the English could march in. But the Commandant in Johannesburg was Judge Krause. Krause had often disagreed with Smuts before; he had not forgotten the blame passed on to him for the arrest of Moneypenny: he disagreed with Smuts now and he promptly arrested Koch and his men. Roberts brushed de la Rey aside, marched into the town, took over the mines intact, and made straight for Pretoria.

Botha saw that it was impossible to hold the capital; the only line of retreat was down the Delagoa Railway into Portuguese East Africa: he would fight each stage of that. Kruger with Reitz and the rest of the Government made a run for it to Machadodorp, a village a hundred miles farther down the same line, and set up a new centre of government in some wagons in a siding. Smuts remained in Pretoria.

In Pretoria all was confusion. Burghers riding into the town, an undisciplined mob, convinced that the war was lost. There was looting and panic, no administration or control. The town was full of stores, munitions, and assets in cash and valuables. To give time to evacuate these, Botha collected some men and went out to check the English advance. Smuts with five hundred men marched out to Irene, but found the English were coming by another route and hurried back. Botha hurried away to prepare a position down the railway. The English were right on top of them, on their heels. There was no time to spare.

Hitherto Smuts had been the lawyer, his whole life based and bound on legal procedure, the interpretation of legal terms, his every action directed by its technical legality. Now, with office and papers gone, with his world torn up round him, he thrust legality out of his mind: he took direct action whether legal or not legal. To prevent the English getting anything of value he told the burghers to loot all they could and then to join up with Botha. There were cash and assets lying in the Treasury and in the banks. He demanded them. The officials refused unless he showed some legal authority. Smuts was standing no opposition, swept their demand on one side, took the money and assets out of the vaults, and, with volunteers and armed police, loaded them on a train in the station.

Already the English artillery from the hills beyond the town had begun shelling the town. Seeing a train ready, they tried to cut the railway line and destroy a bridge. The train got through just in time. It was the last train out of Pretoria and it was carrying the cash and assets down to the President at Machadodorp.

Once more Roberts was forced to halt and refit. He had pushed his troops so hard that many of the men had fallen sick; all needed rest; the horses were skeletons and unfit to march; his supplies and ammunition were running short.

As he waited, the Dutch began to recover heart. Botha had his main force some fifteen miles to the east across the Delagoa Railway, at Diamond Hill, but he himself toured up and down, inspiring the burghers with fresh spirit. De la Rey began raiding from the west. The English communications with Cape Town were a thousand miles of railway, and very vulnerable to attack. The Free State leaders de Wet and Prinsloo threatened to cut it in a dozen places.

Roberts drove Botha at once off Diamond Hill and made him retire away back a hundred miles to a position close in front of Machadodorp. He pushed cavalry after de la Rey until he forced his bands to break up into small pieces and to get away from Pretoria. He turned on de Wet and Prinsloo, and closed them in a net of troops: de Wet dashed out with a thousand men and got away; Prinsloo and the rest surrendered.

By the end of August Roberts was ready. His army was refitted and rested. Buller had advanced up on his right flank and cleared Natal and joined with him. De Wet and de la Rey were temporarily helpless.

He attacked straight down the railway at Botha, outflanked and chased him out of his position, broke up his army, and forced him with a few remnants to run for the inaccessible country to the north round Lydenburg. Kruger made across the Portuguese frontier, was interned and sent to Europe, and passed out of the active part of the history of South Africa. The Transvaal regular army had ceased to exist. The Transvaal Government was at an end, and the Transvaal was formally annexed by England. All that remained for the English was to clear up the country.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DUTCH army was destroyed, the commandos scattered up in the Lydenburg mountains and in odd corners of the Transvaal and the Free State. President Kruger, now physically very decrepit, had been shipped away to Holland. The Transvaal and the Free State were overrun, their capitals captured. The land was full of English troops. The burghers were losing hope: many of them were surrendering and taking an oath of neutrality. Many of the remainder were ready to do the same. Kruger sent a message urging all to fight, but it had little effect: the fighting spirit, the exaltation, was gone out of them.

For a while even Botha thought of peace, but he saw that the terms were too hard. The other leaders, especially those from the Free State, were for fighting to the end. He realised that they must keep the spirit of resistance alive at all costs, encourage the people to stand fast, prevent the commandos from breaking up completely. So long as they did not give in, there was hope.

Collecting each as many of the tough irreconcilables as were ready to fight on or to be killed before they would surrender, and without any general plan of campaign, the leaders attacked the English whenever they saw the opportunity.

To collect men was not easy. Many refused to join up again. They had had enough. They wanted only peace and to go back to their farms. Many wished to remain neutral, but the commando leaders often forced them to come out, flogged any who dared to talk of peace, and confiscated their property.

Botha himself carried on to the east of Pretoria. De Wet and James Hertzog, a Judge of the Free State, each with a body of Free Staters, worked separately southwards and attempted to raid into Cape Colony. Beyers, a brave and skilful leader, moved up and down the Transvaal, always on the move and making sudden attacks on the English whenever he got the chance. Stout-hearted de la Rey, fighting on as he had told the Volksraad he would at that meeting when they had voted for war, went to the south of Pretoria into the Western Transvaal. Smuts joined de la Rey.

The time for office work, for splitting hairs of legality, for writing dispatches, for words and documents, was passed. The lean-faced, scraggy-bodied, insolent young lawyer put all these behind him. He had tasted the thrill of direct action that day he had marched out to Irene with five hundred men to cover the evacuation of Pretoria and he had broken from his legal tradition and his whole training when he had told the burghers to loot the stores in the town and when he had taken the money out of the Treasury and the banks. Now he took a book or two for reading and a rifle, a bandolier of ammunition, his old clothes, a slouch hat, and rode out into the open veld to fight.

Almost at once he showed a remarkable ability as a raider. He was as physically brave as he had been insolently brave before Kruger and the old men in Pretoria. He was as crafty and as full of ruses in attacking isolated detachments of English troops as he had been in fooling Conyngham Greene and wasting time. And old, wise, gallant de la Rey, the cleverest of all the Dutch leaders, who seemed to smell out as if by instinct the best chances and the best routes, taught him the art and the tricks of raiding. Together they raided now a convoy sent with a weak escort, capturing all the stores, killing many of the escort before help could get to them, burning the wagons, and capturing a thousand oxen; now attacking a town where the garrison was weak and misplaced; and now driving the English off a ridge close by the gold mines themselves.

But these were little successes which did not affect the real issue—and there were many failures. Hertzog was greatly respected by his men, but he was no great raider, and he was chased with little trouble out of Cape Colony. De Wet, though he had started out with fifteen hundred, was so harried that he was unable to do any damage and returned with less than half his followers. The English held all the land. Lord Roberts had gone back to England and Lord Kitchener was in his place, and he had set out steadily to clear up methodically and ruthlessly by cutting the country up into sections with barbed-wire fences and concentrating the women and children into camps. The Dutch used their farms to hide in, to refit themselves, and as intelligence centres. Their women helped them. Often dressed as civilians and breaking the laws of civilised warfare, they fired into the backs of unsuspecting English troops who had passed them and left them as non-combatants. When this occurred Kitchener burned their farms and also the farms of the men out raiding and especially of those who had sworn neutrality and broken their word. And he harried all with quick-moving bodies of mobile troops.

But Kitchener wanted a quick peace. War as an organised affair was one thing, but to clear up this vast country of raiding bands was work that he disliked and that would bring him no credit. He made a move for peace. Milner, as his political adviser, expressed his disapproval. He considered it premature and that it would only encourage the enemy. Kitchener persisted. Botha accepted and the two met at the town of Middleburg. Kitchener took his Chief of Staff, General French. Botha took Smuts.

They negotiated, looking for possibilities, but found none. Botha demanded that the independence of the Free State and the Transvaal should be recognised in some way. Kitchener refused. Kitchener would have conceded much: he was "heartily sick of the whole affair and he wanted to get away"; but he knew that the English Government would never agree to this. Milner was firm, even rigid, for he believed that if they were weak now this war would have to be refought very soon. The Dutch must recognise the supremacy of England. Botha requested that the Dutch who were English subjects and had joined him should be pardoned: Milner would give no promise. Kitchener offered to stop burning the farms of men out fighting if Botha would leave alone the Dutch who were British subjects, those who did not wish to fight, and those who wished to remain neutral. Botha refused. "I am entitled," he said, "to force the men to join me or to burn their farms, confiscate their properties, and leave their families on the veld."

They had reached an impasse. As a last effort French took Smuts out on to the stoep of the house. French realised that Smuts was the main difficulty. He spoke English fluently, but Botha knew only a few words. While Botha was inclined to compromise, Smuts was rigid and unyielding. If Smuts could be persuaded, then there would be peace. As they paced up and down French tried to persuade him, explained the uselessness of further fighting, and that the inevitable result would be the victory of England. It would be best to stop now, he argued, while the Dutch could get good terms and before the country was completely ruined. But Smuts would not give back one inch. "And why will you not agree?" asked French. "Because," replied Smuts, sticking out his chin, "because I am right." It was characteristic of him that having once chosen a line he would not listen to any other point of view. He shut his mind to what he did not want to know. His mind would run in the one track he had chosen, and nothing would make him see things from a new angle or change his opinion.

The conference broke up. The English continued to clear up steadily and ruthlessly, burning farms and clearing the country of everything that might be of value to the enemy. The Dutch raided, darting in and out; ruining

farms also and forcing unwilling men to join up or take the consequences. Between them they laid waste and ruined the whole land.

Gradually and steadily the English closed in, crushing the Dutch—the whole country was cut up by barbed-wire fences and controlled by forts and patrols—so that at last Botha called a meeting of the leaders to a secret rendezvous in a farm. Even this was not easy: to avoid the English patrols each man had to travel by a separate route, by little-known paths, and in the dark.

As soon as they had arrived Botha and Smuts with de Wet and many more sat down to sum up the odds and to consider whether they should make peace or continue to fight.

They had no hope except in themselves. All their calculations, and especially those of Smuts, had been incorrect. He had misjudged the English: they were far more vigorous and stout-hearted than he had suspected from their drawling, casual manners. All had expected the English to tire, but they were not tiring but rather becoming more energetic as the strain increased. All had expected that Morley and his Liberal supporters would have been able to do something: though the Liberals were doing England and her prestige and her good name some harm, they were giving no effective help to the Dutch. In the same way they had been convinced that the Germans would have interfered, but the Germans had indeed made a definite agreement with Kruger to help him against England. It was now clear that they did not intend to carry out that agreement. In fact, with the agreement in one hand, the Germans had come to terms with the English and sold the Transvaal to them in return for a free hand in Samoa and in other places.

The truth was evident. They had only themselves to rely on and they were in a bad way: their men were jaded and weary of war; numbers said openly that if it could not be successful quickly it would be better to give up and save what was left; they were in rags and often without boots—often no food except mealie pap cadged from the natives; coffee made out of roots; their horses starved; nowhere to get help, for their farms were burned and their families locked away in some concentration camp; their ammunition running out.

Botha and Smuts agreed for peace. Smuts had sent a telegram, through the consul for Holland in Pretoria, to Kruger in Europe, telling him the facts, black as they were, and asking his advice. Kruger telegraphed back to fight on. Steyn and de Wet would not hear of peace. They and all the Free State, said Steyn, would fight to the bitter end. When Smuts spoke of peace, Steyn turned on him in a fury, but Smuts explained that he too did not want peace, nothing was farther from his mind: his move was a calculated one, a diplomatic one; they needed peace, a breathing space, he said, a short peace; they could then refit for war and when England was in difficulties elsewhere, in India or Europe, they could attack her again. Steyn and de Wet would not listen to that. They knew men better than Smuts. They knew that if they once made peace, the momentum would be gone out of the burghers and they would not come out again for war.

All realised that they were in a desperate position. The flame of enthusiasm with which they had marched out and attacked Natal was gone, but with the dogged obstinacy, the unbreakable persistency of the South African Dutch, they voted dourly, solemnly, without enthusiasm, for war, war against all odds, war without surrender, war to the bitter end. Clothes, arms, ammunition, they must get by raids on the English. Food they must find somewhere. They would fight on.

And there was one hope left—to raise rebellion in the English colonies. Natal was useless: it was all English, but the Cape was full of Dutch related to themselves, ready to rise if they got the chance. If the commandos could raid deep down into the Cape, to where no raiders had as yet penetrated, the whole might rise, and they might yet beat the English.

For this venture they chose Smuts. He believed it was possible and had chances of success. He had shown skill and speed when with de la Rey. He was young and vigorous and his home was in the Malmesbury district, the centre of the Dutch population: he knew the people and the country. They instructed Smuts to collect a commando and raid into the Cape.

It was a last, despairing effort. So close were the English round them that when Steyn and the members of the Free State Government were travelling, an English patrol pounced on them, captured all of them except Steyn, who escaped into the darkness dressed only in his night-shirt and leaving behind him in his baggage his correspondence, including the letters he had from Smuts.

CHAPTER XVII

THE venture appealed to Smuts in every way. The idea was largely his. He was convinced that if encouraged the Dutch of the Cape would rise. He would make a flying raid to test the possibilities and at any rate this would draw off some English troops from the north. That de Wet and Hertzog had failed in their raids, and been ignominiously chased back as soon as they got over the Cape border, did not deter him. He was confident in himself and that where they had failed he would succeed. He had nothing to hold him up. The Transvaal Government did not exist any more in anything but name. He had no family ties. His wife had been interned by the English and was living comfortably and well cared for in a private house in Maritzburg.

He was given the best of everything. De la Rey sent him his picked men, tried and seasoned veterans, each well mounted and well armed, with a pack animal as well as a riding horse. They met in the Western Transvaal in the mountains beyond Johannesburg at the end of July 1901, three hundred and forty men in all. Smuts divided them into four sections, took one himself, another he placed under van Deventer, his second in command, and instructed them all to make across the Transvaal and the Free State as best they could and to rendezvous at Zastron, a township three hundred miles to the south, close to the Orange River and the Cape border—a convenient place frequently used as a base by raiding bands.

His difficulties began at once. Kitchener had just organised a big drive to clear the Free State, and the whole country was full of English troops on the move. Smuts' intentions were known and the English commanders had orders to keep an eye open for him and intercept him. All through the month of August he dodged and doubled and twisted backwards and forwards avoiding the English columns. In getting across the Vaal River from the Transvaal into the Free State he was on one occasion caught asleep and chased by an English patrol, and got away with difficulty and by hard running and riding. He escaped capture a dozen times, especially round Bloemfontein. Food and forage were difficult, for the English had burned the farms in these areas, driven off the cattle and evacuated the people, and left the whole land bleak and empty except for the patrols. It was not until the end of August that Smuts and his men reached Zastron and then their numbers had been reduced by death and capture to some two hundred and forty.

They were now on the border of the Cape Province. The next problem was to get across the Orange River into English territory. Smuts reconnoitred the banks. It was clear that he was expected. The farther bank was strictly patrolled and every ford watched and picketed. There seemed no way across. The expedition seemed doomed at the start. There was an English column closing in on them from behind. If they were to escape back they must give up the raid and break up into smaller bands and then an old man, one of de la Rey's veterans, trying out a ford which he knew, but which had long been disused as dangerous, found it unguarded.

Kitchener had sent down General French from his staff to stop Smuts. French was taking no risks. He had picketed every ford along the river, including this one. He had just completed a personal inspection to be sure that along the whole bank there was no possible gap, and he had hardly returned to his headquarters on a mountain from where he could see the whole of the river bank, when Kitchener, who needed more troops and was collecting every man he could find, from his office far away in Pretoria, and without consulting French, removed the picket on the disused ford and left a gap. Without that gap Smuts could not have got across, but he took the chance at once. Luck again was with him. Making it in the dark, and wading across with the horses staggering against the current and the water swirling up to their girths, he and his men got across just as the day was dawning.

They were on English soil and raiding into the enemy's country. They moved forward, excited and keyed up. The country was not laid waste as that behind them: the farms were prosperous and full of people.

Smuts intended to march through the middle of the Cape down southwards, aiming at Port Elizabeth, but hardly was he across the river than he was attacked by bands of Basutos, who killed six of his men and thirty horses. His every movement was seen and reported. In some of the farms held by Dutchmen and even those held by Englishmen the people were willing to help him, but there were spies everywhere. The natives and coloured labourers would always betray his presence. His own picture and that of some of his men were printed and broadcast. Every post and picket was warned. Four light columns came after him and whenever he was seen troops converged in on him.

Yet for Smuts it was a great adventure. He changed. He had a book or two in his saddle-bags, a heavy philosophical treatise and a Greek testament, but office work, files, words written on paper were things behind him. He began to live. The natural instincts of the boy and of the young man which he had repressed came out. He remained grim as always. He talked little. When not on the move or sleeping he usually sat away by himself, reading the philosophical treatise. He rarely asked advice of anyone. He gave brief orders and expected them to be obeyed. He kept to himself, but he began to realise, though only vaguely, the possibilities and the stimulation of companionship and comradeship with other men, mostly with men with little brains, and men of whom in Pretoria he would have been contemptuous and with whom he would have become irritated, because they were slower witted than himself. He began to feel the kick and the spur of physical action, spiced with the thrill of danger and combined with the uplift that he was doing something of value, something big and worth doing. The sensation that physical action alone could give when the mind was not always questioning the value of action. Though he never opened himself completely and remained still distant and reserved, this raid filled him with a new and human enthusiasm.

Physically, he changed completely. From the thin, scraggy, cadaverous, ill-natured-faced young man he grew muscular and with meat and muscle on his bones. Like so many weakly children, he had no inherent disease, and, from his parents he had inherited a sound constitution, the constitution of peasant ancestors who lived near to the soil. He developed out. He became strong and sturdy. From sallow complexioned he became red faced from the sun and the wind in the open. His weight increased to twelve stone, and he grew a yellow mane of a beard, with side-whiskers as well, and he stepped out rather than slouched, as he had done in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

But above all he was a leader with an independent command, and he realised that these men, whether they liked or disliked him, relied on his judgment, trusted his decision, acted on his orders without question, and looked to him to lead them. The realisation of this developed him. He became self-reliant, and he learned a mastery over himself which he had lacked as the irritable, arrogant, pushing young lawyer, suddenly promoted to Attorney-General in Pretoria.

Crossing the Free State to the rendezvous at Zastron had been difficult, but now only in the Cape Colony did Smuts' real difficulties commence. Driving off the Basuto bands which had attacked him, he started to work southwards. Almost at once the rains began, and with them came piercing

cold winds, often full of sleet and ice. In whichever direction he went, he met English patrols and was forced to fight or dodge and twist and often to make up into passes and mountain peaks, where the mists were bitterly cold and his men were nearly frozen to death and the horses died under the strain. They had no transport or reserves, only what they carried on them. They lived in mud and rain, in utter discomfort, without covering, and without, not merely the luxuries of coffee and tea and sugar, but the barest necessities. Once they marched sixty hours without rest and food, and fought off an attacking patrol. If they rested for a few hours, they were tracked out by English scouts and forced to move again to save themselves.

Once they ate some wild vegetable and half of them, including Smuts and Deventer, were poisoned and lay groaning and retching on the ground. An English column was hard on their track and there was no time to lose. The rest tied the sick men across their horses like sacks of corn and alternately drove the horses on and beat the advancing English back. Smuts, in agony, begged to be left behind, but they would not listen to him. After a while the shaking of the horses forced the sick men to vomit up the poison and they could stagger along by themselves, and the commando got to safety.

As time went on their clothes became rags. When they wounded or captured an Englishman, they stripped him and also the dead, but otherwise they had no means of replacing their rags. They used any piece of cloth or hide for patching, and grain sacks found in deserted farms—cutting holes for their heads and arms—for coats. Their boots fell to pieces and they wrapped pieces of hide round their feet, which were cut and blistered, and the threadbare blanket which each man carried they wore over their heads and shoulders. The horses became gaunt skeletons, weary-legged, lame, just stumbling along. They ran out of ammunition and sometimes the only fresh supply they could get was by searching the tracks after an English column had passed, and picking up such cartridges as the soldiers had dropped.

They kept doggedly on, but they became depressed. They could stand much hardship, but they had not seen the sun for days, only driving rain and mist—and without sun they ceased to be men. They could find no fuel for cooking or warmth, for everything was water-logged. Many were wounded. They had no medicine or bandages. Their worst cases they left for the English to pick up. The rest kept going. Even some of the worst—one man with his eye shot away, the socket a clot of dried blood, and his left hand mangled to a pulp by a bullet and become gangrened—preferred to drag along. Lack of sleep was worse than lack of food. It became an unendurable

physical torture. They became querulous. They spoke against Smuts. He was the leader, true, but he never consulted with them as did other commando leaders and he never told them his plans or intentions. All this marching seemed a waste. He had told them that the Cape Dutch would join them. They were not joining them. What was the use of it all?

They had come to the end of their tether. They were a pathetic band of dispirited and reluctant men, wearily dragging along, with their enemies closing in on them. They took refuge in some mountains from where they could see the country round. The English were all across behind them, so that they could not escape back. They could see that there was a line of English in front of them barring their way to the south, and in the plain below was a light railway with a train bringing up more English troops. They stopped. Some lay full length, others kneeling, with their foreheads on the ground, like Moslems at prayer, their horses drooping beside them. But Smuts kicked them up; pushed them relentlessly on; no resting: they must get on; he would not let them give in. Suddenly they saw a squadron of English cavalry, the 17th Lancers, encamped in neat tents in a valley below: their road must go through that valley.

They hesitated. This was the end. All other ways were closed to them; when suddenly they realised that the English were not expecting them. It was neck or nothing now. “Get on,” said Smuts, “get on at them. We must get those horses or we are done.” They attacked desperately, caught the Lancers unprepared, defeated them, chased off those who were not killed or wounded, and then, in a fever of excitement, went through the camp so that when they had finished every man was re-equipped in English uniform, with new rifles, plenty of ammunition, food, supplies of all sorts, good horses, and well-kept saddlery. They had with one blow got back their courage and self-respect and their belief in their leader. They were ready for anything he might want them to do.

And throughout, Smuts remained curiously impersonal. He had little imagination, or realisation of suffering. He had never suffered, so that pain in others or the hideousness of wounds did not strain or tear at his nerves. When seeing, after a fight, some Dutchmen and Englishmen lying dead side by side, his feelings had been not of horror but anger at the waste, a sudden hatred of Joseph Chamberlain and a wish to be able to place these dead beside Chamberlain in his room in England to show him what war meant.

He had no physical fear, so that he was never drawn out on the rack of apprehension. He was also utterly and impersonally ruthless.

A Dutchman, Lemuel Colaine, a fine, upstanding fellow from the Cape, joined the commando, saying he wanted his revenge on the English, who had ill-treated him. Actually he came to spy. One night he disappeared and a week after that he led a detachment of English cavalry on to some of Smuts' men while they were asleep and killed and wounded seventeen. Some time later, Smuts attacked an English post, surrounded it, and his men captured Colaine.

Smuts was sitting in a farmhouse near by talking to the farmer and his family in the dining-room when they brought Colaine in. Smuts already knew the details. He called a witness or two to establish Colaine's identity, and then without holding a court, and without any formality, there and then, and without any hesitation, he condemned Colaine to death.

"Take him out and shoot him," he said. Colaine fell on his knees and begged for mercy. The farmer's family ran out of the room in hysterics. Smuts sat looking at the man, his face set; his pale-blue eyes hard as steel, almost grey, and as if sightless with this fixed, impersonal intensity. The man was a traitor, a traitor to the Cause; and that was all there was to it.

"Take him out and shoot him," he repeated shortly, and turned to talk again.

Some Hottentots dug a grave beyond the farm. Smuts allowed a pastor to pray with Colaine. When, however, the man asked to see Smuts again, his guards took no notice. They knew Smuts; they knew it was useless: that he would not change. Quickly, for they were human and hated the work, this cold-blooded killing, they shot Colaine, waited while the Hottentots covered him with earth, and rode away.

And Smuts did not seem to have any limit to his physical and mental energy. When his men were completely done, flung down and collapsed with fatigue, he was at work, planning, scheming, thinking out ways and means. He could sleep when he wished and wake refreshed, and he shed fatigue as his stomach had sturdily shed the poison he had eaten. Though in command of the whole force he would not trust his subordinates to carry out the smallest duties: he tried to do everything himself. He would go forward with the scouts and then return to direct the commando. He took risks and

every time came through unhurt. He was never wounded. Once he went scouting with three men. Hours later, he returned on foot, without his horse or his rifle and even without his hat. The party had been ambushed. His companions and all the horses had been killed. He had escaped and walked back quite unconcerned.

His luck was marvellous. Again and again, when he and his men seemed to be surrounded, some local guide or farmer would help them out. Once in the Stormberg Mountains he was caught on a plateau and the English held every path from it and covered all exits with machine-guns. There was a farmhouse in a hollow where the commando had taken cover, but the end was near. The English were only waiting their chance to close in and take them with the least loss possible.

At the door of the farm stood Smuts, talking in a low voice with Deventer, wondering what to do. He had no intention of surrendering. He would fight to the end, and he was arranging how to put up the last fight when from an outhouse came a little hunchback, a cripple, dragging himself awkwardly along on crutches. He knew a way out, he said. As soon at it was dark they hoisted him on to a horse and followed him, down a precipice so steep that the horses would have refused to go had it been daylight, across a bog that was not guarded, and so out to safety once more.

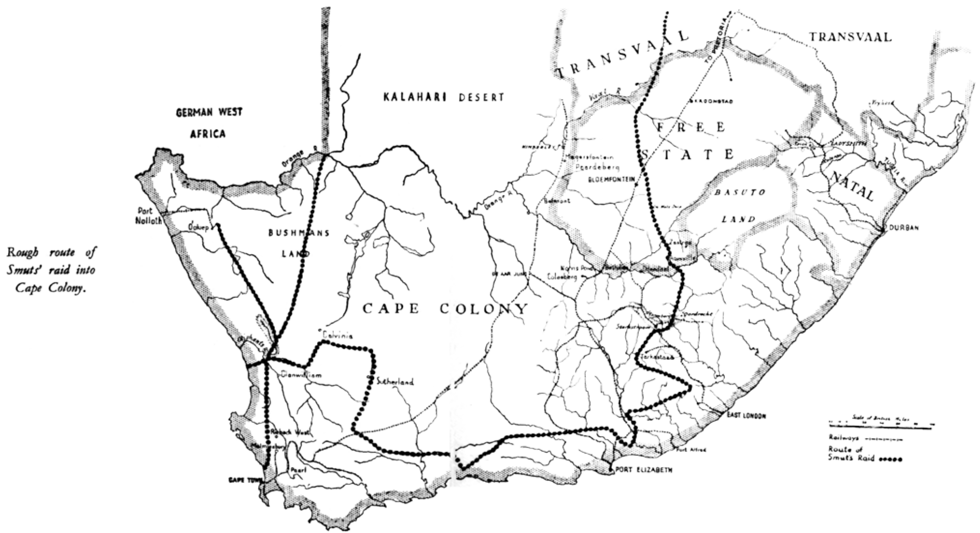
On another occasion, in the nick of time, a Dutch farmer called from a doorway and warned them back as they were riding into an ambush, and yet again a labourer showed them a secret path round the English flank when they were almost hemmed in.

The hardship, the dangers, the strain, only braced Smuts up to greater effort and energy. All the responsibility was his and his men relied on him. He accepted the responsibility with satisfaction. He was not afraid of responsibility and he broadened his shoulders to carry it. He was not cast down like his men by failure nor over-excited when there was a success.

CHAPTER XVIII

But Smuts saw that he must reconsider his plans. He had now travelled through and beyond the midlands of Cape Colony, outmarched and fought with various English flying columns and patrols in a number of skirmishes. He had penetrated far enough south to threaten the port of East London, and from the mountains he had seen, in the far distance, the lights of Port Elizabeth and the grey-blue haze beyond, which was the Indian Ocean. His handful of men had, under great physical difficulties, raided through a large area of enemy territory and were able and willing to continue. But his main object in coming had not been to fight the English but to stir up the local Dutch in the midlands, to blow on the embers of their discontent until they kindled and the whole of Cape Colony flared up in rebellion. And the local Dutch, though some had helped and sympathised, had not—except for a few men who had joined the commando—risen in revolt, or even stirred in protest; nor did they show any signs of rising.

Smuts had, in fact, misjudged the potentialities of a raid. To raid across this country was a great feat of physical endurance, calling for fine leadership and dogged courage among the men; but in such a raid the difficulties lay not so much with the raiders as with the English who had to intercept them. The areas of the Cape were immense: communications hardly existed; the country was broken and mountainous; the raiders had friends and relations always ready to help them, hide them, and to show them the way; many of the raiders talked English and knew the country well; they wore civilian clothes and had only to hide their rifles to become innocent non-combatants and pick them up again to become combatants once more; at times they masqueraded in English uniforms, so that it was as difficult to locate and hold them as to catch quicksilver in a stream running over a gravel bottom. As an Australian trooper was heard to say, “A big dog with a thick coat has a hell of a job flea-catching, but I’ll be b—— if I see why the flea gets all the b—— credit.” Botha had more than once expressed his surprise that the raid-leaders had not effected more and his chagrin that the English had dealt with the raids with such skill.



Rough route of Smuts' raid into Cape Colony.

A raid was not going to rouse the Cape Dutch into rebellion. Many of them had a sentimental sympathy with their Dutch brothers in the Transvaal and the Free State, but many had not; and considerable numbers had volunteered to fight for the English and not against them: they had no great quarrel of principle with their English neighbours. Those who might have come out would not because they had no horses: the English had taken their horses and no Dutchman was going raiding on his own flat feet and without his horse. Moreover, whereas in the Transvaal and the Free State there was grazing for animals on the veld, in the Cape there was little grazing, and most areas were covered with low scrub where a horse could find no provender. Further, if they came out they became rebels, to be shot at sight, their property confiscated, and their families sent to a concentration camp. They had seen what had happened in the Transvaal and the Free State, and there were fifty thousand English troops in the Cape. They had no intention of rising because a few fellow Dutchmen from the Transvaal came, harried and chased and running for their lives, raiding across their lands and calling on them to rise.

Smuts realised this and decided to change his plans. He would make to the west towards Malmesbury and up to Calvinia. In those areas there were no railways, few roads, and very few English troops, and these would find it more difficult to track and harass him. The people were more dourly Dutch, and these might rise. There were, moreover, round Calvinia a number of Dutch bands raiding, and especially one under Maritz, a police corporal

from Johannesburg, which were doing much damage to the English. He decided to co-ordinate these bands into one force under himself.

When Smuts was in a scheme it must always be on a grand scale, nothing petty and small—a united South Africa with Rhodes, an all-Dutch South Africa with Kruger, a war to defeat the British Empire and drive the English into the sea, a rebellion of the whole of Cape Colony to win the war. Now he schemed with these raiding bands and such volunteers as joined him to make an army and use it as a fighting force, not merely for raiding but to strike a definite blow.

He set off without delay. The English were hot on his trail. He crossed the Cape Town-Johannesburg railway with an English column close behind him, but as he went northwards into the bleak country towards Calvinia, the pursuit slackened off, and without trouble he marched into the mountains which lie between Calvinia and the shore of the Atlantic Ocean and, in a valley deep in a wild range above the Oliphants River, made his headquarters.

Few English troops came this way; so he was able to work unmolested. He sent his men out raiding long distances to locate the bands and to bring their leaders in to him, so that he could get their news and consult and plan with them. He found Maritz with six hundred men and made him a general. The military title was as haphazard as the organisation of his force. As often in an unorganised force, big titles were given for small positions. Smuts himself had been made a general when he set out on this raid with only three hundred and fifty men. He collected arms, ammunition, forage, stores, and spare animals and made depots for them in convenient and secret places along the Hex Valley, for use against a time of need. He sent out armed parties: some to Calvinia and the villages beyond it to rouse the people and to get recruits; others to attack any English columns or convoys which passed through the area. One raided so far south that the men saw Table Mountain and created a panic in Cape Town, and there were long paragraphs of descriptions in the London and local papers. Another went into the Malmesbury and Riebeek West area.

Old Jacobus Smuts was there, but sick and much bedridden. The old man was still greatly grieved at what seemed to him to be a useless fratricidal war, when the Dutch and the English should be living peacefully side by side. Nevertheless, he sent his son a substantial sum of money to help him on his way.

As there were other bands in the far north, Smuts went personally there across the dreary length of Bushman's Land up to the Orange River, found these bands, and brought them under his control.

Gradually he created a force numbering close on three thousand men in all, most of them local volunteers. It was, however, only the skeleton of a force, for each band worked on its own under its own leader, and with the immense distances between the areas in which they worked and the lack of communications his control was very nominal.

He knew little of what was happening in the main theatres of the war, in the Transvaal and the Free State; but he decided that now that he had a force he must act: he must create some sort of diversion.

Far up in the north, near the frontier of the German South-West Colony, where the Orange River flowed into the Atlantic Ocean, was the town of Ookiep, where there was a group of rich copper mines guarded by an English garrison.

He decided to attack Ookiep and he calculated that the English would be sure to send a relief force to help the garrison, and so he would draw off some enemy troops from other work. And he half planned, but more as a stimulus to his men than as a concrete plan, to wait until the relief force arrived and then make another diversion by a sudden and desperate raid straight at Cape Town itself.

He called in as many men as he could and set off. The country was barren, mainly desert and stony land, and they had to travel long distances for water. He was as tireless and ubiquitous as ever, up with his advance guard, out with his scouts, planning and ordering and directing. He drove in the English outposts round Ookiep and captured some block-houses which protected the roads into the town.

With his usual foolhardiness, he exposed himself. Sometimes he was standing out inspecting a position full in the open, while his men lay under cover. At other times he was up with an outpost or a party about to attack, within a few yards of the English who were shooting direct at him, and yet he refused to take cover. He was never hit, never even touched by a bullet, until he was convinced that he could not be hit, and he became a fatalist, saying: "What will be, will be. It has never happened; so it will not happen."

His plans worked out. As he closed in on Ookiep, the English decided that the copper mines must be saved and the garrison relieved. A large force was got rapidly together in Cape Town and dispatched in transports to Port Nolloth, for Ookiep itself lay some ninety miles inland. The first troops had arrived and were being disembarked. More were coming every day. Spies and scouts brought Smuts the news. The time was coming for his raid, his desperate and hazardous raid, at Cape Town. He decided to withdraw his men from round Ookiep.

Suddenly, without warning, he flared up into one of his fits of sudden ruthlessness, a sudden desire to destroy, even if the destruction was useless, as he had when he tried to blow up the gold mines in Johannesburg. Now he determined to ruin Ookiep.

A branch line ran down an incline into Ookiep. In the town there lived some three thousand people, white and native, as well as the English garrison. Taking two railway trucks, he had them loaded with dynamite and started down the incline. They should have run straight into the town, hit the terminus, exploded, and blown some of Ookiep and its inhabitants sky-high. It happened, however, that there was a siding half-way down the incline where the points were set, and the two trucks ran into the veld and there, in the open and without killing anyone, blew an enormous crater in the ground.

Hardly had Smuts failed in this when he saw coming jogging along over the open in a Cape cart with a white flag over it, two English officers looking for General Smuts. They brought an invitation from Lord Kitchener for him to attend a conference with the other Dutch leaders at Vereeniging, a village on the Transvaal and Free State border and on the Vaal River, to discuss terms of peace.

For a while Smuts did not believe the news. He took the English officers to his quarters and talked with them for a long time. Then he walked away out into the wide veld, which was like a desert and stretched far away to the east. When he came back after many hours, his face was drawn and grey. Out there alone, in the desert, where no one could spy on him or watch his agony, he had fought out his battle with his own soul. He said little. He was even more reserved than usual, even to moroseness. He ordered his men to cease fighting. He gave them a hint, but no more, that his news was bad. He arranged an armistice with the English in Ookiep, and set out under a promise of safe-conduct to Port Nolloth and from there by boat to Cape Town on the way to the peace conference.

CHAPTER XIX

IT was the middle of May 1902 when Smuts left Cape Town by train. He had come from Port Nolloth on an English troopship. For a week he had lived in an English battleship lying off Cape Town. Everything possible had been done for his comfort. Everywhere he had been treated by the English with great courtesy, even exaggerated respect. He was not, however, hoodwinked by this. He knew that the courtesy was ordered from headquarters, to get him into the right frame of mind for peace-making. He was polite, but even more uncommunicative and silent than usual. He went on to the train quietly and drew down the blinds of his compartment so as not to be stared at. He was as full of fight and as pugnacious as usual. He expressed his strong disapproval of an officer who had published a bad photograph of him. On the train there was a mess, where he dined with the English officers. On one occasion he disliked the food, sent the soup away as unfit for officers, reprimanded the cook, and behaved as if he were in charge, instead of being the guest.

At Matjesfontein Station, General French came to see him. French, though normally as downright and as brusque as Smuts, was, under orders, friendly and mild. He tried to pick Smuts' brain, but Smuts did not relax at all, and the two did not agree.

When the train stopped at Kroonstad, Kitchener came to see him. Kitchener wished to make an effect: he rode up as the General commanding all the English troops in South Africa, mounted on a black charger with his staff round him and a bodyguard of Indian cavalry in full uniform.

Smuts was not impressed. He was not an Asiatic, to be taken in with a little pomp. Such things, uniforms and shows, carried no weight with him. Kitchener came into his coach. He was very friendly, and they talked pleasantly. Kitchener spoke of the uselessness of further fighting, urged that the Dutch should make peace now, and that fighting would only mean a slow grinding of the Republics into the dust. Smuts did not commit himself. He talked little, but he taxed Kitchener with wantonly burning the farmsteads. Kitchener defended his action, but spoke not as a conqueror but almost apologetically, though by all military law he was fully justified. Smuts turned on him sharply and accused him of murdering the men of his commando by shooting them summarily if found in English uniform. Kitchener replied that the wearing of English uniform by the Dutch had been

a breach of the laws of war. Smuts' men had repeatedly escaped capture and death by masquerading in English uniform as English soldiers. He had issued a proclamation as a warning, though there had been no call on him to do so. On one occasion at least an English officer had been murdered by men of Smuts' commando. A man called Duncker, dressed in the uniform of a 17th Lancer, had been cornered by a patrol. He had shouted out, "Don't fire; we are 17th Lancers," and then shot a Captain Watson and got away. Smuts was a lawyer, and a lawyer trained in England in international law, and he at least ought to have known the rules of war and to have kept his men in hand. Smuts' reply that "They had to wear khaki or go naked," brought the answer that if they could not fight without breaking the rules of war they should stop fighting or take the consequences without complaining. Kitchener had excellent replies, but Smuts was determined to show that he was not a defeated enemy but an equal, and to put his opponents in the wrong.

At Standerton he left the train and for several days trekked into the veld to a rendezvous fixed by Botha to which had been called the representatives of the Transvaal commandos in the field. For six weeks the Transvaal and Free State Governments had been negotiating with the English and they had agreed that the commandos should each elect a representative and that the representatives should appoint thirty delegates for each of the republics, who should meet at Vereeniging and discuss the possibility of peace.

When Smuts arrived most of the representatives were already present. He quickly realised the facts. The men who had assembled were in a pitiable condition, emaciated, in rags, starved, and they were the leaders and the pick of the Dutchmen in the field. His commando had suffered in the Cape, but they had lived in luxury compared with these men. A talk with them and with Botha and the other leaders convinced him that, though their spirit and courage were high, they had almost reached the limit of physical effort and endurance. They were all being slowly and steadily strangled by the weight of the English. The English Government and Kitchener were themselves eager for a conference and for peace, but they were also ready to fight on. The fact remained that the commandos had reached the limit; they were defeated: they must make peace. If they persisted in fighting they would, not only as a fighting force but as a nation, be wiped out. That was the fact and Smuts accepted it and faced it squarely. Without looking back or hesitating he put all his efforts into backing Botha to get peace.

The delegates met at Vereeniging on the 15th May—two parties, thirty delegates from the Transvaal, led by Schalk Burger, who acted for Kruger away in Europe, Botha and de la Rey, and thirty from the Free State, led by Steyn, de Wet, and Hertzog. Smuts had not been elected a delegate, but Botha took him as legal adviser on the Transvaal delegation.

The high steppe through which the Vaal River ran was as bleak and dreary as any part of the veld. On this plain near the bank of the river where there was the village of Vereeniging, Kitchener had ordered a tent to be pitched for each of the two delegations and between them a larger tent for the conference.

To this the delegates came—stubborn, grim-featured men, bedraggled and weary, but made more stubborn and grim by their hardships and defeat.

The proceedings were opened solemnly with prayer, and then the delegates spoke. There was no mincing of words; they were rough men used to saying what they thought without respect of persons. Most of them knew deep down in their hearts that they must surrender, but could not bring themselves to agree that this was the end of all their efforts, their agony, and their belief. A few were die-hards who preferred death and the destruction of the country before surrender.

The debate surged and flowed backwards and forwards as delegate after delegate spoke. Botha made a report on the Transvaal: the starvation; the lack of every necessity; the strangle-hold of the English; the need for peace if they were to continue to exist at all. De Wet, always full of boastings, replied with many big words that if they had the courage they could carry on indefinitely: he and Steyn were fiercely against all surrender. Hertzog split verbal hairs and was vague; de la Rey, with his great prestige behind him, spoke wisely and simply for peace. Many of the delegates with religious earnestness spoke of this as a holy war, of trusting in God, of relying on His help, until an old back-veld burgher interrupted them. "God is on our side, you say? We asked for God's answer. He has answered. His hand is stretched out, not for us, but against us." Some spoke of intervention from Europe and the rising of the Dutch of the Cape. Smuts cut in with expert knowledge and told them that no intervention would come from Europe and that "a general rising in Cape Colony was an impossibility."

Tempers began to heat up. The delegates were divided into two parties. The Transvaal, led by Botha, for peace; the Free State, led by Steyn and de Wet, for war, and war to the end, even to destruction.

At the critical moment, Reitz suggested a compromise: let them treat with the English for peace, but let them demand their independence and in return offer to cede the goldfields to the English, make a defensive alliance with England, and allow her to control their dealings with other nations.

Knowing that ultimately they must surrender, looking for some way to ease their pride, some explanation of their actions, explanation which they could give their men on the commandos, to the nation, to their relatives, and to be passed down to future generations, the delegates took the suggestion eagerly. They drafted out a resolution on these lines and appointed a special committee, consisting of Botha, de la Rey, and de Wet, with the lawyers Hertzog and Smuts as their advisers, to proceed to Pretoria and negotiate "on this basis, and, if this basis was ruled out, on any lines they thought fit." They had passed the responsibility on to other shoulders. . . .

The committee took the draft resolution and went to Pretoria. None of them, and least of all Smuts, believed that these proposals would be accepted or even considered by the English, but they knew their own people and that they had in reality, though it had not openly been stated, been given a free hand to get the best terms they could. They would bluff as long as they could. They would fight for these resolutions one by one and so get better terms than otherwise.

Kitchener and Milner welcomed them, but promptly refused to accept the proposals. Milner would consider nothing until they had agreed to the loss of their independence and to accept the supremacy of England. The Dutchmen began to haggle and bargain. They quickly realised that Kitchener and Milner were at cross-purposes and they worked on this.

The idea of the English Government had been that Kitchener should act the part of the stern soldier demanding harsh terms, while Milner as the administrator who was to rule the country in the future should tone down those terms, appear to be the more sympathetic, and, when the time came for him to take over control, the Dutch should look on him as their friend.

But Kitchener would not play his part. He appeared solid and hard. He was in fact a bundle of nerves held down by an iron will. He resented Milner taking part in the negotiations at all and he could not conceal his resentment. He went behind Milner's back and talked privately with the Dutchmen outside the conference and with the journalists. He wanted peace at almost

any cost. He was prepared to make almost any concessions provided he could get away out of South Africa, away from this place which had been the grave of the reputations of so many men. Milner stood for a sound peace on which the future could be built. Again and again when a difficulty arose, Kitchener did not support Milner, until often Milner felt as if he was negotiating not with the enemy but with Kitchener, who should have been his loyal colleague.

Smuts cleverly played up to Kitchener and against Milner. Again, as at Bloemfontein, it was a battle of character and brain between these two men, but Milner was hindered by Kitchener's disloyalty. Smuts used clever arguments, split hairs, twisted phrases, used clever ruses, but, while Kitchener often acquiesced, Milner saw through these and pinned Smuts down.

Smuts—seeing the possibility of creating unending difficulties in the years to come—suggested a general agreement, but to leave details to be threshed out later. "No need of final clauses," he said. Kitchener was sympathetic. Milner refused point-blank. He had the type of mind that was absolutely honest and without subterfuge and always cool and collected. He wanted things exact and concrete, all square and above board, so that later there could be no doubts and no squirming out. "I am certainly not," he said, "going to give up an explicit basis for a vague proposal." Kitchener grew irritated. "Leave Lord Milner out of this job," he said to Botha, taking him aside. "You and I can manage this satisfactorily." But Milner would not budge, nor would he be left out. "If a bad peace is to be made, it must be made over my political corpse," he said. "The obvious principle seems to be that the man who is going to run the show should arrange the conditions. If Lord Kitchener is going to make the bed, let *him* lie in it, and not me."

The discussions grew more sour and violent. On Smuts the effect of Milner was that of a rival on a dog. He was like a terrier walking round on his toes, his hackles up, looking for trouble. De Wet was as firmly against any peace as before. Kitchener could not make peace without Milner's agreement.

Late one night the conference came to a deadlock: neither Milner nor Smuts would give way; when Kitchener, taking him by an elbow, drew Smuts quietly out of the room on to the stoep of the house. For a while the two walked up and down in silence in the darkness.

At last Kitchener said, "Look here, Smuts, there is something on my mind that I want to tell you. I can only give you my opinion, but my opinion

is that in two years' time a Liberal Government will come into power and it will grant you a constitution for South Africa."

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

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

It was a queer piece of disloyalty by Kitchener to his colleague, but it settled the deadlock, for the Dutchmen ceased to be obstinate: a draft agreement on Milner's lines was rapidly prepared and the committee left, to place it before the delegates at Vereeniging.

CHAPTER XX

THE delegates did not receive the draft complaisantly. Steyn was a very sick man. His sight was going. The doctors had given him three weeks to live unless he gave up work and rested. His great beard was long since streaked with grey and his face drawn and wan. His sickness had made him ill-natured, cantankerous, and unreasonable. He saw the delegates in his tent, and denounced them and the draft treaty because it gave away the independence of the two Dutch republics. Then he resigned and left the conference. He had much influence still in the Free State and after his denunciation many delegates hesitated to agree.

