

MEINJES KOP.

On some first ideas for the Union Buildings which I had sketched out, I showed a low dome on the ridge of Meinjes Kop over a hundred feet above them, and on their central axis between the two domed-towers. Some object I felt was wanted there to perfect the design of the whole as seen between the towers from below and across the valley.

Such a low dome might, in the designer's fancy, have been a Heroon or National Memorial, or a Temple of Peace dedicated to the ultimate consolidation and happy union of the two races of South Africa. Some ardent Transvaalers liked to think of it as a Parliament House if ever, as they then hoped, the Parliamentary Capital were removed from Cape Town where it was ordained as a compromise under the Act of Union. From the point on the ridge where this dome might have been, the idea was conceived of a Processional Way or Via Sacra up the narrow saddle-back of the ridge to the apex of the kopje where it sloped on three sides steeply down to the old City ^{of Pretorius} lying in the valley below. On this apex a little circular temple was planned.

The fancy of the Via Sacra and a little Temple of Peace crowning it was revived by General Smuts as a National War Memorial to consecrate the sacrifice of the Great War in which the two once rival races fought side by side. He asked me to make detail designs of it with steps and platforms, simple and massive for great sculpture, leading up to a small eight-columned temple.

John Tweed, the sculptor chosen as a young man by Cecil Rhodes to make the ^{Landing of} Van Riebeeck relief on the front of Groote Schuur and later those on the Matoppo Memorial, was commissioned to make studies and for the purpose it was arranged that he should go out to General Haldane's Army

Headquarters at the front in the last year of the War. There were to be groups of mounted Burghers, Gunners and Airmen upon the pedestals flanking the steps, and friezes of war scenes and types of those who fought, like those he made so well on the Matoppo Memorial. They would have recalled the friezes on the podium of the Temple of Pergamos. These subjects were suggested to Tweed for study. His uncompromising independence, which carried too far had caused his rift with Rhodes, made difficulties which all General Smuts' reasonable-ness could not easily overcome. But at a long meeting at his Chelsea studio between the three of us, he consented to the ideas and to collaborate in the general character of the suggested architectural and sculptural design. Shortly afterwards, however, he wrote to say that he withdrew his consent. In spite of this refusal Smuts sent him to the Army Headquarters at the front as he had arranged. But in six months he produced nothing, neither sketches nor designs, except a small scale slight model resembling the relief on Trajan's Column at Rome, which was totally unsuitable for our site on the kopje top. This famous column was in a court surrounded by storied arcades, from the different levels of which the reliefs as they rose spirally on the column could be seen. It reminded me of Rhodes' description of the model, like the Tower of Pisa as he said, made by Alfred Gilbert as his idea for the Matoppo Memorial, which Rhodes thought so unsuited to the vast scale of the far-stretching granite mountains. Tweed was chosen by Rhodes in place of Gilbert as the sculptor of the Memorial. Tweed seemed to repeat the great sculptor's misconception in his art of the scale of an African background. Tweed never

developed his talent for creative composition in sculpture since the early promise of his Landing of Van Riebeeck at Groote Schuur and his groups on the Memorial on the Matoppos. He was content with his well-deserved reputation for portrait sculpture; and like his friend and master, Rodin, rejected the dependence and collaboration necessary when sculpture in its noblest manifestation is allied to architecture.

Smuts was very disappointed as he had expected much from this direct sculptural expression of the heroism of war. But my designs without a sculptor's help remained. The details were beautifully drawn by Gordon Leith, a South African and a valued assistant of mine; himself a good soldier and one of the best of the junior architects employed in the service of the War Graves Commission. Perspectives were made and sent out to General Botha in South Africa. They were sunk, alas! in the torpedoed Calway Castle. Copies had been kept, however, and were sent out to him. But Smuts on his return to South Africa, disheartened by Botha's death and by political hostility amongst his own people, the jealous reaction to his greatness, - like that to President Wilson in America - , had to abandon this noble conception of a South African War Memorial. Sadly he saw his "solemn temples dissolve into thin air like the baseless fabric of a vision". It might have been one of the greatest of War Memorials; the Via Sacra on the kopje top, between the heroic sculpture leading to the circular temple enshrining a statue of Peace overlooking the hills and valleys round the Capital, and on all sides the receding veld and kopjes vanishing in the blue distance. Smuts, like Rhodes, had a reverence for hill-tops and mountains. The slope of Table

Mountain was Rhodes' "church"; on its summit Smuts spoke his famous "sermon" at the unveiling of the memorial to the mountaineers who fell in the War.

The vision of Meinjes Kop was abandoned and its place taken by the South African War Memorial at Delville Wood, - to overcome perhaps the rivalry of Provinces in the Union, - so eloquently promoted and brought to its successful issue by Sir Percy FitzPatrick.

MEMORANDUM by HERBERT BAKER.