For two days they debated, bringing forward all the old arguments, but they knew they must agree. Many of their men had surrendered already and whole commandos would surrender at once if they did not make peace now. They sought for sound reasons to explain why they made this peace, excuses with which they could face their men and the people with straight eyes and without shame. One delegate put it bluntly: "We say we shall fight until we die," he said, ". . . . a fine speech, but was it not made so that it might be a fine speech for other generations to call us 'the men who were brave to the end'?"

De la Rey spoke for peace. De Wet stood out for war until Botha took him to his tent and at last persuaded him of his folly, when he spoke also for peace.

Hertzog spoke for peace, but with reservations. Things were bad, he said, but he would have gone on fighting. But by calling the conference and by their speeches, Botha—and Smuts also—had made "a fatal error," had confessed that they could fight no more, and so "had taken the heart out of the burghers." They had, said Hertzog, cut the ground from under his feet, and it was only left for him to agree to peace. His hand had been forced by the others. Thus he agreed to peace and yet remained "a brave man to the end"—before his own people.

Botha and Smuts supplied the reasons for the burghers to salve their pride. "No other nation," said Botha, "could have fought as we have! But shall the nation die? No! We will save it by wise counsel."

Smuts had not spoken. He was not a delegate, but now they called for him to speak. The time for the ultimatum to expire, for war to recommence,

was coming close. The light in the great tent was bad. Outside, up from the river, had crept a white mist—the South African winter was on them—which covered the veld and pressed up to the opening of the tent. He faced the delegates, rows of harsh-featured, dour men watching him in the gloom. He was no longer the lanky, cadaverous, white-faced barrister of the days before the war, but a man, used to leadership and to taking decisions.

He began to speak and there came on him the desire to persuade these men, one and all, to reach out to them and impress himself on their wills and on their judgment, to make them agree to peace. He was so convinced, so intense in his conviction, so concentrated, that he ceased to act a part or to think of himself. In his sincerity he ceased to be awkward and self-conscious.

"I," he said, "am one of those who provoked this war. I accept the responsibility and it gives me the right to speak. As soldiers none of you are afraid. As a military force you are unconquered and you can fight on; but here to-day you represent not the commandos only but the nation as a whole. . . .

"The nation calls out. . . . From the prison, from the camps, the graves, the veld, from the womb of the future, the nation cries out to us to make a wise decision. . . .

"We fought for independence, but we must not sacrifice the nation on the altar of independence. . . ."

He spoke of the concentration camps, of the twenty-three thousand women and children who had died there, of the English methods of devastating the land so that all would soon be a desert, of those who were from the Cape and had joined them and must suffer as rebels, but which this treaty would protect. These, he said, and not military defeat, were the reasons why they must sign the peace.

"Brethren, we have sworn to stand to the bitter end. Let us be brave, and acknowledge that the bitter end has come. . . . Death itself would be sweet compared to the step we are about to take. Let us bow before the will of God. . . .

"The future is dark indeed, but we will not give up courage and hope and trust in God. No one shall ever convince me that this unparalleled sacrifice which the African nation has laid upon the altar of freedom will be in vain. It has been a war for freedom. . . . Its results we leave in God's hands. Perhaps it is His will to lead our nation through defeat, through abasement,

yea, and even through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, to the glory of a nobler future, to the light of a brighter day."

Here there was no attempt at cleverness, no trickery, no splitting of hairs, no "slimness." He had given the burghers good reasons for making peace, reasons which were no shame to them, because he was determined to convince them, because he believed in peace. His words came free and eloquent because they came out of his belief in his people, out of his love for Africa. They rang out clear like blows of a hammer on metal—on the metal, the steel, that was deep down and the very foundation of the man—and they found an answering ring in the hearts of the men before him.

The delegates agreed. They voted for acceptance. They signed their agreement giving away their independence, and these hard, gruff, weather-beaten men in their ragged clothes wept openly as they signed, and were not ashamed of their tears.

One hour before the ultimatum expired the peace was accomplished.

PART II

CHAPTER XXI

THE peace was signed, the war was over; but Smuts shrank from going back to his commando to tell his men the truth. Before he left he had given them a hint that the news was bad, but it was characteristic of him that, though he was often brusque and did not realise or appreciate how he hurt other people's feelings, he could not tell his men the facts and see the disappointment in their eyes. When they had heard that he was going to a peace conference they had been jubilant: they had been sure that England had caved in, had asked for the peace conference, was going to give way, was going to hand them back their country; they never conceived that they were beaten.

It had been arranged with Kitchener that each commando leader should tell his own men, explain the conditions, and then in his presence each man should hand over his arms to an English officer and sign a declaration of submission. Smuts dreaded the duty, to have to face his men, to have to tell them that they were defeated and that they must submit.

For many of the commando leaders it was even worse. Their men had elected them as representatives to the peace conference and given them strict instructions not to surrender: they were to vote only for complete independence, or to fight on. How were they to face their men, their angry followers, and explain and persuade them? Botha was outwardly calm, but inwardly he was wrought up and torn with intense, tearing emotion. As the leader he had to control his emotions and to persuade the others to an action which his judgment showed him was a necessity, but against which his whole being rebelled. Now he had to persuade those who had trusted him and fought beside him. De Wet refused to go on with it. He spoke to his men and then left. He could not stand the pain of watching them submit.

In all commandos the men were sullen. At first many disbelieved. When they knew the truth some became truculent: they broke their rifles and flung the pieces down in front of the English officers, or refused to submit and preferred to be deported away out of South Africa. Those who submitted showed, not that they were glad to be quit, though they gladly accepted the good English rations, but that they had been crushed into subjection by brute force alone, and their spirit was unbroken. They remained obstinate, unbroken—and unbreakable.

With their sullenness was a great grief, not only of the fighting men but of the whole people, the women even more than the men. They were a simple, religious people: they had staked all for their liberty and their independence; their God had deserted them; they mourned their lost independence as parents might mourn for a child and they refused to be comforted; and in their mourning there was also a savage anger.

They went back to find their farms burnt, their cattle and horses gone, the country empty, cut up with lines of barbed wire, houses fallen down. The English were rebuilding these for them, but the English had destroyed them and what the English had left the Dutch commandos had ruined. They were bitterly angry against those of the Dutch who had fought for the English; angry with the Cape Dutch who had not come to their help; bitter that some twenty thousand of their women and children had died of disease in the English concentration camps; and they blamed their leaders, especially Botha and Smuts, for having surrendered at all.

The submission of the burghers, none the less, was carried out thoroughly, and when it was finished Smuts went back to Pretoria and started to practise again as a barrister. He held no official position: he was only a private individual, but his reputation as State Attorney of the last Transvaal Republican Government and as a leader from the war stood high and work came his way. He was capable, efficient, and exact, with an encyclopædic knowledge of the law, but he was not a great pleader—"a fair pleader," the *Law Journal* tactfully called him—nor had he the makings of a great lawyer, so that except for a few celebrated cases he was rarely briefed in important actions.

Physically, the war had made a man of him. He had outgrown the scraggy, unhealthy-looking youth who had stalked ill-naturedly about the streets of Johannesburg and who had treated Kruger's old advisers with arrogance. He had become strong and stocky in body. His face was weather beaten and his health was robust. So changed was he that when he went to see his father the old man did not recognise him. Smuts pretended to be a messenger bringing news of himself; then he owned up, but even then old man Jacobus sat looking at him doubtfully and would not believe his eyes until Smuts produced some more definite proofs.

He was not, as were many of the other Dutch leaders, financially hard pressed. His practice brought in some steady money; he handled one or two

lucrative land cases and his father sent him help.

But he went back to office work with his old grim concentration. He forced himself to work, for he had to fight himself, and he was overwhelmed with depression so heavy that it bore him down, as some immense weight on the shoulders, deep into the black waters of a great despair. Despite its discomforts, its hardships, its bestialities, and its monstrous cruelties, the war, the leading of his men, the physical effort, had been for him an inspiration with the spur of high endeavour in it and of adventure. He had been uplifted, exalted in a great cause. As some Crusader dreaming to free Jerusalem from the infidel, so he would release South Africa from the English. The spur, the inspiration, the sense of adventure, the high endeavour, were gone, and in their place was the flat drag of peace, of plodding the "weary road back to habitual self." Office routine and drab ties and necessities had replaced physical action and the life out under the sun and the stars and the wind of the open veld. Reaction swept down over him and with it a feeling of utter uselessness, of utter helplessness, of complete defeat, which, if he had allowed it, would have numbed his will and his character. He would have drowned in his own self-pity.

Against this he fought. A fierce resentment burned up through him, resentment against the enemy, the English, but bitterest against the arch-enemy, against Milner, the man who had slighted him before Kruger at Bloemfontein, the Imperialist who had stood against him and Botha at Middleburg, and who had hardened the terms at the peace conference.

Milner was now High Commissioner, the ruler and the almost autocratic ruler of the Transvaal and of all South Africa. His staff consisted of young men whom he had picked from the English universities and whom he had brought out to show the Dutch how to organise and rule their own country. "Milner's Kindergarten," they were known as, and they were much the same as the precious young men whose drawling accents and supercilious ways Smuts had so hated at Cambridge. To walk in Pretoria, to see everything controlled by the English, and these young men in the offices, in his offices, in the office President Kruger had used, the room on the corner of the Square with the dado of small roses, and Milner either here or in Johannesburg, stiff, haughty, patronising, drove Smuts into a blind fury which his utter helplessness only increased until he was half throttled by the claustrophobia of a proud man of a proud race held down by force. "We have been the freest people on earth," he said. "We are chained down."

He became high-strung and nervy. His house was on a hill some way outside Pretoria. He often worked late in his office in the town and had to

return in the dark. A friend was surprised to find that he was nervous; that the Smuts who had been quite fearless in a hundred tight corners in the war and exposed himself recklessly was afraid of and dreaded that journey and was convinced that one night he would be murdered on his way home.

And at home his resentment got fresh fuel to keep it alight, for his wife was even more resentful than he was. She hated the English. She would have nothing to do with them. No word of English might be spoken in the house. The English flag flew over Pretoria, but she saw to it that when her time came to bear a child an old Transvaal Republican flag was unfolded over her bed.

For Smuts it seemed there was no future. He craved for political work. He wanted power: he had none. He was shut out. Foreigners, the victorious enemies, ruled his country, and ruled it as they saw best. He had dreamed dreams and had great ambitions: they had become as dust in his mouth. His position was far from secure. The newspapers attacked him if he did anything. Milner and his staff looked on him as an "irreconcilable," a man to be watched: given the chance, they would have pounced on him and deported him, so that he had to walk delicately. He took no part in politics or public life. Except for his work on his briefs and in the Courts he shut himself away, stayed at home, reading, moping, or pottering about in his garden. "We are so miserably weak," he wrote to a friend, ". . . so utterly helpless. . . . We go down to ruin. . . . I see no ray of light in the future."

All through the middle months of that year, of 1902, Smuts was sunk in depression. There was no place for him. His abilities were not required. His restless energy, his ambitions, his urge for work, his schemes, his craving for power, his instinct to control and direct, to be in the centre of affairs, had to be roped and corded down. He was out of it, shut out by those he hated most, by English officials. He was strangled for the need of something worth doing. Being human he saw the plight of his country through the eyes of his own misfortunes. He could see "no ray of light in the future."

He was lonely also. Rhodes was dead, buried up on a peak in the mountains of Rhodesia: Rhodes, a torch which had been blown out by a gust of folly, but which had lit many lamps before it had been blown out. Away back in his mind, Smuts had kept his hero-worship of the Colossus and of the ideals of Rhodes. Kruger was as good as dead, a sunken old man away in exile in Europe. Most of the others were gone. Reitz had refused to submit

to the English and had been deported with his family. Piet Grobler was with Kruger. At the conference at Vereeniging the Dutch delegates had commissioned Botha, de la Rey, and de Wet to go to Europe to establish contact with sympathisers and to collect funds for relief, and they had set out shortly after peace was signed.

The three generals had left with high hopes. At the Cape the Afrikander Bond had given them a great send-off. In Holland, France, Belgium, and Germany, they were received with acclaim and especially in England, where they were treated as heroes. Everywhere they went in Europe they were greeted with applause, dinners, and receptions, which they refused, saying that they had come to mourn and as beggars, and not to rejoice. When they landed they were offered addresses of welcome and unlimited sympathy, but little practical help or money. The French, the Germans, and the Belgians were ready to shout against the English. They would open their mouths wide but kept their purses closed and did not help the Dutch of South Africa. Many of their friends, especially financiers in France and Germany, advised them to accept the position and rely on the magnanimity of the English. Disappointed and disillusioned they returned before the end of the year to South Africa.

CHAPTER XXII

BOTHA came to Pretoria and he was for Smuts like some cool firm breeze after a night of fever; for wherever he went Botha gave a sense of solidarity, of quiet inevitable stability. And he gave men confidence in themselves and in him, belief in others, and he inspired faith and hope.

Smuts had had too much success and too quickly. He was a bad patient now that he was suffering from defeat. He had never had to submit to the close discipline of a master or an employer, so that he was restive and impatient. He would not openly play second to any man on any venture. He appeared to be self-sufficient and self-confident, but he was at heart doubting, and this came from that sense of inferiority, which was still part of his character though now hidden, but which rose to the surface in defeat and which had been his marked characteristic as a nervous, shy child. He would not have acknowledged it, but actually he needed a leader. He had fallen in behind Rhodes, and then behind Kruger. Now he fell in behind Botha.

Mrs. Botha had been in Holland during the last year of the war. As soon as she returned, Botha took a house in Sunnyside, near to that in which Smuts lived. It was a pleasant suburb on a hill-side covered with gardens and shady trees and well-built houses. Here the two men spent long hours sitting and discussing on the stoep of Botha's house, from where they could see Pretoria laid out below them and beyond Pretoria the immense stretch of the veld.

For Botha the journey to Europe and England had been an experience and a lesson. He had learned how little value there was in the windy sympathy of the European nations and the real value of practical help from England. He had with difficulty collected £100,000 from sympathisers, but he had brought back the promise of a loan of eight million pounds for relief work from the English Treasury. He had seen the wealth, power, and majesty of the British Empire. With the leading politicians in London he had established useful contacts, and he had an uncanny political instinct, almost akin to second sight, so that he had realised that there was a change in England: that the English public were swinging away from the

Conservatives towards the Liberals—and the Liberals had promised that when they came to power they would give self-government to South Africa. He had above all realised that the English, whether Conservatives or Liberals, did not look on the Dutch of South Africa as a defeated enemy to be held down, trodden on, and ruled, but as fellow subjects within one Empire: they were to be treated more as rebellious children who had been beaten to keep them at home, but as soon as they had learnt this lesson would be left to look after themselves and fashion their own lives. Even Joseph Chamberlain, the arch-enemy, the man who backed Milner the Imperialist, had talked with Botha of self-government in the near future and the need for the English and Dutch to work together. Shortly after the peace Botha had said that the place for South Africa was within the British Empire. His experience in Europe had satisfied him that this was so.

Smuts was of the same mind. Despite the war and despite Kruger's influence, Smuts was thinking in terms of Rhodes' ideal—an indivisible South Africa: a South African nation of all white men, of Dutch and English combined, ruling their own land themselves without the interference of the officials in England; and yet within the British Empire. Both he and Botha realised that self-government was coming. At the time of the official annexation of the Transvaal during the war it had been promised. Kitchener's statement during the peace conference, Botha's talks and experiences in England, Joseph Chamberlain's remarks, all bore that out. They could count on self-government in time, but the problem was how to get it as quickly as possible and to chase out Milner and his brood of imported young graduates and officials.

Under Botha's influence, Smuts began to revive, to become hopeful once more, and to plan for the future. The two settled on their line of action. They would studiously observe the treaty. If, by agreement, they could get it modified, they would do so and it would be to the good: if they failed, it could not be helped. Anyway they would proclaim their acceptance of the Empire, but they would, on all occasions and on all points, attack Milner and his administration. They would refuse to give him any active help. Milner would need their help and advice. Advice they would give, but without taking any responsibilities. Milner would make mistakes. They would use them. It was a shrewd, clever policy created by the brain of Smuts and given weight and dignity by Botha.

But it was not an easy policy, for in defeat the Dutch attacked their leaders, and especially Botha and Smuts. Some attacked them for having carried the war on for another year after they knew that it was useless, and

so ruining the country. A meeting of Dutchmen in Johannesburg passed a vote of censure on them, both for this and also for refusing to help Milner in the work of reconstruction. Others attacked them equally bitterly for having surrendered and called them traitors for saying they would be loyal. The population of the towns, because of their lost trade, treated them as pariahs. The farmers cursed them because their farms were in ruins and the compensation which had been promised did not come. Large numbers of the Dutch had given up and sat back with their hands in their laps and made no effort to help themselves. The English, and especially the local-born English, despite their declaration of loyalty, suspected them. They and many of the Dutch had always looked on Smuts as over-clever. It was "slim Jannie" again. They nicknamed him "the little grey cardinal" and wondered what he was scheming for, what plot he was preparing.

Led by Botha, the Dutch leaders of the Transvaal, however, kept steadily on, ignoring the criticism and the curses. Shortly after Botha's return, Joseph Chamberlain paid a flying visit and toured South Africa. The Dutch leaders took the chance and made use of it. They met Chamberlain in the Assembly Hall of the Volksraad Building in Pretoria, and they presented him with an address of welcome. Smuts acted as spokesman. "We are loyal," he said, "to the Treaty and the Empire. We now come to you, to our new Government, and offer our loyalty, and it would be wiser," he pleaded, "now and at once to give self-government and so win the complete confidence of South Africa."

Chamberlain cut him short, saying that he would not listen to a reopening of the questions settled at Vereeniging; but from then onwards, on all occasions, very subtly and cleverly, the Dutch leaders, while making much of Chamberlain, flattering him, showing him exaggerated attention, disparaged Milner, his staff, and his administration. Chamberlain was very impressionable and easily affected by such personal propaganda and began, half-heartedly, to doubt Milner; but he was not easily hoodwinked, and once he sat back his temporary impression passed and his judgment again took control. Milner too was as shrewd as his opponents and detractors. There was an easy way to test the Dutch leaders. A Legislative Council was ruling the Transvaal. With Chamberlain's permission, Milner invited Botha, Smuts, and de la Rey to serve on it: if the Dutch leaders were so loyal, he said, and so ready to be helpful, let them serve and show what they could do. But they refused, saying that the time was not propitious, and Chamberlain went back to England once more doubtful of them and their protestations of loyalty.

Hardly was Chamberlain gone before the Dutch concentrated on a general criticism of Milner; and for Milner everything went wrong. 1903 was a year of drought such as had not been seen for forty years. The Caledonian River ran dry, which had not happened within the memory of any living man. The crops sown while the war was ending were burnt up as soon as they sprouted. The mealies failed. What was left of the wheat was destroyed by exceptional frosts and hailstorms and eaten up by plagues of caterpillars and locusts. The end of the war had led to a boom, but this had been brief and followed by a general slump. The mines ceased to work satisfactorily. The natives would not come to work in them again: they had made money in the war and wished to laze for a time in the sun; they had received high war-wages and were not going to accept reduced wages in peace, especially as there was good money to be made working for the reparations department. On the gold that came out of the mines, Milner had counted to pay his way for reorganisation. The gold did not come and his reorganisation had to be curtailed.

Every misfortune, every piece of ill-luck, every error of judgment of the English officials, the Dutch leaders exaggerated and used for attacking Milner. They criticised and blamed him for the failure of the crops, the economic slump, the unsatisfactory mines. They misrepresented his every action and his every intention. The "Kindergarten," they said, consisted of inexperienced young men: they were scandalously overpaid. There were robbery, theft, and dishonesty on all sides, and these young men did not know how to handle them. A few local men would have cleared up quickly and far more cheaply and repatriated the prisoners and the deported families back to their homes and reconstructed the life of the country in half the time. Milner was creating a vast and expensive administration for the benefit of his friends. Milner, they repeated, was intent on grinding down and crushing, even of destroying, the Dutch.

Of all the leaders, Smuts was the bitterest. He acted often as spokesman. He drafted many of the documents, letters, and protests. There was a personal element in all that he did that made his actions waspish. He could not restrain his hatred of Milner. "Milner," he wrote, "has dreamed a dream of a British South Africa . . . loyal with broken English and happy with a broken heart, and he sees the dream is coming true. . . . Milner's heart will be thumping with holy joy." His hatred put a sting into all his attacks. With his agile brain he handled every incident to the discredit of the administration. He was relentless and untied by scruples. He attacked all the officials. Milner's administration was "a carnival of extravagance": the Reparations Commission was "a horde of incapable and dishonest officials."

Botha had accepted the treaty, and though he had personally suffered heavily—his farm had been blown up—he accepted it in good spirit and worked for goodwill. Smuts accepted, but remained resentful.

As the months went by and all his attacks had no effect, for Milner remained as before, in control, Smuts became very moody. At one minute he was hopeful. At the next he was depressed beyond any hope. He wrote of "the gloom of despair which is more and more enveloping us all." At other times he was impatient. He was seized with a fever of impatience: impatient and resentful at having to be idle; impatient to get control, to push Milner out quickly, at once. Self-government was on the way, but he wanted it at once, there and then, without delay. He itched to get his fingers back on to power. "Patience is the greatest quality of a statesman." Smuts, like Rhodes, had no patience, while Botha, more solid, sounder, and more stable, remained more steady and had great patience. He tried to hold Smuts in. He was afraid of what Smuts might do, for he was still only young, and in this state of impatience his lack of worldly wisdom and his inability at handling men became more pronounced. He was wrought up and capable of any impetuous foolishness. Possibly by his wits and his quick brain he might extricate himself from the difficulties he created, but could he and would he extricate the rest of them? Of that Botha was never sure and it made him watchful. Smuts often showed a great lack of judgment and common sense. Sometimes Botha saved him. There was a conference between Milner and the Dutch leaders. The interpreter employed was useless and there was no other available. Milner could read and write Dutch, but could not speak it. He appealed to Smuts to interpret, but Smuts pretended not to understand until Botha—who had begun to study English and knew a few words—in despair brushed aside this childishness and endeavoured to interpret in lame, halting phrases.

Again, there was a Miss Hobhouse, an Englishwoman, an enthusiast but unbalanced woman, capable of doing great good, but obsessed with the belief that her own people were always in the wrong. She worked for the Dutch and wrote to Smuts.

He replied personally. Though with those round him and with his associates he was usually secretive, to this Englishwoman, whom he knew a little, he opened his heart and without restraint poured out his woes, his complaints, and his despair in a stream of letters. "South Africa is on the down grade. . . ." "South Africa has been untrue to herself. . . ." "The Dutch are being undermined . . . demoralised by disaster. . . . I am tired of life's toil and endless endeavour. I begin to long for rest," and such unbalanced views

as that the mines were no good. “A sham industry . . . a bogus industry, with its reputation kept going for the purpose of still further swindling the investing public of Europe. The general good of the country . . . is sacrificed for this sham industry.”

Miss Hobhouse wrote also to Botha, but he was wiser. He had summed her up correctly and he instructed his wife to send her a courteous but curt note of acknowledgment. Later Miss Hobhouse published one of Smuts’ letters in the *Daily News* in London, and it supplied excellent material for his enemies.

Botha’s quiet patience and steady judgment often irritated Smuts. He tried to hustle Botha into more action, as he had tried to hustle Kruger, and to get the Dutch leaders to do more. But Botha would not be hustled; and the others, though they recognised Smuts’ brains and abilities, came to Botha for advice and relied on Botha for judgment and leadership.

But at last the time for action arrived. The stage was set; the circumstances propitious for forming an organisation to work for self-government. Milner was in difficulties. He had achieved a great deal but his repatriation and reconstruction schemes had fallen short, the failure of the crops had taken away his resources, so that he had to do famine relief before he could reconstruct; he was being attacked in England by the Liberals; he was harried by criticism both in South Africa and in England, some of which was justified, for his task was immense and complicated and no staff with experience and knowledge of such work could be found, so that his assistants had to learn as best they could by their own mother-wit and by experiment; there was much waste of material and money, much inefficiency, and some dishonesty.

The mines were still short of labour and did not produce enough gold. Milner decided to import Chinese. Some sixty thousand arrived and set to work. The Dutch raised a tremendous outcry. Smuts led the outcry. “The Chinese are coming,” he wrote. “More disaster for the country. . . . Here are the birds of prey voraciously feeding on the corpses of Liberty.” The Liberals in England made a battle-cry of “Chinese slavery.” The tide was turning in their favour. One after another they won by-elections fought on “Chinese slavery.” From their friends in England, Botha and Smuts received warnings that a change of Government was near, and there would be a general election. In that election “Chinese Slavery” in the South African

gold mines would be used as the spearhead of attack. Chamberlain had resigned. The time was ripe.

The foundations of an organisation already existed and the Dutch had been taught to despise the English administration and to expect self-government. The old fighting commando organisation had been retained and the men grouped by wards and districts under the commando leaders of the war into Farmers' Associations. Under another name and ostensibly for peaceful objects, the old fighting organisation remained. The Afrikander Bond in the Cape was in sympathy. In the Free State, Hertzog was making a similar system and calling it the Orangia Unie.

Botha at first moved cautiously, for he expected Milner to break up any such organisation. Milner was suspicious, but received orders from England not to interfere. Botha, therefore, widened his plans and worked for official recognition. Again Milner, though unwilling, was forced to agree by order from England. In the middle of 1904 Botha summoned the leaders to him in Pretoria. They came readily, threshed out an elaborate organisation, and finally in January of 1905 they came in full strength. They crowded into the Empress Theatre in Pretoria so that they filled it to suffocation, and long queues waited at the doors. They formed themselves into *Het Volk*, the People's Party, nominated Botha, Smuts, de la Rey, and Beyers, their old guerilla leaders of the war, to be their central committee, gave them full powers, and laid down that their policy was "complete self-government" for the Transvaal.

Once more Smuts had swung back into active politics—into the work for which he was fitted.

CHAPTER XXIII

BOTHA and Smuts were now the leaders recognised by the Dutch in the Transvaal and accepted by the English administration. Botha was earning good money as a commission agent and as a farmer. He lived spaciously, all his doors open, and to him came everyone who wanted advice or was suffering under a grievance, as they had come in the old days of the Republic to President Kruger. And like Kruger, and with some of Kruger's patriarchal benevolence, Botha received them all. He had time and to spare for everyone. The stoep of his house was always crowded with men and women, mainly ruined farmers from the veld, with their children, who came for help and trusted Botha with a pathetic, trustful helplessness. He had the art, moreover, even if he had to send them away, of being able to make them feel that they had gained everything by coming to see him.

Smuts continued his legal work, but those who came to see him with requests for personal help kept strictly to business. He would come out of an inner room still preoccupied with something he had been reading or studying out of a book or document. If his visitors wasted time or meandered he did not conceal his irritation.

He and Botha kept steadily on with their policy—to attack the English administration and to organise Het Volk. They encouraged the Dutch to become discontented. They criticised and found fault and twisted every mishap against Milner. They refused to give any active help in the reconstruction of the country. The English Government offered them a modified form of self-government as the first stage towards complete self-government. They refused it and made it clear that they would make such a constitution unworkable: they would accept complete self-government or nothing. "Our attitude," said Smuts, "is that we ask not for half an egg, but a whole one."

Everything worked to help them. In the middle of 1905 Milner's term of office came to an end and he was replaced by Lord Selborne, an aristocrat with a pleasant, courteous manner. His instructions were to conciliate the Dutch. In his first speech he flattered Botha and Smuts, calling Smuts, "the brilliant lawyer, the brilliant soldier," and so began to break down the rigid fence which mutual dislike and distrust had built between him and the English administration.

To the last minute and long after he was gone, the Dutch, and especially Smuts, hated Milner. They would hear no good of him. His qualities they did not appreciate. He had many faults. He over-centralised. He was often high-collared, autocratic, overbearing, and he hated well; but his qualities more than adjusted the balance with his faults. He was a great ruler, clean handed, clean in his dealings and in his promises, and with wide vision and great ideals. He knew before he accepted his post that he would have to bear the brunt of the war-hatred and the even fiercer hatred of the reaction after the war. No man could have escaped that hatred. He was often weakly backed from England, but he remained strong and determined: weakness in the first days of the peace would have been a crime. Without complaining, with absolute loyalty to superiors and subordinates, with ceaseless self-denying effort and unlimited patience, he worked on. He laid the foundations for the future. He laid them soundly and securely, bedded them deep down in live rock. His successors, Dutch and English, those who cursed him most, Botha and Smuts especially, built on his foundations. Left to themselves the Dutch could never have laid such foundations, and any structure they might have built would have collapsed.

Milner left quietly, taking ship without fuss or show, dignified and self-controlled, outwardly unmoved by the hatred he had roused, a great man who had destroyed himself doing a great work for lesser men, and, as he left, Smuts wrote him a letter of good-bye. It cost Smuts an effort to write that letter, though it had about it an air of self-satisfied patronage, of speeding the unwanted guest who would never return. "I am afraid," he wrote, "you have not liked us. . . . What is good in our work . . . can safely appeal to the ear of the future. To that ear you have appealed: so do we." Always Milner set Smuts' hackles up, angered, irritated, and enraged him. He and Milner were two stiff-lipped and stiff-necked, reserved, self-opinionated strong men, both irritated by opposition, and they had jostled into each other where their roads had crossed. They could not walk together, and neither would stand aside for the other.

And then, with Milner gone, the stumbling-block to Dutch desires out of the way, Smuts turned back with a sigh of relief to work again for self-government.

Events moved quickly. In England the Government was rapidly being shaken to pieces: it lost by-election after by-election; the members of the

Cabinet disagreed among themselves. The inevitable reaction, which followed every war, was coming in on a full tide. The Transvaal was brought into English local politics. The cry of "Chinese Slavery in the Gold Mines" was being used freely to excite the voters against the Conservatives.

In December the Conservative Government fell. Kitchener's prophecy had come true. Balfour, the Prime Minister, resigned. Campbell-Bannerman took his place with a full Liberal Cabinet, including Lord Morley, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. John Burns, and Mr. Winston Churchill as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. He dissolved Parliament and went to the country.

At once Smuts, with Botha's full approval and backing, made post-haste for England. He did not advertise his coming, refused to be interviewed or to make any statement, said he had come for a holiday, but went quietly to a small hotel off the Strand and got into touch with the Liberals who had shown pro-Dutch sympathies during the war and since.

England was twisted in the agony of that General Election, which was fought with great bitterness and no scruples. The people were tired of the Conservatives, of war policies, of the old Imperialism. The working classes, the middle classes, the vast mass of Nonconformists, wanted a change. The Liberal leaders raised the cries of "The Conservatives are Slave-traders!" "Slavery under the Union Jack!" "Chinese Slavery in the South African Mines!"—the Chinese whom Milner had brought to South Africa to work in the gold mines. At every meeting and demonstration there were pictures and banners of Chinese being flogged, Chinese chained in gangs as they were dragged down into the mines by fat, bloated Rand capitalists; the newspapers were full of similar cartoons. The moral indignation of the whole nation, the natural hatred of the English for slavery in any form, was roused, worked upon, heated up into a fury. Nonconformist ministers in their chapels, Church of England divines, orators on the street-corners, preached and howled at the Slave Traders, the Conservatives. The elections swept out the Conservatives and swept into power Campbell-Bannerman and the Liberals with an enormous majority.

Smuts approached the important men. The Conservatives called him "a Dutchman come to bargain for what he could get," which was exactly what he was. He bargained with the Cabinet Ministers. He had come for immediate self-government for the Transvaal. Winston Churchill thought he

asked for too much: was astonished that he expected it. Lord Morley hedged and wondered whether public opinion would go so far, which disappointed Smuts, who had expected to find in Morley a philosopher who would think more of justice and right than his own career or public opinion. Lloyd George, who had publicly denounced the South African War, promised him all his help.

Lastly Smuts saw Campbell-Bannerman, who listened stolidly. The line Smuts took was very reasonable. "Once and for all," he said, "all the Dutch and their leaders do not wish to raise the question of the annexation of the colonies or of the British flag. They accept accomplished facts . . . but they wish to take part in responsible government." Campbell-Bannerman asked why he and the other Dutch leaders had refused to help on Milner's Legislative Council. He explained that away and pleaded that to give immediate self-government would win the final loyalty of the Dutch. Campbell-Bannerman was a quiet, slow-thinking man. At last he was convinced.

At his next Cabinet Meeting the proposal—"Self-government for the Transvaal" was discussed. Lloyd George and John Burns agreed. Winston Churchill and Asquith agreed in principle but wanted safeguards and conditions. Asquith had no great belief in Smuts. He distrusted him and thought little of his ability. All the Cabinet knew that self-government must eventually be given: the Conservatives had promised it and they, the Liberals, had promised to give it as soon as they got into power. All the Cabinet knew that the Chinese imported by Milner into the mines were not treated as slaves and were even freer than the local natives: that they were not generally flogged or maltreated by their capitalist employers. They knew that the Chinese had saved the mines and saved South Africa from bankruptcy, and that Milner, forced by necessity, had done the right thing, and finally, as the Colonial Secretary told them, it would be impossible to send the Chinese back home, at once, without ruining the mines and the work of reconstruction.

And they knew that with these blatant lies—for many of them had told the voters that the Chinese were slaves, beaten and ill-treated and imported only because they were cheap and to take away work from white men, and had promised that they should at once be sent to their homes—they had deliberately and unscrupulously roused the most just and the most generous instincts of the nation and so persuaded the people to put them into power. The Chinese could not be sent home at once. They did not want to go. Even

the Dutch wanted to keep them. If they went, the mines and South Africa would suffer.

The Cabinet were in an awkward dilemma. How could they now go to the country and tell their supporters of the fraud and of the lies in their election promises? It was out of the question! And here was this Dutchman, Smuts, who represented the Dutch leaders, at the door demanding his pound of flesh. Would it not be a way out of this dilemma to give the Transvaal self-government and let it deal with its troublesome Chinese? Smuts seemed only too ready to take it on; and after all, now the elections were over, the Chinese were of little interest in England: better forget them as quickly as possible. Let the Transvaal shoulder the burden.

As they argued and discussed, Campbell-Bannerman intervened. None of his colleagues knew what he had decided. He spoke for ten minutes with great force, but simply. They were all agreed that self-government would eventually have to be given. Let them give it at once, without safeguards or conditions, without bartering and niggling; with a fine, open gesture: making a fine gesture of necessity. They owed their victory to the Transvaal: let them pay their bill at once, and so by “a big-hearted . . . a noble decision . . . by a magnificent gesture of faith” let them—taking a risk no doubt, but since he had talked with Smuts he was convinced that the risk was small—win the loyalty of the Dutch and so of South Africa.

Lloyd George recorded that the speech moved more than one member of the Cabinet to tears. Campbell-Bannerman was honest and simple, but this was not true of the rest, and those tears must have been shed by some other members far more astute and must, if they really were shed, have been tears of relief.

CHAPTER XXIV

SMUTS returned to South Africa with an understanding that the Dutch of the Transvaal and the Liberal Government would work together, and knowing that self-government for the Transvaal was at hand. He had done well for his people. He was pleased with his work and he was like one awaked out of a bad dream, the bad dream of the last four years since the war. His resentment disappeared. He rediscovered that the English were a great people. The Dutch were dour and unforgiving, never forgetting an injury. The English in England forgave generously and forgot quickly. They were giving back the Transvaal to the Dutch in all but name, and only four years after a war that had cost them tens of thousands of English lives and 200 million pounds in money. “Only a people like the English could do that,” he said. “They may make mistakes, but they’re a great people.”

They were giving the Transvaal back to the people of the Transvaal, but they were also giving Smuts back his chance. Power, control, the opportunity to direct, to be in the centre of things, to be in the limelight; politics, work that would absorb his energies, all these, all that he wanted, were close at hand.

His old energy revived after the years of depression, of aimless discontent, of helpless resentment. With his energy came back his great ideas, his dreams—the dreams and ideals he had learned from Rhodes—of all South Africa united into one white people—Dutch and English working together. His thoughts rose high. “We know how much we have lost,” he said at a meeting. “Perhaps it was better thus. We have fought, we have struggled for our rights. God has taken our liberty—but God is great.”

At the moment he must work to unite the people of the Transvaal and to form the first government with the Party of Het Volk.

He looked everywhere for allies. He visited Steyn, who had newly returned to the Free State from exile. Steyn was ill, almost bedridden, but he still had much influence with all the Dutch throughout South Africa. He talked with the Dutch leaders of the Bond in the Cape. With Botha, he toured up and down the country, speaking at innumerable meetings. “The source of all our evils is disunion,” he said. “Let us work to attain our old object, a united South Africa.” . . . “There must be a blending of the races. . . . There must be no more race-feeling.”

It required courage and determination to speak like that. The English in England might be a people who forgot easily and forgave with a great gesture, but not so the English or the Dutch in South Africa. They were still hot and angry and hostile one against the other. They attacked Smuts from every side, called him traitor, liar, and scoundrel. At home it was no more easy for him, since Mrs. Smuts would have nothing to do with the English. “I am a Dutchwoman,” she said; “just a Dutchwoman like my ancestors.” And her ancestors were well known for their hostility to the English.

But Smuts kept steadily on. He did not lack either courage or determination. He refused to be over-influenced at home. He tackled the English die-hards in Johannesburg itself and begged them to “spread conciliation. . . . Forget the things that divided us in the past. . . . Work for the good of all.” He tackled the Dutch die-hards with equal vigour and even begged those who had fought for the Republic to shake hands with those who had fought for the English. “We need,” he said, “co-operation, trust, and the formation of one great South African Nation. We want to see only one person, the South African, the citizen of the Transvaal and of South Africa.”

“Yea,” he said on one occasion, “when on the bloody battlefield I saw Dutchmen and Englishmen dead, my old ideal came back. Those men who had been killed together should have stood together and fought side by side for one great cause—a great South Africa.”

Campbell-Bannerman kept his promise. A Royal Commission came to South Africa. The Dutch were suspicious of it, thinking it a trick to waste time. Even Botha was doubtful of it. He would talk only Afrikaans, and took Smuts to interpret for him, help him to give evidence before it, and watch its work. But the Commission quickly drafted a constitution giving the Transvaal immediate self-government, and in December of 1906 it became law.

The first election under the new constitution was to be held immediately, and Botha and Smuts called up Het Volk. It turned out with the same enthusiasm and, except that the men carried no arms, in the same formation

as the commandos had come when called out to the war, and it worked solidly at Botha's orders. During the last two years it had been carefully organised. In every district, even in most villages, it had its local committee, its leaders, and its plans ready. In the Transvaal it was the only solid body of well-directed people with a clear aim, and its machinery was excellent.

Botha and Smuts toured the whole country. It was hard and uncomfortable work. The veld was bleak, the hotels very dingy. The transport and the railways were irregular and comfortless and the journeys long and uninteresting. The village halls were draughty and ill-lighted, a flickering lamp often the only light, but the people met them with enthusiasm. They came great distances, whole families together, in ox-wagons and horse carts, across the bleak veld to welcome them. They outspanned and squatted round the houses where they lodged. They crowded the village halls to see them and hear them speak. Politics was in their blood, in the blood of every Dutchman and Dutchwoman, and they came to win back by politics what they had lost by war.

Botha, big, broad, swarthy-faced, and black-eyed, was always even tempered, genial; always ready for a talk, a joke, or a game of cards. He received endless visitors with a ripe good humour, a slap on the back, or a kindly hand on a shoulder, a welcome in his eye. He had a prodigious memory for names and faces and he remembered all he met, their worries and their affairs. "This is a man," the people said of him.

Smuts kept to himself, was distant, usually silent, and sometimes morose. When waiting for an hotel bus to take him to the station or for the train to come in, he often stood to one side by himself, away from the crowds who had come to see them off and to wish them God-speed. If the morning was chilly, he wrapped himself in a greatcoat with the collar turned up and his hat pulled low so that only the tip of his nose showed, and he repelled any advances with gruff and curt replies. But once he was up to speak before an audience, though he was by no means an orator, he spoke with fluency and conviction because his heart was in what he said.

Het Volk candidates were elected by large majorities. Smuts was elected for the Wonderboom division of Pretoria. Botha became the first Prime Minister of the Transvaal under the British flag and made Smuts his Colonial Secretary and his Minister of Education.

Botha and Smuts had become the rulers of the Transvaal.

PART III

CHAPTER XXV

BOTHA and Smuts were the rulers of the Transvaal and the almost absolute rulers, for they had a large majority. Behind them on the Government benches in the Parliament sat row upon row of the commando leaders from the war, mostly those who had not surrendered until the end of the war, "bitter-enders" some, with a sprinkling of young Afrikander lawyers amongst them, and beyond these the whole active organisation of Het Volk, which was stretched out over the Transvaal like a small-meshed net and controlled far out in the veld down to the smallest township; and all looked to Botha and obeyed as if he was still the Commandant-General of the active force in the field.

Smuts rushed eagerly to work, to his old offices, to rule where the Republic used to rule, hurrying to push out the English officials imported by Milner, his "kindergarten" of supercilious young men, and to put right all the things Milner had done wrong.

He had a free hand, for almost at once Botha went to attend an imperial conference in London and Smuts acted as Prime Minister. But he was surprised to find that the organisation of the young English officials and the principles on which the English administration were run were excellent.

The administration was, however, too top-heavy, and he sorted out the surplus officials and bundled them back to England. Milner had dissolved the commando system, by which each ward was placed under a field-cornet and made responsible for its own police duties, and had created a large constabulary mainly officered by Englishmen. Smuts reduced the constabulary down to a small police force and reconstructed part of the old system.

Thinking that the good old family days of President Kruger had come back, relatives and friends of important people, political supporters, helpers in the election, all manner of hangers-on, came flocking in looking for jobs, for pickings, and scraps.

Smuts with money and with jobs was utterly honest: honest beyond any question of compromise, even beyond allowing his party organisers to do what he would not do himself while he looked the other way. It would have been politic to keep supporters friendly with gifts of a few government appointments: such things were accepted as part of the tactics of politics.

Smuts would not countenance it. He packed the job-hunters roughly off: he was not going to have a repetition of the old scandals of Kruger's cronies from which he had suffered in the old days; he was not going to allow the work of the Government to be held up and made less efficient by job-holders. He told the job-hunters brusquely to move off and find work for themselves elsewhere, the Government had nothing for them; and instead he cut down expenses in all directions.

He worked with prodigious energy, a fury of energy, a release of all the energy which had been corded and locked down since the war. He spent long hours in his offices, up to the ears in books, papers, documents. He left little to his subordinates—he was as ever distrustful of delegating work to subordinates.

Excepting Botha, none of his colleagues was of great value, and he took over all he could, doing everything that came his way, and equally ready to handle the unpleasant with the pleasant; so that it seemed to be always Smuts who was up in the House answering questions, replying to the Opposition, and piloting through bills: the government seemed to be Smuts.

The quantity of the work he undertook and the persistent strain—for he never relaxed, never stopped working, or turned to play for a while—told on his temper—his impatient temper—and on his nerves. He was young and inexperienced in parliamentary procedure. The long speeches, the complicated and aimless formalities, the questions, the talk—very soon the parliament was called *Praatfontein*, the Talking Shop—drove him to fury. He wanted everything done there and then and at once, without wasting of time. He was as a result often tactless, even ill-natured, in public. On one occasion the leader of the Opposition complained to the Speaker that Smuts was discourteous. Smuts half apologised but denied his discourtesy and added a piece of sarcasm as caustic as the original discourtesy. A little later he turned on one of the Opposition saying he had done some "dirty work." The Speaker forced him this time to apologise, and then he was aggrieved and eventually lost his temper because his speech was interrupted.

As he handled more responsibility he became more imperious, and with power he became impatient of opposition, of any sort of opposition, whether in his office or in the parliament. He would compromise with no one. He had strong views and held them boldly, for he was convinced that he was right. Only now and again he became doubtful. He told another politician that he was nervous of taking office, for he had had little experience. But when such doubts came creeping up through him, some of the old doubts he had as a boy suffering from an acute inferiority sense—that perhaps he was

wrong, that perhaps he was on the wrong road—he crushed them down and pushed all the more fiercely to get his way, and by his very violence forced himself to know that he was right. He did not care what enemies he made, so long as he got his ends and got things done. Kruger and Rhodes had been his first instructors. Both had been autocrats. He would be as masterful as they had been.

Almost at once he faced up to the Dutch Reformed Church. Milner had used the schools to spread English ideas and to teach English. To prevent this attempt to make their children English, the Dutch had formed the Christian National Education League, which had set up private and religiously run schools of its own. The League was holding its annual congress in Pretoria. The delegates consisted largely of pastors and had the full support of the Dutch Reformed Church behind them. The Dutch, especially the country folk who were stout and sour Calvinists, were solidly religious. The pastors and the Church were the most important things in their lives, and the pastor's word was as strong as law.

The delegates at the congress demanded of the new Dutch Government that their schools should be given grants by the State, that religion, and religion as laid down by the Dutch Reformed Church, should be taught in all schools, and that the learning of Afrikaans, their national local Dutch language, should be made compulsory.

Smuts did not agree. He had his own ideas on education. As a boy and at Stellenbosch he had been religious and he had intended to be a pastor. That stage had passed. Religion had ceased to be the overriding principle in his life. In moments of deep feeling or emotion, sometimes at a critical juncture, he used the name of God in a speech, but often it was to impress a religious audience. He was accused by the extremists of being irreligious. The pastors said that he was a free-thinker. Before one political meeting in a distant township he was warned by his supporters that he would be heckled about his religion. He opened the meeting with a prayer and avoided the heckling. Of one thing he was sure, he was not going to allow any pastors or any Church to dictate. He stumped down to the congress and told the delegates briefly that he would be no party to any reactionary Dutch move: English and Dutch must live together; their schools would not get grants, nor would the schools of any one section of the community; and he said that "the educational system of this country shall not be run by the Churches." The Dutch Church and the pastors did not forget this or forgive him. Later he passed an Education Bill which put all education under government control,

made English compulsory—for he looked on English as the language of commerce and expansion—and Afrikaans optional.

He had no more respect for the mine-magnates and the millionaires of Johannesburg. His own opinion of Johannesburg was low. A Cape politician had called it "a moral cesspool." He agreed and added it had "an atmosphere entirely devoid of culture." As soon as he returned from England Botha gave orders to commence the repatriation of the Chinese. The mine-magnates protested: they said it would ruin the mines; they fought the question in the parliament; they threatened to close the mines. It was a fight between the government and the rich mine-magnates of Johannesburg, almost a repetition of part of the fight between Kruger and the Uitlanders: whether there should be two powers in the State or one; whether the rich men or the government should rule.

Smuts cut straight in. He would not discuss it. The government should be the only power to rule in the Transvaal. He threatened to take over the mines and run them himself. The mine-magnates withdrew their opposition and the Chinese were sent home by degrees, but the mine-magnates bore Smuts a grudge. The Johannesburg newspapers disliked him. The *Rand Daily Mail* marked him down as "the dangerous man of the Cabinet."

As time went on he became more and more irritated by opposition. At meetings he answered interruptions very sharply. Twice Lord Selborne disagreed with his recommendations, and Smuts forced him angrily to give his consent. His own supporters criticised his manner, saying that he was as brusque and short with them as he was with the Opposition, and even when they asked for information on the estimates he did not reply except very curtly; and that he almost ignored them.

He had fought the mine-magnates. He also fought the miners, who were largely Englishmen. There was much unemployment on the Rand. A deputation asked to see Smuts. He saw them and refused their proposals. The Government gave 3*s.* 6*d.* a day for unemployed men: they could take it or leave it. "I cannot agree to any socialism," he said in reply to a question. The deputation came again, dissatisfied. He turned them away, saying that he had no time to waste on them, and that the Government would do no more. He made little attempt to understand their views, though they were prepared to be reasonable. The miners, in anger, struck. It was the first time they had combined and struck as one body. Six thousand of them came out. Smuts—now Milner's constabulary was dissolved—had nothing with which to hold them. He called out two regiments of the English garrison still in the country and forced the miners back to work. The miners, and with them the

whole Labour organisation of South Africa, marked Smuts down as their worst enemy.

One problem, for all his energy and drive, and despite his masterfulness, defeated Smuts. Large numbers of Indians, British subjects from India, had come flocking into the Transvaal. Numbers more kept coming. They were small traders. They took the trade of the white men and they lived on a lower standard, so that they could outbid the white man, and would, if left alone, reduce the standard of living of the whole population down to their own. The white men were determined that this should not be so. Kruger had reduced their immigration. It had been one of his quarrels with the British Government—that it had backed the Indians. Milner had been as strict as Kruger. Smuts was even stricter than either of them. He found that Indians were being smuggled into the Transvaal. By severe regulations he prevented this. The Indians protested. They were led by a lawyer practising in Natal, an Indian named Gandhi. Smuts was angered by the protest and was highhanded. Gandhi gently opposed him with "passive resistance"—he refused to give way or to resist. Smuts understood force and how to use it, but "passive resistance" destroyed force, it absorbed force. It was the old trick of the boxer, to withdraw from a blow and so absorb the punch and damage in the blow.

All South Africa—for the struggle affected not only the Transvaal but all South Africa—watched. India and England were watching also, and Australia was interested. The two men faced each other. Smuts, with the power to damage his opponent, obstinate, his jaw set, his eyes almost grey-blue with anger, impatient, becoming heated and irritated. Gandhi, small and dark, apparently helpless, quiet and placid, but as obstinate as Smuts, and his obstinacy had the quality of water in a pool: if beaten with a steel rod the water would move, but it was not destroyed and came back always to the same level.

Smuts tried threats and brow-beating. Gandhi remained placid. Smuts imprisoned some of the Indians. They, with Gandhi leading, went gladly to prison. When released, Gandhi gently asked to see Smuts. Smuts lost his temper and refused to see him, sent his secretary out to him with a curt dismissal, and then wrote to him in stilted official language that "he was not aware that any useful purpose would be served by the proposed interview."

Then suddenly he realised that he was faced by something he did not understand and something he could not break by his usual method, by forcing it to his will. Doubts as to whether he was on the right line weakened

him. He compromised, saw Gandhi, treated him pleasantly and with respect, and made him promises.

He was twitted and laughed at by his opponents, caricatured and made fun of in the newspapers. Smuts could not bear to be laughed at. It touched him on the raw: hurt his personal dignity. He angrily explained "the man who cannot climb down is a small and contemptible man. . . . I do not mind climbing down. . . ." but to satisfy his pride he added, "I have at the same time secured my object."

When the time came to carry out his promises, he said that Gandhi had made a mistake: he had made Gandhi no definite promises. Gandhi replied, as Conyngham Greene had replied after his talks with Smuts in Pretoria before the war, that he had "a personal promise from Smuts." Smuts denied that, saying, as he had said of Greene, that he had given no promises, only carried on a general discussion. Gandhi did not argue with Smuts, but returned to his previous methods. Smuts, hoping that time would find a solution, tried to shelve the issue, but Gandhi and the Indians kept steadily on, and the cartoonists and the Opposition papers and all his opponents laughed once again at Smuts.

But, as a whole, Smuts got his own way and established the government of the Transvaal against all who challenged it. He did it at the cost of making a host of enemies. The Dutch Reformed Church and the extreme Dutchmen in both the Transvaal and the Free State were bitter against him for his Education Bill and his liking for English. The mine-magnates and the rich men, the miners and organised labour, even some of his own political supporters, and the wire-pullers, job-hunters, with their relatives and friends, all detested him. He had ridden roughshod over them all and they watched for a chance to get him by the heel.

CHAPTER XXVI

THOUGH SMUTS seemed to be in the limelight and as if he was the whole government, yet Botha was always there. He did not appear often in the Parliament, for he was not at ease speaking English and Smuts acted for him, but without Botha at his shoulder Smuts would have made many errors, and perhaps have failed. Botha was a good business man and he believed that the real foundations of the State were land and agriculture. He was an expert farmer and he kept all questions of agriculture under his own hand. There was little money to spare, but he spent it on the farms, on importing good stock and seeds, on increasing the export of mealies, and on improving the quality of the sheep and the wool. He carried on the work founded by Milner, set up model farms and places for research work, sent young Dutch students to learn the latest methods in America, and founded a Land Bank with money which he borrowed in England and gave liberal loans to the farmers.

His work was practical and effective, but he did far more than that. He was always available with advice and help for his colleagues—and his advice was wise and sound. He was in every sense the leader. While Smuts was buried deep in his office in papers or fighting for his ends and making enemies, Botha had his house crowded with visitors of all sorts and kinds, who shared his tobacco and drank his coffee as their fathers had smoked the tobacco and drunk the coffee of President Kruger. Smuts would be curt with a delegation, or again he might walk down a street and ignore his own best supporters, looking right through them without seeing them. Or he would wander out of his office into another to find a textbook. A crowd might be waiting to see him in the ante-room. He would push his way through them, still absorbed in some problem. He would return, reading the textbook as he walked, and saying nothing to the people round him, his nose in the book, not even realising that they existed. Ruffled, angry men would come to Botha to complain of Smuts and his discourtesy, and Botha would smooth them down with soft words.

Botha had an unequalled natural ability in handling crowds, while Smuts had little. At one meeting in Pretoria, when both Botha and Smuts were on the platform, so great a crowd tried to get into the hall that many were forced to remain outside. They began to get angry and out of hand. Smuts went out to them. The crowd grew more angry, for he acted on them as an

irritant. Botha went next, and within a few minutes he had pacified the crowd.

Smuts did not seem to realise that he was unpopular. To get a fact, to attain a practical end, meant more to him than to win men over. When Botha became Prime Minister, Smuts wrote to a friend, “I might have been Premier, but considered that it would be a mistake to take precedence over Botha, who is really one of the finest men South Africa has produced.” He did not realise that brains and push, capability and energy and thrust were not the primary necessities for a leader and a premier, but that he must have human sympathy, the ability to handle men, to understand them and use their idiosyncrasies, to keep them sweet, to ease off their jealousies so that they would work in harmony, to be able to judge their characters and abilities and then to be able to delegate work to them—and these were the qualities that Smuts most conspicuously lacked and which Botha equally conspicuously possessed. A few newspapers had suggested that Smuts should be Premier and he did not realise that Het Volk and the political leaders and the people in general would not follow him, despite his brains and energy, though they would follow Botha.

The two men worked well together, but Botha kept a close eye on Smuts. As always, he was afraid of the foolishness that Smuts might do in a moment of impulsiveness or in a moment of annoyance. Sometimes, even when it was against his better judgment, for the sake of peace, he would let Smuts go his own way, but more often with a few wise words he held him back—as Kruger had held Smuts back when he was the bristling bantam cock of a young State Attorney—and so saved him from many grave errors.

CHAPTER XXVII

HARDLY had Botha and Smuts taken over control of the Transvaal from the English administration and begun to deal with its problems and to establish themselves against all opposition than they realised that the Transvaal could not stand alone. Every problem in the Transvaal was inextricably interlocked with similar problems in the rest of South Africa. The country had been split by history and circumstances into four self-ruling colonies, the Transvaal, the Free State, Natal, and the Cape, each independent and linked only by the vague and little-interested Government in England, but it was an indivisible whole. The divisions were artificial and unnatural and could not exist for long.

Milner had recognised this fact. To stave off immediate trouble he had made a temporary Customs and Tariff Convention. His policy had been to hold the colonies steady while he educated each separately: to create in each slowly and steadily a sense of fellowship with the other: to make their leaders think in terms of South Africa as a whole; to teach them loyalty to the Empire, and, when they were ready, to make them by one Act of the Parliament in England into one country.

The Liberal Government had changed this policy. They had decided that all four colonies must be self-governing and free of any supervision or even guidance from England and that they must work out their own salvation in their own way and as best they could.

Between the four colonies there had always been friction. Left now to themselves, this friction increased. With four legal systems, four governments, four railway systems, four customs systems, they disagreed hotly. The Transvaal was rich and in the centre, but shut off from the sea. All goods came to it by the ports and railways of the Cape and Natal. The Cape and Natal wished to make money by high freight rates. The Transvaal wanted low rates on commodities imported so as to keep the price of living down, but high tariffs on agricultural produce so as to protect the Transvaal farmers against the Cape. The Free State wanted high tariffs, and Natal low tariffs. Between them were growing up tariff barriers and competition. The Transvaal, though for the minute sending and receiving its goods through the Cape and Natal, saw that it would be cheaper and more convenient to use the Portuguese railway and the Portuguese port of Lourenço Marques to their east. The Portuguese offered good terms.

Again and again, from the making of the peace at Vereeniging onwards, representatives of the four colonies met in conference, but with little result except to increase the friction and to emphasise the difficulties. It was clear that the railways could be run more efficiently and cheaply if under one control; that markets could be better utilised; that tariff barriers were folly and would ruin them all; that education, justice, defence, and the handling of the natives and of the Indians would be best done from one centre and by one policy; but no one would agree. It entailed sacrifices all round which they were not prepared to make.

The friction increased. Irritation between the colonies became more pronounced. A crisis was at hand. Milner's Customs and Railways Convention was coming to an end. A conference called to discuss how to replace it failed completely. Lord Selborne with his staff made an extensive study of the situation and was dismayed to find that unless there was some form of centralisation there would be civil war, for tempers were rising. He issued a bold report emphasising the danger, the vital necessity for centralisation, and that this must be done by South Africans themselves and not by any action from England.

That report brought the crisis to a head, for it forced South Africans to realise what before they had only known. On every side the leaders began to discuss and plan: in the Cape the Prime Minister, Mr. Merriman, and the Chief Justice, de Villiers; in Natal, the leader of the government and the head of the Opposition. The Free State was "lukewarm and difficult" and, being poor, was afraid of being overlaid by the Transvaal, but at last Steyn, de Wet, and Hertzog were persuaded to agree. Some of the officials left by Milner organised societies all over the country for "closer union." The newspapers had leaders on Union across their front pages. At every public meeting and in each of the four parliaments it became the main topic. Steadily the massed sentiment of the South Africans was concentrated on Union.

Botha accepted the necessity for centralisation. He knew that the Transvaal might profit by an agreement with the Portuguese to use their ports, but he would have none of it, though he was prepared to utilise it as a pawn with which to bargain, and even as a threat. He decided to take the lead and invited the representatives of the other three colonies to meet in his house in Sunnyside. The discussions were amicable. The leaders were ready to consider Union. In May 1908 he called an Inter-Colonial Conference on Railways and Customs to Pretoria. It was a complete failure, but before it

broke up it issued a strong report advising centralisation and the calling of a general conference to discuss it at once.

What to Botha was practical and sound politics was to Smuts far more. It was the realising of a dream, and a dream that he had dreamed since he was a youth. It was his philosophy of life, his guiding principle, to see everything as part of a greater whole, each part developing and coalescing into the greater whole, which in turn was but a part of some greater whole. Each colony was but a part of South Africa, as South Africa was but a part of Africa as a whole. Jan Hofmeyr had taught him this. Rhodes with his immense vision had inspired him with it. Kruger had some of the same conception, but he had interpreted it in his own way. The big, the large conception always attracted Smuts, caught his imagination, fired him. He found it hard to be patient with detailed humdrum things. In dealing with petty things he was often petty, even mean-minded, so that an American once said of him that "he was often looking at the stars and so stumbled in the earth ruts." But a great conception brought out of him the greatness that was inherent in him. It changed his whole mentality and his whole manner. He saw Union not as a mere joining together for political and economic advantages, but the coalescing of all the white men and of the colonies in South Africa and the creation, the birth, of one great South African Nation.

Circumstances had given him the power to realise that dream. With a queer inevitableness everything played for him, and with his usual ferocious energy Smuts worked towards his object.

The first thing was to get the Transvaal behind him. This was not easy. To attain Union it would be the Transvaal which had to make the greatest sacrifices. It was rich. The other three colonies were poor and nearly bankrupt. The wealth of South Africa lay in the gold mines in the Transvaal. The other three colonies would want a share of their wealth. The mine-magnates, the miners, the farmers, and the townspeople were none of them ready to give up their advantages. There was one group of politicians who suspected that in some or other way this was a scheme made in England to take advantage of South Africa, and they stood in the way. Another, led by a young advocate, named Tielman Roos, disliked the whole conception. The Dutch disliked uniting with the English colonies of the Cape and Natal. The English suspected Smuts.

Many asked why they should unite. It was sufficient, they said, to make agreements and, if necessary, to pool railway and customs receipts.

"This is no time for patchwork arrangements," replied Smuts. "There is no alternative to Union but Separatism. We must go the whole hog one way or the other. . . . Separatism means to revert to barbarism. . . . Parties and policies will disappear, but a constitution well made will last a hundred years."

He spoke earnestly in Parliament. Fired with his convictions, he toured up and down the country, arguing and speaking. He was no longer on edge, the departmental head being heckled over his bills. He was patient and prepared to reason and he showed great powers of convincing opponents.

"We must have Union," he said at one meeting. "Two such people as the Dutch and the English must unite or try to exterminate each other. There is only one road to salvation . . . the road to Union . . . to a South African Nation."

The farmers demanded more protection and tariffs. He replied "I will not build a ring fence round the Transvaal . . . to exclude our brother South Africans."

To the leaders of Het Volk: "Our road is to form a great South African Nation. . . . We must build up a new great nation."

His dream had become more than a dream. It had become an article of faith. In speeches and letters he preached his faith. "Ay!" he repeated. "When on the bloody battlefield 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." To de Villiers he wrote: "You approach the subject from the broadest standpoint, but many others approach it from a purely material or selfish point of view—and just there the danger lies. For from a purely selfish point of view the Transvaal has little to gain from Union. Economically the strongest factor in the South African situation, it is also largely independent of any particular colony, and can therefore view the situation with comparative equanimity. Hence the chief danger and opposition will always come from the Transvaal. . . . But I do not despair. We who love South Africa as a whole, who have our ideal of her, who wish to substitute the idea of a United 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."

The Convention of all the Colonies was summoned to meet in Durban. Smuts cleared his mind and studied all the Union and Federal constitutions available, American and English. He decided exactly what he wanted—Union; to get a national parliament and a national executive in place of the present four, and leave them to deal with all questions. He prepared his scheme. For details he employed the best brains he could find, mainly the officials Milner had left behind, such men as Mr. Patrick Duncan, Mr. Philip Kerr, who conceived many of the ideas and organised much of the propaganda, and Mr. Lionel Curtis, who was a combination of a dreamer and a man of action, and who was the driving force behind the whole move towards Union. He had all ready down to the smallest details, with facts and figures and illustrations and parallels to be quoted and with answers, and alternative compromises to meet every possible objection. From these he prepared a general memorandum, which he sent round to the leaders in all the other colonies, asking for comments, and from these again he completed his final scheme and discussed it with the principal leaders such as Merriman and de Villiers and obtained their approval, so that by the time the Convention opened he was primed and ready.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE delegates from the Transvaal travelled down from Johannesburg to Durban by train. As well as Botha and Smuts there were the Englishmen who led the Opposition and represented the mining interests, and the old fighting-man, de la Rey, who knew nothing about law and procedure, who had not grasped even the significance of the meaning of this convention, and who was contemptuous of all conventions and discussions, having only one formula for deciding argument, and that was: "People talk too much. Take your rifle," but whose support was necessary because his prestige stood very high with all the Dutch and he represented the outlook of the back-veld farmers.

The train crossed the bare treeless steppe of the veld and then meandered down from the plateau between the soft green hills of Natal. Smuts sat in an easy-chair in one corner of the observation car. As usual, he was reading documents and papers and making notes with a pencil, but he was a very different Smuts from the liverish and impatient man who, during the last few months, both in his office and in the Parliament at Pretoria, had been short-tempered and overbearing. When it suited or pleased him, he could be an interesting and pleasant companion, and if he would take the trouble he could be a genial and absorbing talker. He was relaxed now and peaceful. Now and then he looked out of the window with interest. Several times he opened a discussion on general subjects, not connected with the papers in front of him.

As they came to Ladysmith and the battlefields of the war and crossed the Tugela River, Botha began to point out places of interest: Dundee, Colenso, Spion Kop. As he described, pointing out this position and that, he warmed up to his subject. He knew every inch of the ground. He had commanded here. He described the battles, the movements of the men, the courage of the Dutch, the sacrifices of the English. He grew enthusiastic explaining his own part, how that Piet Joubert and then Lucas Meyer, the nominal commanders, had not really commanded and how the effective work had been his. His dark face and black eyes lit up with excitement.

Close beside him, giving his queer sensation of stillness, and looking out of the window, pipe in mouth, his only movement an occasional stroking with his left hand of his square-cut brown beard, sat de la Rey. For a while he said nothing, his eyes shrouded. Suddenly he looked up fiercely at Botha

and interrupted. Speaking slowly, with a measured candidness, his voice still and icy with contempt, he made light of each incident which Botha had described: Botha's "gallery play," as he called it. That Botha, twenty years younger than himself and without fighting experience, had in the war been put over him and was now trying to teach him how to fight stirred up his bile.

The attack was sudden and unexpected and quenched Botha's enthusiasm like cold water on a red-hot blade. He was staggered by the criticisms. He was a proud man and very sensitive to anything that humiliated him. His anger flared up. His eyes flashed and his face went sallow with emotion. He bit his lower lip in an effort to keep control, but de la Rey went steadily on. There was an awkward, uncomfortable silence in the coach, with everyone waiting for Botha to burst out, and the only sound above the roar of the train was the steady voice of de la Rey.

From his corner Smuts looked up once, his pale-blue eyes wide open, taking in the whole situation, and then he went on reading as if there was nothing the matter. After a while he slewed round and with a preoccupied air asked a question about some government business, pointing to a paper he was holding in his hand. The question broke the silence and cut across de la Rey's discourse. The others began to talk. De la Rey, temporarily put out of his stride, came back, however, to his subject. He criticised Botha's handling of his men and his tactics. He asked Botha a question and trapped him in the answer, and then showed how he had let the English at one point get away, when he ought to have wiped them out. Smuts started up another discussion and still with the preoccupied air of being in a difficulty over something in the papers in front of him, and when de la Rey would not stop he told him a story with a joke in it, laughed heartily himself, and made the others laugh with him. Without appearing to interfere actively he gradually eased Botha and de la Rey apart, until the tension had slackened off.

Smuts was acting and acting well, and he was acting with all his ingenuity and all his skill. He was playing for big stakes. There must be no quarrels amongst the Transvaal delegates. A quarrel, especially a personal quarrel of this sort, might complicate and upset everything. A quarrel was a thing to be used as a manœuvre: it must be for some advantage. This personal quarrel seemed to him almost criminal in being useless and senseless, just friction which wasted time and effort. He worked to side-step it. He talked de la Rey off on to another line and led Botha shrewdly away and smoothed down his hurt feelings.

Smuts had no illusions about the difficulties ahead in Durban. There would be plenty of opposition and plenty of quarrels there. He must keep the Transvaal delegation at least solidly together.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CONVENTION met in the Town Hall. It was strictly South African. Even the High Commissioner, Lord Selborne, was not present. De Villiers from the Cape presided, helped by Steyn from the Free State. The population of Durban and the surrounding country crowded the streets and the town was on fiesta. To show its approval and good wishes—but with no intention of taking any part, for this was something for South Africans to decide for themselves—the Imperial Government sent two cruisers, which fired a salute of welcome.

The large majority of the delegates came without even the vaguest notions of what they wanted. They came to discuss and argue and to beat out some general ideas, which they could take away and ponder over. A few understood that immediate decisions were vitally necessary. But one man and one man only knew exactly and in detail what he wanted, and that man was Jan Smuts.

As soon as the debates began, many difficulties appeared. The vast majority of the delegates had come because they had been forced to come, not because they wanted to come. For many any centralisation meant the end of their careers as politicians; most had relations in the various civil services and on the railways and customs staffs; some of these would be put out of employment: they were not prepared to make such personal sacrifices. Some came to procrastinate: they would avoid making final decisions; they remembered conventions of this sort before which had lasted for years and produced no results.

Smuts himself was a queer mixture. Men like Botha and de la Rey and Kruger were great because in their aims and their characters they were essentially simple. Smuts was very complex. It was always hard to understand the reasons for his actions or to follow the turns and twists and the subtle weavings of his brain. He loved South Africa with a great passion. He worked for South Africa with a spirit of idealism akin to fanaticism. He believed that Union was not only essential, but that it was able to lift South Africa up to greatness. Yet he did not forget his own interests. He loved power. He had ruled the Transvaal. He was determined to rule on the large scale of all South Africa united into one. His opponents said that he loved South Africa and wished to make her great, provided that Jan Smuts and

only Jan Smuts had the guiding. One wit wrote a piece of doggerel, which ran:

Jannie is for South Africa
One and great and free.
"But," he says, "if you want it so
You must leave it all to me."

This mixture of personal interest and idealism gave him a tremendous driving force and a sense of the practical.

When he had the power to enforce his will, Smuts was overbearing and autocratic and trampled roughshod over opposition, but when he had not the power he would be accommodating and ready to persuade, and once he had set out to persuade, he became almost hypnotic in his ability to convince. He had persuaded the obstinate burghers at Vereeniging to agree to peace terms. He had persuaded solid old Campbell-Bannerman, who was prepared to be critical and even suspicious of him, that if he gave immediate self-government to the Transvaal he would not be taking an undue risk. He had come to Durban to get the four colonies to give up their separate parliaments and reduce them into provincial councils, to unite and to transfer the work of ruling to a central parliament and a central executive. He could not force them to agree; so he set to work to persuade them.

It was October when the Convention met and the summer had come. The gardens of Durban were full of flowers, great tropical blooms and palms, and along every wall, where the lizards hunted, there were scarlet bougainvilleas. The broad streets glared up between the white houses in the eye-piercing white sunlight. From the Indian Ocean the wind drifted in heavy with damp; occasionally a storm of rain which the sun licked up as a mist; so that all the air was languorous and for men every movement was a weary effort.

The delegates felt the effects. They became languid, often liverish and irritable, querulous, and unable to make up their minds. But Smuts was unaffected. He took more care of his appearance than the average Dutchman: his moustache clipped, his beard cut to a point. He wore a dark suit, with a hard-fronted shirt and a wing-collar, and a waistcoat with a gold chain across it, and he made no difference because of the heat, for it did not

seem to affect him or at any rate to distress him as it did the other delegates. While the others became woolly in thought and speech he remained clear, lucid, and forceful.

He had everything ready and thought out. As he had his plan clear cut, and the rest of the delegates had only vague notions, his plan became the basis of the discussion. He remained always at hand and behind him was a staff of nineteen advisers, all experts on their own subjects, so that when any difficulty arose he was ready to handle it.

His line of action was to get the general principles fixed and to leave the future Union Parliament to discuss difficulties of details. To get his end he was prepared to make promises, even if those promises could not be carried out: for him the end justified the means. He promised that Union would reduce taxation and government expenses, but he took no steps to see it was done. Each colony was suspicious that once its parliament had been reduced to a provincial council its power would disappear. Smuts promised that the provincial councils should in practice be provincial parliaments. This could not have worked into the general plan, and a few months later he told Piet Grobler that they ought never to have been left.

Through those hot days he never relaxed. He had an object—Union—and his mind kept down that track without looking to the right or to the left. He worked with unabated energy and at top pace. He was always ready, propelling the Convention in the direction he wanted it to go, and yet not too obtrusively or enough to raise opposition to his methods. With infinite patience he kept the delegates away from details. One wanted women to have a vote. Smuts agreed, but suggested that they should wait until the women asked for votes. There were frequent deadlocks on the big essential principles, and then he would ask for time, discuss the difficulty overnight with his staff, and by the morning meeting have found a solution. Often the solution was a piece of clever wording, a piece of draughtsmanship only, but it satisfied the delegates. There was the problem of a capital for United South Africa. Each colony wanted the capital. Smuts wanted it at Pretoria, but realising that he could not get that, he persuaded the delegates to have three capitals: the Legislative Capital at Cape Town, where the Parliament would sit six months of the year; the Executive Capital in Pretoria, where the government offices would be centred; and the Law Courts in the Free State at Bloemfontein. On the questions of the official language and of the rights of the natives, the Convention became so heated that it seemed about to break down. Smuts begged for delay. Steyn and the English representatives from the Transvaal came to an agreement. Between them

they persuaded the delegates to make Dutch and English equal and to leave the native problem to the future Union Parliament.

Smuts acted as spokesman for the Transvaal delegates, but Botha was always behind him, backing him whole-heartedly. Smuts, with his agile brain and his quick manner, made men suspicious of him. Botha gave those round him a sense of trust and confidence in what he said and did. Smuts, they felt, was "slim" and crafty; Botha was sound and reliable. Many a time the delegates took Botha's word and agreed to a proposition which, had Smuts been alone, they would have refused with suspicion. The two men held the whip hand, for they controlled the wealth that the Transvaal could offer. Botha promised that when Union was complete he would pool the wealth of the Transvaal. That promise, coming from him, carried more weight than any other argument before the Convention.

Many of the delegates were difficult to handle, but by far the most difficult were the Dutch delegates from the Free State—Steyn, de Wet, and Hertzog, in particular. Steyn was the influence behind them. He was half blind and half paralysed since the war, physically a wreck of a man, but he was as bitter and salty and as unbroken in hostility as ever. Every South African Dutchman was by nature constitutionally jealous of any other Dutchman who succeeded. With this queer inherent jealousy Steyn and every Dutchman in the Free State envied their brother Dutchmen in the Transvaal and resented the position taken up by Botha and Smuts. Steyn felt that Botha and Smuts were taking too much upon themselves.

Against Botha, de Wet had a personal grudge. He had been annoyed, like many of the older men, that a young man had been put over him in the war. De Wet was loud and boastful—the Baboon, they called him—and he had boasted often of his raids. Botha had criticised the value of his raids, and he had brooded over those criticisms. When Botha went to the Imperial Conference, he had attacked him openly, and when Botha came back, he had said that he had become anglicised, had been fooled and ruined by the English.

Hertzog, Steyn's particular favourite and the most capable of the Free State delegates, was opposed to both Botha and Smuts. He was an attorney with weak gestures and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, but as full of jealousy as Steyn himself. As Smuts' ideas were large and expanding, his were small and contracting. He had the mentality of the old-time Dutchman.

He believed that South Africa was for the Dutch alone. He hated the English. He believed in small states and not in union or centralisation. He had criticised Botha and Smuts for making peace at Vereeniging and claimed that he would have fought on, if they had not forced his hand. As soon as the Free State was given self-government, he had ejected all Milner's officials wholesale and at once, and criticised Smuts for not doing the same. When Smuts made English compulsory and Afrikaans voluntary in the Transvaal, he made them equal in the Free State and, urged on by the Dutch Reformed Church, had accused Smuts of injuring Dutch interests. While Smuts had preached that English and Dutch must live together and eventually unite into one nation, Hertzog had preached with equal energy that they must live apart. The two men were in many ways alike—both lawyers, both hard workers, with no relaxation or outside interests to give them a little of the milk of human kindness and understanding of human weaknesses. Both were ambitious and determined to have power. But in all else, in their outlook, mentality, and their objects, they were antagonists. They irritated each other to distraction. Though with the other delegates Smuts was able to force himself to be patient, with Hertzog, when they disagreed, as they did frequently during the Convention, he grew hot and angry.

The Free State delegates were against Union, but they were afraid of being isolated, and they could do nothing but agree.

Gradually the difficulties were overcome, side-stepped, or postponed, and the delegates turned towards Union, and Union such as Smuts proposed. Smuts made an appeal to them. Despite the practice and experience of the last few years he was still on ordinary occasions a poor speaker, stilted in his wording, awkward in his gestures, his voice high-pitched, monotonous, and nasal, and he was unable to grip his audience. Now, as at Vereeniging, he was so convinced, so intense in his conviction that Union was right, that as he spoke the words came easily and convincingly, and his awkwardness fell from him as if it had been a tight waistcoat suddenly ripped off, giving him freedom to expand.

He spoke out clearly and decisively to the attentive delegates. He begged them to think only of principles and to forget the material difficulties. "The passage of time will destroy the value of material things," he said, "but principles will remain." He begged that the constitution should be made

flexible and not rigid. He quoted from half a dozen other constitutions, from that of the United States of America and of Australia, of England and Canada, to illustrate his points and to prove that Union was better than any Federation. He urged them to decide now and at once and warned them that any drifting would mean disaster in the near future. His voice dropped a tone from its high pitch to a fuller note and rang out decisively. “Think well on into the future. Make a constitution under which South Africa will live for generations . . . a constitution which will stand and weather the storms that will burst over South Africa . . . a constitution which will be the final pact, the final treaty of peace between the white races. . . . Let us trust each other and in that trust work for the future and the greatness of South Africa.”

The delegates of the Convention agreed to Union. A number of committees on which Smuts was the important member prepared the draft in legal terms. The Convention moved to Cape Town and Bloemfontein and decided on the final form. This was sent to the four local parliaments. The Cape, the Transvaal, and the Free State passed it. Natal, not satisfied that the whole thing had not been engineered by a few politicians for their own ends without the knowledge and consent of the people, held a referendum, but by a great majority the people voted for Union. A delegation of all the leading men, headed by Botha and Smuts, took it to London. The Imperial Parliament debated the draft and gave its consent. King Edward VII signed it, and in December 1909 it became law.

CHAPTER XXX

BOTHA and Smuts returned to the Transvaal. They had been made much of in London. The King had sent for Botha privately to Buckingham Palace and told him that he wished him to be the first Premier of the Union of South Africa. Botha and Smuts had both been consulted on the choice of a Governor-General and they had advised Lord Gladstone.

There was much to be done in the Transvaal to prepare for the change. Among other things there was a large surplus in the Transvaal treasury. Smuts decided to use twenty thousand pounds of this to give all the members of the Transvaal Parliament about to be dissolved a present of three hundred pounds each.

This raised a howl of protest. Senators of the Upper House, politicians in opposition, mine-magnates, ministers from the other colonies who said that Botha's promise to pool all assets included this money, even members of the Opposition in the House of Commons in London protested.

But the reasonable, patient, compromising Smuts of the Convention was gone. He had no need in the Transvaal to compromise or be patient. He had the power to enforce his will and he meant to have his way. The Transvaal had, he said, of all the colonies made the greatest sacrifices: before Union was completed the people of the Transvaal should get what was theirs; he meant to see that the members of the Transvaal Parliament should not go away disgruntled.

He would listen to no protests. He passed a Bill through the Lower House. Being sure that the senators would hold it up he unearthed an old law and on its authority requested the Governor to sign. A number of taxpayers took it to law. The Courts decided it was illegal. Smuts found a legal quibble that covered him: he jockeyed the Governor into signing, and paid over the money.

He followed this up by allotting the remaining surplus to constructing a Union Building on the hill above Sunnyside, a magnificent building on a magnificent site looking down over Pretoria. It cost one and a half million pounds. He had wished to make Pretoria the capital. He had proposed to make it at least the place where the Union Parliament should sit, but de Villiers had vetoed that and given the position to Cape Town; but the offices

and the administration were to be in Pretoria. With his unrelenting persistency Smuts kept to his original object. He calculated that by constructing such a building to house the administration, Pretoria would become the most important centre and perhaps eventually the sole capital of South Africa. But his high-handedness and his autocratic actions did him no service at this moment and often they were thrown in his teeth.

Lord Gladstone as Governor-General arrived in Cape Town early in May 1910. The Act of Union was timed to come into force on the 31st May, but there would be no elections until later in the year. A government had to be formed, and the problem was to know who should be Premier.

Lord Gladstone asked for reports of public opinion, sent out inquiries round the countryside, consulted all the leading men, including Smuts. It was clear that only two men stood out. Merriman, the Englishman, who was Premier of the Cape, and Louis Botha. Smuts was not in the running: he had little following: and he strongly urged Lord Gladstone to choose Botha. Only a handful, including Steyn and Hertzog and de Wet, more in jealous opposition to Botha than anything else, backed Merriman. Lord Gladstone chose Botha.

At once Botha constructed a cabinet. He had to take men from all the old colonies. Hertzog he made Minister of Justice, but he did it unwillingly and only because it was politic. To Hull, an Englishman from Johannesburg, he gave Finance. Out of nine posts he gave the three important ones of Interior, Mines, and Defence to Smuts.

In the elections in September his supporters were returned by a large majority to the first Union Parliament.

Botha and Smuts ruled all South Africa.

PART IV

CHAPTER XXXI

BOTHA and Smuts, as they had been the rulers of the Transvaal, were now the rulers of all South Africa united.

Union seemed an assured success. All through the country the people rejoiced. The Dutch parties of the old colonies, Het Volk of the Transvaal, the Orangia Unie of the Free State, the Bond of the Cape, and the majority of the Dutch of Natal, dissolved their old organisations and united into one party—the South African Party—and made Botha and Smuts their leaders. The Opposition was small, only enough to act as a critical audience. All through South Africa there seemed to be a new spirit of tolerance. Dutchmen from one province were kindly towards Dutchmen from another province. Dutchmen and Englishmen met on the best of terms: on better terms than they had met for half a century. The ancient rivalries, the Jameson Raid, the war, seemed to have been forgotten. All thought that a new era had begun, that a new nation had been created; that they were marching together to greatness and prosperity.

Botha and Smuts had their hands full of work. They had to create the machinery for the new organisation as well as to carry on the day-to-day business of ruling and of legislating for the future.

The two men had grown used to each other's ways. Smuts was the professional politician, whose absorbing interest and whose trade was politics. Botha was the country squire gone to politics, who because of his qualities had been accepted without question as the leader.

Botha had little education or culture, but a breadth of vision, together with common sense and a balanced judgment and "a natural tact due to an innate sympathy for men, so that he understood them and summed them up quickly and correctly. . . . He did not analyse men, but he had an instinctive knowledge of character and motive." Smuts had the hardness and brilliance of steel. He had a great knowledge of the facts of law and history, a memory well stored and always as ready as a good card index. The one man supplemented the deficiencies of the other. As time went on the one rarely acted without consulting the other.

Most of the work came on to Smuts' shoulders. Botha went to London to an Imperial Conference. Smuts, in addition to his own three posts, acted also for Botha. When he returned, Botha was often very unwell. Brought up and

living in the open on his farm, on horseback from dawn to sunset, he found that the closeness and inaction of an office quickly ruined his digestion. He suffered from colitis. Travelling on boats, eating haphazardly in country inns or in hotels in England, did not suit him. He was poisoned by some bad food—ptomaine poisoning—and took months to throw off the effects. Smuts, the pasty-faced, weakly lad of Riebeek West, had, on the other hand, grown into a strong man. Office life suited him. Though often liverish, he was always in tremendous health and he had the bustling arrogance of the very healthy. He took on all duties on which he could lay his hands. In an incredibly short time he had the new machinery of government ready and working.

Like every Dutchman, he had deep down in him the instinct to own land, and he bought a piece at Irene—the place close outside Pretoria to which he had marched with a few hundred burghers to oppose Lord Roberts' advance in 1900. In the bare, empty, rolling veld between Johannesburg and Pretoria it was a little oasis, where there was a stream of water and some mimosa and willow trees. He bought an old tin-roofed bungalow, erected it on his land and moved in with his wife and five children, planted a garden, and began to make a farm. His father had been ill and was bedridden; so he went often to Riebeek West to see the old man, but the rest of his spare time he spent at Irene—and he did not encourage guests.

But hard on the heels of the original optimism of the people there came reaction. Each province had made great sacrifices for Union; they now asked what they had gained: the taxes were no less; the expenses of government had not been reduced; the railways might run more cheaply, but many of the railwaymen had been thrown out of work. Each province wanted to know why it did not get a larger share of money. Between them the old rivalries broke out again like half-healed wounds which had been torn open and were more painful and angry than before, because they had been half healed. The other three provinces were suspicious of the Transvaal: they suspected that the Transvaal meant to dominate; already Botha was Premier, Smuts had three posts, and Hull, the Treasurer, was from Johannesburg.

From every side there came criticism: that the Government did little; that it had no united or constructive policy, but was pulled in different ways and so was impotent, which was not unnatural, since it consisted of men with little in common. Hull, the Treasurer, quarrelled with another cabinet minister and resigned, and Smuts gave up two posts and became Minister of

Finance but kept Defence. Members in the House protested: it was folly, they said, to combine a spending department with the Treasury; Smuts had never shown any financial ability; he had no experience of business; the financial houses distrusted and disliked him. They repeated their demand to know why he had spent the reserves in the Transvaal treasury on gifts to his supporters and on buildings in Pretoria. They maintained that the money was the property of the whole Union. They refused to pass some of Smuts' financial proposals; but the Government, though defeated, ignored defeat and carried on.

The pressure of the work which Smuts had undertaken was enormous. At first he rushed at it and revelled in it. He drove his staff without pity. He had even less pity on himself. Every morning he was early at work in his office. In the afternoons, evenings, and often late into the night while Parliament sat, he was in his place in the House. He rarely left his seat. He had meals in the House and talked politics while he ate. If he did go out it was to consult or advise someone or to verify a reference from documents. In a difficulty he might walk up and down in the Lobby, his head thrust forward, his eyes on the floor, ignoring anyone there, refusing to be interrupted, thinking out a solution.

His enemies, the Labour Members, together with those who represented the financial and mining interests and the Dutch Church, kept at him, holding him up with questions, nagging at him, asking for information which often it was clear they did not really need. Their opposition irritated him. That, in order to embarrass him, they deliberately wasted his time—"his precious time"—and held up the work of the Government made him seethe with anger. Often he refused to answer or to supply the information which they demanded. When they persisted, he pretended to read the papers on the desk in front of him, or he sat and glared at his opponents across the House, his blue eyes angry and resentful.

He became arrogant once more. More than once when Members demanded a discussion on some subject, he shrugged his shoulders, and though they protested and shouted at him he ignored them. Members even of his own party criticised his autocratic ways, and it became a stock joke to describe South Africa as "a democracy—but with apologies to Jan Smuts."

He resented criticism, and often showed it. Sometimes he would accept amendments to his bills, but more often he would not give way even on the smallest detail. He would not compromise and come to terms, and, as he would not unbend, his opponents grew more obstinate and stiff-necked. Then Smuts would fight, his chin set and pushed out, steadily contesting

every point, on into the small hours of the morning, and get his way by sheer persistency and the physical ability to wear his opponents down. Strong and tough as he was, yet it told on him. Often his face was drawn and weary, and there were heavy circles under his eyes.

He continued to make enemies. With casual acquaintances he was reserved and off-hand. He could, when he wished, be the most charming and courteous of companions, but it was impossible beforehand to tell what line he would take. Without any warning or apparent reason he might at a social function or a dinner ignore an important man beside him and open himself out to some youth or young woman. More often he was charming because he needed something—a vote, support, some information. When this was so, he could never conceal his motive and once he had what he wanted, he retreated into himself and his companion ceased to exist for him.

Experience did not teach him the wisdom of handling deputations with patience. They might come from long distances and their members in their own areas be men of importance, used to respect, and they went in to Smuts expecting to be heard with deference. He would treat them with impatient brusqueness so that they would come out ruffled and angry. Smuts' secretaries, however, had grown wise, and one would wait outside in the passage, and, if the deputation was clearly annoyed, would hurry into Botha's office and beg him to see them, and Botha would put them at their ease and send them away contented.

On one occasion a water board from a distant district, led by its president, came to see Smuts.

"Must I see them?" asked Smuts when his secretary told him. He was reading papers at his desk. Papers he loved. A deputation of human beings was an interruption, and an intrusion.

The deputation was shown in—old, grey-bearded, grave Dutchmen from the veld: men with much dignity and conscious of their own importance. Smuts met them half-across his room so that he did not have to ask them to sit down. "Will you go down the passage? It is the fourth door on the right. Mr. X. will deal with your case," he said, as he shook hands with them and showed them through the door all in one hustle.

The deputation came out boiling with anger, their dignity hurt. The secretary was waiting outside and ushered them tactfully in to Botha, who greeted them genially and gave them chairs. "Sit down, sit down," and he drew up a seat specially for the president. "Come, fill up your pipes and let us hear what is toward"; and he talked and listened, so that each member of

the deputation got the impression that he was the only man in the world Botha wanted to consult.

They left the offices saying: “Man! Who told us to see that Smuts? We will never go near him again. But Botha! Now, that is a man.”

Smuts did not understand the value of personal contacts. Often when Botha had been sitting on his stoep talking, Smuts would upbraid him, as he had upbraided Kruger, for wasting his time with people of no importance, saying that a letter would have been sufficient. But a letter would not have been sufficient, and Botha knew that, and Smuts did not.

CHAPTER XXXII

BEYOND all these troubles, the parliamentary squabbles, the fighting over bills, the personal frictions, there was, however, a great storm banking up. Between the Dutch and the English the old jealousies were reviving. Their friendship after the Union had been only a brief truce. Once more they were coming to loggerheads. It could be seen in each of the old provinces. The Dutch Reformed Church supplied the impulse. The centre was in the Free State. Against it Botha and Smuts worked desperately. They pleaded for co-operation between the two white races, but the friction increased, and there were many who used it to their own private advantage.

When deciding on the membership of his Cabinet, Botha had been pressed to include James Hertzog as the representative of the Free State. He did not want Hertzog and he disliked and looked down on him. Usually good-natured, Botha when he did dislike soon hated, and then he hated with virulence. He hated Hertzog. He would have nothing to do with him.

Smuts and Hertzog were to each other as fire and water. They were so alike and yet so different, that they could never agree.

Smuts was prepared to fight a bill through the House—that was a politician's work. He made enemies but without realising it. But when it came to an open personal quarrel, as always he avoided it, unless it had some practical value. He would not let his personal feelings spoil his work. Hertzog was necessary in the Cabinet. Botha would not deal with Hertzog; so, taking a grip of himself and holding down his dislike, Smuts tried to come to terms with Hertzog. He asked Hertzog to his house, was friendly with him, and over a meal, using all persuasions, he offered him a lucrative post as a judge. Hertzog refused at once, for he had planned out a clear line of action for himself. He saw the reaction coming and the Dutch hostility to the English. He had already been asked to lead the Dutch reactionaries and replied that he would, but they must wait until the time was suitable. He decided to bide his time, quietly and secretly. He would jockey Botha and Smuts into the wrong, choose his opportunity, and come out as the champion of the Dutch.

Having failed to get Hertzog to withdraw out of politics, Smuts persuaded Botha to take him into the government as Minister of Justice.

From that moment Hertzog worked cleverly, always making it obvious that he was upholding the rights of the Dutch and implying that Botha and Smuts were selling these to the English. He did not quarrel openly, but he worked with a pleasant manner and an innocent air. A Dutch paper, *Die Week*, which was opposed to the Government, gave his views. The English attacked him. He retaliated fiercely and made sure that all the Dutch knew what he had done.

All through the years 1911 and 1912, while still a member of the Cabinet, he prepared his ground by working against Botha and Smuts. Botha proposed a contribution to the Imperial Navy: Hertzog told his friends it was "folly" and that the proposal had the English capitalists of the Rand behind it. Botha wished to give state aid for immigration: Hertzog called this "unpatriotic, anti-national, and a crime against South Africa." When taxed with disloyalty to the rest of the Cabinet he blandly expressed surprise.

Botha grew angry. He showed his dislike of Hertzog openly. He treated him with suspicion, ignored him, refused to confide in him. Hertzog made a grievance of this, as if Botha was the aggressor and he was a poor innocent, misunderstood.

Botha, seeing that the irritation between the Dutch and the English was being worked up into hatred again, toured the country, preaching that the two white races should merge into one stream. Hertzog judged that at last his time had come. Steyn and Merriman were encouraging him. Merriman because he was sour that he had not been made Prime Minister, and Steyn because the leadership of the Dutch had passed from him to Botha. In the party were a number of young Dutchmen from the Transvaal who opposed Botha and his policy and who had never agreed to Union: they were continually criticising him. They were led by Tielman Roos, who was clever, boisterous, and had a biting tongue. Botha treated the criticism indulgently, but Smuts resented it. At last he struck at Tielman Roos, attacked him in public and without mercy. Tielman Roos swore that he would be revenged on Smuts and let Hertzog know that he was with him.

Hertzog went a stage farther. He preached that the Dutch and English must remain two separate streams that should never merge. He began to come out into the open and attacked the English in South Africa, calling them "foreign adventurers," suggesting that they were like "dung against a kraal wall that the next fall of rain would wash away." The English newspapers demanded his resignation. An English member of the Cabinet refused to sit with him. Botha insisted that Hertzog should accept "joint cabinet responsibility" and show normal loyalty to his colleagues.

Again Smuts tried to make peace. Hertzog, he realised, was still necessary in the Government. A crisis now might smash the Union. He drafted Botha's demand in moderate terms, asking Hertzog to sign a paper that he would not make speeches on general policy without consulting with the rest of the Cabinet, and gave the draft to Fischer, who was an old friend and colleague of Hertzog. Fischer foolishly showed the original draft to Hertzog: almost rubbed his nose on it; and Hertzog, seeing it was drafted by Smuts, flew into a rage, called Smuts a lunatic, refused to sign, and proclaimed that he would not be muzzled by Smuts and his English friends.

At last Smuts realised at what Hertzog was aiming and that he could do no more. Botha was hesitating what line to take. Smuts advised him to dismiss Hertzog. Botha still hesitated. Having made up his mind Smuts was now as determined to get rid of Hertzog as before he had been earnest to keep him. Hertzog had become a danger in the Government: better be rid of him, and quickly. He pressed hard on Botha to act. Botha called a meeting of the party leaders to a committee-room in the Parliament House and asked Hertzog for an explanation. When Botha was angry he became deadly quiet. When Smuts was angry he became red in the face, but he rarely raised his voice and was exaggerated in his dignity and reserve. Hertzog had not the self-control of Botha or Smuts. He would fly up into noisy rages. As he defended himself he grew angry. His voice, always high-pitched and nasal, rose almost into a scream, so that those near the committee-room and even in the Lobby below could almost hear what he was saying.

Botha requested Hertzog to resign. He refused. By now he had recovered his temper and his bland manner, and he expressed his surprise and asked what was the cause of all the trouble. Botha dissolved his Cabinet and ejected Hertzog.

James Hertzog walked out of his office away back into the Free State. He had got what he had wanted. He could say that he had been thrown out of the Government because he had defended the rights of the Dutch people of South Africa against Botha and Smuts and their English friends.

At once de Wet girded up his loins and went up and down the country blasting Botha and Smuts, and Smuts in particular. Steyn gave all his support and proclaimed that Hertzog had been "martyred for what he had done for the Dutch," and rallied the whole of the Free State to him. Merriman encouraged them. The pastors of the Dutch Church came into the

fight. They appealed to the old racial hostilities; they roused the Dutch into resentment; they revived the old hatreds, which having died down for a time, might have died altogether. They taught the people to distrust Botha as the servant of the English—had he not been made an Honorary General in the English Army and on his last visit to London worn silk stockings at the levée of the King of England?—and to despise Smuts for having sold himself to England.

The South African Party met in conference in the Hofmeyr Hall next door to the Dutch Reformed Church in the centre of Cape Town. All the leaders were there on the platform. The delegates filled the big hall to overcrowding. The delegates from the Free State sat in a body at the back.

De Wet opened the proceedings. He stood up on the platform, squat and square on his feet, pugnacious and blunt and full of resentment, boastful as ever. He demanded that Botha and Smuts should resign, that Steyn should become the leader of the Party and appoint a new Prime Minister. The Free State delegates applauded, but Botha faced them with a dignity and a majesty of presence which made all the big words of de Wet seem like cheap bluster. He repeated his faith that the future of South Africa depended on the co-operation and the union of all white men, whether they were Dutch or English. Smuts stood solidly by Botha. Then came James Hertzog, nervous, hesitant, sharp, with a quick, bird-like fluency, but so muddled in his reasoning and so poor in his speech that he was known as “James the Obscure.” Persistent and pertinacious, he stuck to a few fixed ideas: he believed that all South Africa belonged to the Dutch; he hated the English, so that anything that was good for England and the English must be bad for the Dutch. In these he represented the back-veld Dutch, and especially those of the Free State. He was, moreover, determined to be Prime Minister. Now he was grey with complaint: how Botha had never wanted him in the Cabinet; how Botha had ignored him; how Botha had treated him unfairly.

De Wet’s motion was put to the vote. The voting was for Botha. Hertzog and his supporters stood up, but Hertzog was no leader. As an Irish politician said of him “There was no weight in the man.” They hesitated, not knowing what to do, until de Wet strode down the hall, turned at the door to wave and call “Adieu” to those left on the platform, and the rest followed him out.

Hertzog went out of that meeting sullen and obstinate. He went practically alone and without followers, for he had miscalculated his time. Now he must work for a party. He gathered the discontented round him. From the Cape came a Dutch pastor who edited a Dutch paper, *Die Burger*, and had entered politics, a Dr. Malan; from the Transvaal came Tielman Roos, very resentful against Smuts. These, with Steyn and de Wet and the Dutch of the Free State behind them, formed a new party, the Nationalist Party—Dutch in outlook, republican in its aims, and hostile to England and to being united with the English.

The old wound between the English and Dutch, which had almost closed and healed, had been torn open by James Hertzog and his friends, and once again Dutchman was set against Dutchman, and Dutchman against Englishman.

CHAPTER XXXIII

FOR SMUTS it seemed that his dream of a united South Africa, of the birth of a new nation of all white men in South Africa, was already half destroyed, but he had little time for hesitation or regret.

In 1913 throughout the world there was a sensation of disaster near ahead. It may be that facts exist as facts before they become events within the consciousness of human beings. It may be that many minds thinking round one subject create the atmosphere out of which the events are conceived. The ordinary man had no vivid realisation of this sensation of coming disaster, but it existed at the back of all men's minds.

Everywhere there was a turbulence of spirit. Everywhere there were systems, loyalties, ideas, developed in a hundred years of peace, which were dead encumbrances and were fit only to be swept away. The workers restless and dissatisfied and distrusting their employers; socialism, syndicalism, and anarchism; underground upheavals in Russia stamped out brutally with Cossacks; in France sabotage and corruption; in Ireland threats of civil war, the English army being forced to take sides; in England suffragettes assaulting Cabinet ministers, workmen using the strike to fight the capitalists, who replied with the lock-out; the heaving of discontent in India, Arabia, Egypt; countries constantly snarling at their neighbours; two great empires, the Turkish and the Austro-Hungarian, utterly rotten, sagging to their fall, only buttressed up like ancient and decayed trees; Italy, Russia, France, England, Germany, intriguing for the best pieces when those empires should crash and eyeing each other in the mean time; Japan growing great in the Far East and America concerned and jealous; Italy and Turkey suddenly at war; Greece, Rumania, and Bulgaria equally suddenly in a general mêlée against Turkey, and then fighting each other.

Overshadowing all other troubles and quarrels a rivalry between England and Germany filled the whole world with its clamour: Germany, vigorous, overcrowded, full of men and energy, vital, domineering, needing land and colonies, and demanding to expand; England, owning half the surface of the globe, much of it immense tracts fit for cultivating but empty of men. As the Germans pushed out, they found the English in their way in all directions and refusing to give way to them, and the two quarrelled bitterly.

South Africa, though six thousand miles away from Europe, was involved in that quarrel. Germany, as well as her colony, German South West Africa on the Atlantic coast, had another, German East Africa, on the Indian Ocean. She planned to unite these two and create a German Central African Empire, and then press south, overrun South Africa, take possession of the goldfields, and fill all the fertile, rich land down to the Cape with millions of German colonists.

Botha and Smuts had long known the details of that plan, and they had realised that a European war was close at hand in which Germany would fight England for world domination. Botha had discussed it with Lord Haldane at the Imperial Conference in 1907. General Lord Methuen had come out from London to work out schemes with Smuts. When the South African leaders had visited England, taking with them the draft of the Act of Union for sanction, Botha and Smuts had both been called in to the Imperial Defence Committee. Their private information from Holland and Germany made it clear to them that war was near. They decided that they must create a Defence Force at once, so that South Africa should be able to defend herself when the war came.

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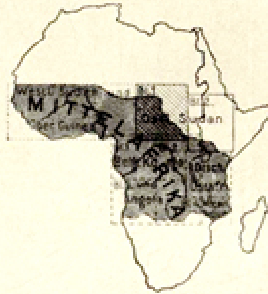

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PREIS:

Im Umschlag gefalzt .... M. 6
Im Umschlag, aufgezogen auf Leinwand in Taschenformat M. 12
Aufgezogen auf Leinwand mit Stäben zum Aufrollen ..... M. 13

BERLIN 1917

Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen)

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The cover of a Map of the German plan for Central African Empire. Published by the Colonial Office, Berlin, 1917.

The cover of a Map of the German plan for Central African Empire.

Published by the Colonial Office, Berlin, 1917.

Smuts had his scheme ready, but it would take some time to get it working. He dissolved the old commando system. His defence force was to be a small regular army. Round this he would develop a citizen force of all males between seventeen and sixty to be trained by regular officers; boys under seventeen would be cadets. He created a headquarters staff with a commandant-general in command of the whole and made as Commandant-General, General Beyers, the guerilla leader in the Transvaal in the old war.

CHAPTER XXXIV

HARDLY had he begun to organise the Defence Force when a new and urgent trouble was on him. The restlessness of Europe had reached the workers in the mines on the Rand. They were dissatisfied; and trained agitators worked on their dissatisfaction. The Rand was full of unemployed, miners and farm hands, for there had been a long drought and men had come swarming in from the countryside looking for work. The miners hated and distrusted the mine-magnates. "Filthy leeches" they called them. Many of the miners suffered from a pernicious lung disease brought on by the dust of the mines: they knew that most of them would die of that disease, and the agitators told them to demand more pay and pensions while they were still alive.

They had asked for these in 1907, opened negotiations to get them, but Smuts had driven them back to work—with troops. They were better organised now and more determined. There was a new spirit amongst them. They did not believe any more in negotiations or appeals to justice. They would use direct action—force. When the mine-magnates began to reduce expenses and to employ cheap black labour to replace white men they prepared to resist.

A mine-manager cut the pay of a few workers. His action was illegal, tough-handed, and he was rough and tactless. The men went on strike. The mine-magnates refused to treat with the men. The Trade Unions backed the strike. The mine-magnates shouted for government help, but Smuts, who was in his office some thirty-five miles away in Pretoria, took little notice. He was maintaining "a strict neutrality" in the quarrel. He had had no experience of strikes; he had little sympathy with either side; he left it to them to negotiate between themselves; he hoped it would all blow over. The strikers tried to smash the mine. The police held them off. They armed themselves with pick-axes and dynamite and marched down the Rand, pulling out the workers in the other mines. Wherever possible, the police prevented them.

A deputation saw the Governor-General, Lord Gladstone, demanding that the Government cease to be neutral, but that it should interfere and stop the quarrel. Lord Gladstone replied that Smuts was going down to the Rand. The deputation refused to have him: "an unfortunate selection," they said.

Smuts would only make the strikers more angry and obstinate. To Botha they might listen, but not to Smuts.

Lord Gladstone telephoned to the Government that they must act or he would be forced to act himself.

Then Smuts acted half-heartedly, sent to arrest some of the strike leaders at a private meeting in a house, instructed the police to break in on the meeting and lodge the men in jail. His action roused a howl of rage. It was illegal. He had to withdraw hurriedly and release the men.

The strikers became bolder as they realised their strength. The whole Rand was going up in a fury. There were monster meetings demanding a general strike. A mass meeting was arranged for the 4th July in the Market Place in Johannesburg. At the last minute and too late, Smuts forbade it. He instructed the police to move the crowd, but not to use force. The crowd became rougher; they threw stones and bottles and lumps of iron. The police suffered. Man after man was knocked out with a cut face or his horse injured. Still Smuts forbade the police to use force. They reported that they could not hold the crowds or keep the peace any more.

Suddenly Smuts realised that the danger was real and he must act. A little show of force, a little sternness to both sides at the beginning, and all would have been well. That opportunity he had let pass, but now he acted at top speed, and he was strong and determined as he had been weak and shifting before. Without even the permission of the Governor-General, he sent troops to the Rand. The strikers flamed up more fiercely at the troops.

That night the crowds went out smashing windows, throwing bottles and stones, and using weighted clubs. They rioted and looted. They cut off the electric supply, stopped the trams and pulled out the tramway men, and paralysed all transport. They burned the Central Railway Station, the Park Station, and roasted a negro alive inside it. They attacked the newspaper offices which the mine-magnates controlled, bombed in the door of the *Star*, fired the building, and drove off the fire brigade. They searched for their enemies, the mine-magnates, attacked their offices in the Corner House and their club where they met, the Rand Club. But the mine-magnates had run for it, out of immediate danger, to a suburb, and were sitting safely in the Orange Grove Hotel.

In front of the Rand Club the police and the troops were told to use force. The troops opened fire. The crowd went crazy mad. They broke open the arms-shops and returned the fire and threw dynamite. There was a pitched battle. Twenty-one were killed and fifty-one hurt. Though held up

for the minute, the crowds increased. Besides the miners there were large numbers of cosmopolitan adventurers, hooligans, and criminals who lived in Johannesburg and who swarmed into the battle. The police and troops together could not control them and sent word to Smuts.

Smuts decided on personal action and at once. There was nobody in Johannesburg capable of handling the situation. He called Botha and the two drove in a motor-car straight to Johannesburg. They would handle this thing themselves.

They arrived early in the morning. The streets were full of angry, resentful crowds; so they had to drive slowly, and, when they were recognised, they were hooted and cursed. They went to police headquarters, heard the reports, and realised that the police were helpless. They tried to find the mine-magnates, but they were three miles away in Orange Grove, in a panic, and "declined to enter Johannesburg," but left all to the Government to do the best it could for them. Then they drove on to the Carlton Hotel in the centre of the town and close to the Rand Club, and met the Strike Committee, headed by J. T. Bain.

Louis Botha.

Louis Botha.

In a small room in the hotel they sat facing the Strike Committee. Round the hotel crowds swarmed like angry bees and as ready for trouble. A few police, useless in case of a definite attack, guarded the hotel door. A couple

of strikers covered Botha and Smuts with revolvers. The Strike Committee began to dictate. They threatened and sneered. They hated Smuts. He had humiliated them in 1907. They would humiliate him now. He was their real enemy, and while Botha sat quiet, calm, and unmoved, Smuts looked across at these men, these labour leaders who to him were jackals leading a rabble, looked across at them with an arrogant contempt that made them even more bitter. Neither he nor Botha was troubled by the personal danger, but they knew they were helpless.

The police and troops could do no more. There were few Imperial troops left in South Africa, and those were at distant stations. The commando system was gone and the new Defence Force not yet ready. There was no more force they could call on. The railwaymen threatened to join the miners. If they did, Johannesburg would starve in a week. There were 170,000 natives locked in the compounds and only three days' rations for them. After that they would break out. News came in of more strikers along the Rand, and all were marching in on Johannesburg. If they made a mistake, Johannesburg would that night be burned down, the mines would be smashed in.

Coldly and deliberately, without any show of hurry, as if conferring favours, Botha and Smuts did the only thing they could do. They gave way, accepted the terms of the Strike Committee.

From the Carlton Hotel, unescorted, they drove out through the hostile crowds to the mine-magnates, sitting in the safety of the Orange Grove Hotel in the distant suburb, to tell them the terms. The mine-magnates gladly left everything to them. As they drove back, a crowd held them up and threatened to kill them. The car was an open one, and they were looking down the muzzles of half a dozen revolvers with excited fingers twitching at the triggers.

"Kill 'em," shouted the crowd.

"You can," shouted Botha back. "We are unarmed. But remember. We have come to make peace for you people. If we are killed, that is finished."

The crowd stood back. It was not what Botha had shouted—few could hear that—but the quiet fearlessness of the two men that made them stand back.

As the car drove on, Smuts sat looking straight ahead, his jaw set, his grey-blue eyes blazing. To be held up by this filthy rabble; to be forced to knuckle down to Bain; to have to humiliate himself: it hurt his pride. He

took a great grip of himself or he would have blazed out then and there. His whole instinct was to fight and he had to sit quiet.

But he held himself down. He went back with Botha and signed the agreement with Bain, but as he told Parliament later, “This was the hardest thing I have done in my life—to put my signature on that document together with that of Mr. Bain.”

And he held himself down because, though beaten now, he was only postponing the final fight, and he was determined to get ready and next time he would take his revenge.

CHAPTER XXXV

SMUTS returned to Pretoria resentful and angry. He had been defeated and humiliated; and humiliated by people he despised, by trade union leaders, Socialists, leading a rabble of workers. With Socialism and the workers he had nothing in common and no sympathy. This time he had been taken unawares, caught unprepared, but he would see that it did not happen again. He kept his intentions to himself, and when he wished, Smuts could be exceedingly secretive and silent. He accelerated the organising and training of the Defence Force and prepared his plans.

The Labour leaders also did not mean this to be an end. The workers were still dissatisfied, and the professional agitators worked on their discontent: they told them that they had the whole game in their own hands; that the way the Government had handled this last strike showed that they were feeble and afraid, bluffing one minute and giving way the next; that Hertzog and his Dutchmen were with the workers; that the workers had only to demand, and the Government would give way. They roused them until they became puffed up and boastful. They talked. They organised propaganda but little else, for when it came to concrete organising of the workers, they still only talked. And they had misjudged Smuts, for he went on steadily preparing. His chance came at the end of the year.

As before, the trouble started with a small incident. The Government had taken over the railways and placed them under a Minister for Railways. The Minister for Railways, for economy, reduced the staff. The Union of Railwaymen and Harbour Servants challenged him. Their leader was a Dutch socialist called Poutsma, a professional Labour leader and an extremist who had been brought up in Europe. Poutsma was aggressive and demanded that all men dismissed should at once be reinstated. The Minister for Railways refused. Smuts' enemies said that he deliberately created the situation, started the trouble, and so struck at his own time in order to deal once and for all with Labour, and also to test the efficiency of his organisation of the Defence Force. As Minister for Finance it was Smuts, they said, who had pressed for railway economy, and it was Smuts who

advocated not giving way to Poutsma, or even listening to the demands of the railwaymen.

Poutsma called out the railwaymen. The Government did nothing. Again his enemies suspected Smuts of waiting to get all Labour out at once. Poutsma called on the General Trades Union Council for help, and in the middle of January of 1914 the Council called a general strike.

The Labour leaders had big aims. They meant to overturn the Government and take control themselves. They formed a General Strike Committee, made their men into a rough military organisation under areas, distributed some arms, and threatened the Government with revolution. It was the challenge for which Smuts had waited.

At once he struck. The official report on the last strike had blamed him for being dilatory and undecided. Now he went to the other extreme. He acted at full speed, ruthlessly, and with as little feeling as a machine of steel. He declared martial law; mobilised the Defence Force; called up the Citizen Army, and thirty thousand burghers came riding in ready, and with them a large body of special constables. He picketed all the important points on the railways and made a cordon round the mines. On the Rand he formed a Committee of Public Safety. To the Defence Force he gave orders to stand no nonsense, and to the officer commanding the Rand Light Infantry, which was guarding the main line, he sent an order: “Exercise the greatest severity. Don’t hesitate to shoot.”

The strikers, staggered by the speed of his actions and frightened by the show of force, did nothing. Their leaders with two hundred men barricaded themselves into the Trades Hall in Johannesburg. Smuts sent de la Rey with some field-guns and instructions to blow the strike leaders and the Trades Hall sky-high unless they surrendered, and as soon as de la Rey surrounded the building they surrendered.

Then, without warning, on his own responsibility, without consulting even the Minister of Justice, Smuts instructed the police to take nine of the leaders, including Poutsma, out of the prison and deport them out of South Africa, without warrants, charges, or a trial.

“Don’t come near me or communicate with me,” he said to the police officer in charge. “You have full discretionary power. Take them to Durban to-night and ship them off.”

The police officer ran the prison van into the station, backed it up to a coach, bundled his prisoners into the coach at top speed, and told the engine

driver to speed up. The line down to Durban twisted and turned through steep hills. Down it the train raced at breakneck speed, did the journey in a third of the usual time, and ran up as near to the quay as possible.

In the harbour the *Umgeni* was getting up steam to sail for England. The police officer put the men on board. The captain refused to take them without some written order from the Government. It was illegal, he said, and he and his company would be summoned before the Courts and fined thousands of pounds, probably: he would not take the responsibility; the Government must do that. Smuts gave a letter that covered the shipping company, and the ship sailed with the men on board.

In the morning there was a tremendous uproar. The judges of the Transvaal Courts protested against the illegality. The remaining Labour leaders applied for a writ of habeas corpus and demanded their colleagues back, even sent a tug to chase the *Umgeni*, but she was gone. Her next port was in England, where she landed the men.

Smuts was attacked from every side, but he took no notice. He brought a Bill into Parliament to indemnify the Government and himself for everything done. The Labour Party accused him of illegality and of striking at the liberty of every individual. He acknowledged the illegality, but shrugged his shoulders and swept their angry protests contemptuously on one side, saying that he had acted for the good of the State.

"A smashing blow," he said, "had to be struck at syndicalism in this country. I gave that blow." And to a friend, "It was a smart and good piece of work." Parliament gave him full indemnity.

In ten days, without a shot being fired, Smuts had smashed this general strike which had been an attempt at revolution. He had avenged his humiliation. The workers, angry and bitter, crept back to work. Hertzog was Smuts' enemy, and so they looked on Hertzog as their friend. They began to work with Hertzog in his opposition to Botha and Smuts.

And from this time many even of Smuts' supporters looked at him sideways. His illegal orders deliberately given, his autocratic action, the manner in which with a quick explanation and a shrug of his shoulders he had passed it over and asked for a general indemnity, made them afraid of him. He was once more looked on as the "Oriental Despot," and his enemies coined a word to explain his outlook—"*platskat-politiek*," or the policy of ruthlessly shooting down all opposition.

CHAPTER XXXVI

MEANWHILE the disagreement, which had grown when Hertzog went out and formed the Nationalist Party, had increased into a schism. It was a quarrel between Dutchmen, for the English took little part, but it split the country from top to bottom. It had ceased to be merely political but had become a personal dispute, so that in every township in the Transvaal and the Free State, and where there were Dutch in Natal and the Cape, it divided the people into two camps—some for Botha and a nation of English and Dutch equal and united, and others for Hertzog, with Dutch and English separated and the Dutch in control.

As the weeks went by the quarrel became more virulent. Men of Hertzog's party—and the women even more—became so bitter that they would not deal with those of their neighbours who followed Botha and Smuts. If they met in the street they either glared at each other without speaking or turned their backs. A local seer, van Rensburg, who was celebrated for his prophecies, stumped the back-veld saying that he saw the English leaving and with them went Botha and Smuts, but from amongst them a vulture flew back and that was Botha, but Smuts came back no more. Many believed him. At public meetings the two parties interrupted each other, brawled, and often came to blows.

From this stage Dutchmen went easily from words to deeds, from arguments and ill-looks to taking their rifles. De la Rey expressed the general feeling when he had said, "Nowadays people talk too much. Take your rifles"; and all through the Free State and the Transvaal men began to talk of fighting each other.

Suddenly, six thousand miles away in Europe, Russia was at war with Germany; France and England joined in. Other nations followed them, and all Europe was at war. The volcano had blown the top off and was in full eruption.

In South Africa the people, especially the Dutch, were only vaguely interested. They sat in the cinemas and watched the newsreels showing the German advances and the retreats of the English and French. Europe was a long way away. This was no affair of theirs: a topic for discussion and very little more.

But very soon it came nearer. Even before England declared war Botha had telegraphed to London that South Africa would look after its own safety and any Imperial troops could be withdrawn. Ten days later he announced in Parliament that he had agreed to attack the Germans in their South West African colony, conquer the country, and destroy the big wireless station which they had erected at Windhuk.

His announcement was promptly opposed as unwise and unnecessary. “If we do not conquer German South West Africa,” he replied, “the English will do it with Australians and other troops. It is ours, and it is our affair.”

“England,” said Smuts, “has treated us well, given us back our liberty, and now she needs our help. . . . There are German battleships in South African waters and they threaten our trade. They are in communication with Germany through the wireless station in the south-west. . . . The British Government has said, ‘There is work 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.”

From Parliament the discussion spread rapidly through the country and became hot and angry. Many of the Dutch did not want to fight the Germans and certainly not to help the English. They looked on the Germans as half-brothers and they had no quarrel with them. Some did not want to fight anyone. Others were ready to fight in self-defence, but not in some distant country far from their homes. Others strongly objected to being called up under the new Defence Act and forced to go, and suspected that their horses would be commandeered. There were German agents all through South Africa who worked on these ideas and spent good money liberally.

There were in addition many Dutchmen, especially in the Free State, who still craved for a republic. They had never given up hope even after Vereeniging. They had waited for a chance, when England might be in difficulties, to strike once more and win back their old republics. They looked on Botha and Smuts as sold to the English. But here was the chance. The Germans were almost in Paris. The French Government was on the run. The English Army was reported to have been wiped out. Strike now, they said, and win back liberty.

Steyn and Hertzog saw their chance also. It was a chance to throw Botha and Smuts and their English friends out and take control themselves. Keeping well in the background, taking no decisive action, they worked to this end.

Beyers, the Commandant-General of the Defence Force, was opposed to the expedition. He had been to Germany, watched the Germans on manœuvres, and was convinced they would win the war. He had told Smuts that he disagreed, and Smuts, disliking his criticism, had at a staff meeting in Pretoria snubbed him openly. He had old grievances against Smuts and Botha: they had left him out of their Government when he thought he should have been a member; they had promised to make him Speaker of the House and had failed to do so. He was sore against them, and now Hertzog played on his vanity and ambition. Hertzog hoped that if he could persuade Beyers to resign, he could break up the Defence Force, create a crisis, and throw out the Government. How far Hertzog was actively for the Germans was doubtful, but Smuts spoke of him as “almost a German advocate.”

De Wet too was out for trouble. The old fighter was cantankerous and full of prejudices and he would do anything to spite Botha and Smuts.

North of Pretoria, in charge of the big training camp at Potchefstroom, was a Major Kemp, who stood in with Beyers, and on the German border was Maritz, Smuts’ old assistant in the South African war who had become a follower of Beyers, and was in command of that area.

Beyers sent out word to prepare for revolt. The decision to attack the German colony had brought the quarrel between the two parties to a head.

Beyers and Kemp arranged the details. De Wet was ready. Maritz was away on the German border, and in touch with the Germans. Only one thing was needed, and that was to persuade de la Rey to join. De Wet could bring out the fighting men of the Free State, and de la Rey could raise the Transvaal.

Beyers used all his influence with de la Rey. Always very religious, the old man had become abnormal. He talked with spiritualists and attended séances; and he was under the influence of van Rensburg, who had told him that the Dutch were in bondage and he was elected to save them.

Beyers and his friends told the old man that they were there to liberate the Dutch, until they had almost persuaded him to join them, but his family were against his being mixed up in any rebellion. They disliked and feared van Rensburg. They blamed the seer with his weird prophecies for throwing the old man off his balance. Mrs. de la Rey maintained that having signed his word at Vereeniging her husband must stand by his word and his loyalty.

When Beyers sent messengers she drove them away. When the old man still wavered, one of his daughters took charge of him. She never left him, even sleeping in his room; eventually she took him into Pretoria to Botha and Smuts, and then, overcome by the strain, she collapsed in a faint, and Smuts and Botha carried her out of the room.

There was a study in Botha's house in Sunnyside which looked out on to the garden, where there was a palm tree, and the roses were already in bloom. It was a little plain room with a chair or two, some trophies hung on the walls, and a leather-topped writing desk. Here, all one late evening and night, Botha and Smuts reasoned with de la Rey. But reason was useless, for the old man was convinced that the hand of the Lord was on him; that his time had come to save the people, the Dutch, out of the power of the English. They read passages from the Bible with him and searched the Scriptures for help. They knelt with him in prayer and asked for guidance.

This was no play-acting. Botha and Smuts rarely demonstrated their religion, but both had been brought up strictly by religious mothers, and in times of crisis such as this, when the issues were so great, so vital, the training of their childhood came automatically to the surface. The issues were great and vital, because they knew that if de la Rey went out into the veld, thousands of men from the Transvaal would follow him and there would be civil war, with Dutchmen killing Dutchmen. De la Rey was beyond argument, beyond where they could reach him with words. He had gone out into the twilight where the mind does not know whether it is of this world or of the spiritual, and they prayed for divine help to save him, and to save South Africa and their people from the disaster and tragedy of civil war.

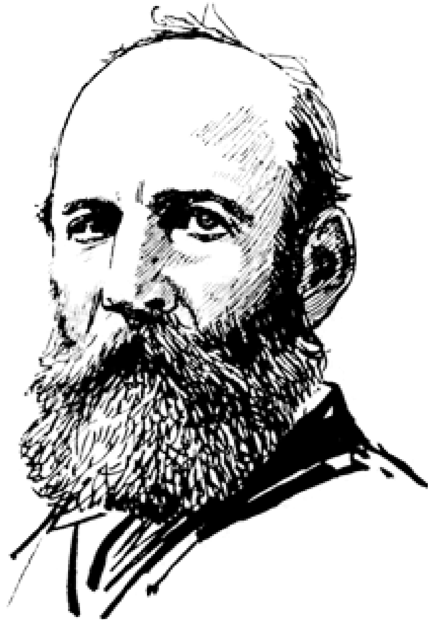
After a while de la Rey became more normal. He listened to what they said. Botha pleaded with him. "*Oom Koos*," he said, using the term of affection by which de la Rey was known, "Oom Koos, you may be right, but I will not believe that God, even to save His people, will direct you by the way of dishonour, and the road you take is the way of dishonour."

De la Rey hesitated and became doubtful. At last he agreed to wait until he was given more light.

But Beyers came back. This time he had a definite plan for revolt. In the camp at Potchefstroom there were sixteen hundred men, all well armed. If

he could get de la Rey to come to the camp the men would rise. They would then seize the railway, march on Pretoria, proclaim a republic, and so start the revolt. Maritz was to advance into the Cape, bringing the arms and money supplied by the Germans, and de Wet would raise the Free State.

De la Rey.



De la Rey.

Beyers chose the 15th October, for van Rensburg said a fifteenth was favourable. On that date the Government had their hands full. They were all in Cape Town, a thousand miles away, and troops were to leave for German South West Africa on that day.

Still de la Rey hesitated. Beyers realised that he could not be sure of raising the Transvaal without the old man. Again he used all his influence, and de la Rey went to Johannesburg to talk with him, and still he was undecided, torn this way and that with doubt, pulled now to one side, now to the other, unable to make up his mind what was right. At last he went up to his bedroom in the hotel, and kneeling down opened his Bible at random. It opened at the prayer of Solomon in the second book of Chronicles. For a while he read, and then he rose contented. As he came down the stairs those who waited below in the hotel hall for him, the men who were scheming to use him for their own political ends, saw that his face was shining with a great light, as if he had heard a Call.

He was always a man of few words. He said nothing of his intentions or what he had decided. That evening he drove out of Johannesburg with Beyers in a car by the western road towards the camp at Potchefstroom, where Kemp and the others were waiting for them. It happened that the police were looking for a gang of highway robbers and had picketed every road with orders to stop all cars. One picket on the outskirts of the town challenged their car. Beyers, not knowing of the highway robbers and thinking that his plot had been discovered and he was being arrested, told the chauffeur to drive on. A policeman fired at the car as it drove away. The bullet hit the road, ricocheted up, struck the back seat, broke up, and a small piece hit de la Rey. The old man fell sideways. He said nothing. He neither sighed nor groaned. His spirit fled easily out of him. This was the Call he had heard.

"He came," said his wife very quietly, when they told her of his death, "he came to where his road parted into two. He did not know which to take, so God called him away."

CHAPTER XXXVII

DE la Rey's death changed much. Beyers hesitated. He was afraid; and he did not know how far he was discovered. At de la Rey's funeral he spoke, saying he was loyal to the Government. De Wet, Kemp, and Maritz did not move.

But it warned Botha and Smuts. They now had full details of what was being prepared. They came straight to Pretoria and began quietly but rapidly to prepare.

Hitherto Smuts had looked on the talk of rebellion as more boast and noise than fact. He did not believe his opponents would fight. They were his old friends and comrades. He was out of touch with them, and he did not understand their mentality or outlook.

A friend who went to see him in his house at this time found him like a man lost, now that he was sure of the rebellion. At first he was curt and gloomy. Then he opened out to his visitor. He went down, groping through the labyrinths of his mind, twisting in doubt at each turning. He searched to know why he and his opponents did not see in the same way. They were of the same breed—Dutch South Africans. He wondered if in some way he was not like them, not like the Dutch, whether he had changed and lost their fundamental outlooks and virtues. Or were they the failures? He offered them a high destiny—a united South African Nation with a splendid future. They preferred to follow men like Hertzog, and to follow them back to isolation, disunion, provincial quarrels, petty republics. Were his own people not fit for a high destiny? He thrust the idea savagely away from him, forced himself to believe and to proclaim that they were fit for greatness.

Almost at once Maritz went into revolt. Still Beyers hesitated. His conscience smote him. He was not sure that he was right nor whether he was wise.

A week after Maritz had revolted, Beyers spoke in the Opera House in Pretoria at a celebration of Kruger's birthday. The hall was full of his opponents. They hooted and booed. He grew angry. They attacked the platform where he stood with another defence officer, Japie Fourie by name. Smuts, expecting trouble, was waiting in the Pretoria Club, and sent out reinforcements of police, but could do nothing, as the crowd swept the

police aside, shouting that they would kill Beyers. Someone hit Beyers with a stick. Someone else hit Japie Fourie a blow in the mouth.

That decided Beyers. He went mad with rage, and Japie Fourie was searching to kill “the bloody Englishman who had hit him.” The two went out that night into the Magliesburg mountains beyond Pretoria, declared a revolt and called up their men, and began to organise them into commandos.

A few days later de Wet came out with his Free State fighters. Botha appealed to Steyn and Hertzog to use their influence to prevent civil war. They refused to interfere.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE country was up. It was civil war. Beyers and Kemp were raiding north of Pretoria, close to the capital and in the surrounding country. De Wet was collecting his old fighting men in the Free State. Maritz with German assistance was raiding over the frontier down into the Cape. There were wild reports coming in from every area. Everything was uncertain, in confusion, uproar, and disorder. Though Botha shrank from civil war and Smuts had not believed it possible, this was no time for hesitating. They now realised the facts and set to with all their energy.

Smuts made an appeal to the people. "The Dutch people of South Africa," he said, "feel that their honour has been touched. . . . Out of the last war the Dutch people brought little but their good name. . . . They are not going to allow anyone, no matter how great a part he played in the past, to drag that good name in the mud. . . . We are going to see this through."

Botha called out his old commando leaders and their men. As ever in South Africa, politics depended on personalities, and as de Wet's old fighters would follow him, so Botha's were equally ready to stand by Botha. They came pouring in by the thousand, and with them came the men summoned as the Defence Force, until there were thirty thousand at the disposal of the Government.

Botha took active command in the field, Smuts remained in Pretoria. He had to supply the troops which had already left for German South West, and at the same time to organise and provision from the beginning this force of loose commandos under Botha. At one time he was even short of ammunition for them, until he found a large dump which had lain forgotten in Kimberley. He worked for long hours and at tremendous pressure. He had no time even to go to Irene. His office was always full of staff officers, telephones ringing, orderlies coming and going. Through all this turmoil and hubbub he kept his hand on everything. He pigeon-holed off his work in his mind and made his decisions quickly and decisively. He expected others to be as quick and lucid as himself and he was rough and impatient when they were not. An order given must be carried out almost before it was given, or he was rampaging.

It was anxious work also, for no one could be sure of the loyalty of any particular commando, or exactly who was friend and who was enemy. It

needed courage and grit to carry on the routine under these circumstances, when the next man might be an enemy unknown. As each commando marched in he had it carefully handled to test its spirit. An error, and it might go over to the enemy.

On one occasion a commando rode in and bivouacked close outside Pretoria. Each man had his horse, saddlery, three hundred rounds of ammunition, his rifle, and a week's ration.

Smuts went out to inspect them. Very quickly he realised that they did not want to fight: they were disloyal. Here, close to the capital, they were dangerous. It was just such danger as braced Smuts up. He decided quickly to be rid of them. Falling them in, he explained to them that fine men of their calibre were far more valuable on their farms than fighting: lesser men could do the fighting. They were pleased and preened themselves like peacocks as he complimented them. Then he spoke of a shortage of horses and rifles and offered each man a price for his horse and his rifle: £30 for a horse and £5 for a rifle. They agreed quickly, for the prices were good; they could not resist a bargain; and as they left each man received his money in hard cash there and then and went gladly home, satisfied and pleased. They went home also unarmed and without horses and so were no more a danger.

The first thing was to make Pretoria and the surrounding country safe. Botha made straight at Beyers and Kemp. Beyers was havering. His nerve had been shaken. He was not sure what to do. Botha did not wait, but smashed at him, caught him at Rustenburg, scattered his men, and captured four hundred. Beyers and Kemp, now outlaws, made off westwards to join up with Maritz and the Germans. Beyers was trapped in a bend in the Vaal River, which was in flood. Always a brave man, he refused to surrender and tried to swim the river with his horse, but was entangled in his greatcoat and drowned.

Kemp made off. Botha chased him to Upington and missed him, and he got away to Maritz.

Beyers finished: Pretoria safe: Botha turned down into the Free State to look for his old rival de Wet. The "Old Baboon" had found his fighting men

ready: he was in control of the principal towns and half the Free State was in his hands.

With six thousand burghers and artillery and his scouts out, Botha went south looking for de Wet. There was news of him from here and there, but he was as elusive as in the old days.

Botha had halted at one place where there was a telegraph office. Suddenly an orderly came running with a message. A staff officer hurried into the telegraph office. A farmer in Mushroom Valley, a valley a little south of Winburg, was calling. De Wet, he said, and his staff were in the valley: they were holding a consultation not two hundred yards away from the farm; he could see de Wet leaning against a telegraph pole giving orders; his men were outspanned in the valley beyond towards the foot of the mountains; they were cooking a meal.

Botha made his plans quickly. He would form his columns into a half-moon round the lower end of the valley. That would leave only one way out by a road which wound its way up the mountains beyond and through a narrow pass. Koen Brits, his best leader, was out on a flank with General Lukin beyond him. The two never got on well. Botha knew and appreciated the value of both, but he knew that the peppery, quick-tempered, exacting Englishman was always at loggerheads with Brits and his eccentric, haphazard ways. The last message he had from Brits, sent by helio, was, “If you don’t take that damned Lukin away, I’ll shoot him.”

Botha decided to get Brits back to the centre. Lukin must ride hard round the mountains and close that road as it went through the pass. Once that was done, de Wet was trapped inside.

Botha always took with him an expert telegraphist, and as soon as he came to a convenient place, and especially when he was working out a plan, he would tap in on the wire and talk with Smuts in his office in Pretoria. He tapped in now. The telegraphist called through on the tapper and then read out the replies.

“Is that you, Jannie?” asked Botha. “Now listen. De Wet is in Mushroom Valley. Here is my plan,” and he gave details of the positions and how the columns were to close in. “What do you think of the plan?”

“Why are you bringing Koen Brits back?” asked Smuts. “It will make for confusion and waste time.”

“Because he and Lukin don’t get on and they may leave a gap.”

"Better like this," and Smuts outlined a perfect plan, provided that each commando moved with the precision of a machine.

"But I tell you," repeated Botha, "Lukin and Brits don't work well together. Their personalities clash."

By now Smuts was impatient. "Why keep on bothering about personalities? Give the orders to close round de Wet and tell them to get on and get him."

Botha shrugged his shoulders and let it go. Brits remained next to Lukin, and Botha sent out his orders to march at once, and in order to save time instructed each column to pass on the orders to the next.

The columns closed in quickly. The timing was excellent and Lukin should be across the road. De Wet was in the valley all right. Botha opened fire with artillery at long range and advanced on him. De Wet struck back. He was revengeful and tigerish. He had just heard that his son had been killed in a skirmish and he urged on his men to fury. They fought fiercely and there were heavy casualties on each side, and then de Wet's men broke and made up the valley. Beyond it the mountains towered up, shimmering with heat under the blazing sun, crags and precipices, black shadows, and the road, a white ribbon, twisting its way up to the pass.

Botha watched the dust of de Wet's men above the road. He waited for Lukin to open fire and hold them up. There was no sound. De Wet's column was through the pass and out into safety beyond. The dust of his horses settled again. He had got away.

Lukin had not got there in time. He had not got the orders from Brits until too late, and only then got them by chance.

Smuts had seen the fight as a chess-game on a board. He had not considered personalities, he had not realised how they counted: an army was to him a machine, and so de Wet had escaped.

But the fight in Mushroom Valley had broken de Wet. His men began to scatter. With the rest he made off westwards across the Free State and down the Orange River, trying to get to Maritz and the Germans. Full tilt after him Botha sent Koen Brits. Nearly trapped near Paardeberg, de Wet turned north away up into the immense and barren desert of the Kalahari. Brits collected

some motor cars and kept on his track. At last, when he was left with only a handful of men and without water or food, he was surrounded and captured.

De Wet was finished. The fire was gone out of him. The square-stanced, muscular, rock-like old guerilla fighter, the man they had nicknamed the Baboon for his strength and agility, was broken in body and spirit. All the boast was gone out of him. He was condemned by court-martial to a short term of imprisonment, but released almost at once; but from then on faded out of the life of the country.

To Botha, this civil war, this killing of old comrades, was a nightmare, and he was frank and open in showing his emotions. When before Ladysmith they told him that twelve men of his old commando had been killed, he cried out sharply, as if suddenly he had been stabbed, "Not that! Not that!" When, after the fight with de Wet in Mushroom Valley, he saw lying dead, face upwards, two of the men who had fought beside him at Colenso, he stood for a while staring up the valley, his eyes full of tears and his face working, and he wept openly before those who stood round him. All through the months when he was putting down the rebellion, chasing and killing his old comrades because of their folly, he was as one out of whose life had gone all the joy. He became suddenly old and worn; the spring had gone out of his step and the light out of his eyes.

Smuts showed no signs of distress. He worked at top speed with tremendous vigour, concentrated only in defeating the rebels, untouched apparently by personal considerations; and when they brought him the news that Beyers was dead, he was at his table in his office with staff officers round him. He sat up, suddenly rigid, covered his eyes with his left hand, took a piece of notepaper from in front of him, and wrote quickly. Finishing the note, he put it in an envelope, addressed it, and, without looking up or taking his left hand from his eyes, held it out abruptly, and in a curt, harsh voice said, "See Mrs. Beyers gets that at once. She must not get the news officially. She must have it from a friend."

That was Smuts. Moved to his depths as deeply as Botha, yet he must hold himself in rigidly and hide his emotion. Imprisoned in the hard shell he had constructed round himself, he could not and he dared not relax or let anyone come close to him, or let them see his pain. So that Botha seemed lovable and human and Smuts curt and harsh.

CHAPTER XXXIX

BEYERS and de Wet were gone. Deventer, Smuts' old second-in-command on his raid across the Cape, chased Kemp until he surrendered, and harried Maritz until he bolted off across the frontier into German territory and away to shelter. Only a few stray commandos of rebels still hung on. One by one they were rounded up. The last was the one under Japie Fourie, who was in the country to the north-west of Pretoria. He made a raid towards the town, was surrounded, and himself captured. He was tried by court-martial and condemned to be shot as a traitor.

The Nationalists made every endeavour to save Japie Fourie. Hertzog spoke for him, though no one knew better than Hertzog that Fourie was guilty. Smuts' life was threatened. He was warned that if Fourie was shot he would be murdered. Delegations came to see him in his office in Pretoria, in Cape Town, and in his house at Irene.

But he had made up his mind. Japie Fourie was guilty. Beyers and Kemp and the other regular officers had resigned from the Defence Corps before they went into rebellion. Japie Fourie had not. He had fought in uniform. He had looted farms. He had murdered men to pay off old grudges.

"He has," said Smuts, "shed more blood than any other officer. . . . When all the rest accepted that they were beaten he held out. . . . He shot twelve of our men, and some at twelve yards' range, for which there is no excuse. . . . He was the leader of a marauding band and nothing more." Whatever could be said in extenuation of the other rebels, nothing could be said for Fourie.

There was also cold calculation in Smuts' determination. In the old republics rebellion had been a pleasant and easily forgiven form of protest. He would show that in the new united South Africa it was a crime against the State. He might have had de Wet shot, but de Wet was too important: his execution would have aroused a new revolt. He might have shot smaller men, the rank and file, but that would have been useless bloodshed. Japie Fourie was the right man. He should be shot and be the example to teach the lesson.

Having made up his mind, he would not be turned from it. A party of delegates, led by Dr. Malan, came from Cape Town to his house at Irene.

Smuts was out walking. After waiting a while the delegates took the train back to Johannesburg from Irene. When Smuts returned, he sent down to Irene Station to call them back, but they were gone. He could have called them from Johannesburg, or even Cape Town, if he had wished to see them. From that time Malan became his fiercest and most persistent enemy.

Fourie was to be shot by a firing party at dawn on Sunday morning. On Saturday afternoon a delegation of pastors of the Dutch Reformed Church came to plead with Smuts. He promised to consider the sentence. He knew that the execution would take place within a few hours. Convinced that he was right, relentless in his determination, undeterred by threats, and unmoved by pleadings, as grey and relentless as some steel-built machine, whether he refused by direct statement or side-stepped and avoided answering, he went steadily along the line he had decided. Japie Fourie was shot.

"Wherein lies the difference," he was asked, "between the rebels in the old war with the English and these rebels?" and he replied, "Success."

The revolt was over. The burghers went back to their farms. A few rebels were given light sentences and then released. But the bitterness behind the revolt remained.

CHAPTER XL

ON the 15th October, 1914, the day de la Rey died and Botha and Smuts knew that rebellion was sure, the first South African troops from Cape Town under General McKenzie landed at Luderitzbuk, the southern port of the German South West African colony.

This expeditionary force did not prosper. General McKenzie made little headway. Smuts, as Minister of Defence, could send him little help, for Smuts' time and energy were concentrated in suppressing the rebellion. Though Botha had promised the English Government that he would invade the German territory in case of war as long ago as 1911, Smuts had not had data collected, nor even maps of the country prepared, and these were now hard to get. He had few trained staff officers to help him. So McKenzie had to be neglected.

Von Spee, the German admiral, had defeated an English fleet off the Coronel and was out on the open sea in the South Atlantic, in touch both with Berlin and with the Governor of the South West Colony through the powerful wireless station at Windhuk. At any moment he might appear off Cape Town, bombard the town, and sink any transports. The Germans holding McKenzie back with one force had pressed south over the Orange River and threatened Port Nolloth and the mines round it, as Smuts had threatened them in the last war. Maritz had been sent to watch and hold up the Germans. Smuts ordered General Grant, who was at Upington, to march to Port Nolloth. Grant was ambushed by the Germans. Maritz took his troops, joined the Germans, and left the frontier unprotected.

Grant's friends said that Smuts mishandled this: that he knew the Germans were advancing and that Maritz was in touch with them; that he sent Grant a warning by letter, which arrived too late, when he should have sent it by telegram, and so was responsible for the defeat. Grant demanded a court of inquiry. Smuts, already overburdened and irritated with work, refused him abruptly. It was clear that in the Defence Office in Pretoria there was much confusion.

The Germans were concentrating against McKenzie, and with von Spee out and able to isolate McKenzie from the sea and Maritz gone, there was the possibility of a disaster at any moment.

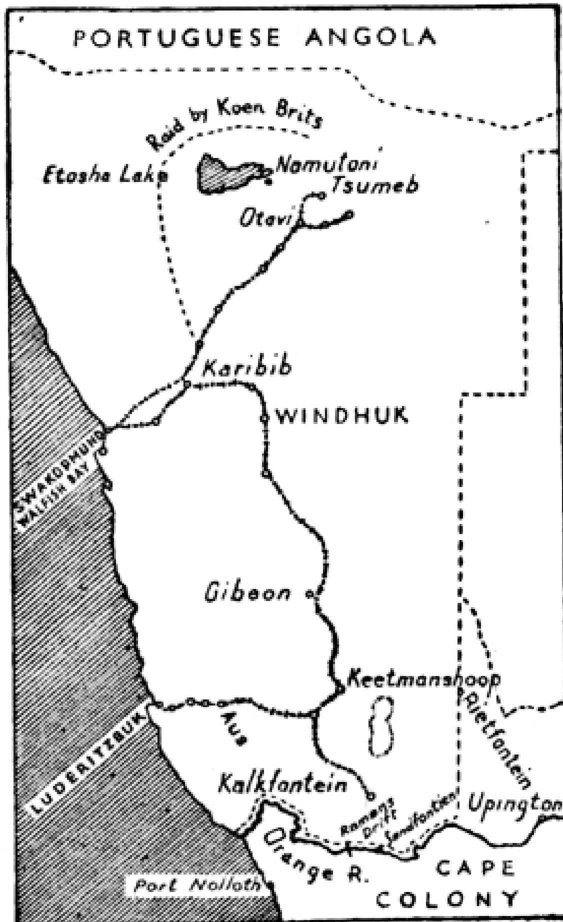
As soon as the rebellion was crushed, Botha took command of the expedition. Smuts wished to take command. Botha was a sick man, he said, and had better stay in the office in Pretoria. The troops were volunteers, and their leaders were the old commando leaders, tough old fighting men who did not mince their words. They had come because of their personal trust in Botha. They loved Botha. They had come because Botha had personally called them to follow him. They made it bluntly clear that they would not follow Smuts.

Botha’s plan of campaign was simple. One railway ran up from south to north through the centre of the German colony, with branch lines off to Luderitzbuk and Swakopmund. He decided to send two columns in from the Cape and advance McKenzie’s force up the branch to Keetmanshoop, while he himself took the main force into Swakopmund, dashed into the interior, cut the railway at Karibib, divided the German forces into two, and cut off those being driven up from the south. He had fifty thousand men against nine thousand Germans, but he wanted to cut them off and surround them so as to prevent their carrying on guerilla tactics, for the country was vast, bare, and as difficult as the Transvaal veld.

He landed at Swakopmund without difficulty. A British squadron had sunk von Spee and his ships off the Falkland Islands. With great speed he advanced on to the central railway at Karibib, sent a force south to take Windhuk and the wireless station, and reorganised his force to push on after such Germans as had gone north.

Smuts remained in Pretoria in his office, preparing and organising. As well as Minister of Defence he acted as Prime Minister. He worked with fury. He hustled the whole Government and the departments. He appeared untirable, and any reverse seemed only to spur him on to greater energy, but he was not happy. He was weary of the office work. The strain of the rebellion had been great. He wanted a change. He was eating his heart out to be on the move. Messages from Botha showed him how good life was out in the open, in action, ordering, commanding, moving, as in the old days with his men in the Cape raid. Botha was a new man now that he was fighting a real enemy. The depression of the rebellion had fallen away from him. He was like a schoolboy. Smuts yearned for that life. He wanted to be there.

The speed of the three columns in the south also did not satisfy him. It was vital that someone should control them from one centre, so as to time



Map to illustrate Botha's German West Africa Campaign.

them to advance together and at top speed and so pinch the enemy in between themselves and Botha's column. He did not believe anyone could control them as well as he could. He did not trust anyone else to do it. He must be there himself, with everything right under his own hand.

Leaving his office he made post-haste to Luderitzbuk and took command of the three southern columns. He acted not so much as a general in command of a considerable force, but as he had acted when he was the leader of his three hundred men raiding full tilt across the Cape. He would take no excuses. The columns must hurry forward; supplies or no supplies, they must bustle. He sent McKenzie riding hard into the blue, without keeping contact, from Aus across the desert to Gibeon, to cut off the Germans retreating down the railway, and then messengers after him to urge him on. He himself pushed on with his tireless, fearless, and unreasoning impetuosity, and so rapidly that often his staff and even his personal secretary could not keep up with

him, lost him, and found him again stranded away out alone on the bleak veld. Once he was captured and brought in by his own patrols.

Botha was somewhat troubled at these methods. He was afraid that Smuts might make some precipitous rash move which would lead to a defeat; and he tried to tone down his rampaging impetuosity.

But within a month the Germans in the south were on the run. Finding Botha across their retreat they surrendered. Smuts returned back to Pretoria with the same speed that he had come away.

Botha now reorganised and turned north, pushing the Germans who were there easily before him up the railway. At Otavi the Germans intrenched themselves. Behind them was wild country in which they could carry on guerilla warfare for months. Botha was determined to prevent that. He held them in front and sent Koen Brits a tremendous ride through desert and the marshes of the Etosha Lake on to their rear and then attacked. The German commander, who was a regular officer, protested that “this was not war but a circus,” and surrendered. The whole of German South West Africa had been overrun and the German forces completely destroyed. The campaign was over.

CHAPTER XLI

BOTHA returned to South Africa as a conqueror. His had been the first Allied victory over the Germans. The newspapers made much of him. Smuts met him at Cape Town, and they were given a great reception. At many towns, including Johannesburg and even Stellenbosch, they were fêted as heroes. They lived in a glow of satisfaction, and they spent much of their time slapping each other on the back in mutual admiration. Smuts issued an official dispatch congratulating Botha; Botha said how proud South Africa ought to be to have as one of its sons a man so marvellous as Smuts.

The life of the Parliament was nearly at an end. The elections were to be held in October. With this feeling of satisfaction that they had done a fine piece of work, Botha and Smuts prepared for the election.

Smuts was warned by his friends, and even by Merriman, that there was big trouble ahead. He ignored the warnings, but already from all over South Africa came a growl which rapidly grew into a snarl, and a savage, evil snarl. The newspapers, especially the Dutch newspaper *Die Burger*, edited by Dr. Malan, published bitter cartoons of Smuts. Postcards showing coffins and the heads of Beyers, de la Rey, and Fourie were sold in large quantities and buttons with Republican colours were worn in all towns where there were Dutchmen.

There were many German agents at work, for the Germans had realised the importance of this election. As Merriman said in a speech at Stellenbosch, "Make no mistake, this is a vital election. It depends on the electors . . . for as sure as the sun rises to-morrow, if they make a mistake, there will be civil war again in South Africa." Civil war would help the Germans. They worked to eject Botha and Smuts and to put in an anti-English Government and so give the British Empire a smashing blow. They worked persistently. They spent money freely. They approached and bribed men in high positions as well as in small posts and bought all the votes they could. They had printed in Holland pamphlets to show that Botha and Smuts were traitors to South Africa, and distributed these secretly all over the country.

Smuts was attacked in Parliament. His record as Minister of Finance was closely scrutinised and he came badly out of the scrutiny. He had no interest in money or money-making. "Money would be a nuisance to me," he said

once to a questioner. “I should always have to be wasting my time thinking how to use or invest it. . . . Why should I burden myself with money? Besides, I don’t find it interesting.” He had never been short of money or had to count the pennies and so to realise their value. His personal finances and his accounts were haphazard and usually neglected. They bored him. So did his work in the Treasury.

The methods of taxation and of expenditure in South Africa were untidy, unscientific, and wasteful. He made no vigorous attempt to reform them, because he looked on his post of Minister of Finance as only temporary. He was casual and indifferent about expenditure because this meant the constant checking of details, and in everything he undertook he disliked and avoided detail. He was useless at all detail. Detail irritated him into a lather of impatience. He had the flair, the genius, to conceive the big, bold ideas and to see far ahead. Others must supply the details, and he would put in the energy and the drive which carried all to completion.

To understand some scientific theory he could memorise and manipulate figures, but figures used for the practical affairs of every day wearied him to distraction, and he could neither grasp them nor did he know how to handle them.

His financial statements were always brief and often unsatisfactory, and when cross-questioned he frequently refused to supply more information. On one occasion the Nationalist Opposition asked the cost of supplying the expedition to German South West with remounts. Smuts gave them a figure at random out of his head, and told a friend, “The Nationalists will take a month to check that figure and by then they will have forgotten all about it.” Such tactics were mere tricks and brought him no credit, but only made people suspicious of his veracity and accuracy.

When Botha left for German South West Smuts had given up the Treasury, but he had still to present the budget, and the Members of the House now took their revenge and heckled him until it became clear that the Treasury under his control had been full of muddle and waste. The word went out round the country that Smuts had wasted the money of the people.

As the campaign of the election started, a massed attack was concentrated on Botha and Smuts, but particularly on Smuts. He went electioneering vigorously in his own constituency of Pretoria West, and also

in many others. Almost everywhere he was met with hostility. Either his meetings were boycotted or they were packed with opponents, who shouted him down.

His past was raked up. He was cursed for deporting the Labour leaders in the 1914 strike, and once again called the "Oriental Despot." All the bitterness of the rebellion was revived and worked up. He was openly accused of having deliberately arranged to murder de la Rey, and of being responsible for Beyers' death. He was called the "assassin of Japie Fourie." To anger the farmers, it was recalled how he had tried to levy a tax on land, but Parliament had refused to sanction it. When he tried to make capital out of the campaign in German South West the Opposition jeered at it as a trumpery little affair in which it had taken fifty thousand troops to round up a handful of Germans, and the word was sent round that Smuts meant to suppress the Constitution, impose martial law, and conscript Dutchmen to fight for the English in Europe.

In everything the opponent was Hertzog. Since his ejection from the Cabinet he had been steadily establishing a position as representing the Dutchmen, especially of the back-veld. It was not so much that he understood the mentality of the back-veld Dutchmen, but that he had the same mentality as they had. He represented their views. They were afraid of Smuts, of being dragged off to fight in Europe to help the English. They did not want to be forced to become a great people: they preferred the narrow isolation of a small community shut away from the world.

There were always two Hertzogs. Hertzog the private individual, quiet, a little scholarly, interested in Latin and books, pleasant in manner, and pedantic; and there was Hertzog the politician, who was spiteful and relentless.

Hertzog had become not the leader of the majority of the Dutch of South Africa, for he had not enough in him to be a leader, but he was their spokesman, or rather their "mascot"; and in politics he attacked Smuts on every possible occasion with intense virulence, and eventually declared himself to be an out-and-out Republican and against Smuts and his English friends.

As the elections came near, the attacks became fiercer and more personal. The Dutch Church pastors egged on Smuts' enemies. The women took a part and brought in a fierce, unreasoning emotionalism, so that the contest became vitriolic. Every device was employed. De la Rey's and Fourie's wives were used to arouse sympathy. The story was spread that

Fourie's body had been refused to his widow—which was true—and had been buried after his execution in lime in the prison yard—which was untrue.

At meetings Smuts was attacked with the grossest personal abuse. He was called "Judas, traitor, bloodhound, murderer." The crowd shouted, "You've cheated us too often. . . . We want not you, but a member with a white man's heart." More than once he was pelted with bad eggs and tomatoes. At a meeting in his own constituency in a suburb called Newlands, an organised attempt to kill him was made.

He was due to go with Ewald Esselen, an enormous man, who was leader of the Transvaal Bar. Esselen tried to persuade him not to attend the meeting—it was called a "social"—but nothing could frighten Smuts, and he would go. The meeting was packed with roughs, who howled at him. He sat on the platform and stared at them contemptuously, which annoyed them. A woman held up the child of a man shot by the soldiers in the rioting in the 1913 strike in Johannesburg. The crowd began to throw bricks and stones, and broke the lamps. They tried to rush the platform. Suddenly Smuts lost his self-control. He blazed up, as Beyers had blazed up when hit with a stick, into a fury, went berserk, lashed out. Esselen caught hold of him. Smuts fought with Esselen, shouting, "Let me get at the devils." As suddenly he was calm and controlled again.

The party tried to get back to the car. The crowd closed round them. Two men caught Smuts by the neck. A third tried to brain him with the handle of a pick. Smuts fought back like a fury. A miner close beside him was knocked out by the pick handle. The police got Smuts to the car. The chauffeur was trying to start up. Someone in the crowd fired twice at Smuts at a few paces and missed him; but he was standing quietly, apparently absorbed in thought, apparently noticing nothing. "That reminds me," he said to a man beside him, "I must get that new bull down to the farm." He was playing a part, acting, to keep those round him from becoming hysterical and shooting and so from tragedy. As he drove away he turned to Esselen. "So that's what you call a *social*?" he asked.

Usually Smuts faced the hostile crowds without showing much emotion. He was always ready to fight them back, to answer their taunts with sarcasm and their challenges with counter-challenges. He made little attempt to hide his contempt, his aristocratic contempt, for them. To him they were a rabble, "a miserable mob." Insults he ignored. One thing alone threw him off his guard and made him angry. If anyone questioned his veracity, he became furious and denounced his opponent.

At first Botha and Smuts had looked on the hostility as ordinary election fever, but as it increased and became direct personal hatred they were taken aback, especially as it came from the Dutch—from their own people.

Smuts, in particular, had not realised it, and the full-blast attack staggered him. He did not understand it. He worked for the country and the people, not for himself. No man could say he worked for himself. Yet they hated him. He became depressed. At times, the fighting spirit oozed out of him as he wondered whether he was wrong; the old doubts, the old inferiority sense of his boyhood returned, and sometimes, when driving long distances from meeting to meeting, he would examine those with him for the causes of this hatred. He would debate why he was "the worst-hated man in South Africa." He saw that he had no personal following. He was a prophet without disciples. He talked of retiring. "I would like nothing better than to be out of this hell. . . ." he said, and he told his wife that all he wanted was "to come home and spend my time on the farm." At that minute, in the weariness of his disillusionment, he meant it; but he could not voluntarily have given up any power. That was contrary to his nature, for he loved power.

For a time he found it hard to throw off the depression. The day after the attack on him at Newlands he wandered about, quite unlike himself. He was to speak at a meeting. He came muffled up in a big khaki coat, the collar turned up, spoke badly and absent-mindedly, his voice hoarse. He was completely deflated. On polling day he visited the booths, but without any optimism to cheer his supporters. He walked round, gloomily, his face drawn and haggard. He had no energy. He was sure he was going to be beaten. But none the less he was elected with a fair majority.

The election put Botha and Smuts back in power, but their own people, the Dutch, had very largely voted against them and for Hertzog. There were two other parties, an English Party and the Labour Party, mainly English too, and led by Creswell, an English engineer. These decided to support Botha so long as the war lasted, and they gave him his majority. Botha and Smuts had been placed in power by the English vote.

That the Dutch should have deserted him hurt Botha desperately. It all but broke his heart, and he never was the same happy, genial soul again. He wanted to resign, but was persuaded to carry on for the good of South Africa.

Smuts was equally deeply hurt, but he was more buoyant and recovered more rapidly. He could discuss, especially if he was depressed, whether he was wrong, but ultimately he could never believe that he was wrong. He had very little respect for the brain-power of others, and eventually he always convinced himself that his opponents were either foolish, obstinate, and ignorant, or just perverse. He at any rate knew that he was right; and he took up office again with renewed energy.

CHAPTER XLII

MEANWHILE, away up on the coast of the Indian Ocean, close under the equator, the English and the Germans were fighting on the frontier between their East African Colonies. The German commander, von Lettow-Vorbeck, had advanced to the north, entered British territory, and threatened Nairobi. Not having sufficient forces, he had entrenched himself in the Kilimanjaro Mountains and from them raided down, almost at will, on to the railway that ran from Nairobi to its port at Mombasa.

In British East Africa were the King's African Rifles and some volunteer units. To help them, from India, had been sent a small force. These had tried to thrust the Germans back and had failed. They had been severely handled in several engagements, attempted to land from the sea at Tanga and outflank the German position and been beaten off; and dispirited they had sat back on the defensive.

Late in 1915 the British Government decided not only to thrust the Germans out of British territory but to conquer the German colony. Lord Kitchener, who was Minister of War, protested: he disapproved of these sideshows; he said that Germany must be defeated in Europe, and an expedition of this sort would only bleed England of necessary men and transports. But the Cabinet over-ruled Lord Kitchener, ordered a sufficient force to be dispatched, and appointed General Smith-Dorrien to command.

Smith-Dorrien fell ill. Botha had just completed the conquest of German South West and returned to Cape Town. It seemed only logical and sound that South Africa should deal with German East also. The British Government asked Botha for help. Botha agreed and sent out a call for volunteers, who came flocking in, Dutchmen and Englishmen alike, from all over the Union. Giving them little training but forming them into some organisation, he began to ship them up to Mombasa. The British Government offered the command to Smuts, who accepted, was gazetted a Lieutenant-General in the British Army, and appointed in February 1916.

The command had been offered to Smuts before, but he had been busy with politics and he had refused. Now he accepted gladly. He was not jealous of Botha. Between the two men there was never any jealousy, personal or official, but Botha had had his success in German South West and Smuts was human enough to want a success to himself. He believed in himself as a general and that he could with a few brilliant strokes finish off this campaign. He considered also that he must go, either he or Botha or some South African general must go, for there were, he said, some seventeen thousand South Africans in German East, and a South African general ought to be there to lead them and look after them.

Above all he wanted to get away for a time. He had been very roughly handled in the elections, and his enemies, especially Hertzog, were still at him. The newspapers, led by Dr. Malan in *Die Burger*, produced every possible story which could hurt him. When he accepted the command, *Die Burger* wrote that “he was escaping his difficulties. . . . Had to go because of cabinet disagreements. . . . Was after an English general’s pay in addition to a South African Cabinet Minister’s salary.” He yearned to leave all this behind, the niggling criticism and the sneers of the Nationalists, and get out into the open, feel again the kick of action and of commanding men, the surge and thrill of those great days when he had led his men raiding across the Cape.

He wasted no time, went to his house in Irene to pack up, and down to the little local wayside station to catch the night train to Durban. Two staff officers from Pretoria and a few local friends saw him off. He came hurrying along at the last moment with his family: Mrs. Smuts, grown from the sedate, serious little girl of the Stellenbosch days into a typical Dutch wife, homely and shrewd; his children bare-footed and lusty urchins of the farm. He said good-bye briefly under the dim light of the station lamp, picked up his eldest son, carried him to his carriage, and then, with a sigh, as if he could not bear to leave him, put him down, climbed up into the coach, and steamed away into the darkness.

He landed in Mombasa on the 19th February, 1916 and went straight to Nairobi; he refused all receptions and social functions, and set off at once to investigate the whole front personally. He found the troops depressed, their morale low. They had little confidence in their leaders, and they had an

exaggerated idea of the fighting value of the enemy, and especially of their black *askari* troops.

The staff had prepared a scheme for attacking the Germans. Smuts considered it and decided with some modifications to use it. The Germans held a line from the Kilimanjaro, by the Pare Mountains, down to the sea. Through these ranges was a gap in which stood the town of Taveta and beyond it Moschi. This was the gateway into German East, and it was held by the main body of the enemy. The staff scheme aimed at holding the Germans while the first division marched down from Longido round the mountains on to their rear, then forcing them back, and so trapping the whole force.

Smuts' Campaign in German East Africa

Smuts' Campaign in German East Africa

Smuts agreed and decided to move at once. The staff advised him to wait. The rains were expected within three weeks and the rain would turn the whole country into a quagmire, flood the rivers, make all transport impossible; but Smuts would have none of it. He would attack at once. He wanted a quick, spectacular advance. He rattled and bustled everybody and

everything. He would wait for nothing. He concentrated his main force in front of Taveta and started the first division on its march from Longido. He had all the commanders up, showed them personally over the ground, explained to each exactly what he had to do, and attacked. He did not attempt to pin the enemy down, but by a skilful flank movement he jockeyed them out and so acted too quickly, for in the time allotted to it, the first division could not get behind the Germans.

Smuts had given the first division three days to march the fifty miles from Longido and get into position, and it was too little. The country was unmapped and unknown and turned out to be thick jungle without roads or even paths. The general commanding the division was not prepared to risk a blind march into the bush, where there were Germans hidden. He took the normal precautions; but this was not Smuts' idea at all. He sent a wireless message to hurry and then another, and after that an aeroplane. The first division arrived too late to block the enemy in the gap, and they slipped out and made southwards. Smuts promptly replaced the general.

As his column came into Taveta, Smuts was up with the advance troops and pushed on to Moschi. He was through the gate and in German East.

Before him lay an immense country, bigger than the whole German Empire. Across his front from Moschi down to the sea at Tanga ran a railway. Two hundred miles to the south was a main line running seven hundred and fifty miles right across the colony from the Belgian Congo to Dar-es-Salaam on the Indian Ocean. On this were placed the German main stations and depots. Except for these two there were no lines of communication except a few rough roads, and the whole country was an immense jumble, unmapped and little known, of waterless deserts, marshes, great rivers often in flood and without bridges, huge primeval jungles, tropical forests infested with every poisonous, biting insect, and full of savage animals and a few primitive wild tribes. Every tropical disease was rife, but especially malaria in its worst form, with pneumonia and dysentery.

Smuts' staff of trained soldiers were of the opinion that there were two alternatives. Either he must hold the Germans beyond the mountains out of British territory and leave them to stew and weary in the great forests, occasionally attacking them to make them apprehensive and to keep the offensive; or he must plan some great manœuvre by which the enemy might be encircled and, before he could escape and scatter or begin guerilla

warfare, destroy his armed forces, as Botha had done in German South West and so completed that conquest in one swift, brilliant campaign.

But Smuts did neither. The vastness of the country, the risks, and the immense difficulties did not warn or deter him. He was at heart a raider and not a soldier. His only experiences of war had been his guerilla fighting and raiding in the Cape. In German South West he had treated his forces in the south as raiding columns. To dash ahead, each man carrying his own rations, fending for himself and his horse, overleaping difficulties: that was his experience, and he treated this campaign as a magnificent raid. He calculated to finish it in six, or at most nine, months and get back to Cape Town.

To gain speed he quickly reorganised the force and ejected several of the older and more cautious commanders. He had with him Deventer, his old comrade. Giving him a division consisting of South African Infantry and five regiments of South African Horse, he told him to push on, get on to the back of the enemy, make a detour and get down to the central railway, and cut it in the middle, while he himself would take the main force and move on a line to the east nearer the coast into the same railway and the temporary capital of German East at Morogoro.

Deventer too was a raider. He gave a few verbal orders, took five thousand mounted burghers of the South African Horse, told his infantry to follow as best they could, and rode out like a hot blast, as hard as he could go. He detoured through Aruscha, his men picking up what food they could, the horses reduced to a little grass and mealie stalks. A river in flood held them up. His troops swam the fierce current. He marched into the Massai desert, where there was no water. When his men slackened under the pitiless sun he drove them on and entered Kondoa Irangi, a hundred and fifty miles to the south of Moschi, just as the rains came down.

Here he was held up. Von Lettow had moved his main force across to check him, and had entrenched them in the hills overlooking the town. Of Deventer’s column of five thousand men over eleven hundred were down sick. All the horses needed rest and care. There were no rations and no transport to get these to the troops, who eked out the scraps they had got with country fruit—paw-paws and ground-nuts. The rain had made all the country a sticky bog of black mud. The horses sank up to their chests in the treacherous stuff. Deventer was almost isolated, and he was at a standstill, immobilised.

The rains had caught Smuts also, and he was forced to stand fast until they slackened. He fumed and fussed to be off, and the minute it was possible he pushed down the Pangani River to Buiko and then turned south to Handeni.

His staff begged him to go slow and rest the troops. They had marched a hundred and forty-five miles in thirteen days, through swamps and marshes full of malaria, through forest where they had had to break tracks and cut roads yard by yard through thick jungle and giant thorn bush. Sometimes they had marched all night, at others, from two in the morning to the dusk. When not marching they had been building roads and bridges. They had been wet through day after day with mud and rain, and worked gasping in the steaming heat. All the way the Germans with their askaris had sniped and machine-gunned them from the forests and the bush, for they knew the country and the paths, and could dash in and be gone with impunity. The men, the staff officers said, were worn out.

The Transport and Supply officers and the doctors also begged Smuts to halt. The whole transport system had broken down. The railway needed much repair before it could be used. The lorries were stuck in the flooded rivers or bogged in the mud. There was no repair organisation. The oxen and mules were plodding along miles in the rear and dying like flies. They could get no food up to the men and no medicines. The only ration left was a hard dry biscuit which when soaked made a porridge, but which gave the men acute dysentery; there was no meat or bread or sugar or tea, except sometimes some mealies, and occasionally oxen which had died from the tsetse fly and were almost uneatable. This meat the native troops would not eat, and they were dying of starvation. Many had eaten roots and herbs gathered at random and been poisoned. Over nine thousand men had already gone to hospital seriously ill.

But Smuts would not listen to them. He knew nothing of scientific staff work and he despised it and the staff officers, who were, he considered, always making difficulties. He told them he would not be worried with details. “I am sick and tired of experts,” he said. “The experts have hopelessly broken down in this war.”

It was typical of his lack of staff training and experience that on one occasion he decided to halt and went forward to choose the camp and then still farther forward to reconnoitre personally. Only late in the afternoon he ordered the troops into camp. As a result they arrived in the dark: there were no camping arrangements; all was confusion. The camp was badly sited and covered with high elephant grass. The weary men, dispirited and hungry, lay

down, each man where he was, in discomfort and waited for the dawn. The place was near a native village and was alive with red ticks, which gave the men an intermittent fever.

For doctors he had no respect: he had said that often before. Experts of all sorts he distrusted. Graphs, marching hours, lines of communication protection—what were all these details about? He had already told them not to worry about the lines of communication, even about the railways. Leave them unguarded. A few breakdown gangs were cheaper than patrols and could quickly repair any damage the Germans could do. Transport! Rations! What was all the fuss about these things? “Hunger! Thirst!” he exclaimed. “There are no such things when the success of a big operation hangs in the balance.” Somewhere just ahead of him in the impenetrable forest, always just beyond his reach, was von Lettow and his men. He must get at them. He gave the order to push on and at once.

CHAPTER XLIII

SMUTS himself lived as hard as his men. He ate the same food, went as hungry and short of sleep, and was as ill as they were. He had malaria, filled himself up with iron and arsenic and quinine, and forced himself to keep going.

He took many personal risks, and was often foolhardy; he did not realise that the commander of a large force had no right to risk himself as if he were leading a small raiding party. He would get up well in front, often ahead of his advance troops, and even of his scouts. His staff tried to keep him back, but that made him angry and petulant, and he pushed on the more. At the crossing of one small river there was a fight. He was up with the front line and through the river with the first men, under fire.

On another occasion he went so far forward that a German patrol cut him off and he had to run for safety, and he got away down the back of a hill with his clothes ripped by the thick thorn of the brush and his face and hands cut with the sharp boulders.

For every mile his men marched he did five. He seemed never to be at rest. When the column halted he went ahead reconnoitring, and then he would sit down with a pad of paper on his knees and without hesitation write out his orders in easy, flowing English, as if he were comfortably sitting at a desk in his study.

Yet he found time to do many personal acts of kindness. He would himself carry out cups of tea to his guard. He would stop on the march to ask tired men how they fared, and more than once he hoisted a sick man on to his horse and walked beside him until they came to an ambulance.

But at last, out of sheer necessity, he was forced to halt and rest his men. The delay made him fret. He must be up and doing. It was time, he decided, that Deventer pushed on from Kondoa Irangi. He was in excellent signalling communication with Deventer, but that was not enough: he must go himself; see for himself; do it himself, and leave it to no one else. He drove off by car across the difficult and dangerous country, where he might be captured anywhere by enemy patrols, up northwards and then across the Massai Desert, and down to Kondoa Irangi, saw Deventer, explained what he wanted, and hurried back, a journey of some five hundred miles.

Deventer pushed down to the railway, took Dodoma, and was astride the main line.

Away in Pretoria, Botha was acting as Minister of Defence. He was troubled at Smuts' methods. He was constantly nervous that Smuts would do some foolish act and there would be a disaster. Men coming back invalided told harrowing tales, and were bitterly critical of Smuts. The Opposition asked awkward questions. The German forces were some six hundred Germans and six thousand askaris, natives—and no South African thought much of natives. Smuts had twice that number of white men, the best and sturdiest young fighting South Africans, and Indian and African troops as well. How was it, they asked, that he could not finish off this handful of Germans with their natives? And why these enormous losses of wounded and sick—already twelve thousand South Africans had been invalided back? These criticisms were not easy to answer, especially as there were reports of white South Africans being beaten in straight fights by natives, of bad tactical handling, and that the diseases from which the troops had suffered so severely were "due to lack of food and to the great exertions demanded, as much as to the unhealthy climate."

Repeatedly Botha begged Smuts to go slow and not outrun his transport or leave his lines of communication unprotected. "Smuts," he said on one occasion, "is a pernicious optimist. He often gets himself into a tight fix for the pleasure of fighting his way out."

He tried to keep Smuts on the right lines. When he received a plan from Smuts, he would spread a map out on the floor of his office, forbid anyone to disturb him, lie down at full length, and study the details, absorbed, sometimes for hours. He had a flair not only for visualising country which he could see before him, but also for visualising it from a map. Several times he realised that Smuts was heading for a disaster. Then he would send him another plan of his own in a friendly, tactful telegram, and Smuts would usually adopt it. More than once from his office, away in Pretoria, he saved Smuts from walking into trouble.

But he grew more and more nervous as Smuts went tearing ahead, ignoring the advice of his staff and the experts, his lines of communication lengthening, and getting no nearer to finishing the Germans. Parliament was in recess. He wired Smuts that he would come and see him. Smuts was

delighted. He trusted Botha and listened to him as he trusted and listened to no other man.

Botha found things as he expected. Over half of Smuts' fighting troops were already off the strength and hundreds were going down daily. One thing was clear. All the white men must be evacuated and replaced by Indians and Africans at once. White men were not able to stand up to the climate and, unless this was done quickly, there would be trouble in South Africa, for the people there would not tolerate these enormous casualties without compensating results. Having settled this and given Smuts all the advice he could, Botha returned to his work in Pretoria.

Two weeks later Smuts advanced down to the railway and entered Morogoro. Between him and Deventer, von Lettow was skilfully manœuvring his men up and down the railway. Deventer drove him again to the south and joined hands with Smuts. The main railway was in their hands.

Smuts held the main railway on which were all the principal German towns and depots, but he was no nearer the defeat of von Lettow and the German forces. He must push on after his enemy. There was even more difficult and disease-infested country ahead. He sent Deventer down to Iringa and himself advanced by the Uluguru Mountains towards Kissaki.

In the thick, steaming jungle round Kissaki, von Lettow had dug trenches and made barricades and waited. Smuts, hoping to catch him here, sent forward his columns. He meant to direct the operations himself and he had kept the details to himself. He rarely told even his staff what he intended to do. Unfortunately, as he came up his car broke down. There were no horses handy. He raged, but there was nothing to be done. The British columns advanced without co-ordination. Von Lettow struck at them separately and beat them back, and then, having given his men new courage, evacuated and once more drew out southwards.

Smuts saw that for all his marching, his rushing ahead regardless of losses of men and animals and material, he had failed. He had visualised finishing the campaign with a few sweeping blows. He had delivered the blows, but at nothing, into the air; and the enemy was still there. He had marched through great tracts of country, but only what he and his men stood on was conquered. Round them was bush and forest so thick that an army of the enemy might have passed at a few hundred yards and he not known it.

All he had left was the tattered bits of his force: half the men disabled; all the white men invalided or sent home; thirty thousand horses, oxen, and mules dead; the roads littered with broken wagons and lorries; no reserve of food, ammunition, or men; his communications haphazard, constantly threatened, and easily cut.

He tried a piece of bluff. He sent von Lettow a stern summons to surrender, but the astute German was not taken in. He knew the position and that Smuts was bluffing, and that "as far as force was concerned, Smuts had reached the end of his resources," and he politely, but bluntly, refused.

Once more the torrential rains came and Smuts was forced to stand fast at Kissaki until December. Then he pushed his limping, weary troops on another fifty miles across the Rufiji River, but with no clear objective except to find the elusive Germans; when in mid-January of 1917 orders came from Botha for him to return at once to Cape Town, as he was needed for other work.

With a sigh of relief he handed over to one of his divisional commanders, General Hoskins, and hurried to Cape Town.

PART V

CHAPTER XLIV

AWAY in Europe the Allies were in great danger, for England was weakly led; and if England failed them they would all be defeated. To win the war needed strong, passionate leadership, with a man leading who had the instincts of a dictator: able to decide, prepared to take risks, act, drive, and smash his way to victory.

The Prime Minister of England, Mr. Asquith, was faltering. In the Cabinet was Mr. Lloyd George. He saw the danger, the lack of energy, the muddle and confusion and waste, when the leader could not lead. He believed in himself. He hustled Mr. Asquith out of office and himself in. One of the first things he did was to invite the Dominions to send representatives to an Imperial War Conference; and he invited Louis Botha to come as Prime Minister of South Africa.

Botha refused. He wished to stay with his own people in South Africa: they needed watching and guiding. He did not wish to go to England. "The British Ministers," he said, "will find Dominion Premiers a damned nuisance fussing about, and not of much practical value." But Smuts might like to go. Smuts liked that sort of thing and it would be quite a good thing if someone else took over German East Africa: Smuts needed a holiday; the criticism of his handling of the campaign was increasing.

Smuts accepted without hesitation. He had had enough of German East. The malaria from which he suffered kept coming back in bouts and made him very weary and depressed. The campaign, he told others, was over. His work was done and there was only the clearing up, which other men could do; and he hurried back to Cape Town to prepare.

Smuts left South Africa in March 1917. He left in a volley of curses. Hertzog and the Nationalists made the best use of their chance. He was off to England, to his English friends; off "home," they sneered. They revived van Rensburg's prophecy: "I saw the English leaving Africa";—the English troops were gone already—"a vulture flew back, which was Botha, but Smuts went with the English and came no more." The Dutch of the back-veld believed the prophecy and believed that Smuts had gone to mix them up in the war that England was fighting. "South Africa," they said, "is too small for our Jannie."

Smuts retaliated: “We have done our duty. No one can accuse us of being small or petty,” he said. “. . . We have followed in the steps of the Voortrekkers and the Pioneers. . . . I trust South Africa, instead of being petty, gnawing at its own entrails . . . will become the great country which is its destiny.”

His enemies set up a great outcry: “Smuts dares to compare himself to the famous Voortrekkers, with the founders of South Africa!” They named him the “Reincarnation of Rhodes,” and recalled the blood and ruin that had come to the Dutch from Rhodes and his great ambitions. “Jannie too,” they said, “must have an empire, must have the world”; and a blaze of fury against him ran across South Africa as he left.

Smuts arrived in London in a whirlwind of applause. Those responsible for war propaganda had seen his value. Here was a one-time rebel who had fought against England and he was coming to help England in the hour of her great need: he was coming because he realised that England stood for justice and right against German tyranny and brutality. He was, moreover, the first successful Allied general in the war, for he had swept the Germans wholesale out of Africa. Subtly, with all their skill, they built up a reputation round Smuts which made even his friends in South Africa gasp. The newspapers proclaimed him “The conquering hero . . . come to kindle new enthusiasm and new confidence. . . . The most considerable figure in Greater Britain. . . . The destroyer of the German power in Africa.” Lloyd George introduced him as “one of the most brilliant generals of the war.” Admiral Fisher suggested he should take command in France. Winston Churchill followed up with “A new and altogether extraordinary man from the outer marches of the Empire.”

Smuts always appeared to dislike publicity, and yet he was always in the public eye. He refused newspaper interviews, yet the reporters got their interviews. He shut himself away, yet no public man had so many photographs of himself published: of himself, stern-faced, of set purpose; in his cap and gown as a student, book in hand; as a pugnacious state-attorney; in his fighting kit as a raider; in his office, signing a document, surrounded with books; in his house, a child on his arm; but, above all, as a general in uniform, jaw set, map in hand. He avoided the limelight, and yet almost unconsciously, more by instinct than by intention, again and again he backed into the limelight, into the full glare of publicity.

In South Africa his own people gave him little applause. They respected —and suspected—his brains and his mental agility. They attacked his actions, and usually put the worst interpretations on all he did. They never pretended to like him, and they did not applaud him. In South Africa he was just Jannie Smuts, son of old Jacobus Smuts of Riebeek West; the clever, unpleasant boy of the family, and everybody knew all about him without any delusions: that was all there was to it.

In England he was given all the applause a man could want. He was given honours, decorations, praise, degrees, receptions, dinners—one even in the gallery of the House of Lords; and to this applause he responded eagerly. He played his part as a believer in England's great qualities and in the justice of her fight—and also as the victorious general, the conqueror of German East Africa. He gave an interview which was broadcast by all the newspapers. "The campaign in German East Africa may be said to be over," he said. "What is delaying the absolute end is the fact that March and April are the heavy rainy season. After April the Germans will have to surrender . . . the campaign will be brought to an end by the native battalions which I have trained."

But here a difficulty arose. Hoskins away in German East Africa found that Smuts had left him only the broken-down wreckage of an army: men, animals, rifles, guns, transport, medical services, all worn out; and with that a bad position and an undefeated enemy in the most difficult of country.

Hoskins was experienced in the country and a trained officer. He had been Inspector-General of the King's African Rifles. He realised he must start and build up everything, right from the foundations; that Smuts had left him nothing but trouble; and he sent in demands for stores, horses, oxen, lorries, rifles, guns, and reinforcements—an immense list. The War Cabinet were staggered, for had not Smuts said that he had all but finished the campaign and the men he had trained could end it off in a month or two? Smuts was vague when asked. Hoskins must be wrong. Better if Hoskins went elsewhere and Deventer, who understood this sort of thing, took over. Deventer would easily settle with von Lettow.

So Hoskins departed, and Deventer took command, and month after month Deventer chased von Lettow without result, so that in the end the Germans were stronger than ever, doing much damage in Portuguese territory and in British Rhodesia as well as in German East, and were unbeaten; and Deventer's demand for supplies and arms ultimately far exceeded those sent in by Hoskins. But by that time the War Cabinet were

busy on other things, and Smuts was established in the public eye in England as the successful general.

Once more he had his photograph taken as the stern-faced commander in uniform, and it was published, signed, with the inscription, "Let us have faith that Right is Might, and with that faith as an end try to do our Duty." Crowds came to hear him when he spoke. He told them that the British Empire was not founded on might, but on moral principles . . . on freedom, equality, and equity. . . . "Fifteen years ago," he said, "I fought against the British Empire . . . for liberty and freedom. I am fighting for the same things to-day," and his audiences, who had become weary of the stock phrases of the English politicians and doubting their own cause, listened to Smuts using the same stock phrases and went away uplifted, full of new fighting spirit and of moral indignation against Germany.

Smuts had been deliberately eulogised for propaganda purposes, but as soon as he attended the meetings of the Imperial War Conference he showed his value. Not oppressed by the immediate pressure of events around him, he looked at everything from a different angle, and he judged and advised wisely and quietly. He was clear and quick, energetic and vital, so that he stood out as an exceptional man at those meetings, and as the Conference came to an end Lloyd George determined he would keep him for other work.

Early in the war an English army under General Murray had been sent to Egypt to protect it from the Turks. Asquith had agreed with Sir William Robertson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff at the War Office, that this army under General Murray was to defend only Egypt and the Suez Canal. But as soon as Lloyd George became Prime Minister he gave orders that General Murray should attack and push the Turks back out of Palestine: he wished to pin the Germans down in France and "to knock out the props" on which they depended, of which one was Turkey. Smuts had expressed his complete approval of this policy. He considered that the Allies were too tied to the front in Europe.

General Murray tried to push the Turks back and failed. Lloyd George decided to replace him, and offered the command of the army in Egypt to Smuts.

The idea caught the imagination of Smuts: to conquer Palestine, to rescue the Holy Land from the Infidel Turks; to "knock away the prop"—he

loved a phrase—and with a spectacular blow bring Germany down; but he discussed it first with Sir William Robertson and found that the War Office were opposed to the whole idea. To the War Office it was a dangerous sideshow. He told Lloyd George this, but Lloyd George at a Cabinet meeting promised he would see him through. "You're afraid of Robertson," said Lloyd George. "Take the command, and if you have any difficulties come to us. We'll see you through." But Smuts calculated that with the War Office against the scheme he would be short-circuited whatever Lloyd George might do, and so he would be left in a backwater; and he was not going to be left in any backwater. He was determined to be well in the centre.

"I have had enough of fighting," he told a Jewish audience. "I shall be of more use in the centre." He was prepared to take the command only if he could do something spectacular and do it quickly and come away.

He telegraphed to Botha for advice. Botha understood Smuts. He knew that Smuts' great ambition was to be considered a great general, and Botha had no delusions about that. He knew that Smuts was an excellent guerilla leader, a fine, bold raider, but no general.

Knowing nothing about the Turks, Botha sent for one of his staff who did.

"Tell me," he said. "Have the Turks any big generals?"

"Surely," replied the officer. "Enver Pasha is there and many Germans, von der Goltz and others."

"But are they really big generals?"

"Yes," replied the officer, "they are."

"Then," said Botha with a smile, "I don't think we had better let our Jannie go against them . . . but I have something else for him. Something more in his line. They want him in the War Cabinet in England." And he sent a telegram to Smuts, a telegram which showed how close and intimate these two men were with each other, for both were sensitive men easily hurt. If anyone else had sent Smuts such a telegram he would have flown into a fury.

"Advise you to refuse," it ran. "We both know you are no general."

Smuts refused the command. General Allenby, a successful cavalry leader in France, was appointed. The rest of the Dominion representatives had left and the Imperial War Council was indefinitely postponed. The

English War Cabinet had again taken control. Lloyd George invited Smuts into the War Cabinet.

The appointment of Smuts to the War Cabinet was opposed by other Ministers. Walter Long, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, criticised it, saying that the other Dominions and Colonies might object: Smuts was not even a Member of Parliament in England. To bring a Colonial into the Cabinet! It was unheard of! He was horrified.

From another angle the Liberals attacked Smuts. Mrs. Asquith wrote, begging him not to sit in a Cabinet beside men like Lloyd George, and her friends said, "with Milner, who . . . nearly lost us South Africa, and George Curzon, who thinks of no one but himself." But Smuts cared not at all for the old feuds of Mrs. Asquith, or her quarrels and personal dislikes; he would not be involved in old party squabbles; the war had to be won and he would sit in the Cabinet with anyone who would help to win it. So that Mrs. Asquith was hurt and went among her Liberal friends telling them that Smuts had gone back on them, deserted them, and misled them, when she had thought that he was "as honest and trustworthy as I am."

The ordinary people in England were ready to have him. They were tired of the old rivalries and wranglings and of the old men. Smuts was a novelty and brought hope. He had now a great reputation. He had been made "the hero of the hour." And Lloyd George was determined to have him there, whatever anyone else said.

The two men had much in common. Both were professional politicians, brought up as lawyers. Both were very quick-witted, so that both had a reputation for being over-clever and for being "slim." Both were impatient of delay or opposition, of old men and old prejudices: things decided on must be done and done quickly without the making of objections or difficulties. Both were unorthodox and despised the formalities and the delays of departments and the caution of civil servants, and trained staff officers.

And in Smuts, Lloyd George had found something he wanted. The admirals and generals said that no man could be a strategist without training and experience, he must be an expert in the art of war; and that Lloyd George was just "a little attorney" and an interfering muddler. This drove Lloyd George to fury. He explained half the war errors by it. "There is no

profession in which experience and training count less with judgment and flair . . . imagination, resource, initiative, and flexibility are more essential to success in the vocation of the soldier than in any other," he wrote. And here was Smuts, another "little attorney" who, without training or experience, had run the English generals off their legs in the South African War and who had, he said, conquered German East Africa: a brilliant general, in fact. Together with Smuts he, Lloyd George, would show all the admirals and generals what two "little attorneys" could do—and he used Smuts on every possible occasion.

CHAPTER XLV

THE WAR CABINET was planned to consist of men of exceptional ability and standing, free from routine or department ties, and so able to undertake any important duties. If a committee hung fire because of jealousies, personal or departmental, or because of a timid or inefficient president, a member of the War Cabinet was sent to preside and bustle the committee; and he had behind him the whole power and prestige of the Cabinet. If a situation at home or abroad was delicate, critical, or obscure, a member of the War Cabinet was sent to investigate, and he reported his own conclusions direct to the Cabinet. It was an autocratic system excellently suited to the war.

Many of the members of the Cabinet, however, were too busy. Lloyd George, Bonar Law, and Curzon especially had their own departments. Others of the members had been brought in for political reasons and were of little other use. Lord Milner and Smuts were the two who were the best fitted and the freest for these special duties.

At the first meeting which he attended Smuts found himself sitting beside Milner, his old rival, the man he hated, the man who had always set his hackles up; but now they were to work together for one great object. They quickly became friends, and from friendship they went to respect. Both had the same quick, decisive mind: Smuts more complicated by alternatives and more tortuous, Milner more simple and direct. Like a woodman preparing a tree to fell, each rapidly cut away all undergrowth from a problem and left the trunk bare. The more they grew to know each other, the more they saw eye to eye. There grew up between them a close mutual understanding. They consulted each other, trusted and backed each other. Smuts treated Milner as a son might treat an honoured father. He would take Milner by the arm away into a corner to work out some knotty point, and until Milner had agreed, he would not be satisfied to give his opinion.

At meetings Smuts was extraordinarily reserved. He refused to be drawn into any discussion on local politics. Even when it was on military or diplomatic subjects he often sat silent. On one occasion he sat right through a long meeting of the full Cabinet without opening his mouth, though Austen Chamberlain tried several times to draw him out, and at the end Bonar Law, in jest, complimented him on his restraint.

When, however, he did speak he always had something to say and something worth saying. The rest of the members were too close to the events, too close to the ground. They had sons and brothers in the fighting line and the problems were intensely personal as well as national, and they could not look up and beyond.

Smuts was freer. He could look up and away into the future, and now and again he made schemes and observations which were like flashes of inspiration to the others tied down to the immediate problems.

"We shall," he said in 1917, "win this war but lose the peace, and all who are directing in this war will lose their reputation." He began to speak of an organisation, a league of all nations, to keep the peace and build a new world when the war was over. To the others the war had become wearily eternal, without beginning and without visible end. He began to plan out the form of the British Empire after its ordeal and testing in the fire through which it was passing. He opposed all idea of concrete union by federation with a central Imperial Parliament. "No one outside a lunatic asylum wants," he said, "to force the young nations of the Empire into any particular mould. . . . All previous empires were based on the idea of assimilating and forcing different human material through one mould to form one nation. . . . My conception of the British Empire is a grouping of free states held together with a common allegiance on terms of freedom and equality." And he coined the telling phrase "The British Commonwealth of Nations."

So both by his silences and his expressed opinion he earned the reputation of being "a wise councillor."

Smuts had a suite of rooms at the Savoy Hotel in London, luxuriously fitted and with a view across the Embankment and the busy Thames beyond; but at times he became homesick for the wide, arid spaces of the veld; for the sun; for the rough accommodation of the converted bungalow which was his house at Irene, where he ate veld food and slept on a hard mattress on a narrow iron bedstead, often out on the stoep. These things suited him better than the luxuries of the Savoy.

On one occasion a friend sent him some biltong, the sun-dried strips of meat used in South Africa. The parcel was given to him in the hotel hall. He would not wait until he got to his room, but tore it open as he went up in the lift and chewed the brittle strips of meat as he went down the passage,

enjoying it more than the delicacies of the hotel restaurant and its French chef.

Like all others in those days of intense effort, he worked hard and took what sleep he could get, went to bed late, and got up early. He ate sparingly, never smoked, drank only a little red wine and occasionally some brandy. He was usually well dressed in the uniform of a lieutenant-general, with red tabs on his coat, and he looked well and healthy. For exercise he drove out in his car to Richmond and walked hard across the Park. He avoided social functions and dinners, though he was a member of one or two clubs, including the "Other Club," a select group started by F. E. Smith and Winston Churchill. Any spare time he spent with friends—quiet, unimportant people in London or Oxford—so that officials, and especially those representing South Africa, complained that he neglected his social duties. Even when he had promised, they were never sure he would turn up, but they would find that he had gone off somewhere walking, or to his friends.

Colonel House, the confidential adviser of Mr. Wilson, the President of the United States of America, reported that he had met Smuts and that "He is alert, energetic, and forceful. . . . One of the few men here who do not seem tired"; and that was natural, for Smuts was in a special position. The months he was in England were a holiday for him. He was away from the oppressive routine of his office and the churlish suspicion and dislike of his own people. He was being educated. He needed culture. He was as yet only half educated, and then only in law and erudite philosophy, some science grubbed out of books, and some poetry. He was like an encyclopædia with only a few pages cut. Of music and the heart-beat of sound, of art, painting, of the joy of colour caught, of the play and working of great intellects, he knew and felt nothing. In these he had had no experience. In South Africa he met no first-class brains. In England he was in constant contact with first-class minds working at high pressure. The contact stimulated and taught him. One hour's talk with Balfour or Milner was more of an education than a month of reading alone in Irene.

He had, moreover, no responsibilities. He was in the pleasant position of being free-lance adviser to the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet, who respected him, asked his advice, and trusted his judgment. From his youth up he had been called by the big thing and the big idea. Now he was a power

behind the men handling world affairs and without their obligation to justify their opinions.

He had few personal anxieties. South Africa, his country and home, was six thousand miles away and in no danger. He was convinced that Germany could not win the war; she might be able to force a draw or stalemate, but no more: so she could do no harm to South Africa.

He was able to stand well back out of the crowd and watch. He was apart, like one of the old gods sitting on Mount Olympus looking down with scorn on the efforts of men and the puny battles of the mortals round Troy. He was like one who has found an ants' nest broken up by some clumsy foot, and who watched with detached curiosity the massed striving of the pygmy world below him.

The Smuts of South Africa disappeared: the impatient, liverish, often ill-natured, often petty, Smuts, harassed with constant responsibility, overworked, always under close criticism and distrusted, who had to calculate all he did and said in terms of how it would affect the voters at the next election. The slowness of the routine of Government offices and even of the Cabinet and the fumblings of older men—he was younger than his colleagues, had lived more simply and in a better climate, and so had more vigour—irritated him somewhat, but he was more tolerant. He was more easy-tempered and more human. And while all round him there was massed hysteria and the palpitating, bloodshot-eyed confusion of a world gone mad and the weariness of men about to break under strain, he developed an air of tranquillity, of imperturbability, of the watcher self-contained, looking on from his superior viewpoint, interested but not intimately affected; so that many came to him for his advice.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE more Lloyd George worked with Smuts,the more useful and the more to his liking he found him. He sent him to the headquarters of Sir Douglas Haig, who commanded the British forces in France, to get his views, and then to discuss the situation with the King of the Belgians and the President of the French Republic. Smuts could express opinions and say things that no Englishman could say. For the same reason Lloyd George considered sending him on a propaganda mission to the United States, for Smuts would be able to pay tributes to English character and to praise England in a way no Englishman could possibly do without boasting; and if an Englishman came boasting, no American would believe him or even listen to him.

Smuts came back from France with decided views. He considered that the French ought to do more, push ahead, show more of an offensive spirit, defend France without depending so much on the English Army. England, he considered, was being dragged at the tail of France.

Hardly had he returned when Lloyd George asked him to be chairman of a Convention on Ireland: the various Irish parties, rebels and loyalists, had agreed to meet; Smuts seemed the right man to preside; he was an old rebel turned loyalist, and Lloyd George calculated that the loyalists would be pleased and the rebels might listen to him.

Sir James Craig, the leader of the northern Irish, went to see Smuts at the Savoy, and found that he wished to be chairman. “Better take my advice,” said Sir James Craig, who was always direct and blunt. “Get aboard the next ship to Cape Town before you accept this job. You’ll be better off. Without an interpreter you’ll not understand what they are saying, and without a guide to their religious differences and their characters you’ll never know what they are doing.” Smuts showed his wisdom by refusing to be chairman.

Lloyd George put Smuts on to committee after committee. He created a special committee to advise the Cabinet on its war policy and another to watch events in the Near East, and he made Smuts a member of both.

From every side came demands for men—men for the front line, for the reserves, for the factories, for the mines, for every national service. Every department scrambled and haggled and shouted for men. Lloyd George made a War Priorities Committee with Smuts as its chairman to hear the

claims and to allot the men where they were most needed. He had to “keep his finger on the pulse of the war-weary people” and to judge how to use the men at his disposal: and he did it with a fine judgment, partiality, and firmness.

The 7th July, 1917, was a fine summer day with a clear sky and a warm, pleasant sun shining. In the middle of the morning a fleet of twenty-two Gotha aeroplanes flew out from Germany across the sea, dropped bombs on the East End of London, destroyed a great number of buildings and started huge fires, killed and wounded a hundred and ninety-five people, terrified all the population, and, despite the anti-aircraft guns and all attempts to intercept them, sailed away with a fine audacity safely back to Germany.

The result was a tremendous outcry. These were not the first German aeroplanes which had come raiding and got away in safety. From all over England came angry demands for inquiry and action: if this could happen, then there was something wrong with the air forces. And there was very much that was wrong with the air forces.

When the war began, flying was a new invention, crude and undeveloped. The war had forced it into quick development. To meet the new problems and the new dangers a dozen independent organisations had been created. They were run by forceful men, and each thought his own organisation the best. There was no centralisation or co-ordination, but waste, reduplication, and friction. For the defence of London alone there were five different independent commanders. The Navy had its own air service and the Army its own independently; and the Army and the Navy grew so bitter at any attempt to amalgamate that they expended almost as much of their energies in fighting each other in committees as in fighting the enemy in the air. Inventions were not pooled, but rather concealed, as from trade rivals. The Army had taken all its ‘planes to France, and the Navy, with Winston Churchill at its head, had tried to protect England by bombing Belgian towns where there were German air bases, but with little result. There was a Board of Inventions and Research, a Munitions Inventions Department, an Advisory Committee on Aeronautics, and a Ministry of Munitions, which met together, discussed, and did little.

Asquith, when Prime Minister, had set up first a War Air Committee under Lord Derby, but it had failed, and then an Air Board under Lord Cowdray, but with little power, so that it became only a conference where

the Army and Navy spent their time quarrelling. It was this confusion and friction which had made the raid of the 7th July possible.

The Cabinet met at once and faced an indignant House of Commons in a secret session. Something had to be done and done quickly. Lloyd George sent Smuts post-haste to investigate and report.

Smuts went at his work at full speed. He had behind him the indignation of the whole country and the full authority of the Cabinet. In South Africa he was involved in every political feud, and this sapped his strength and influence there. In England he was not involved in any of the departmental quarrels, nor was he tied by any personal or official commitments. The departmental and political leaders, with the admirals and generals behind them, tried to carry on their old feuds and so to hold him up. These difficulties he tactfully but firmly ignored, and pushed on quite relentlessly; nothing was going to hold him up.

He knew nothing about the subject or its technicalities, but he listened to anyone who could tell him anything of value. He quickly picked the brains of those who came to him and got rid of them as quickly, wasting no time on them. In South Africa, where life moved more slowly, that method had made him unpopular. In England people accepted it, in the rush and scurry of life, as normal and natural.

With amazing speed he assimilated details, and, refusing to allow his mind to be complicated by personal considerations or time-honoured conventions, he sorted the details into essentials, gripped them, and made his decision clearly and firmly. Within eight days he had a complete scheme for the defence of London. He destroyed the separate commands. All must be centralised, he advised, under one commander who should control, as well as the aeroplanes and the men, all the guns, lights, telephones, and every available service; air barrages were to be devised; the anti-aircraft stations were to be outside London and the pilots trained not merely to chase the Germans after a raid but to meet them in the air before they reached London, fight them in formation, and drive them off.

Then he divided England into areas and repeated the same system for the whole country.

That done, he went hard at the whole problem of the fighting air services. Again he was up against the intense rivalries of the Navy and Army chiefs; again he ignored them firmly and pushed on. He recommended the amalgamation of the air forces of the Navy and the Army into a separate fighting force and the creation of an Air Ministry with a minister at the head.

The Cabinet accepted his scheme. Parliament passed it into law. It was a success.

On one point alone Smuts hesitated. The Germans had deliberately bombed undefended English towns and killed defenceless civilians. Should he recommend reprisals on German towns and on German women and children?

Smuts had a great respect, even a great liking, for the Germans, their mentality, and their philosophy. He believed that the Teutons were the soundest stock of all the nations; that the real objective of the war was to rip away the Prussian military dictatorship which had driven them to war and to set the German people free; and that the future of the world and of civilisation depended on Germany and England, after the war, acting together. He wondered whether reprisals against civilians, the killing of women and children, might not lead to such bitterness that no such co-operation would ever be possible. It was the memory of the deaths of the women and children in the South African war which still kept many of the Dutch hostile to England.

South African politics also made him hesitate. Hertzog and many of the Dutch boasted that they were of German extraction. Hertzog said one-third of the population of South Africa had German blood in them. This was an exaggeration, but Smuts saw that if he recommended reprisals against the Germans undoubtedly his opponents would use this as another stick with which to beat at him at the next election.

He had, moreover, many friends in Holland. The Netherlands Minister in London, Jonkeer van Swinteren, was an intimate friend of his. The Hollanders were very pro-German. Smuts had tried to help them. Botha had encouraged him to do so. “There is a tender feeling,” he wrote in one letter, “for Holland in the Union. The greater England’s friendship with Holland the easier it becomes to uphold the Empire in South Africa.” More than once Smuts had been criticised for helping Holland and so for helping Germany indirectly. He had protested when the Admiralty commandeered some ships from Holland, and he had arranged for the export from Holland of gravel, which was used on the roads in Belgium, and these roads were utilised by German troops in occupation. He was greatly influenced by the feelings and the opinions of the Hollanders, and they advised him and tried to persuade him against reprisals.

Had it been against any other people, or a question of pity or of humanitarian sentiments, Smuts would not have hesitated; but it was a

question of policy. He had to decide whether reprisals would stop the Germans raiding English towns and whether they would create such bitterness that the two peoples would never be able to act together. He was peering away out beyond the immediate need into the future beyond the war.

Reluctantly, putting on one side the effects in South Africa and the advice of the Hollanders, he recommended reprisals. "The Germans have forced it on us," he said, "and, moreover, our air position should be not here in London but beyond the Rhine."

In the meantime he was employed on a dozen other duties. The police in London went on strike. It was a good-humoured strike, little more than a protest at the terms under which they worked; but it was difficult to handle, for neither the police chiefs nor the Government could accept the principle that the police had the right to strike as if they were miners or factory workers: they were the guardians of the law. Lloyd George sent Smuts to deal with the strikers.

Smuts did not have to bother about the principles: he could without loss of dignity or control be more amiable to the strikers and more conciliatory than any of the officials. He heard their grievances, gave them much when it was justified, and they went back to duty quickly and in excellent temper.

With Barnes, the Labour leader, he settled a strike of five thousand engineers in Coventry and then went to South Wales, where the coal-miners round Cardiff were out and in a dangerous mood.

The situation was critical. The men refused to return to work. The Navy reported that they had only one week of coal in reserve, and after that they would be unable to keep the battle fleets at sea; all movements of food, troops, and supplies would be paralysed; no reinforcements would be able to go to France; no food shipped into England, and England would starve within another two weeks. The Germans would have won.

At Tonypandy an immense crowd waited for Smuts. They were out for trouble. They would not have listened to an Englishman or a Welshman, but they were prepared to listen to this South African and to hear what he had to say. They had expected a black man; and though they were disappointed that he was only white, still he was a stranger, and a novelty, and they waited for him to speak.

For a minute Smuts stood looking out over the seething thousands of angry men, a sea of white faces from under grey-cloth caps staring up at him, moving like waves broken up when a wind breaks across the tide; now a catchword or a jeer ran through them, to be taken away up to the edge of the crowd, and died away. He could feel the air electric with the massed passions below him. He knew that on his success or failure with these men depended defeat or victory in France and the future of England, of the Empire, and of Europe; perhaps of the civilised world.

It was just such a moment as brought out all the best in Smuts, the steel in his character. He had prepared no set speech: he had left to the inspiration of the minute what he should say. As he had left London, Lloyd George had said to him, “Remember, my countrymen are great singers.” He would use that.

He leant a little forward and the crowd was still and tense.

“Gentlemen,” he said, and his Malmesbury accent showed he was no Englishman, “I come from far away. . . . I do not belong to this country. . . . I have heard in my country that the Welsh are the greatest singers in the world. Will you first sing me one of the songs of your people?”

A second of surprise and of hesitation, and then a man struck up with “Land of My Fathers,” and the whole immense crowd, tier on tier, joined in as one tremendous choir and with an intense passion and fervour.

When they finished there was silence. They were quivering with emotion, the anger out of them, and he spoke quickly before the mood passed. “You know,” he said, “that your comrades in France by tens of thousands are risking their lives in the trenches . . . but the trenches are not only in France, but here in Tonypandy . . . and I am convinced that here in Tonypandy you will defend this Land of your Fathers.”

The men went back to work. The strike was over. The Navy got its coal and kept the high seas open for the Allies.

When some part of England began to falter or grow war-weary the Cabinet sent Smuts to speak. He made fighting speeches full of stock, trite phrases. Had they come from an Englishman they would have met with a shrug of the shoulders, but coming from a stranger—for such is human nature—they roused and invigorated his audiences.

“What is required of you is unfailing determination to hold on and win,” he said. “We have conquered. The victory is ours. . . . In Germany there is a growing feeling of terror.” In the Midlands, in Sheffield, and Manchester, he said, “We are fighting for an ideal. . . . Right may be borne down by force for a time, but if we have determination right will win at last”; and away in the north, “The enemy are already defeated: that is my conviction,” and, “We fight for freedom. In my day and in my country I have seen freedom go under and I have seen freedom rise again, indestructible, deathless, immortal.”

CHAPTER XLVII

LLOYD GEORGE was essentially a man of action; explosive, blasting action. Events acted on him like blows on dynamite, burst him up into a fury of action, though no one was ever quite certain which way he would blow up and what he would damage in the process. While the strain of the war sapped the fighting spirit out of others it made him more vigorously pugnacious. He became more dictatorial and more impatient of delay and of the departments. He grew bitterly contemptuous of the Army chiefs, especially of Sir William Robertson, the chief of the Imperial General Staff at the War Office, and Sir Douglas Haig in France. He used the members of the War Cabinet more and more to replace the officials and to side-track the recognised routine—and he placed more and more reliance on Smuts. In Smuts he found a man of action also, at times equally explosive, as impatient as himself of delay, and with the same lofty contempt for officials and recognised routine. He took Smuts' advice frequently and sent him on every sort of mission and duty.

In mid-June 1917, Sir Douglas Haig presented to the War Cabinet a scheme for a massed offensive by the British Army. This attack was to be made into the Flanders country beyond Ypres and Passchendaele, to swing northwards and threaten the German lines on Ostend from a flank, force them off the Belgian coast, take Bruges, and even go farther, even to forcing the Germans to come to terms.

The Naval chiefs, especially Admiral Jellicoe, backed the scheme. They wanted the Germans ejected from the Belgian and Channel ports.

But such a scheme meant the employment of tens of millions of pounds and hundreds of thousands of men, and the ministers were divided whether to give their consent. Lloyd George, Milner, and Bonar Law were against it. Curzon and Balfour were doubtful, "Smuts was strongly for the view that the generals had made out a case for at least having a try. Personally, he thought the chances were highly favourable."

To help him make up his mind he jotted down some notes, which ran:

"Western Front remains.

(II) *Larger Objective.*

(1) Secures Ostend and Zeebrugge and north coast and **Navy Saved**.

(2) Extracts us . . . in case of French collapse.

(3) Forces Germany to Antwerp-Brussels-Namur line.

Losses at 100,000 per month—less than half a million, whom we can made good.

Very serious to veto operation on which military authorities are agreed."

He voted for this *Larger Objective*, which was Haig's scheme, and he was prepared to lose five hundred thousand men to carry it out.

Smuts' opinion carried the Cabinet. Balfour was impressed because Smuts supported the scheme. Lloyd George believed Smuts to be "a brilliant general . . . with much experience of war," and treated him as his military adviser and accepted his view. All hesitated to veto a plan which the Army and the Navy chiefs backed.

But Smuts was a "politician to the core, and only an amateur soldier." Haig, who talked with him, said of him, "He does not know a great deal about strategy, but is anxious to support Robertson and myself." Botha might have been able, with his inherent military instinct, to have judged correctly, but Smuts had neither this instinct nor the capacity, nor the experience to judge the military details of such a scheme; and they were unsound. The staff work was inefficient and the Intelligence worse, and Smuts had no training in either. If an offensive at that moment was sound strategy, it should have been made in some other area. Smuts did not know the country round and beyond Passchendaele. It was low, cut by streams, and only kept dry by a complicated system of irrigation and by canals. If rain came, it would turn this country into a bog, and rain was likely. Any bombardment with guns would break up the irrigation system, breach the canals, and turn the fields into lakes. When the French general Foch, the trained soldier, was shown the scheme, he exclaimed that it was "futile, fantastic, and dangerous," and wanted to know why Haig wished to make this "duck's march through the inundations to Ostend."

The Cabinet, influenced largely by Smuts, gave its consent. The offensive was a disaster. The rain came. The artillery bombardment broke up the canals. Through deep mud and swamp and water the British troops staggered forward a few thousand yards. Over four hundred thousand men

were killed or wounded, or drowned and choked in mud and filth. Nothing was gained and much was lost.

Lloyd George turned on Haig, accused him of concealing essential facts and so deceiving the Cabinet and giving it the wrong material on which to form its judgment. As well as being contemptuous, he now became suspicious of Haig; but in Smuts he kept his faith. They were both politicians, and the soldiers had, he said, deliberately deceived them.

By the time 1917 had come to the autumn the fight for victory had long ceased to be a fight of blows, but a weary clinching, as of two wrestlers, who with sagging, quivering muscles leant chest to chest, forcing themselves to hold on, to make one more heave, one more despairing effort. For help the Cabinet looked round for allies, great and small, any who could help them to heave Germany back: Arabs, Moslems of all sorts, Kurds, Greeks, Armenians, and, above all, the Jews, the Jews of the whole world, but especially of Germany and of America. To enlist the help of the Jews, Balfour, as the Foreign Secretary, with the consent of America and France, issued a declaration that if the Allies won the war, England would see that Palestine should be made into a national home for Jews.

The idea of Zionism, of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine, was put into practical politics by a Roman Catholic Norfolk squire, Sir Mark Sykes, who had specialised in the Near East and had much influence with Balfour. Balfour took it up with enthusiasm. Milner agreed with it at once: much might be gained, he considered, and nothing could be lost by it. The War Cabinet discussed it. Palestine would be an important strategical point in the British Empire: it would be well to develop it after the war. The only people with the money, energy, and the inclination to do that would be the Jews; both for the present crisis and for future needs Zionism ought to be backed to the full.

To Smuts the idea appealed in every way. Rhodes had dreamed of an all-Red Africa. Smuts dreamed the same dream. Palestine developed and made strong would be an auxiliary to that dream.

South Africans had no love for Jews, but Smuts, even in the early days of Het Volk, when he was ruling the Transvaal, had favoured them and encouraged Jewish immigrants. When criticised, he had said, “It is not because I love the Jews better than I love other peoples, but it is because I

love justice.” His enemies smiled, said it was just “slim Jannie”; for he needed the support of the Jews and they controlled the wealth, and that meant power and success.

Undoubtedly, Smuts loved both power and success. “What makes men trust their chief?” Balfour once asked him. “Success,” replied Smuts; though history could have shown him a hundred cases where this was not true.

Smuts had also a personal liking for Jews; he liked them round him. They had the same background as his own people: the Dutch of the veld and the Jews of the desert. They had the same characteristics. Both were sour, bitter people; strictly religious, with their lives based on religion learned from the same Book—from the Old Testament. Both were patient in revenge, and never forgave or forgot an injury; intense individualists, refusing to allow that any man was superior to the next or to be ruled or disciplined, and yet with a profound respect for the law and for the written word.

Smuts had the brain of a Jew; not of the Jew who produced great music and art, nor of the Jew who handled the intricacies of small businesses or of big finance, but of the Jew who pondered over the minutiæ of the Scriptures, who cogitated the labyrinthine arguments of the Talmud, and laboured out the erudite, dry-as-dust philosophies of Spinoza. Men with hard, material outlooks, yet with sudden streaks of idealism and great world conceptions, who dealt with facts as the cold desert moonlight deals with shadows, dividing light and darkness with a clear line, and not as the warm sunlight, which weaves them into colours that blend and change. Smuts, like the Jews, could understand, even glory in, Isaiah, but he could not enjoy a fairy story or laugh lightly at a thin joke.

But above all Smuts shared with the Jews their tremendous arrogance. Throughout history, the Jews had bowed and cringed and salaamed before their oppressors, but always they had known that they were superior to their enemies. They were the Chosen People—as the Dutch felt themselves to be the chosen people—chosen by God Himself, set apart and better than other men, and every Jew knew that he had been specially chosen to be a Jew.

Smuts had this intellectual arrogance, this sense of being superior to other men, and this made him impatient. He had no humility, nor had he the ability to come down to the level of ordinary men and so to understand and sympathise with them. As it had made men oppress the Jews, so this arrogance had made them dislike Smuts.

Zionism caught his imagination. He worked for it with enthusiasm. The leader of the Zionist Jews was Chaim Weizmann, a professor of chemistry at Manchester University. He came to see Lloyd George. "Go," said Lloyd George, "and talk with Lord Reading and General Smuts."

Weizmann saw Reading, but Reading, the Jew, met him coldly, and froze him with his icy reserve. He went to Smuts, the Christian, who welcomed him with warmth and enthusiasm. "One of the great objects for which we fight this war," said Smuts, "is to provide a national home for the Jewish people," and he worked zealously to help Weizmann and the Zionists.

From another direction there seemed a chance of help. The Austrians were throwing out feelers for possible peace terms. Word came through from various agents, from a rich Austrian merchant, and through a Bourbon prince who was related to the Empress and who was serving with the French army. The Austrian Government tested the French, but the French distrusted them and snubbed them at once. Then they got into touch with the English.

The Foreign Office considered the negotiations unsound. Balfour thought them not only unsound, but definitely dangerous: Austria, he said, was tied hand and foot to Germany and unable to make a separate move; this was a try-out by Germany, and Germany had no intention of making peace until she won; she had some other reason for this move, but it was not peace.

But Lloyd George did not agree. He would try any possibility. There was labour unrest in England: the Trades Union Council was about to sit; if he ignored any chance of peace and was criticised, he would have no answer; he looked on the Foreign Office as timid and procrastinating. He determined to ignore the regular diplomats and to act independently. He asked Lord Reading to go to Geneva and meet an Austrian diplomat, Count Mensdorff, who before the war had been Ambassador in London for many years; but Reading was too shrewd: he agreed with Balfour, and he refused. Lloyd George asked Smuts, who accepted. Smuts did not realise the possible complications. Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson said of him: "Smuts has vague ideas. . . . He does not understand European questions, though he is learning."

All the arrangements were made in great secrecy. Smuts set off with credentials and passports arranged as for Mr. Smith. The weather was wild. Smuts, as always, was very seasick crossing the Channel. A car met him and

drove him to Paris. On the road he was dismally car-sick. He put up at an obscure hotel in a back street and then drove on by car again to Geneva, where he was met by a M. Parodi, a Swiss, who had been employed by the Egyptian Government and was now working for the English. Geneva was the centre of the spy system of all Europe, and word went out of Smuts' arrival.

The next difficulty was how to meet. Mensdorff was in Geneva, staying with the Austrian consul, but neither he nor Smuts would take the first step, as it might be viewed as weakness. An elaborate piece of by-play had to be staged. At a fixed hour Count Mensdorff and General Smuts went to a street in a suburb of Geneva and entered it from opposite ends. Halfway down, as they passed each other, Mensdorff looked up, recognised General Smuts, and in surprise held out his hand in greeting. General Smuts, equally surprised, said how delighted he was to see Count Mensdorff and how nice it would be to talk with him. Parodi stepped up to say he had a house conveniently close—just round the corner, in fact—and he would be delighted if they would come in; and with honour satisfied, the two sat down to discuss.

The conversation was amiable and varied. Mensdorff wanted to find out all he could, but very soon Smuts saw he had nothing to offer. Austria could not make a separate peace. Smuts talked largely. He outlined the war objects of the Allies. He expressed his great regard for the German military power and its leaders. He said, "We in England do not believe that we can beat Germany in a military sense, but we are fighting to destroy Prussian militarism." Mensdorff asked him to define just what he meant. Smuts had been using a loose wartime propaganda term and could not. They parted with expressions of deep mutual regard. The German Government received a full report of all that had happened. Smuts returned to England to report that the negotiations were useless.

Balfour and Reading had been right. The Germans were preparing an immense massed attack on the British Army and wanted to know how England stood. Austria was only their agent. The French, and M. Briand in particular, were furiously angry: accused the English of allowing the enemy to get some sort of a wedge in between them. Lloyd George said he had told the French Prime Minister, but that did not satisfy the French. The French papers attacked Smuts, published ribald stories about him, and jeered at him and at Lloyd George for being so naïve: Smuts did not understand the Austrians or Mensdorff at all. "Your people," said Smuts as a last appeal, so the story went, "your people are in a serious and hopeless condition."

"My people," replied the Austrian grandly, "may be hopeless, but they are never serious," and Smuts left, saying that the Austrians were very queer.

"Lloyd George," said Clemenceau, "is a fool, and an extra fool for sending Smuts, who doesn't even know where Austria is."

From the meeting the Germans gained some encouragement and the English gained nothing. Smuts, when asked, denied he had even been to see Mensdorff: in fact, he had never even left England or been near Geneva, he repeated sturdily.

After Passchendaele, Lloyd George grew virulent in his suspicion of everything done by the General Staff and the War Office. He used Smuts to watch them. He sent him repeatedly to make independent inspections and to report direct to the War Cabinet. He sent him on a tour along the front in France and instructed him privately to study the officers he met and to find someone to replace Haig; but Smuts reported that there was no one.

Lloyd George trusted Allenby in Palestine, but he suspected Robertson and the War Office of trying to ruin his policy of "knocking out the props" from under Germany by defeating the Turks.

As soon as Allenby took over Lloyd George urged him to push ahead. Robertson advised him to go slow. Allenby pushed on, broke through the Turkish lines before Gaza, where Murray had failed, and sat down to reorganise. Again Lloyd George urged him on and again Robertson advised him to go slow and again Allenby pushed ahead, and before Christmas of 1917 he marched triumphantly up to Jerusalem and entered the Holy City. Again the same process was repeated. Allenby sat down to reorganise. Robertson advised him to go slow. Lloyd George urged him to bustle on and smash the Turks back. He was now convinced that Allenby could defeat the Turks and force them to make peace. Robertson's attempts to slow Allenby down drove him into a fury of impatience. He decided to ignore the War Office and the General Staff and Robertson, and to act on his own initiative; and he sent Smuts post-haste to see Allenby and arrange all details for a final triumphant advance.

Smuts took a small staff with him and hurried to Allenby's headquarters in Palestine. The two went down to Egypt, pretended to be sight-seeing, and discussed schemes for an advance up to Damascus and even into northern Syria. With their staffs they decided on the general strategy, the line of

advance, the quantity of shipping, supplies, and the reinforcements in men with guns and small arms.

Hardly had Smuts returned to England and reported to Lloyd George before the Germans made a tremendous drive straight at the British Army in France, overwhelmed the Fifth Army, and bent the whole British line back. From every front every spare man was sent to help. Allenby was told to dispatch all his white troops and to hold up his advance. Through March of 1918 the British Army hung grimly on. One break, and the war would have been lost. Faced with defeat, the Allies agreed to accept the French General, Foch, as supreme commander of them all.

Lloyd George sent Smuts to report on the situation in France. He came back weighed down with pessimism. He began to talk of defeat. Lloyd George aimed at an out-and-out victory and to dictate terms of peace to a crushed and defeated Germany. Smuts made speeches telling his audiences—as he had told Mensdorff—that an out-and-out victory was impossible: that it would be sound to approach the enemy at once and see if they would not come to terms. At Glasgow he made a speech that had so much the spirit of defeatism that Lloyd George was furiously angry. Smuts said the situation was desperate. “He seemed to revel in the idea that it was desperate and impossible.” Lloyd George knew as well as Smuts that the facts were black, but that was no reason to lose heart. In such a crisis Lloyd George was at his best. He was full of boisterous enthusiasm. He toured the country, speaking of victory, the magnificent victory that was at hand, and he kept hope and enthusiasm in the people.

Foch too was sure of victory, and was steadily making his plans. He wished to concentrate troops round Rheims and he asked Haig to help him. Lloyd George opposed the idea, and he sent Smuts to tell Haig that if he appealed to the English Cabinet, they would forbid him to carry out Foch’s wish.

Haig, whatever his faults, was solidly loyal. He resented this back-door way of doing things. He had not wanted Foch as his commander, but once Foch was appointed he would stand loyally by him. He told Smuts bluntly that whatever Foch ordered he would carry out.

Smuts returned sunk in depression. The strain of the war had begun to affect him. He had lost his old freshness and his old detached, superior air. He made the gloomiest of reports to the Cabinet: he was not sure that the Germans could be held back; even if they were held back the war would last into 1920; it might mean victory for the Allies, but at the cost of wrecking

European civilisation. But Lloyd George would have none of it. He would not accept Smuts' estimate. He laughed him out and went on, undeterred and without fear or hesitation.

The Germans made a final blow. Foch held them up and counter-attacked. Allenby had worked out a plan of his own which was not that arranged with Smuts. As soon as he received fresh troops from India, he made a sudden encircling attack and drove the Turks helter-skelter in front of him.

The Germans staggered, began to retreat. In Germany there was revolution. Bulgaria, Austria, Turkey, and then Germany capitulated. The war was won.

CHAPTER XLVIII

AS the Armistice which ended the fighting was signed, at eleven o'clock in the morning of the 11th November, 1918, the people of England went wild with excitement and with relief from the strain of four long years of fighting for their lives. They had awakened from a hideous nightmare and they shouted with joy. And out of that relief and sudden release from danger, which for so long had been insistent, close behind each man's shoulder, there came a fierce demand for revenge on the Germans and on their rulers: a demand that the Germans should pay and be punished for all the misery and destruction they had inflicted on the world.

In the wild excitement, in the demand for revenge, even in the sense of relief, Smuts could take no part. He had not felt the strain and he could not realise the relief, or the waking out of the nightmare. He could not understand the wild excitement, even less the demand for revenge. In all the uproar, while round him crowds shouted and danced in frenzy, he stood alone, cold, solitary, detached.

He resigned from the War Cabinet, gave up his position on committees, including the presidency of the Committee for Demobilisation, and began to prepare for his part in the coming Peace Conference, and especially to draft out his conception of a league of nations.

Europe, he saw, had been torn into quivering strips, broken up into a hundred jagged pieces. The old systems were gone, and with them the old beliefs and the old stability. If Europe was to be rescued from chaos and anarchy and its civilisation saved, something had to be created to take the place of the old order. It should be a league of nations. "This League," he wrote, "will have to occupy the great position which has been rendered vacant by the destruction of many of the old European empires and the passing away of the old European order."

He found many others thinking on the same lines: Léon Bourgeois, the French philosopher, Lord Robert Cecil in England, President Wilson in America.

The conception fitted in with his philosophy of life, that small units keep ceaselessly uniting into bigger units, which in turn unite again into bigger units. For him, all life was such a progression: the four colonies becoming the Union of South Africa, then South Africa with England and the other

Dominions and Colonies uniting into the British Empire, and now the British Empire with all the Nations of the Earth united into a League of all the Nations.

He spent his spare time on his scheme. He discussed it with the leading legal experts. He travelled round England speaking at meetings on it. He drafted it as a memorandum for the Cabinet, and, as the date for the opening of the Peace Conference came near, he issued it in the form of a pamphlet: "The League of Nations. A Practical Suggestion."

Botha came from South Africa to join Smuts. He had changed much during the last two years. While in other countries during the war political parties had agreed to a truce in their quarrels, in South Africa they had attacked each other even more fiercely.

Hertzog, with Tielman Roos and Malan and their followers—Steyn and de Wet were gone—had worked for a republic. They had toured the country in a big campaign. They had used all the consequences of the war to help them—the increase of taxes, the rise in the cost of living, the general unrest in all men's minds. They had preached that now was the chance to break away from England, while she was in a death struggle in Europe, and the chance also to chase out the traitors who had sold South Africa to England, of whom Botha was the chief.

They had worked up a campaign of hatred against Botha personally. They had used every trick, every insult, every lie to rouse the people against him. "He was up to the elbows in the blood of Dutchmen": had boasted of killing rebels who were Dutchmen. He was a renegade, a traitor, a turncoat. They dragged up old stories about him. He had as a young man been a hanger-on, they said, to a corrupt deputy in the old Transvaal Republic, and that was how he had got on. He was ruining South Africa, dragging them all into a war in which they had no concern and a war against the Germans, who were their cousins.

The campaign and the lies had their effect. Many of the Dutch who before had stood with Botha left him and joined Hertzog.

Botha had been ill. With Smuts away the whole Government had been on his shoulders and he was tired, for it had taxed all his strength. The campaign against him had mortally hurt him. He was over-sensitive and felt insults over-acutely. But what hurt him most was to see that it was the

Dutch, his own people, who were deserting him, who cursed him and distrusted him, and this had taken all the joy and the objective out of his life.

The British Empire was to be represented at the Peace Conference by delegates from England and the Dominions, fourteen in all, with Botha and Smuts to speak for South Africa. The idea of the Dominions being represented had not at once been accepted in England. Lloyd George and Winston Churchill had disliked it. The Foreign Office had been scandalised at the novelty. But Milner, in contrast, had agreed without hesitation, and the Dominions, led by Canada, had quite resolutely said that they had in the war proved their "nationhood" and they intended to be represented. Smuts maintained that their attendance at the Peace Conference and their signing of the Peace Treaty would be a proof before all the world that they were now equal partners with England and would be the date of their coming of age as nations.

The delegates met in London for the preparatory work. Very quickly Botha and Smuts realised that they could not agree with many of the ideas of their colleagues. The English members in particular were as fierce for revenge as the people in general. They were determined to "make the Germans pay . . . to search their pockets for the uttermost farthing." Botha and Smuts looked on such demands as unsound and impossible.

When they reached Paris for the Conference they found it even less to their liking. Every delegation had come to grab what it could get. Poland wanted a bit of the Ukraine. Belgium wanted the mouth of the Scheld and a slice out of neutral Holland. All the peoples of the broken-up Austrian Empire and of the Turkish Empire made some claim: Arabs, Armenians, Czechs, Slovaks, and a host more. Italy and France and each of the forty-five allied countries wanted all they could get. They produced big-scale maps and pamphlets to prove their claims with columns of facts and figures for every delegation and they filled every committee room with their clamour. Some of the French generals wanted to march in triumph to Berlin and occupy a province of Germany as a reprisal. Italy wanted to destroy Austria. Rumania wished to annex half Hungary. The French leaders wished to smash Germany into small republics, destroy her for ever, and so make France the dominant military power in Europe. Some of the French politicians proposed to make a levy on neutrals, especially on Norway, Sweden, and Holland, who had helped Germany, and so to make them pay

for a part of the war. There were still half a dozen small nations fighting happily with each other. To the two South Africans, the world and its representatives in Paris seemed to be mad.

Botha and Smuts were like two human beings who had suddenly landed on a new planet and found it inhabited by people who appeared to be like themselves, but worked up into a frenzy of excitement by passions and desires and impulses so illogical that they could not understand them and with which they could not sympathise.

Neither Botha nor Smuts understood Europe or the Europeans. Coming from South Africa, they could not visualise the fears hundreds of years old, of oppression and invasion, of constant watching of frontiers, of massacres, murders, and ravaging, of a hundred quarrels far older than South Africa, but deep down seared into the being of the peoples of Europe. Without interest in these things and without any active conception of this background Botha and Smuts were being asked to help to solve the problems of reconstituting Europe.

CHAPTER XLVIX

IN PARIS SMUTS lived in the Hotel Majestic, where most of the British Delegation were housed. As ever, he buried himself in papers and documents. He rarely dined out or visited places or saw friends. He did not enjoy the gaiety and amusements of Paris. Except for a few visits to picture galleries and museums and some brisk walks for exercise, often alone, he took no relaxation but stayed in, working grimly.

He was acutely dissatisfied and unhappy. “The unhappiest time of my life,” he said. In South Africa since a young man he had been a person of importance and accustomed to being listened to with respect and to getting his own way; in England he had been lauded to the sky, a member of many committees, and trusted and looked up to by all. In Paris he was no more than one member of the British Delegation.

The Conference was organised into a Committee of the Big Four, consisting of Orlando for Italy, Clemenceau for France, President Wilson for America, and Lloyd George for England. There was a larger central Committee of Ten and innumerable sub-committees to deal with the different problems, and finally the massed conference of all the Delegations in Plenary Session, which rarely met. Smuts was not on either of the central committees and on few sub-committees of importance.

Both he and Botha worked to prevent what they considered follies. They prevented Belgium stealing a part of Holland. They persuaded the British Delegation of the folly of breaking Germany into pieces and allowing the French to become dominant. They pleaded that the Peace Treaty should be made with clemency and not for revenge: made possible to carry out and not impossible. They quoted their own experiences after the South African war and the value of clemency. “I know what defeat means,” said Botha; “my soul has felt the harrow.”

But Smuts found that his opinions and advices were largely ignored both by the British Delegation and by the other Allies. The French in particular suspected him of working for the Germans, for he did not conceal his opinions. He said that England was tied to the triumphant chariot of France; that France must not be allowed to dominate Europe or to destroy Germany; that the Allies, and especially the French—as well as the defeated enemies—should be forced to reduce their armaments and to abolish conscription, “Conscription, the tap-root of militarism,” he called it; and that the French

had an unwholesome, a “shell-shock” effect, on the making of the Peace Treaty.

He had, however, still much influence behind the scenes, since Lloyd George still believed in him. For Lloyd George the winning of the war was simple. There he was like an engine with full steam up, driving down a track towards one definite and clear objective. To win the Peace was different. The innumerable complications, the unending possibilities, the arguments for and against put forward with skill and cunning by clever pleaders on subjects about which he was largely ignorant: these all had to be considered and judged on before decided. They left him havering and uncertain.

He was by nature volatile and quick changing and much influenced by the last person with whom he discussed a subject. In doubt he would call in Smuts, and after Smuts with his German bias had talked to him, Lloyd George would be convinced that the Germans would not sign the treaty unless he gave way on some point or other, and that it would mean the renewal of war, blockade, air raids, or some such horrors, and “under the influence . . . of General Smuts he would arrive at a meeting with a gloomy air, saying, ‘They will not sign’ ” and be prepared to compromise and give way to the Germans.

Or again, there would be some important subject before the Council of Four. Lloyd George might call in Smuts and they would breakfast together, and then Lloyd George would go down to the meeting with proposals so favourable to the Germans that on one occasion Clemenceau exploded into bitter sarcasm and asked “whether Mr. Lloyd George expected the Allies to ask Germany’s pardon for having taken the liberty of beating her.”

As time passed and Smuts saw decisions made with which he disagreed and found that he could not influence these decisions or get his own way, he became resentful. He became impatient of the delays, the long arguments of the pleaders, of the constant bargaining, and the compromises. He looked on the work of the committees largely as waste, for he was convinced that most of it would have to be scrapped or revised.

He became very contemptuous of the other delegates. He compared them with Kruger and was sure Kruger could have done far better than they were doing, and he was equally sure that he could himself do far better than they were doing, but he was tied and helpless, for few would listen to him and

fewer follow his advice. He felt that he was above and beyond them, looking down on them as a spectator into a pit where they grubbed about, quarrelling and picking up all they could get. "The other statesmen," he said in haughty disdain, ". . . and their greedy squabbling."

He tried to rouse Botha to protest, but Botha was simpler, wiser, more rational, not so easily stirred up, more philosophic, accepting facts, realising the imperfections of men and ideas; that the great truths are begotten by error out of turmoil; that the great world-forces move infinitely slowly and with infinite waste—a million years for a river to carve its way through, or for the rain and the frost to break a mountain into a plain where men might live and cultivate the soil; a billion tree seeds scattered before one took root; billions upon billions of years for a star to be born out of the agony of a nebula, itself born of terrific destruction, and man to be created on it; a thousand years for a tribe to become a nation. These things Smuts knew but did not realise. He was always in an impatient hurry to get things done. If it were wise to lead a stream from a hill-side to a lake below, Botha would have let it run its natural course; Smuts would have laboured to find a way to hurry it.

Botha counselled Smuts to go slow: they were in Paris to look after the interests of South Africa, he said; they must not get too deeply muddled in the quarrels of Europe; the Europeans must settle their own affairs; England was too heavily involved already, he thought.

As the American Secretary of State said, comparing the two men: "Botha was essentially logical. . . . The enthusiasm of the visionary made no headway with him. . . . Reason and facts appealed to him. . . . He possessed the foresight which sees the end in the beginning and prevents the adoption of a course which may be disastrous or unwise or of doubtful expediency. . . . Of the men I have met, Botha was one of the greatest. . . . Smuts was often head in air, lost in thought. . . . He had vivacity of mind which comes from a restless imagination and . . . impatience."

But when it was South African interests, Smuts ceased to be a dreamer and was as hard-headed as Botha. He came down from his high perch into the pit with the other statesmen and joined in their "greedy squabbling." Many years before he had said, and Botha had agreed, "The day is not far distant when almost all the territory south of the equator will belong to South Africa." Long ago he had made up his mind, and said openly that the Germans were bad neighbours in Africa. With their schemes for a Mittelafrika empire and the training of armies of black troops—his experience in German East had taught him that—they were a menace to

South Africa. They must go out of Africa never to return. He himself drafted and read a resolution to the Conference, affirming that on no conditions should Germany be given back her colonies.

He had also invented the term *mandate*. Germany was, under the Peace Treaty, to hand her colonies to the major Allied Powers. These Powers were to govern them, not for selfish exploitation, but under a *mandate*, a *moral authority*, from the League and with the blessing of the League. A *mandate* was a "check and advance on the old policy of colonial annexation," he said. But he saw to it that German South West was handed to South Africa under a mandate that was virtually annexation, and that German East and any other colony on the Indian Ocean where the Germans could make submarine or air bases should not be handed back to her.

Despite Botha's advice, Smuts grew more difficult. It angered him that Botha would not see eye to eye with him. When he differed with the other delegates he would not compromise. With Lloyd George also his views diverged so much that they began to disagree often. Both were obstinate, dictatorial men, for ever hitting out, yet very sensitive if hit shrewdly in return.

Their disagreements grew into quarrels and their quarrels became explosive with personalities, "bitter recriminations and taunts." Smuts, German in his outlook, said: "I look on the Germans as the most cultured race in the world." Lloyd George was a Celt, and a fiery Celt who had no liking for Germans. Their temperaments clashed. Many times Botha had to come between them. "I am tired," he wrote in a letter, "of trying to keep peace between Smuts and Lloyd George. I am sitting waiting for them in my room. I have asked them to come here, for they have been quarrelling again."

"I never realised," said Smuts after the Conference, "how near I came to breaking with Lloyd George."

Suddenly Hertzog and a party of the Nationalist leaders from South Africa appeared in Paris and demanded to go before the Peace Conference and put their case for a republic.

Since the day that he had gone out almost alone from Botha's first Union Government some seven years before, Hertzog had learned much. He was a slow and muddled thinker. He was an even more muddled and vague

speaker. On one occasion, seven thousand Dutchmen met to hear him speak, expecting him to declare his convictions and his policy. He spoke without stopping for two and a quarter hours and told his audience nothing.

But when out of his consciousness an idea had been slowly churned up it became a conviction, and he maintained it obstinately and persistently. He had become a convinced Republican, but he had gradually realised that if he tried to force a republic on to South Africa it would mean civil war: nearly forty per cent. of the population were Englishmen and under sixty per cent. Dutchmen. He was not prepared for civil war; the rebellion of 1914 had shown him what civil war meant. He made up his mind to gain his republic by winning the votes not only of the Dutch but of the English population. These ideas were fixed in his head: separation from England and the formation of a republic in South Africa, winning the English as well as the Dutch votes for a republic. From these he never swerved by the fraction of an inch.

He was no statesman, but he was a politician with a flair for political manœuvre. Before he left South Africa, he knew that his mission would have no result except to win him votes in South Africa. First he must collect all the Dutchmen behind him. To this end, very astutely, he made use of every detail of his mission. When he booked a passage by a ship of the Union Castle Line the sailors refused to man the ship: most of the sailors were Englishmen from England. He used that for propaganda, and many angry South Africans joined him. A British cruiser offered to carry him to England. He refused and instead took passage on a small ship from Holland, which was useful to show how good a Dutchman he was, and many Dutchmen joined him.

When he arrived in Paris, no one wanted to see him. Paris was crowded with similar little self-appointed casual delegations. He avoided Botha and Smuts, but he saw Lloyd George.

Lloyd George told him briefly that he had no standing. South Africa had its own government and must decide its own domestic affairs and its own form of government: Botha and Smuts represented South Africa at the Conference.

Hertzog went back to South Africa chirping in his pleasant little way. In Paris they had laughed at him, but he was quite happy. He had got what he wanted. He had got himself well into the public eye.

The mass of the population, whether Dutch or English, whether they were glad or sorry that England was victorious, were determined not to be

dragged into the quarrels of Europe, and they suspected that Botha and Smuts—but especially Smuts—would involve them before they knew it. Hertzog was able to tell them of Paris, of how Botha and Smuts were sitting there in conference with statesmen from all countries, giving their opinions on problems which were of no concern to South Africa, and which they had best leave alone; and how when he had come to put the case for South Africa, he had been shut out of the Conference. And many thousands more voters joined Hertzog and suspected Botha and Smuts.

One mission Smuts undertook. Hungary was ruled by a Bolshevik dictator, Bela Kun. The Rumanians were trying to advance into Hungary over the frontier laid down at the Armistice, and the Hungarians were resisting them. The French and the Italians wanted to send troops and smash the Hungarians. Lloyd George persuaded the Conference to send Smuts on a mission to settle the quarrel peacefully. This was the official reason given.

The real reasons for Smuts' mission were more complicated. Lloyd George wished to get into touch with the Russians and find some grounds for agreement. Bullitt, an American diplomat-politician, a Left Wing Socialist, had gone on an unofficial mission to Russia. He had talked it over with Lloyd George. He came back with proposals from Lenin on which some discussion was possible, but Lenin's condition was that the Allies should open with an invitation. Bullitt saw Lloyd George. Wilson heard of this. He had a curious streak of intense personal jealousy in him, and he was furious with Bullitt. He refused to see Bullitt or to consider Lenin's proposals. Without Wilson's agreement Lloyd George could do nothing. The proposals were, therefore, never placed before the Conference and the chance slipped away.

A second try was made a little later. The Allies invited the Russians to send representatives to Constantinople for a conference, but that also fell through.

Bela Kun was in close touch with Moscow and with Lenin. Smuts was now instructed to endeavour to use Bela Kun to persuade the Russians to send delegates to the Peace Conference and if possible to get Lenin himself to come.

Never was a man less fitted than Smuts to carry out such a mission. He was completely ignorant of Hungary and the Hungarians. He disliked even

mild Socialism. Bolsheviks and Bolshevism made him foam at the mouth. The whole idea of getting into touch with Lenin repelled him.

He had on his staff two officials from the Foreign Office who knew his instructions, but Smuts did not tell them. One recorded after a conversation with him, "Smuts is very reserved. I cannot make out what his own view is. I get the impression, and so does—— , that Smuts wants us to handle this side of the business on our own, and without engaging *his* responsibility. If that is really so, we shall do the stupid, and pretend not to understand what is expected of us."

Smuts was in fact being what both his friends and his enemies in South Africa called him—"slim." Others could take responsibility for the awkward and unpleasant work which he disliked; but he found it not easy to catch the Foreign Office officials.

On the way, he stopped at Vienna and visited the British Military Mission, which was lodged in the Embassy. He was in his least pleasant mood. He took a dislike to the Head of the Mission, did not attempt to disguise the fact, and treated him with the same arrogant contempt with which he had, as State Attorney, treated the old men in Pretoria. He turned him out of his room, and, while Smuts conferred with one of the subordinates, the Head of the Mission had to wander disconsolately about the building. Later, Field-Marshal Sir H. Wilson sent an officer from Paris. Smuts did not like Sir H. Wilson, and treated the officer with the same scant courtesy.

Arriving in Budapest he refused to leave the train or to let his staff go outside the station except for a short drive. He was determined that no Bolsheviks should get any encouragement from him, and if he went into the town they might make capital of his visit. He did all he could to discredit them, and to get them turned out.

Bela Kun came to see him. Smuts held the Bolshevik at arm's length, treating him with cold disdain mixed with a frigid courtesy equalling chilling. He discussed the frontier problem but refused to give way one inch. He made no attempt to be amiable or to get on to friendly terms with Bela Kun or to use him to establish contact with Moscow.

He stopped two days but did not leave the train or accept any hospitality. He did not visit the town or country. He made no inquiries, but listened to half a dozen casual observers who came to see him. He could not bear any contact with Bolshevism. He had no patience to expend in negotiating. On the second evening he gave Bela Kun an ultimatum about the frontier, and

would discuss nothing; and when the Bolsheviks asked for a further meeting, he ordered the train to move off and left them standing disconsolate on the platform in the pouring rain.

Free from the work he had undertaken, but disliked, he relaxed, ceased to be morose and ill-natured, expanded, and told stories of South Africa, of the open veld, and of his adventures in his raid across the Cape.

He arrived in Paris with nothing of his real mission accomplished or even attempted, but with a proposal to make an economic union of the Central European states, and when the Peace Conference ignored his advice, he quarrelled violently with Lloyd George, and, with his disdain of the Conference, wrote: "I went back to that wrangling in Paris."

In one piece of work Smuts was happy: in the creation of the League of Nations. By the time he arrived in Paris he had thought out his conception of the League exactly, got it into concrete form, and knew what he wanted. President Wilson had similar ideas, but they were vague, woolly, and nebulous; he had not thought them out. Lloyd George offered him Smuts' memorandum, to read. Wilson was liverish and intimated to Lloyd George somewhat shortly that he did not want any of his help. "But," said Lloyd George, "after Wilson had read Smuts' memorandum he swallowed it whole." From that minute, on all questions on the League, President Wilson looked to Smuts. He used his pamphlet as the basis for the final draft of the Covenant of the League. He called him in when he wanted advice, believed in him and trusted him. And Smuts was once more content. He was getting the attention to which he was accustomed. He was getting his own way. In planning the League he felt that he was out of the "greedy squabbling" and doing great work for the world.

He had, moreover, in Wilson a man of similar outlook. Wilson was essentially a schoolmaster. He looked down on those round him from a higher plane. He treated them and the nations of the world as schoolboys, to be educated and improved. Smuts had the same attitude and the same desire to improve others. "Mankind," he said, "has to be educated into a new mentality and into new international methods." Neither realised how this air of superiority irritated other men, and how few men wished to be improved.

Both Wilson and Smuts were scholars and found books and words more attractive than live men, and both loved phrases. A good phrase had more

influence with them than a pamphlet full of figures and facts. They borrowed phrases from each other and swapped them with enjoyment. Smuts used Wilson's "self-determination." Wilson borrowed Smuts' "Europe is being liquidated and the League of Nations must be the heir to that great estate." "Heir to that great estate": Wilson rolled the phrase round his mouth and used it whenever he got the chance.

Both loved power. Both were very self-concentrated, and both, to get their own way, used big words and small deeds. Clemenceau's caustic and blasphemous description of Wilson might equally have applied to Smuts. "He talked like Jesus Christ and acted like Lloyd George."

Smuts believed that ideas were stronger than physical force: that if they let loose on the world an idea which was true and was an ideal it would defeat all opposition; that, even if some show of force should be necessary, the strength of the League would depend on the idea and the ideal within it. Wilson agreed, but Clemenceau and the French, on the other hand, were far more practical. They wished to educate and improve no one. They wanted solid, concrete gains—reparations in good cash gripped between the clutched fingers, square miles of territory annexed; not nebulous ideals. The League, they said, would be useless without military strength to enforce its will. They wanted an international police force and a General Staff of the League.

Smuts believed that the League was the most important decision before the Peace Conference. All other problems—frontiers, minorities, payments of war debts, precautions against future wars, creation of new states—all these and the thousand other complicated problems to be settled could be dealt with later, once the League of Nations was recognised, legalised, and had become part of the organisation of the world, "and a great organ of the ordinary life of civilisation."

Wilson was of the same opinion and he took one step farther, for he tried to knit the League so closely into the Peace Treaty with Germany that the two should stand or fall together.

A committee was appointed to work out the Covenant on which the League should be based. The principal members were President Wilson for America, with Lord Robert Cecil and Smuts for the British Empire. Lloyd George took little part, but left it to Cecil. At meetings Cecil did all the talking. Smuts, as he had done in the War Cabinet, said little and then always said something of value, so that he was looked to with respect; and it

was his influence and his advice which made the final result—“The Covenant of the League of Nations.”

CHAPTER L

ONE by one the various committees finished and submitted their recommendations. These were co-ordinated and drafted into the treaty. When the British delegates received their copies, every delegate was staggered. It had not seemed much to agree to a demand here or to refuse a concession there, in committee; but the cumulative result was a treaty so severe that it could never be enforced without crushing Germany. Many of the delegates protested at once, especially Milner, Botha, and Smuts.

Botha was deeply troubled. “My conscience and my reason are against it,” he said; “for the penalty clauses will mean retaliation.” He pleaded with the other British delegates to use their influence to reduce the severity of some of the clauses. When the details were being discussed before a Plenary Session of all the Delegations, he appealed for reason and clemency.

It happened that he was sitting next to Milner. When his turn came he rose and spoke briefly. “We have triumphed,” he said, “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 . . . and we remember. We knew the bitterness of defeat. . . .”

For a minute he paused, and, taking a breath and with deep emotion and a voice that rang through the Great Hall of Mirrors where the delegations sat and with a tone which held all tense, he said: “Gentlemen! Seventeen years ago,” and he put his hand on Milner’s shoulder, “seventeen years ago to the day, my friend and I made a peace at Vereeniging. . . . It was a bitter peace for us. . . . We lost all . . . 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.”

Botha’s plea made a sensation, but it did not persuade the delegates to reduce the severity of the treaty. Still troubled, he went to London and talked with Asquith. Then, quietly and solidly, he made up his mind that he would sign, for it would do more damage to refuse to sign than to sign, and it was to the interest of South Africa.

Smuts was far more vigorous, even violent in his opposition. He maintained that not only was this treaty impossible to enforce and had in it the seeds of "disaster greater than the war"; it was also based on "injustice and broken pledges." President Wilson had made a peace speech during the war, and, believing in the promises in that speech, he said, the Germans had signed the Armistice. He appealed to Wilson on his own promises, but Wilson was not to be tripped up in that way and replied that the treaty "was harsh . . . but on the whole just."

Smuts tried Wilson's private adviser, Colonel House, and told him that he would not sign the treaty. It was full of injustices. Germany would get the world's sympathy. No one would stand for a blockade, and for killing women and children, to get that treaty enforced. But House was unmoved by the lurid picture he painted.

He tried Balfour, who told him he was too pothered up with legalities.

Getting no satisfaction even from other members of the British Delegation, he became so violent in his denunciations that his best friends also looked on him as pro-German and the French papers attacked him, asking why South Africa, which had sent only a handful of men to fight—a brigade in all—lost little, become rich, and was gaining an immense tract of land, should presume to dictate the Treaty.

Smuts argued with Lloyd George, but got even less satisfaction, and he quarrelled with him once more: accused him of falsifying the minutes of one important meeting by saying the British delegates were unanimous, when he and others had disagreed; of pushing through a treaty which was madly impossible in its severity and unjust.

Lloyd George made no bones in replying. He denied point-blank that the minutes of the meeting were incorrect. As to the severity of the treaty—Smuts, he said, talked a great deal in vague terms: let him define exactly what he wanted. He pointed out that it was on Smuts' advice that the reparations to be paid by Germany had been increased by a vast sum to include pensions and separation allowances. He asked if Smuts was prepared to give German South West and German East and other colonies back to Germany and to meet Germany's claims for business losses in South Africa.

Smuts was in a quandary. Much of his criticism of the treaty was nebulous generalisations, vague, high-sounding phrases, and he could not give concrete proposals. He had advised the increase in reparations, though most of the lawyers on the delegations and all the Americans had advised

that it was unjustified. His advice was written and in Lloyd George's possession, and could not be denied. He had no intention of giving up German South West or letting any of the German colonies round the Indian Ocean go back or of paying compensation for German business losses in South Africa. He had in fact shown again what Botha had called "his infinite capacity for getting into difficulties," and this time it was not easy to escape.

He piped down on to a lower note. He wrote to Lloyd George, avoided answering his awkward questions, and used vague, muddled phrases such as "In this great business German South West is as dust compared to the burdens now hanging over the civilised world." But this did not change his views; it made him even more violent, and he telephoned to Botha, who was on a visit in London, that he would not sign the Treaty or even wait in Europe until the end.

Botha hurried over at once to Paris. There were only five days to the signing of the Treaty. He found Smuts at the Hotel Majestic getting ready to leave and his batman packing his bags. He would listen to no argument. He was obstinately set. He would not sign, and he was going at once. Botha, in despair, decided that, being Prime Minister, he would himself sign and leave Smuts out. By this compromise he hoped that his signature would make South Africa a member of the League of Nations and establish South Africa's new status as a nation, while Smuts by refusing would satisfy the Dutch in South Africa, who would certainly be truculent when they knew the details of the Treaty.

Then he realised that this was impossible. They could never explain this in South Africa: he, Botha, signing; Smuts, the hero, who refused to sign. They must both sign or both refuse to sign.

He appealed once more to Smuts, using all his powers of persuasion.

"Surely, Jannie, you won't desert now," he said, and Smuts began to waver.

Together they went to see Lloyd George. Smuts repeated obstinately that he would not sign and mentioned a public protest. "Sign and protest afterwards," said Lloyd George.

Smuts went away to think out his decision by himself, and Botha, knowing him, let him go. It was twenty-four hours to the time for signature. For a space he walked in the Champs Elysées, his eyes fixed on the ground, absorbed, fighting out his battle with himself.

For Botha the decision had not been difficult. He saw things simply. It was for the good of South Africa, so he would sign, whatever the consequences or the criticisms.

Smuts' decisions came always out of a complication of reasoning, a sorting of possibilities, a balancing of alternatives; but his mind worked with such speed that he appeared to be as simple and direct as Botha. Now he had a difficult decision to make. He genuinely and passionately believed that the Treaty was bad and impossible, that the results would be more terrible than those of the war. He had a great hatred of Bolshevism. To him it was the world's greatest danger: a disease that would rot civilisation. Germany was the bulwark against Bolshevism. Germany must be given back her self-respect, so that her people would refuse Bolshevik propaganda and would stand by their own civilisation: and also she must have armed force to resist any aggression from Russia.

Had this been all he had to consider he would have decided not to sign. He would even have given up his cherished dream of the League of Nations, woven as it was into the fabric of the Treaty. That he stood almost alone and that he could not get his own way hardened his obstinacy and increased his contempt for the other "statesmen and their greedy squabbling."

But it was not all. Politics in South Africa had to be considered. If Botha and he signed, the Dutch would attack them for agreeing to so harsh a treaty against their German cousins. If they refused, then South Africa would have no claim to the new status of the Dominions of the British Empire or to take over German South West. He had boasted much that he would bring back to South Africa a treaty which would establish her as an independent nation. He dared not go back without that. He dared even less to go back without German South West. The Nationalists would be at him, saying he had spilt Dutch blood to win this new province, promised it, and then come back empty-handed. He peered out into the future, trying to see how Hertzog, cunning Hertzog, would use these things against him and how the people of South Africa would react.

Suddenly, he saw that the way out was to sign and protest, just as Hertzog had signed under protest at Vereeniging, and so put himself right with the Dutch, with his own people, and yet obey his conscience.

He walked rapidly back to the hotel and called his secretary.

"I have decided to sign," he said, "but I will tell the reason why," and sat down and wrote out at once his memorandum of protest in his own spidery, difficult hand.

The next day he and Botha signed the Peace Treaty at Versailles, and the day following the English papers published Smuts' protest.

PART VI

CHAPTER LI

AS soon as the Peace was signed, Botha left Paris. His one desire was to see South Africa again. The homing instinct that comes to animals when their time to die is near was in him, for he was very ill. Orpen, the painter, had painted a picture of him at the Conference, but Death stared so surely out of the eyes that Orpen put his painting aside and did another.

From his father, Botha had inherited an internal complaint. In Paris the great plague of influenza, which was scything down men like ripe grass, had almost killed him. He had recovered from it slowly, but it had inflamed his old complaint, which now affected his heart and legs. On the voyage he lay nerveless in a long chair on deck, longing only to see South Africa under her sunshine.

Smuts remained a little longer. In England he was honoured, listened to, wanted. Lloyd George wanted him to become Ambassador at Washington. A group of politicians wanted him to stand for parliament and lead them. In England he could take a part in great Issues, World Issues, the things that interested him, were life-blood to him—the British Empire, the League of Nations, the fight against Bolshevism.

From South Africa came no urgent call for him to return. Hertzog, Malan, and Tielman Roos and their followers said it would be better if he stayed where he was: he was obviously more at home in Europe. Many of the newspapers agreed with them.

But South Africa called Smuts as insistently as it called Botha. He was flesh of its flesh, bone of its bone. He was rooted in South Africa, deep in its soil as his fathers before him. He could well understand that Hertzog wanted him to stay away, but that the people of South Africa would not welcome him back, after all he had done for them, he did not believe. In England, he calculated, he would be only one of many and perhaps soon forgotten. In South Africa he stood a head above the rest. "Better," as Cæsar said, "be first in your village than second in Rome." If he was to remain a world figure it must be with South Africa and with his own people behind him. And Botha needed him.

Hardly had he arrived when Botha became more seriously ill, and one night he slid peacefully into deep sleep, and from sleep into the deeper

sleep, and was gone.

When Botha died, there went away a great man. Many men had greater capabilities and greater virtues; but there was about Botha a Majesty which all felt but which none could understand or explain by his looks, or by what he said, or even by what he did. It came of some Greatness inherent in the man himself.

Smuts came softly to the house in Sunnyside, on the hills above Pretoria, to say good-bye to his dead. He was stunned and lost. For twenty years Botha and he had stood together. They had often disagreed, but rarely quarrelled. Lord Buxton recorded how, during all the years he was Governor-General, he had once only had to settle a difference between them. They had stood loyally side by side; instinctively and without need of words, they had understood each other.

"I," said Smuts on one occasion, "deal with administration. Botha deals with people."

But the combination had meant far more than that. Botha had been the leader, and now Smuts was as if the shell in which he had cased himself had been torn away and he had been left exposed. He was alone, as he had never been alone while Botha had stood shoulder to shoulder with him. He was suddenly intensely conscious of himself. His grief tore through all superficialities and moved him to his depths as nothing else could. Often in the past years he had hesitated, doubted himself, whether he was right or wrong, and forced himself by willpower to know he was right; but now he was aware, vividly aware, of himself and his imperfections; and he was humble.

The Governor-General called him to be Prime Minister.

"I have," Smuts said at his first cabinet meeting, "I have neither tact nor patience, and you must take me for what I am worth"; and even in saying this, he did not wish anyone to know how he felt, and he spoke quickly and abruptly, almost roughly.

CHAPTER LII

SMUTS had come back from England with his head full of plans of South Africa as an independent partner in the mighty British Empire, of South Africa as a member of the world organisation of the League of Nations. He would make South Africa great. He expected South Africans to greet him with thunderous applause and to march boldly down the highway, along which he would guide them to their high destiny.

But during the years he had been away, Smuts had got out of touch with his own people and their ideas. South Africans, Dutch and English alike, had no desire to be made into a great people. The more the world became involved in troubles, the less they wished to be involved in the affairs of the world. They were quite content to concentrate on their own local interests. They had turned in on themselves even more than before, and they were not going to let Jannie Smuts guide, dragoon, or hurry them. They knew their Jannie Smuts. His high-flown speeches left them unmoved.

"I think it is the only real hope of the world," Smuts said, "that the League may acquire such moral authority . . . that the governments of the world, great and small, will listen to the judgment of its Council. . . . The nations have not been true to their word; they have not been faithful to the work of their Dead. . . . Everywhere there is the denial of the human spirit. . . ."

This sort of stuff, they said, was Jannie Smuts' clack and noise, talking big. It might be sucked in by the people in England, but they had heard that sort of stuff from Jannie before.

So far from being applauded, Smuts found himself being bitterly attacked.

"This is the way," wrote one newspaper, "by which General Smuts proposes to lead us to greatness: the way of external and internal war of persecution, of treading down the freedom of his fellow men, fellow citizens, and fellow burghers."

James Hertzog.

James Hertzog.

Hertzog led the attack. Slowly, heavily as a moving sand-dune and as inevitably, he advanced towards his objects: to destroy Smuts and to become Prime Minister himself. “Socially charming, politically spiteful and obstinate,” he was made all the more angry, because Smuts despised his slowness and did not conceal his scorn of him.

Very shrewdly Hertzog used every possible opening. Smuts’ protest against the Peace Treaty: that was just a political move by Slim Jannie. Smuts made a speech on Reparations, published an article in the American papers defending President Wilson and the Covenant of the League as “one of the great creative documents of human history,” and issued a call to the nations of the world to save Germany and Civilisation before they crashed. Hertzog asked what all this had to do with South Africa, and repeated the same question that Lloyd George had asked: why, if he felt like that, had Smuts advised an increase in reparations and so laid a bigger burden on the Germans? When Smuts at length and with much heat tried to explain this away, he got no credit.

Smuts talked of the Empire. He went off to London to an Imperial Conference. Hertzog said that he was promising the help of South Africa, if there was another war. Smuts defined his conception of the British Empire as “a grouping of free states held together with a common allegiance . . . by hereditary kingship and frequent conferences.” Hertzog said these were empty words: England would always overlie the other members of such a grouping. South Africa wanted a republic.

"It is," he said, "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."

There were enough troubles in South Africa, said Hertzog, without worrying about those of other countries. There had been a boom during the war: now there was a slump. Trade was depressed: many businesses were going bankrupt. There was little demand for diamonds. The sale of ostrich feathers used to be a thriving trade: it was disappearing. They had suffered the worst drought for fifty years, and it had ruined many farmers and thrown many of the labourers out of work. Smuts had done nothing. There were thousands of unemployed. The budget showed deficit on deficit. Taxation had increased, and unnecessary cuts had been made all round. Men were being put off the railways. More natives, because they were cheaper, were being employed in the gold mines, and white men turned away. The pay of the civil servants was being reduced. These were all due to the mismanagement and the incompetence of Smuts, and all he could do was to make fine speeches about Europe. "Smuts," said Hertzog, "has brought South Africa to the verge of ruin," and he called all the discontented to his side with glowing promises; and every cut meant that men who had before backed the government now turned against Smuts and joined Hertzog.

There were other troubles. The spirit of unrest and discontent which filled the world after the Great War had touched South Africa. There were secret organisations and talk of revolution among the white workers. Bolshevik agitators were inciting the white workers to rise and demand their rights and overthrow the capitalists; and they roused the natives also. Seventy thousand natives struck for higher pay on the Rand. There was a similar strike in Port Elizabeth. At a town near Port Elizabeth a strange religious sect collected to wait for the end of the world and refused to disperse and go home. In German South West, now governed by South Africa under a mandate from the League of Nations, a tribe of Hottentots refused to pay their taxes and revolted.

Towards the natives Smuts had the attitude of every South African, Dutch or English. He was hard and without sentiment. The white man was master and would treat the black man well, but the black man was the servant. He would tolerate no resistance. He was utterly ruthless. The natives on the Rand were driven back to work. In Port Elizabeth, where they resisted, sixty-eight were shot. The religious sect was driven home with rifles and machine guns: three hundred were killed and wounded. The revolt in German South West was crushed by aeroplanes bombing the tribe. The

League of Nations called for a report, and refused to accept the one presented.

Hertzog was even less sympathetic to natives than Smuts, but he used these events to show how incompetent and violent Smuts had become. “The Prime Minister’s footsteps,” he trumpeted shrilly in the House, “his footsteps drip with blood,” and steadily he collected more and more voters to his side.

All politics in South Africa were exceedingly personal. The personality of the individual leader counted for more than his policy. Botha’s principal followers had been the men of his commandos in the South African war. Smuts had few personal followers, and these became fewer. As Smuts had said, “I deal with administration. Botha deals with people.” Now as Prime Minister he had to deal with people as well as administration, and whereas before his inability to handle men or establish personal contacts had not been so evident, now it stood out glaring and obvious before all.

He made no attempt to change. The one flash of self-revelation after Botha’s death had burned out. He had shut himself within his shell once more, and he was the Smuts of the old days and the old ways. He would allow no one to know that he had any soft spot. On rare occasions, with friends, he could relax a little and become almost boyish, as a schoolmaster might unbend with his older and more privileged scholars, but never so that anyone could have taken a liberty with him, ragged or teased him, or even dared to slap him on the back with a cheery “Hallo, Jannie!” though he would have given much to be able to relax to that extent and to be popular. “With the thoughts and emotions of the plain, ordinary people he had no contact.” He despised the common herd and he “despised the human qualities which are elemental in successful handling of the multitude.”

His contact with first-class brains and his dealing with great issues in England made him more impatient now he had to deal with small administrative problems and slow, easy-going subordinates. He was intolerant of men whose brains moved more slowly than his own.

He became very moody. One day a visitor would find him alive, jumping up every few minutes as they talked, making a note or two, full of electric energy, and the next day the visitor would find that he would hardly look up, would glower, or go on reading papers, or gaze at the ceiling or stare

through his visitor, or, rather, past him, with his blue eyes unseeing, and he would refuse to say a word. At social functions, such as opening a bazaar, he might be distrait or he might be charming, but even then he was cold and distant; he could not be effusive, or pay the blatant compliments which bazaar-organisers expected and rejoiced in.

He began to age. He was thinner and more lined, and his hair was rapidly going grey. He suffered often from the malaria which he had contracted in German East, but he would not give way to it. He dosed himself, dragged himself to his work, and forced himself to concentrate. After a bad bout of malaria he was often irritable, taciturn and morose, and impossible to approach, and sometimes deeply depressed and very pessimistic.

When talking politics he could rarely rouse, or even interest, his audience. He was prosy, dull, ineffective, carried little conviction, was often verbose with much repetition, and he had neither the brisk wit nor the fire which could catch the spirit of a crowd and make it laugh or jeer. He might be talking from an ox-wagon to an audience in the veld, talking of great things in Afrikaans phrases so well chosen that they were Biblical in their sonorous beauty. He would try to reach down to the minds of those before him and fail, and, finding that they did not understand him, he would become lame in speech and awkward in gesture. Any quick-witted heckler could make him stammer and uncomfortable. If heckled he grew irritated, but he would not argue. He would shrug his shoulders and leave his questioners to think what they liked.

Men had trusted Botha instinctively, and instinctively they doubted Smuts. “He has,” wrote Merriman, “a reputation for shiftiness which is perhaps undeserved.” In big issues his statements were absolutely reliable, though when cornered by a question he might shoot out a reply in the hope that his questioner would not realise that it was incorrect. Often, and especially when giving an interview to journalists, in describing something he would talk with an air of candour but omit the important points, a Dutch trait which Milner described as “perfectly charming in duplicity, with a manly air of frankness which would disarm any Englishman.” People in general looked on him as too clever, and as ordinary men they distrusted him. They believed that he used men for his own purposes and then forgot them. Even his best friends complained that they were never quite sure where they were with him.

As a result, friends and enemies alike read into his smallest misstatement some deep ulterior design. He might say that he had walked to his office

when he had ridden there in a car, or that he had seen someone who was away. They would wonder at what he was scheming. Once, when there was a conference, Smuts spoke of the long drought. An old farmer promptly got up and looked out of the window. “Why did you do that?” asked another. “When Jannie Smuts says there is a drought, there will be some catch in it,” he replied; “I looked out for the rain.”

Hertzog, in contrast, though far the more crafty politician, was trusted because of his lack of cleverness. He thought like the ordinary man, and so the ordinary man understood him and did not suspect his every word and action. His friends and subordinates knew exactly where they were with him: he always stood by them. Everyone knew what were his objects. They were simple and concrete, and his methods obvious.

Early in 1920 the General Elections were due. Smuts met with much opposition. The pastors and the Dutchwomen worked with virulence, raking up every possible story and using every possible electioneering trick against him. He was convinced that he would win with ease, but at times he flashed back in annoyance. He was speaking in his own constituency of Pretoria West when the crowd began to heckle him. “If you people are determined to wallow in the mire of racialism,” he snapped at them, “Pretoria West had better begin to look for another representative and the country for another premier.” He never conceived that Pretoria West or South Africa would be so foolish as to take him at his word, and when the results were announced he was staggered. He had got in for Pretoria West, but Hertzog had come back to the House with the strongest party. The Dutch, and with them most of Botha’s followers, had left Smuts for Hertzog.

Hertzog claimed to come in, but he would not give up his demand for a republic. There were two other parties, Labour and the English Party, known as the Unionists. They would not accept a republic and stood in with Smuts, but even with them he had only a shifting majority. He could never be sure of it. On one occasion Labour had a motion before the House. Hertzog, the cunning politician, saw his chance. Though it was completely against his political aims, he voted with Labour and all but beat the government.

Such a majority was unworkable. Smuts looked round for an alliance. He tried to come to terms with Hertzog, but that was impossible. He tried the English Party, and they combined with him to maintain the connection

with the British Empire and prevent a republic. He promptly went to the country and came back with a working majority.

CHAPTER LIII

FOR the first time since Botha died, Smuts was firmly in the saddle. He had a good working majority. He could count, as one Johannesburg newspaper said, on being "virtual dictator for the next five years." He was determined to be dictator and to rule as he saw fit. But in his strength lay his weakness, for it was by the votes of the English Party that he was in power.

Hertzog saw the chance. This English Party, he explained at his meetings, consisted of the friends of Rhodes and Milner. It had been organised by Jameson the Raider. It was full of Jingoes and Imperialists. With these men, who had tried to destroy the Dutch, with these enemies of South Africa, Smuts, a Dutchman, had allied himself. Many who had stayed with Smuts as the successor to Botha began to leave him. Botha, they said, would never have agreed to this.

And Hertzog's second criticism, that Smuts "wanted to have a foot in two continents," that he held a dual position and had a dual allegiance, had enough truth in it to hurt, for half his heart and more than half his thoughts Smuts kept in Europe.

Smuts had two completely different, even antagonistic personalities: the Smuts in South Africa, disliked and distrusted, impatient and easily irritated by administrative details, reserved and haughty to arrogance, often descending to political tricks and often petty; and the Smuts in England, the illustrious statesman, calm and deliberate, giving wise and wide-visioned advice, trusted and listened to by a whole nation with attention that amounted almost to veneration.

In the spring of 1921 he left Cape Town to attend another Imperial Conference in London. Up to the time he sailed, he was trying to answer, and with considerable irritation, various criticisms of his actions, and he left with the Opposition snarling close behind him, and himself snapping back at them.

In London he was met with friendly applause. He spoke at big meetings on European affairs and was listened to with deep attention. His advice was sought by important people. The King invited him to stay at Windsor Castle and asked his advice on various points in a speech he was to make when he

opened the new Ulster Parliament House. The Cabinet discussed the same speech with him.

All through the south of Ireland the rebels were fighting with the English soldiers and the police, but the rebels were nearing their end. They could with difficulty and for an emergency turn out three hundred gunmen, and even of these three hundred they could not be sure. They were almost beaten. Their leaders sent to Smuts through Tom Casemate, an Irishman who had served under him in German East. Smuts spoke to Lloyd George and offered to go over and see the leaders. Lloyd George was glad to let him go, so long as it was unofficial, but doubted if he could do any good.

Smuts saw the leaders, Arthur Griffiths, de Valera, Erskine Childers, desperate and suspicious men, but they listened to him. He gave them fatherly advice. "The English are a queer people," he said. "If you are outside their family group, they suspect you of the worst. Inside the family you can do anything you like, and you can get anything out of them. I know, for I've been in both positions. So come into our family, our Commonwealth of Nations. You'll find it your best policy."

He returned to England. "I feel as if I am back from the fourteenth century," he said, but he told the Cabinet that a solution was possible. It had become more "a human than a constitutional problem." He persuaded some of the die-hard ministers, such as Winston Churchill and Birkenhead, that a truce and a conference were best; and he left for South Africa feeling that he had done a fine piece of work; and he left acclaimed as a great statesman.

He landed in Cape Town feeling unwell; he had been seasick for nearly all the voyage. On the quay and in the streets were crowds of unemployed, who hooted and booed him: he was aggrieved. In the House he was asked sneering questions: what he had done in England, looking after other people's affairs, "clearing up other people's messes"; and he snapped back with little wisdom. He was visited by deputations with complaints, deputations of taxpayers, of civil servants asking for their war bonuses back, of railwaymen protesting at cuts of pay, of natives, of miners, and of the trade unions. He often answered them curtly and abruptly, without any of the calm judgment he had shown in Ireland, and sent them away more dissatisfied than before. And behind all these deputations were the beginnings of a big industrial upheaval, which, handled wisely at once, might have been avoided.

CHAPTER LIV

SOUTH AFRICA'S two biggest industrial centres were Johannesburg and the towns round it, with its gold and coal-miners and its transport workers, engineers, and municipal servants, and thirty miles away Pretoria, where were the central works of the railways. But on these two the whole life of South Africa depended.

Johannesburg had grown into a great and rich city, but it was still no more than a mining camp expanded, and it had the spirit of the mining camp. The city itself stood in the centre of a ridge of hills known as the Reef, which ran east and west, sixty miles long, and which was covered with townships and the heads of shafts leading to the mines beneath. It was an evil place, where mine-magnates, financiers, stockbrokers, jobbers, gamblers, adventurers, and workers all scrambled for quick money: rich to-day, broke to-morrow; immense contrasts of riches and poverty; abject poverty staring across narrow streets at blatant wealth; a place without culture or refinement; an ungodly, evil city, with a restless and unstable people.

During the war the workers had prospered, and with prosperity they had become proud and stiff-necked and hostile against the mine-magnates, the financiers, and the capitalists. With peace came a slump. Wages went down. The cost of living went up. There was a shortage of houses. The mine-magnates, to reduce expenses, began to employ an increased proportion of black to white labour. There were many unemployed, and the white workers were angry, and became bitter and resentful.

Between the two the hostility increased. Both organised; the mine-magnates and the capitalists into the Chamber of Mines, and the workers into trade unions, which combined into the Industrial Federation. The workers were on edge, ready for trouble, and would stand for nothing. Many times the Federation called out men in small strikes and got their way, until they believed that the capitalists were afraid of them and that they were the masters. Agitators, trained in Bolshevik propaganda and with money from Russia, were at work amongst the miners, rousing them, telling them that the mines were theirs and for the taking. A clash was inevitable. The trade unions with the Federation were demanding control of the mines. The owners, backed by the Chamber, were preparing to fight. The Government did not interfere.

On New Year's Day, 1922, the owners reduced the pay of the miners in the coal-mines from thirty to twenty-five shillings a day. The miners came out on strike. The Chamber decided that the time had come to make a fight. The coal-owners refused to give way to the strikers.

Ten days later the owners of the gold-mines decided to employ more black men in place of white. Twenty thousand miners came out on strike, and with them the engineers. Again the owners, backed by the Chamber, stood fast and refused to give way. The big battle between Labour and Capital, between the Federation and the Chamber, had begun.

Smuts tried to negotiate between the two. This was work in which he needed Botha, for the workers did not trust him. They hated him bitterly. They had not forgotten the shootings in 1913 or how he had treated them in 1914. In 1913 they had told the Governor-General that they would not have him negotiating: Botha they would have, but not Smuts; and they would not have him now.

Smuts too had changed. In the old days he had disliked socialism, but he had disliked the mine-magnates even more. In England he had learned to fear Bolshevism, and behind all socialism, all movements of the workers, and all innovations, he saw the red hand of Bolshevism and of Russia. He was biased towards the mine-magnates and he did not conceal his bias.

Having failed to negotiate, he drew back. Other members of the Government wished to take action. He would not have it.

"The Government will remain severely impartial," he announced. "We will make a ring round you disputants and let you fight it out," which seemed all fair and sporting, until he showed that he was backing the mine-magnates, for when asked on what terms he advised the men to return to work he replied, "On the terms of the Chamber." And he issued a statement: "The police have instructions . . . to protect all miners who return to their employment. . . . I call on the mine-owners to restart the mines." The mine-owners said that they were quite ready if the men came back, but the Federation replied, "We accept the challenge of General Smuts to the workers and we recommend all men to stand fast."

The quarrel, bitter before, was made more intense by the politicians, for the Opposition took sides with the men. Hertzog sat quiet. Openly he did not back the strikers any more than he had backed the rebels in 1914, but they

knew that they had his sympathy, and very astutely he used to his own advantage every mistake that Smuts made. But his supporters were not so quiet. Tielman Roos, his lieutenant in the Transvaal, haphazard and unreliable as ever, went stumping the Transvaal, attacking Smuts as "the agent of the Chamber." Tielman Roos had a bitter and caustic tongue, a shrewd and crafty brain, with a genial manner that made friends with the ordinary man; and he suggested that a republic would run the mines for the workers and not for the financiers, who were mainly Englishmen or foreign-born Jews, and who cared nothing for South Africa and spent their money outside the country. "Down with the financiers and up with the republic!" was his war-cry.

The Federation demanded a round-table conference. The Chamber sent a rough, uncouth reply: "We will waste no more time . . . trying to convince people of your mental calibre . . . and we see no reason why we should discuss our business with representatives of slaughtermen and tramwaymen."

The strikers, convinced that, when the time came, Hertzog would turn out his men with rifles to help them, began to drill. They marched through the streets in detachments led by men with badges to show that they were officers. Some had uniforms and many had rifles. They came to blows with the police. In the village of Boksburg a crowd had collected to hear a speaker and refused to disperse until the police broke up the crowd by force. The next day they collected again and sang the Red Flag, and the police fired on them. Tielman Roos made accusations against the police and demanded an inquiry. Smuts bluntly refused any inquiry.

The Federation declared a general strike and called out all the trade unions to help the miners. As they did so, the officials of the Federation were roughly pushed on one side by five men, who called themselves the Council of Action. They were capable men, trained in this work, extremists, and they had their plans ready. At once they marched their men out in regular formations, took control of the whole Reef, began to kill and drive out the native labourers, and to murder the officials in the mines.

At the beginning and quite ruthlessly, Smuts had decided to be finished once and for all with these troubles with Labour. He would make an end of "sitting on the edge of a volcano." He would let the workers go to the limit,

show them at their worst, reveal their real aims, give South Africa a taste of what real Labour trouble meant, and then smash the workers.

In Pretoria he had left two cabinet ministers to watch events and to keep him informed. This they had failed to do, and suddenly he realised the danger: that a full-blast revolution was on him. He decided to act at once and to act himself, and, when he made a decision to act, he did so at top speed. He made no attempt to negotiate or to compromise. All the changes and hesitations of the last two months disappeared. "There will be no Mexico here," he said, "so long as I am in power. I will preserve order." He ordered troops up to the Reef and told them to hurry. He sent out a general call to the commandos and they came hurrying in. He armed the police with rifles and told them to shoot, and he declared martial law.

Two days later he made a speech at the House of Assembly in Cape Town, and as soon as it was finished went out as if to go to his office, took a car, drove to the station, and got aboard a special train to Johannesburg, a thousand miles away to the north. He had with him the stout-hearted lawyer Esselen, but he told no one else except the necessary officials. Even Mrs. Smuts did not know. But someone had been watching and warned the Council of Action: Smuts their enemy was on the train. The rioters tore up the line eighty miles below Johannesburg near Potchefstroom. A ganger stopped the train in time. Smuts took a car, sent a message in to the police in Johannesburg, and hurried on by road. The chauffeur drove with a revolver in one hand. Smuts took it quietly away from him and told him to bustle.

Close outside Johannesburg they came to a crowd of roughs across the road. Smuts ordered the chauffeur to drive straight at them and get through. Some of the roughs were armed and opened fire on the car. The chauffeur had his hat knocked off by a bullet. The tires of the car were punctured. Esselen wanted to drive on with the tires flat. Smuts would have the tires mended, and while this was done he got out and sat by the side of the road.

Some of the roughs came up. Esselen emptied his revolver at them, so that they hung back. Smuts sat unmoved and asked Esselen not to be so hasty, for, he said, "If we are really attacked you will be unarmed."

Danger never excited Smuts. In danger he did not go berserking, wild, shouting, his blood leaping as a trooper's in a cavalry charge. Danger made him suddenly still, mind and body taut and hard as a steel blade, mind working quickly and clearly, without hurry, body ready for action. He gave an impression of deadly stillness. For anyone who showed fear he had only contempt, and as he sat there by the side of the road, looking at these roughs

who dared not come at him, his eyes were full of arrogant contempt: they were poor scum; he despised them.

He drove on into Johannesburg to the Drill Hall in Union Square. On the road he met bodies of armed strikers, but no one stopped him. At the Drill Hall a sentry held him back with a rifle and fixed bayonet, pointed at his stomach. Smuts pushed the bayonet away with a bare hand, and the sentry was so surprised that he let him pass.

The police had sent out a messenger to prevent his coming, but the messenger had missed him. When midnight struck and then a quarter past, they became alarmed. There were reports that Smuts had been murdered on the road. The police could do nothing; they had no men to send out. They were hemmed in by overwhelming numbers. Even the detachment in police headquarters was surrounded. The general in charge of the troops and his staff, worn out by a hard day, had gone to bed. Suddenly Smuts walked in, unworried and unconcerned.

For some time Smuts had been ill with gastric influenza, and the doctors had warned him to go slow and take a month's holiday. He had felt weary and pulled down. All this disappeared, now he was in action: he was ill no more. He listened to the reports at once. The position was bad. The whole of the Reef was controlled by the rioters, who were well armed and organised into detachments under trained leaders. The centre of Johannesburg itself alone was free. Why the rioters had not taken this over was not clear. Had they done so Smuts would have been helpless.

The police, split up into small detachments of fifty men each, were scattered all along the Reef guarding the mine shafts and points of importance. Each detachment was isolated. In some cases they were exposed, grouped in a valley with the rioters holding the hills round and able to fire down on them.

The police and the authorities were powerless. The population was in a panic. The rich mine-magnates and stockbrokers had taken cover in the Rand Club, where they waited, armed and ready to fight, but helpless. They had seen industrial troubles before, but not red revolution, wild and fierce, with murder and wanton destruction.

Smuts put out his hands and took firm grip. Here was a problem directly in front of him which needed action: that he understood. The result was remarkable. At once the panic disappeared. The authorities once again took heart. Smuts had taken over control and all would be well. Johannesburg sighed with relief.

Smuts made his plans quickly. He ordered the police detachments to be called in and concentrated into one force, which he would use to attack the rioters at their centre. This left the mines exposed, but he decided to take that risk. Then he sat down, and, quietly until morning, and as if nothing serious was to hand, talked of farming and breeding bulls.

By dawn of the next day troops were coming in. He was ready. He telephoned to Pretoria to send all aeroplanes, and to bomb. He attacked the key to the rioters' position at the head of the Reef, near the Country Club, and beat them out. Then he fought steadily down the Reef. The rioters fought fiercely back at Benoni, Boksburg, Brixton, and Langlaagte. Smuts brought up guns and armoured cars and shot them down without pity. They made a last stand in a school at Fordsburg. He cleared the village of women and children, gave the rioters a warning, and then with artillery and bombing aeroplanes blew in the school and killed and captured the leaders. He had smashed the attempt at revolution.

CHAPTER LV

SMUTS returned to Cape Town proud of his work and satisfied, proud and satisfied because the commandos of young farmers from all the Transvaal had turned out at his call and come riding hell for leather to help him. The people were with him, he thought. To all those who had helped him he sent out a message of thanks and congratulations: they had crushed lawlessness, and no nation could exist on lawlessness; and "We are building a nation," he said. Many of his own acts had been illegal, and he asked Parliament to grant him a Bill to indemnify him for these.

His request was met by the Opposition with a roar of reproach. The cost of the revolt had been enormous: many of the mines had been damaged; houses, even whole streets, had been destroyed; officials murdered and mutilated; native labourers driven away and afraid to return; the whole life of Johannesburg and the Reef brought to a standstill. It had taken twenty thousand troops and police, with aeroplanes, armoured cars, and machine guns, to put down the revolt, and there had been eight hundred casualties, of which a large proportion had been amongst the Government troops.

And all this, said Hertzog, could have been avoided if Smuts had known how to handle a strike. Hertzog spoke in his bitterest manner. Smuts had deliberately and revengefully, he said, held his hand until bloodshed was sure, and this was the result. Smuts had been utterly callous, heartless, criminal, and he had enjoyed shedding blood.

Smuts' supporters attacked Hertzog with equal bitterness, telling him that he and his own men were responsible for the trouble. They shouted insults and personalities at Hertzog. Hertzog's supporters shouted insults back. There was wild pandemonium. Again and again the Speaker called the House to order, and then closed the sitting.

Smuts sat silent, his face set, his eyes grey with fury, restraining himself and refusing to take part in the uproar, which seemed to him to be cheap and undignified.

But the antagonism against him increased. He now stood out alone at the head of the State without Botha to bear part of any attack or to smooth away some of the bitterness. The antagonism was concentrated fully and personally on him.

Hertzog marshalled all the forces against him with skill. He threw in his teeth the Rebellion, the campaigns in German South West and German East, the shootings in the 1913 strike, the killing of the natives in the Cape, in Johannesburg, and the slaughter of the Hottentots in the South-West, and now this great killing on the Reef. Smuts was a "man of blood."

The Dutch pastors took up the cry. They had never forgiven Smuts. They were his implacable enemies. "Jesus had his Judas, Paul had his Evil Spirit . . . General Hertzog has his Smuts," preached one from his pulpit. Their influence among the Dutch was immense, especially among the women.

Labour repeated the same cry: Smuts was the man of blood, the enemy of the workers, the agent of the mine-magnates, of the financiers, of the Chamber of Mines; and everywhere the workers believed it and hated Smuts.

Everything that Smuts did was twisted cleverly against him. In 1923 he went again to London to another Imperial Conference. At that moment Germany had failed to pay her war reparations. France had threatened and then marched troops into the Ruhr, the industrial centre of Germany. The English Government had refused to be a party to this. Smuts, by letters to the newspapers and in speeches, made a full attack on France. We are "on a march to destruction . . . a crusade of suicide," he said. "The time has come for a convocation of a great Conference of the Powers to consider reparations. . . . The occupation of the Ruhr is largely responsible for the disaster. . . . It is illegal . . . it is a breach of the Treaty of Versailles." And later, "France has made impossible the Conference on reparations, which I had proposed. . . . There must be a Conference with wider powers to set Germany on her feet. . . . Our duty is to go forward, even if France does not march with us. France . . . went forward without us to seek reparations in the Ruhr, and shall we shrink from going forward without her when something far deeper, far more fundamental, is at stake?"

The French newspapers attacked Smuts violently as the pro-German of the Peace Conference who was now trying to split England from France to help Germany, and so mulct France of her just dues. The Australian newspapers were astonished at Smuts. The Canadian papers were even more surprised. "This is plunging . . . into the foreign policy of Europe with a

vengeance," wrote one. "If this didactic and detailed intervention had been made by our own prime minister we should look on it as a startling innovation. General Smuts has played a great part in world affairs, but after all he is only an overseas prime minister. . . . We cannot believe that a man in his position would make so bold a contribution to the very delicate discussion of European affairs without the permission of the British ministers."

Smuts' enemies in South Africa saw their opportunity. Smuts, they said, had not merely the permission of the British ministers; he was the agent and the mouthpiece of the English Government, and this explained all he did, even his going to Ireland. Smuts, the agent of the English Government and of the English financiers of the Chamber of Mines, was not the man to be trusted with the interests of the people of South Africa. The Dutch, especially the farmers, believed this, and looked more than ever sideways at Smuts.

Meanwhile, Tielman Roos had been steadily at work in the Transvaal. There he was the leader of the Nationalists. The people liked his open, genial, witty manner and his quick, biting retorts. He had sworn to be revenged on Smuts. He rarely came down to the Parliament, but spent his time travelling from town to town, speaking, carrying out a steady, clever, unscrupulous, and bitter campaign against Smuts among the Dutch.

Everything, too, seemed to move against Smuts. The world slump increased, and South Africa suffered. Unemployment and distress became more extensive. Smuts tried to reduce them by relief work, irrigation schemes, and road-building, but these led to much wasteful expenditure. He started a scheme to electrify the railways, which was found unwise. The drought had been followed by a plague of locusts, and the ruined farmers were sour and resentful. He tried to help them by stimulating the trade in fruit and maize, but with little success. As Merriman wrote of him, he was "a poor administrator": and the Opposition attacked him with criticisms which he could not answer.

CHAPTER LVI

SMUTS had been in politics for twenty-five years. It was now, for the first time, that he was the real ruler of South Africa. He put out his hands for the power for which he had worked so long. He would rule, and rule as he saw fit and in his own way. He towered over his colleagues and those round him. His personality and his brain dominated all, and the rough edges of his character, without Botha to soften them, became rougher and more pronounced. The antagonism to himself did not make him more wary, but only more obstinate to get his own way. He became more dictatorial, until he was called "the steam-roller" and "the Oriental despot," and people went round asking each other with a sneer if he claimed leadership by election or by divine right.

He would stand no opposition. He would have his own way absolutely and in detail. All opposition was to him a personal affront. Those round him must agree with him absolutely or they were against him.

It was the same in small things as in great. Once, when he was camping, he considered that the fire had been built wrongly for the wind. He kicked it out and rebuilt it himself, but so that the wind brought the smoke into the camp. That evening he sat in clouds of eye-stinging wood-smoke, but contented, for he had his way. On another occasion in Pretoria an old Dutchman questioned a statement he had made on philosophy. Smuts looked the old man up and down as if he had been insulted and changed the subject.

He became even more reserved and he relied less and less on other men. He preferred to do things himself. He did not understand team-work. He was a lone man playing a lone hand, and convinced that he could do what he wished better than anyone else could do it for him.

He looked on his colleagues in the Cabinet as encumbrances who had to be endured. He avoided seeing them. "He wanted clerks, not colleagues." Sometimes he did their work and gave orders to their departments without consulting or informing them. He became "more than the head of the Government. He was the Government . . . Cabinet, all departments of State, the Party Committee, the civil services . . . Parliament itself." His colleagues complained, said that they found it impossible to see him, but he took no notice until several protested strongly, and even Patrick Duncan, who had been his faithful and complacent admirer and follower for many years, and was the deputy chief of his party, quarrelled with him.

With Botha gone, there appeared a defect in Smuts which had not been obvious before. Botha had always seen “the end in the beginning,” and so planned far ahead. Smuts could look far away towards the stars, or conceive great world-movements, but in practical affairs he had no long or constructive policies. As in war so in politics and administration he had the mentality of the raider, not of the general. He dealt with each difficulty in turn, and not as part of a general advance. In front of him he saw a ridge held by the enemy. He drove them off or cleverly outflanked them, and then he looked to see the next difficulty. There was a joke in Pretoria that when Smuts was asked for a general policy he said, “We will begin plan-making,” but no plan came; and his distracted colleagues and assistants tore their hair —for he was always busy and would not see them. He was, in fact, avoiding a decision on some big issue.

At times there came creeping back in him, for all his despotic insistence that he was right in all things, doubts, making him hesitate. Before, he had been able to consult with Botha, who gave him confidence. Now he had cut himself off from other advisers, and he trusted little in any man’s advice. As ever, he forced the doubts out of his mind, forced himself to know he was right, and, with no one to restrain him, did and said violent things—because of his doubts.

He grew exceedingly unpopular. He rode roughshod over people and made many enemies and did not care what enemies he made. The Upper House of Parliament was full of experienced and older men. Smuts did not conceal the fact that he had no respect for them and that he could rule better if they were out of the way. In the Lower House he sat usually silent and aloof, but when he spoke it was often with a caustic, acid scorn and a cynical sarcasm that made members hate him. He rarely, however, descended to personalities, and of his worst enemies, even of Hertzog and Tielman Roos, who could get under his skin and hurt him, he always spoke well.

His subordinates and the civil servants were nervous of him. He was utterly impatient of slowness and stupidity. He preferred novel rather than tried and tested lines of action and methods. If anyone tried to explain a difficulty, he brushed him aside, looked on him as obstructive, a man to be sent elsewhere or anyway to be ignored. Whatever Smuts wished, must be done at once and without hesitation.

From many sides he was given warning of coming trouble. Members of his own party, especially those from Natal, began to criticise him. He looked on those who were old as dodderers and the others as disloyal to him.

Articles in the newspapers said that the feeling of the country was turning against him. His party managers warned him that Hertzog was flirting with Creswell, a retired engineer who led Labour, and that there was some agreement between them. Smuts did not believe them. He would not listen to what he did not want to know.

But trouble was boiling up. The people of South Africa were tired of Smuts. His majority in Parliament began to be reduced. He resented that. There was a by-election at Wakkerstroom. It was a good seat, and he sent his best candidate. Without warning he made a speech saying that he would treat this election as a test. The electors must elect his man or he would himself resign. The electors threw his man out.

Smuts was bitterly resentful at the defeat. He was unwell. The malaria had reduced his vitality. He had broken out in painful carbuncles, which had to be lanced. He was run down and needed a rest. At this defeat he swelled up in indignation, in a flush of supreme arrogance. He still had a working majority. He need not go to an election for eighteen months, but if Wakkerstroom would not obey his orders he would go now. South Africa, he knew, could not do without him. He did not consult his party, his party managers and organisers, nor even his colleagues in the cabinet, but handed in his resignation and then walked in to his colleagues and told them briefly that the Government was at an end.

So little did his supporters know or even suspect, that when the editor of a newspaper in Cape Town got the news he discredited it, but meeting the Treasurer of the party, a man looked on as one of Smuts' few confidants, he asked him. The Treasurer bet him he was wrong. They walked down to the club. A cabinet minister came in. He confirmed the news. The Treasurer paid his bet.

At the news South Africa was up, seething with excitement. Hertzog and Creswell came out into the open. They had made an agreement, a Pact. Hertzog had thrown his principles into the cart. He had agreed not to press for a republic or secession from the British Empire, and Creswell with Labour had agreed not to talk of socialism. Their desire for power and the fruits of power and their hatred of Smuts was stronger than their principles.

The election was a straight fight. Smuts with his own and the English Party against Hertzog with Labour. Smuts made a great fighting speech, full

of promises to reduce taxes, to help agriculture, to aid meat and tobacco, to grow more cotton, to assist industry by banking facilities, to build new railway workshops, to give technical education, and to create a new and special office for a cabinet minister to look after all these. He was met only with vicious and positive hatred of himself personally. Mrs. Smuts put aside her dislike of the English and came to his help, touring the country and speaking at women's meetings.

But the voters had had enough of the dictatorship of Smuts and of Smuts' World Issues and European Issues and Imperial Issues. They cared more about their own bread and butter. Hertzog would look after those. Hertzog would look after their interests while Smuts, head in air, was thinking of England, Empire, Europe, the World. They threw out the Government. They threw out Smuts from Pretoria West and put in a Labour candidate of little importance; and Smuts had to be found a safe seat at Standerton. And they sent Hertzog back to represent them with a good majority.

The defeat was the defeat of Smuts personally. At the moment when he had stood straddling supreme, with power between his hands, he had fallen; and he fell through ignorance of handling men and through pride, and because he was as arrogant as a steel blade drawn and held on guard.

PART VII

CHAPTER LVII

AS soon as they had won, Hertzog and his men rushed in to take possession, to grasp power and the perquisites of power. They had worked and waited twelve years for this. Creswell became Minister of Labour; Tielman Roos, as talkative and as excited as a cock-sparrow, Minister of Justice; Malan, the ex-pastor editor of *Die Burger*, Minister of Education; Havenga, a young Dutchman from the wilds of the Free State, a close friend and at one time secretary to Hertzog, who, though he had no knowledge of finance and was slow-thinking, was yet solid, completely honest and determined to learn and who was absolutely loyal to Hertzog, went to the Treasury to look after the finances of South Africa; and a man or two whose main qualification was that they had been leaders in the Rebellion in 1914. Hertzog took up residence at Groote Schuur. This was the old farm that Cecil Rhodes had had built for himself into a great house and which he had left, when he died, for the use of prime ministers.

The spirit of Cecil Rhodes lived in that house: rooms spacious and hung with tapestry; old furniture, heavy Dutch china, rich silver, and fine pictures, a monstrous sarcophagus made into a bath fit for a Roman emperor. Yet a house of the country, with Dutch gables and latticed and barred windows, with heavy wood shutters, and an open, pillared terrace where Rhodes had walked and looked away over the gardens full of palm trees and hydrangeas and bougainvilleas, away to the pine woods on the slopes that climbed steep up to the summit of Table Mountain, where it towered sheer above Cape Town; and here, and amongst the pine trees, Rhodes had dreamt his spacious dreams and planned them into wide-flung policies. It was the house of a Great Man and of a Leader of Men.

And here came Hertzog to live. There could have been no greater contrast than between the builder and the man who dwelt in the house. Hertzog was small, his vision narrow, his mind cramped and provincial. He was no leader, but contracted by “craven fears of being great.” A dwarf had come to sit in the seat of the Colossus.

Smuts gave up office with a half-smile and a shrug of his shoulders. Patrick Duncan, urged on by his English supporters, protested at his

resignation and the overbearing way in which he had done it without consulting the party. Smuts listened to him without resentment. The editor of a newspaper asked him for a statement. “I shall be back stronger than ever within a few months,” he replied.

He was quite sure that he had carried out a shrewd political move. He had been criticised almost to blackmail by the English members from Natal and by some of his own party. A few months in opposition would do these critics good, teach them a lesson. The Government could not last long. Hertzog’s followers were all Dutchmen, farmers, land owners, and conservatives. Creswell’s followers were all Englishmen, workers, landless men, and socialists. As well ask hedgehog and dog to mate as to ask these to function as a government. The country would soon find, he calculated, that it could not get on without him. “Let us not,” he said at a meeting, “be too much affected by ups and downs. The huge structure of unpopularity built up against us will dissolve as the morning mist.” His doctor had told him to rest. It would be a relief for a little time to go to the farm at Irene, to read and recoup and get ready to return to power, and it would be interesting to watch his enemies making mistakes.

But as the months went by and there was no change, no splitting in the Government, no crisis, and no call for him from the country, Smuts realised that he had been wrong.

Botha had had an extra sense, which had warned him what the man in the street and on the farm was thinking. Smuts had not this sense. He worked out his deductions methodically and without considering the element of human character. Botha acted by instinct and was right. Smuts acted by logic and was wrong. He worked so hard, so shut in his office, his nose so close to paper, that he had no time to think or to keep in touch. He had not realised how tired the country was of him, nor the great swing of the voters against him, nor his own personal unpopularity. He also did not realise how the perquisites of power could destroy the principles of politicians and hold together men who otherwise were antagonistic. Some of the men round Hertzog had brought back the abuses of the cronies who had hung round Kruger in the old Transvaal Republic, the sale of contracts and concessions and the appointment of relatives and friends to offices and posts irrespective of their qualifications. With such things Smuts had never soiled his hands. They did not come into his calculations.

And many things helped Hertzog. Good rain fell. The drought ended. The plague of locusts ceased. Platinum was found, and money began to flow into the country again. Trade began to revive, and the mines to prosper.

As he realised the fact that he was not wanted, the arrogant assurance and the complacency died out of Smuts. He was mortally hurt in his pride, for South Africa had rejected him and his leadership and thrust him roughly out into the wilderness. He had some hobbies, but he had no ability to rest or to take a holiday, and his work in his office had absorbed his time and all his interests, so that after years of concentrated, strenuous effort the flatness of empty hours came as drab reaction. He loved power, and he had handled it so long that it irked and angered him to be powerless. Depression loaded his shoulders and weighted his feet as with lead. He shut himself away and refused to take any part in politics or to lead his party.

After a time he took a grip of himself, returned, and faced life again, resumed his normal existence, went back into politics, and led his party in opposition; but he was a changed man. He had suffered. He had tremendous self-control and he began to remodel himself completely, training himself laboriously to be more natural and human, to take more interest in other men and the common details of life, to be less self-centred, and to talk more.

In parliament he surprised both his enemies and his friends. His enemies attacked him on all occasions with sneers and with bitter, even gross, personal criticism. Smuts sat quiet. Expecting him to defend himself, his supporters shouted back abuse. Smuts did not move. He sat, sometimes staring up at the ceiling, at other times with chin on hand, impassive, wrapped in thought, his eyes far away and unseeing. Only on rare occasions was he roused by some exceptionally offensive remark or by some shrewd stab from Tielman Roos, and then his forehead would grow scarlet and he would stare at the speaker with grey, freezing eyes and with a steady, unwinking stare. His close friends knew that then he was angry, but he showed no other emotion; and his ability to sit still without moving a muscle for long periods became uncanny.

It was not that he had ceased to care or to listen. He was listening, and he was hurt intensely.

"I cannot understand," said a supporter, "how you can put up with the abuse of those fellows."

"No more can I," he replied. "Often I would like to leap at them and strangle them." And at another time, "Politicians should be pachyderms. Public life means not only the supreme enjoyment of achievement but the

continuous agony of mis-understandings, of differences with friends and associates, of hideously unfair and wounding criticisms." He had created for himself a thick skin, but under that covering he was as sensitive as ever; and he had to hold himself in with a rigorous hand and in that way learn patience. "When I cannot control my temper," he said on another occasion, "I walk away."

When he spoke in the House or at meetings in the country, it was for moderation. He spoke on the attempts of the Government to force all officials to qualify in Afrikaans as well as in English; on a proposal to segregate the natives; on trade treaties which the Government were making with foreign countries, and especially with Germany and to the disadvantage of England; pleading always for moderation and to avoid any race-strife between the Dutch and the English.

Hertzog could not bring forward a proposal for a republic or secession from the British Empire, his pact with Creswell made that impossible; but he kept alive amongst the Dutch their hatred for England. He raised the question of the right of South Africa, in case England should go to war with some other nation, to declare herself neutral and still remain inside the British Empire. And in 1927 he wished to have a separate flag for South Africa and to discard the Union Jack.

Mr. Amery, the Dominions Secretary from England, was touring South Africa at the time. He suggested two separate flags to be flown, as in Malta, side by side: the one to be the Union Jack; the other a South African flag. He used every form of persuasion, but Hertzog would not compromise.

Hertzog's proposal roused all the hostility, which had begun to disappear, between the English and the Dutch. It became the topic of conversation in every village and dorp, and the burning argument in every hotel and bar and farm. It grew quickly into a quarrel, which boiled up angrily. Englishmen and Dutchmen insulted each other openly, swore they would shoot each other rather than give way.

Smuts toured the country. He opposed Hertzog's proposal, but he begged for reason and compromise. The Dutch met him everywhere with fierce hostility. His meetings were broken up, and he was howled down. At Bloemhof, in the Transvaal, Hertzog's supporters raided the hall where Smuts was due to speak, broke the furniture, chased out the police, tore up the Union Jack which was on the platform, and swore that they would kill Smuts if he persisted.

“A thousand men will not make me change my mind,” replied Smuts unmoved, and kept steadily on.

The debates in the House were vitriolic. Smuts rose to speak, as now he always did, deliberately, quietly, and without heat. He expressed regret at the passions which Hertzog had roused, and in restrained, steady language he made a simple speech. Hertzog’s supporters answered with howls, taunts, and more insults. A crisis was at hand. Civil war was not far off.

The Governor-General, the Earl of Athlone, saw the danger. He begged Smuts to meet Hertzog at his house. Smuts agreed readily. They dined in a party; Smuts unusually affable, Hertzog on tiptoe, expecting Smuts to patronise him. After dinner the Governor-General manœuvred the two into a room and drew his other guests away. Three hours later Smuts and Hertzog came out. As they said good night, they nodded to each other. The controversy over the Flag had been settled. The turmoil in the country, artificially roused, died down rapidly. South Africa flew her own Flag, which consisted of the republican colours with a small panel in the centre made up of the Union Jack and the flags of the two old republics; an ugly flag unworthy of South Africa. This was to be flown side by side with the Union Jack. The moderation and compromise of Smuts had won.

CHAPTER LVIII

SMUTS left Groote Schuur with little regret. He had lived there for long periods alone, while his family remained on the farm at Irene. He had only camped in the big house, a lone man in a wilderness of fine rooms and beautiful things and luxury. These he neither understood nor desired. He preferred the roughness and the discomfort of his farm with the veld wide open round him on every side. Now that he was out of office, he spent much of his time there.

At Irene he could live as he wished. In his office he was always correctly and carefully dressed. On the farm he wore ancient clothes, a dilapidated pair of trousers, and a khaki shirt open at the neck. He got up early, drank two or three mugs of coffee, and went off on a horse to look round at the thousands of trees he had planted, the avenue of maples, the willows down by the stream, the fruit trees of all sorts, and his field of lucerne, and his prize cattle and breeding bulls; and to talk with his stockmen and labourers. He came back to the food of the veld Dutchman, rough and sustaining, and then went to a big room which he had made into a study and lined the walls with shelves full of his books. Here he sat and read, and no one dared to disturb him. He read heavy official books, textbooks, reports, equally heavy philosophic treaties, mixed in with histories and some literature—American, German, and English. He kept up a large correspondence with many friends in England about the League of Nations, the Peace Treaties, and the problems of Europe. He saw visitors reluctantly and usually with some suspicion, wondering what they wanted.

As when a young student, his real hobby was still the study of grasses. He was not moved by their beauty, nor by the wonder of their fertilisation. He studied them with a museum brain. He went on long treks to collect them, dried them, searched amongst them for new species, and catalogued and classified these by their Latin names into their families and sub-families. In this his knowledge was complete and exact.

He was not worried for money. For years he had drawn the salary of a cabinet minister. He had good assets, and a second farm in the Western Transvaal. Even if he had been short he would not have allowed thoughts of money to worry him. Book-keeping and accounts wearied him to distraction. He had no idea of the position of his own personal finances, and he ignored any reference to it from his wife or the bank. They would muddle along

somehow, he said. He ran Irene with princely gestures, buying expensive cattle, which rarely paid, and experimenting in new manures and new machinery, which paid even less. For his own personal wants he needed little money. Except for his longing, the longing of every Dutchman, to own land, he wished to possess nothing. A bed, a rough table, rough clothes, rough food, an old wooden chair with a leather seat made by his father, a few books, and some writing material, and he was satisfied. He was almost free from possessions. His family were as simple in their needs and tastes as he was, a haphazard, veritable circus of a family, who filled the house and looked on him with awe and, as he once said himself, "My children treat me as a distinguished stranger." Many a man with half his income and none of his position had more comfort and more refinement in his home.

Mrs. Smuts kept house and boasted that they lived as veld Dutch and that she was proud to be the wife of a Dutch farmer. She was a shrewd, capable woman, without any pretensions or artificialities. She was always ready to give hospitality or to help any neighbour who was in need. She cared little for dress or appearances. Had she decked herself out and varnished her nails she would have shocked herself as much as Smuts. Ever since those first days in Stellenbosch, when they had walked sedately side by side under the oak trees up the street to the college, she was the only person with whom Smuts could relax completely, be himself, and be natural. He discussed all his difficulties with her, and she gave him sage advice. She had still no liking for the English. The tragedies of the war with the English had burned far more deeply into her memory than into the memory of Smuts. None the less she never stood in his way when he wished to deal with the English, and after his defeat in 1924 she came out actively to help him keep the connection with the British Empire. When he went abroad, she preferred to remain in South Africa. When he was in his most difficult moods, she knew how to handle him. She looked up to him with the same steady devotion with which she had looked up to him in the first years of their marriage. He was to her "The old Baas." When he was sunk in despair and ready to give up she could still rouse him and draw him back, revived and ready to fight again.

Whenever overworked in his office, badgered too severely by his enemies, or with things going wrong, Smuts had often spoken with pleasure of the days when he would be able to retire, to return to Irene to farm and

read and sit in peace and to think. But now that he could do these things, he found that they rapidly palled. He was not at heart a farmer. He was a politician. But the rough and tumble of leading the Opposition, the political meetings in the country, and the constant speaking against the policies of the Government, and not fighting for his own, were not what he wanted. He wanted to be back in the saddle, controlling, overworked, badgered, dealing with masses of problems and difficulties, deciding the lives of other men, and guiding South Africa in the way she should go. He soon grew restless. He planned out far-reaching schemes, but he had no power to carry them out.

He went for long walks, either in the veld beyond the farm or climbing in some mountain district, pacing solidly along, hour after hour, often alone, or, if with companions, a little way ahead, saying little, and, if spoken to, gruff and even morose. He was thinking. To crystallise the ideas that hung as if in solution in their minds, other men had to talk or to write and rewrite. Smuts walked, and while he walked his subconscious mind chewed over facts and the theories fed to it from his memory and his brain digested them and formed them into the bones and flesh and skin of complete and concrete ideas. So that when he came to speak or to write he did not hesitate.

To fill his time and absorb some of his restless energy he wrote and published a philosophical treatise, *Holism and Evolution*. He had been pondering the theory since the days when as a student he had studied Walt Whitman. "It has been," he wrote, "my companion throughout a crowded life." He had drafted it during the first session he had sat in opposition. It contained his philosophy of life, the conception which had directed his political efforts, and it was begotten out of his own character.

His philosophy was based on Evolution. Its name he took from the Greek words *to holon*, The Whole, and defined it as a primary law "according to which Evolution is a rising series of wholes, of which man is the highest." The Universe, he explained, was a process which consisted of creating larger and better wholes. The atom was a whole, but as an organism it contained a small extra force, or credit, which dragged it always towards and made it tend to coalesce with other atoms, and together they produced larger and better wholes, which in turn, though they were themselves perfect wholes, tended to coalesce with other wholes and make even greater wholes; and the process, beginning at the atom, or before the atom, continued until it reached the apex of perfection in human personality.

He believed that this process "applied, beyond the domain of biology . . . to human associations, like the State." He had, therefore, laboured to make

the provinces of South Africa, which each in themselves were complete wholes, coalesce into the larger and better whole of the Union of South Africa, which again coalesced with the other Dominions and Colonies into the British Empire, which in time should coalesce with other nations into the League of Nations. Here was the thread that held together and made a chain of all his variegated political efforts.

This process, he explained further, was in action throughout the Universe. It was dependent on an inherent impulse or a living purpose existing in everything. Yet in his Universe there appeared to be no need nor even room for God. There was a design, but no Designer. A purpose, but no directing Brain. There might be a permeating influence that might vaguely be labelled "God," but there was no personal God interested in men. In Smuts' philosophy there was, for the ordinary man, no God.

Smuts' philosophical treatise showed his immense knowledge of facts and theories, and how subtly and powerfully he could weave these together to prove his idea. He spoke of it as "a new religion," but as an explanation of politics it seemed to offer a complicated explanation of a simple and normal historical process—of states combining for security or for common interests, and it did not explain why they broke up as easily as they combined.

And as the creed of Smuts, which welled up out of his very being, it was Smuts himself, for it was based on a stupendous intellectual arrogance. It was the Philosophy of Supreme Human Arrogance. He proclaimed "Human personality is the summit of perfection." He had none of the humility of the psalmist when he cried out, "Oh, God! What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Here was the arrogant boast of Lenin and the belief of Mustafa Kemal. "Man is the prophet of his own perfection."

CHAPTER LIX

HARDLY had the bitterness roused by the controversy over the Flag died down before the new elections in 1929 were at hand and the parties began to prepare for the fight. Smuts was convinced that he could stage a come-back. He prepared a programme, but so dull and ordinary that it roused no enthusiasm even amongst his own supporters.

Hertzog, however, understood the tactics of political warfare far better. He concentrated on Smuts personally. He knew that it was easier for the voters to hate a man than to hate a programme. He pointed out that he had a cabinet of young men, while Smuts kept to the older men, and he invited the young men to stand by him and so take their chance. He had brought prosperity to the country, while Smuts had brought bankruptcy. He attacked the love which Smuts was always showing for England. Uniting South Africa! Smuts did not know what the phrase meant. "The national unity outlined by General Smuts," he said, "is unity obtained by allowing the British lion to devour the Afrikander lamb. . . . General Smuts has always been an enemy to national unity in a South African national spirit." It was no better for the English in South Africa, he said, than for the Dutch, and he appealed to the English to join him as well.

But his master blow he kept until the election was close. Smuts had made a speech on a Great African State which contained a number of loosely worded phrases. Hertzog leapt at these. "General Smuts and the English Imperialists behind him," he announced, "plan to establish a black dominion in which South Africa will be no more than the white spot on the tail. . . . South Africa will be one small section of a great Kaffir state." Together with Tielman Roos he issued a manifesto denouncing Smuts as "the apostle of a Great Kaffir state from the Cape to the Sudan with equality between white men and black men," and calling on all white men in South Africa to rise and hound Smuts out and to stand firm and protect their wives and their homes and their families from the hordes of the black men.

The manifesto issued by Hertzog and Tielman Roos was a lie. Smuts had never been the "apostle of a Kaffir state" nor favoured "equality between white men and black men," but the mass of the voters did not know that, and the whole country, and especially the Dutch farmers, turned out in angry indignation and voted against Smuts. Hertzog was returned with a majority, but the Labour Party was wiped out. Creswell remained in the Cabinet to

represent four Labour members in the House. Tielman Roos resigned. He was ill with severe kidney-trouble. The doctors had warned him that he had probably only three years to live, and he must rest and be quiet. He went as a judge to the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein.

Once again Smuts, defeated, went out into the Wilderness of Opposition.

CHAPTER LX

SMUTS decided to go away for a while and tour in England and North America. "I wish," he said, "to investigate for myself and see what is the matter there." He was not well. He was weary of the drab routine and the ineffectiveness of being continually in opposition. A change would do him good.

His tour was a triumphant progress. He was greeted in England with affection as well as applause and respect. He stayed as the guest of the King at Sandringham, delivered the Rhodes Memorial Lectures at Oxford and was made an Honorary D.C.L. of the University, visited Cambridge, and spoke on Livingstone to large audiences in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In Canada and in the United States he was treated with equal respect. He lectured to many League of Nations societies, was received by President Hoover at the White House, and granted the singular honour of being allowed on the floor of the Senate and shaking hands with the senators as they filed past him.

He sailed for South Africa to find the Parliament discussing a Bill to restrict the immigration of Jews. He fought the Bill and was met with fanatical hatred. He was about to return to England, and his opponents asked if he intended, on this trip, to become the ruler of Palestine, and the ribald shouted after him: "Hail! King of the Jews."

His book, *Holism and Evolution*, had gained him a reputation amongst scientists as a philosopher-scientist. On arrival in England he presided at the Centenary Meeting of the British Association, held in York and in London. Five thousand of the leading scientists of the world attended. "This," he said, "is the crowning honour of my life." His opening speech was received with applause and every meeting he addressed was crowded. He was loaded with honours, scrolls, degrees, and decorations.

The English public and the English politicians listened to his advice with bated breath. He told them, not about South Africa, but how to handle the problems of Europe, how to save Germany and Civilisation. He lectured them on how to make the League of Nations a success, how to keep World Peace, how to deal with the Mandate for Palestine and the Jews, and how to settle with Ireland and India. When some politicians reminded him that he had failed to handle the Indians and the natives in South Africa, they were looked at sideways. To doubt the wisdom of Smuts, even to speak lightly about him, became almost akin to blasphemy.

He left for South Africa firmly established as an Elder Statesman of England.

In South Africa he found all changed. Everything was going wrong for Hertzog. Partly this was ill-fortune, for there had been another severe drought followed by a plague of locusts, which had ruined great numbers of farmers, and the farmers were the staunchest supporters of the Government. But it was also largely the fault of Hertzog himself. England had come off gold. Other countries had changed their financial policies and done the same. Havenga, Hertzog's Minister of Finance, kept South Africa on gold, and Hertzog backed him.

The results were disastrous. South Africa could sell nothing abroad. Her exports dropped by twelve million pounds and began to stop altogether. There was no ready cash in the country and no credit or confidence, and many bankruptcies. The Free State was itself unable to meet its debts. The mines were badly hit, and Johannesburg was almost ruined. The depression had become so acute that the dullest clerk in a counting-house could see that the country was going bankrupt, but Havenga still held steadily on. The experts round him advised him to make no change. He was sure that to come off gold would be disastrous, and he believed that to do so voluntarily was grossly dishonest. Hertzog was as ignorant of finance as Havenga and so could not help him.

Smuts saw his chance and attacked the Government for not rooting out malpractices in the offices of the State, for bribery and nepotism, and for encouraging favouritism: these had become a public scandal, he said, and the country was weary of them. He used the old criticisms which Hertzog had used against him in 1924, the stagnation of trade and agriculture, the deficit in the budget, the rising taxes, and the increased unemployment. The only solution, he said, and one he would use at once if he came back into power, was to follow England and come off the gold standard.

Hertzog refused to listen. He would not be tied to the tail of England. South Africa would stand four square and alone on her own feet. To go off gold was both foolish and dishonest, and Smuts ought to be ashamed of himself for making so dishonest a proposal.

The slump became worse until it was a crisis, and from one end of South Africa to the other the people were complaining. There was a by-election at

Germiston which had always stood by Hertzog. Smuts sent down a young candidate as a try-out. He won the seat. The word went round that Hertzog was coming to an end. Smuts warned his party to prepare for a general election.

Suddenly, down from the Free State like a whirlwind, came Tielman Roos. Three years as a judge in the Supreme Court of Appeal had bored him with the tameness of the life. He wished to be made Chief Justice, and Hertzog refused to appoint him. Excited and annoyed, he burst out with some speeches on politics and criticised Hertzog, who quickly told him that, as a judge, he must keep out of politics. Tielman Roos resigned, stripped off his robes as a judge, and, disregarding the protests of his doctor, he dashed back into politics, shouting that he had come to save South Africa, and that South Africa must at once, under his guidance, without a minute's hesitation or delay, come off gold.

Tielman Roos was a novelty. He was liked. He had a flare for personal publicity, together with bounding vitality and energy. His whirlwind methods attracted attention. Crowds came flocking to him. He tried to combine with Smuts, said that twenty-four of the members of the House who sat behind Hertzog had promised to join him, that he could throw Hertzog out of power. But Smuts, though pressed by many of his own party, refused. He was not going to be tied up with this mercurial, haphazard, unreliable fellow, especially as Tielman Roos wanted everything, to be Prime Minister, and to nominate half the Cabinet; and he could not show any proofs that he could carry out his boasts.

But Tielman Roos had frightened Hertzog, and he made Havenga, still grumbling in disagreement, come off gold. At once there came prosperity, tremendous, unprecedented prosperity. Tielman Roos was wanted no more. He was of no more value. The crowds, now busy making money, forgot him. Confused and complaining a very little, a dying man after his fierce effort, he sagged and disappeared; but he had shaken Hertzog and ripped his party from top to bottom.

Smuts saw that victory was near. Cape Town, all the coast towns with their hinterlands, and most of the Cape Province were with him. Natal and every Englishman in South Africa would vote for him, together with Johannesburg, financiers, shopkeepers, and workers alike. Prosperity had returned. They remembered that it was Hertzog and his minister of finance, with their folly and ignorance, who had all but ruined them, and that Smuts had been for months demanding that South Africa should come off gold.

Hertzog's supporters were in the Interior, the farmers of the veld of the Transvaal and of the Free State, but many of these, after the drought and the depression, were against him.

Hertzog himself was losing heart. He felt insecure. He did not know how many of his party, and even of his cabinet colleagues, were loyal to him. They were constantly criticising him. The party was full of complaints and he was not strong enough or leader enough to hold them together. He sent word by roundabout methods that if Smuts made an offer of coalition he would accept it.

CHAPTER LXI

WHEN SMUTS received the message he had to make the most difficult decision of his life. He was convinced that he could break the Government, go to the country, and come back with a big majority to be Prime Minister for at least five years. It meant for him the end of this stagnation of his life, of useless opposition. It meant power and the work that was his life-blood. He was young no more. He had curbed much of his impatience, but he could not afford to be patient now. He had only a few years ahead left to him.

For a minute he drew back and offered to resign and clear the way for others. He was wanted and respected in England. There was big work that he could do there. But his supporters, Patrick Duncan and the others, would not have it. It would be deserting, leaving South Africa in the lurch, and leaving them in the lurch. They had stood by him when times had been bad. He must in loyalty continue to lead them, especially now that there was success ahead. He had only two courses: to fight for power and to be Prime Minister, or to combine with Hertzog.

To make up his mind, he needed to be alone. He walked away out on to the mountains, to think as he walked, and came back to spend a night as well, making up his mind.

To combine with Hertzog was to combine with the man who had attacked him for years. He must forget all the insults. He did not find that difficult, but he would have to tread down his pride, for Hertzog was to remain as Prime Minister and he was to be only his deputy. He would have little power and yet much responsibility and have to bear the blame for all the errors. He would have to be for ever compromising on his principles and consenting to much with which he did not agree, and this was contrary to his whole character. He would not be able to act without constant consultation with Hertzog, and he could not help looking down on Hertzog as slow-witted, dull, and without vision. He must conceal his feelings and continually curb his impatience. In all this there was little that appealed to him, but that was what coalition with Hertzog would mean for him

personally. His whole instinct, his whole being, craved to fight, to win power, and to rule.

And if he fought? What then? He looked round. He saw all round him the beginnings of a new nation, stirring with awkward movements as a child but newly born. Out of the discords and the travail of the past, out of the errors and the tragedies, the insistence of Kruger, the ambition of Rhodes, the clear-eyed hauteur of Milner, the tragedy of Jameson's Raid, the horrors and the hatred of the war between the Dutch and the English, the English soldiers and the Dutch burghers lying dead side by side on the battlefields, the despair and the strivings of the years from defeat to self-government to Union; out of the Rebellion, the World War, and the strife with Labour, he saw that a nation had been born, a nation of Dutchmen and Englishmen who were realising vaguely that this South Africa was theirs, and that though they might often disagree, yet they were brothers, that they were the South African Nation.

If he fought now, he would renew and perpetuate the rivalry between the Dutch and the English, and perhaps stifle this young nation at its birth.

Rhodes, Hofmeyr, Jameson, Merriman, Kruger, Milner, Kitchener, de Villiers, Steyn, Campbell-Bannerman, de Wet, de la Rey, and many more. They had all taken a part and they were all gone. Only Hertzog and he remained.

He looked down the years behind him and saw failure and achievement, elation and despair, like sunshine and shadow in a wood, mixed together in a broken pattern, and through that broken pattern came forming something: came forming the figure of an ideal, of his Ideal. Out of smaller units was being formed a finer Unity: out of men and races and provinces, a Nation.

And Botha? What would he have decided? Botha had loved South Africa. He loved South Africa as intensely, as desperately, as passionately, as Botha had loved her.

"What is best for South Africa?" Botha would have asked. The answer to that question should be his decision. If he combined with Hertzog, South Africa would have peace. She would suffer from the normal pains of growing and from the many ailments of a child, but she would have the chance to grow up lusty and strong into a nation.

He made his decision. He renounced his pride, his arrogant contempt for the little men with whom he must work, his personal interests, his desire and

his whole instinct to fight and win power and to rule; and he held out the hand of friendship to Hertzog, who grasped it.

At a general election in the spring of 1933 they swept the country. No opposition worth the name remained. There were no Dutch and no English parties. They were united. South Africa might develop in peace.

And by that Act of Renunciation, Jan Christiaan Smuts broke faith with his interests and his instincts and kept faith with his Ideal.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

YEAR	DATE	ITEM
1486	——	Diaz, the Portuguese, discovers the Cape.
1497	July 8th ..	Vasco da Gama sets out. Found and named Natal.
1510	——	Dom Francisco d'Almeida, Governor-General of Portuguese India, landed at the Cape. His party wiped out by the Hottentots.
		The Portuguese have little further interest in South Africa, and evacuate.
1580	——	Drake rounded the Cape.
1591	——	English ships visit Table Bay for the first time.
1600	——	English East India Company formed.
1602	——	Dutch East India Company formed.
1652	——	Johan van Riebeck sent by the Dutch Government as first Governor-General. Cape the half-way house to India, but no more.
1658	——	First slaves imported from the Guinea Coast.
1666	——	Dutch build Castle of Good Hope.
1679	——	Stellenbosch founded.
1688	——	Huguenot settlers arrive and go to Stellenbosch. Are absorbed by the Dutch.
1792	——	Dutch East India Company bankrupt.
1795	——	English landed at the Cape.
1796	——	English annex the Cape.
1803	——	English hand the Cape back to the Dutch: Batavian Republic under Treaty of Amiens.
1806	——	English, under General Baird, attack and capture the Cape.

1815	——	*English buy Cape Colony from the Dutch for six million pounds.*
1820	——	Many Englishmen, ruined by Napoleonic Wars, arrive and settle.
1828	——	Dutch settle round Orange River.
1834-1836	——	Great Trek of Boers to north, to get away from English control.
1834	——	Slavery abolished.
1838	——	Boers, led by Pretorius, fight Zulus. End of Dingaan.
		English garrison sent to Port Natal. All slaves liberated.
1839	——	Natal declared a white possession.
1841	——	Boers of Natal declare themselves independent of the English.
1842	May	British occupy Port Natal.
1848	——	Boers trek north again to get free of the English.
		English annex country between the Orange River and the Vaal.
1852	January ..	Transvaal independent.
1853	——	Cape Colony given a Parliament.
1854	——	English hand Orange River back to Dutch.
		Crimean War.
1857	——	Boers fighting among themselves.
		Indian Mutiny.
1860	——	Indian coolies to Natal for the sugar fields.
1862	——	Louis Botha born.
1865	June	Basuto War
1867	April.. ..	First diamond found at Hopetown, Orange River.
1868	——	Basutoland annexed by the English.
		Suez Canal opened.
1870	——	*Smuts born.*
1871	——	Kimberley diamonds discovered.

		Cape takes over Basutoland.
		British annex Griqualand West.
1872	——	Cape Colony given complete self-government.
1880	April	Gladstone takes office.
1881	——	First Anglo-Boer War. Battle of Majuba.
1884	——	Fred. Strubens finds gold in Johannesburg.
		Bismarck declares South West Africa a German protectorate.
1886	——	*Witwatersrand goldfields proclaimed.*
		Johannesburg gold rush.
1887	——	English annex Zululand.
1888	——	Kruger again elected President.
1889	——	Transvaal and Free State make defensive alliance.
		Rhodes joins hands with Hofmeyr.
		Delagoa Bay Railway reaches Transvaal.
	——	Slump in goldfields.
		Rhodes and Alfred Beit buy Kimberley Diamond Mines.
		De Beers founded.
		Rivalry between Dutch and English for rights in the Rand. Gold between them.
1891	——	*Smuts to Cambridge.*
1892	——	Railway reaches the Rand.
1895	——	*Smuts working with Hofmeyr, the friend of Cecil Rhodes. Practising in Cape Town.*
1895	June	Chamberlain becomes Colonial Secretary.
		Delagoa Railway from Pretoria reaches sea.
	December 29th	*Jameson Raid.*
1896	——	Steyn elected President of the Free State.
1897	——	*Arrival of Sir Alfred Milner as High Commissioner.*
		Steyn and Kruger make agreement to stand together.

1898	——	*Kruger's Fourth Presidency.*
		Kruger dismisses Chief Justice Kotzé.
		Schreiner Prime Minister of The Colony.
		Smuts as State Attorney of the Transvaal Republic.
1899	March 24th ..	Uitlanders' Petition.
	May 30th ..	*Bloemfontein Conference.*
	August 12th .	Smuts-Greene negotiations.
	October 11th	*Boer War.*
1900	——	*Fall of Pretoria.*
	November 29th	*Kitchener takes over from Roberts* and starts to clear up systematically.
		Smuts and de la Rey to Western Transvaal.
1901	February 28th	Middleburg peace discussions.
1902	April 4th ..	*Smuts besieges Ookiep.*
	May 15th ..	*Conference at Vereeniging.*
	May 19th-28th	Discussion with Kitchener and Milner.
	May 28th ..	Delegation returns to National Convention.
	May 31st ..	*Peace signed at Pretoria.*
1903	January ..	Boer leaders meet Chamberlain.
		Smuts and Botha combine.
		Milner invites Botha, Smuts, and de la Rey to join Advisory Administration: they refuse.
1904	January ..	Botha forms *Het Volk Party*.
	June 22nd ..	First cargo of Chinese labourers arrives.
	July 14th ..	Kruger dies on the Lake of Geneva.
		Jameson Prime Minister in Cape Colony.
		Steyn returns to South Africa.
1905	May	Selborne replaces Milner as High Commissioner.
	December ..	*Smuts visits England.*
		Balfour's Conservative Government falls, and Liberals come in with *Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister*.

1906	December 6th	*Self-government given to the Transvaal.*
	December 22nd	Smuts stands as Het Volk candidate for Winterboom.
1907	February ..	*Botha Prime Minister of Transvaal.*
		Fischer Prime Minister of Orange River Colony.
		Lorenço Marques becomes capital of Portuguese East Africa.
	May 22nd ..	Miners' strike.
	June 30th ..	Self-government given to Orange Free State.
		Botha attends Imperial Conference in England.
1908	October 12th	*National Convention at Durban.*
1909	May 31st ..	*Act of Union.*
1910	——	Last Chinese labourer leaves South Africa.
		Election.
		Smuts Member for Pretoria West.
1911	——	Botha attends Imperial Conference in England.
	November ..	*South African Party formed at Bloemfontein.*
1912	June 28th ..	Smuts Minister of Finance.
1912	December ..	Botha re-forms his ministry without Hertzog.
1913	——	Bad year. World troubles.
	May	*Rand strike.*
	July	Botha's Government falls.
1914	January ..	*General strike. Deportations.*
	August 4th ..	*War declared against Germany.*
		Rebellion in Western Transvaal.
	September 15th	First troops under Mackenzie land at Luderitzbucht, German South West.
	September 16th	*De la Rey shot.*
1915	Mid-April ..	Smuts joins Botha in German South West.
	May	Smuts to Aus, to co-ordinate Southern columns.

	May 5th ..	Botha to Karibib.
	July 9th ..	*Germans under von Francke surrender to Botha.*
		General Election.
	September 23rd	Attempt to kill Smuts at Newlands meeting.
1916	February 19th	*Smuts lands at Mombasa, for German East Campaign.*
	March ..	Smuts through Taveta gap.
1917	January 3rd..	Across Rufiji River. Hands over to Hoskins.
	January 20th	*Smuts leaves German East* for Cape Town.
	January ..	*Imperial War Cabinet formed; Smuts a member.*
	May ..	Smuts reorganises Air Force and Air Defence.
1918	January ..	Smuts to the Western Front to report.
	February ..	Smuts to see Allenby in Middle East.
	March 21st ..	Big German offensive.
	April 14th ..	Foch in supreme command.
	July 15th ..	Germans’ last offensive.
	July 18th ..	Allies’ counter-attack.
	September ..	Influenza plague.
	October 1st ..	Allenby takes Damascus.
	October 31st	Turks sign Armistice.
	December 16th	Smuts resigns from War Cabinet.
		Botha reaches England.
1919	January 11th	*Botha and Smuts to Paris for Peace Conference.*
	April 4th ..	Smuts to Budapest to see Bela Kun.
	June 28th ..	*Versailles Treaty signed.*
	June 29th ..	*Smuts publishes protest.*
	July 19th ..	*Smuts returns to South Africa.*
	August 26th ..	*Botha dies.*
1920	——	Election, Smuts backed by Labour and Unionists.

1921	May 26th ..	Smuts Attends Imperial Conference in England.
1922	——	*Johannesburg Communist rising.*
1923	September ..	Imperial Conference.
1924	April	*Election. Smuts defeated.*
1925	——	*Publishes "Holism and Evolution."*
1926	——	Hertzog attends Imperial Conference.
		Definition of Imperial Status.
1927	——	*Flag Debate.*
1929	——	Smuts touring in England, Canada, and America.
1932	——	South Africa goes off the gold standard.
1933	——	*Smuts and Hertzog combine.*
		Coalition Government.

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