RHODES IN '90]

men. But I think my nickname will serve him for some time yet. He is still the one common denominator to all the fractions—the Colonial Imperialist, the Federal Home Ruler, the English Afrikander, the man who can so carry the Union Jack that Dutch Boer will go forward under its folds shoulder to shoulder with Cape Colonist, with Natalian, with Englishman. He alone at the Cape seems able to strike out of his native energy heat enough to bring to the fusing-point those divergent elements—divergent in a low temperature—"Empire and Self-government."

"Cecil John Rhodes, the founder and moving spirit of the British South Africa Company, the amalgamator and moving spirit of the De Beers Diamond Mining Company, and the Prime Minister of Cape Colony, is only thirty-eight. A year ago, when Sir Gordon Sprigg resigned office, and Mr. Hofmeyr declined it, and Mr. Rhodes formed a Ministry in twenty-four hours, he had to play for a time yet another part. Forced to add the cares of a grown colony to those of an empire in the making, Mr. Rhodes at first stickled to be "Prime Minister without portfolio." But, an hour before the new Government met Parliament, the Speaker (by an error since corrected) ruled the arrangement unconstitutional; and Mr. Rhodes found himself pitchforked into the Commissionership of Crown Lands and Works. It boasts as much detail as most of the Cape Departments; but Mr. Rhodes, thus cornered, buckled to his Lands and Works with a will, and never flagged for the rest of the session.

"But a mere pluralist is not "Necessary" as such. Even if Mr. Rhodes' offices were more multiplied and more responsible than all that I have named, they would hardly do more than hint, on the face of them, how much this gentleman of large designs would be missed. The faithful reader who has followed through its intricacies the story of the English in Ophir will understand how completely the whole gigantic enterprise has pivoted on Mr. Rhodes. A corporation, as Professor Seeley has said of the old John Company, can neither catch a fever nor be killed in battle. But the fortunes of a corporation can largely be bound up with the life of a man who, though he stands as big as Saul and is as ruddy as David, was hardly expected some thirteen years ago to outlive the voyage to the Cape. Certainly you would not guess it now; and Mr. Rhodes tells a humorous story of the discomfiture of a certain worthy doctor who had pronounced doom on him in

RHODES IN '90]

those youthful days. "*You* the same Rhodes, sir? Impossible! According to my books you have been a corpse these ten years. Here is the entry . . . tuberculosis . . . recovery impossible." "Impossible" is a word wanting in Mr. Rhodes' dictionary.

"Cecil Rhodes was only fifteen—a delicate and rather dull lad, "privately educated"—when he sailed for the Cape under such gloomy auspices. His father, for twenty years rector of Bishop Stortford, had a family of six boys. Four of them turned soldiers, and one of them, now with Lord Harris in Bombay, has been through the Soudan. Probably Cecil was the last of the brothers that any one would have picked out for the great career. He began as a planter in Natal, but abandoned cotton for diamonds in the early seventies. At Kimberley he put a few thousands (as many as he could get) into old De Beers shares, and claims, and lands. When the mines fell on evil days he saw that he could unite them into a Golconda; did so, and made himself a millionaire.

"That is an old story, told in an earlier chapter. The curious thing is that even while he was in the first flush of excitement over mining and money-making, the young man determined to send himself to college. Five years he spent hovering between the iron shanties of Kimberley and the grey towers of Oriel. He discovered a new use for the Long Vacation. At Oxford the young colonist and his friend Maguire were the most popular men in a jovial hunting set. Rhodes "kept the drag," but got his pass, and found time withal to go north and study pumping machinery. To-day his *entourage* finds in him that strange hybrid —an Afrikander and a Diamond King under the old-world spell of a university in the old country. I suspect Oriel and Oxford enter largely into his patriotism; and a new Oriel and a new Oxford, nestling under the shadow of Table Mountain, are more than mere accessories in his dream of a United South Africa. At twenty-eight the member for the Diamond constituency was what we should call Chancellor of the Exchequer in the brief Scanlen Ministry. The office served his purposes and ours better than appeared at the time. It saved him from being stabbed along with Gordon at Khartoum. Gordon had met Rhodes at the Cape at the time of the Basuto trouble. There was a robust faith in "God's Englishmen," if nothing else, common to the two

men; and Gordon took a liking for the young colonist—though he did once flame out at him Gordonesquely: "You are one of those men who will never approve of anything not organized by yourself." From this liking sprang the invitation to come and join Gordon on his mission to Khartoum, which the Treasurer-Generalship happily debarred. From this point, for the last five or six years, Mr. Rhodes has divided with Mr. Hofmeyr the underlying forces of Cape politics. He has done more than any other man for the racial, if not yet for the political, union of South Africa. We have seen him in these pages peace-making in Bechuanaland (in 1884–1885), or at Blignaut's Pont (last year), where he helped the High Commissioner to strike the Swaziland Convention with President Kruger. He was the first to grasp and to popularize what I have called, for want of a better word, the New Afrikanderism—the conception of Imperial progress made through and for the colony, of Colonial progress made through and for the Dutch, and not merely for the mother country in the one field, and the mother country's scions in the other. All that he has done has been done in touch with the Bond and the Paarl, hand in glove with the "Parnell of the Dutch." Some say Rhodes is using Hofmeyr—some say Hofmeyr is using Rhodes. In either case the result is that we see a Dutch majority in Cape Colony following an English Premier while he takes away the north from their Dutch cousins of the Transvaal Republic, tells these cousins, "As rivals you are stopped, but we want you as helpers," and calls on all South Africa to join in developing the new empire under the British flag.

"The Dutch know that if Imperialism meant, as it once did mean in South Africa and elsewhere, the Divine right of Downing Street, the subordination of the sentiments and interests of an embryo nation in the New World to the convenience of a clique of official failures and place-hunters in the Old, in that moment Rhodes the Imperialist would yield to Rhodes the Republican, and the Presidency of the independent United States of South Africa would be the goal of his ambition. Incapable by temperament of the narrow provincialism which regards the position of a Colonial Switzerland under a guarantee of the Powers as a grander prospect than enfranchisement of the Empire, Mr. Rhodes would yet accept that prospect unhesitatingly as the alternative to complete Home Rule. Unity, with complete local self-government of

RHODES IN '90]

the units—it is hard to say which of the two conditions appeals more to Mr. Rhodes where both are attained. It is not hard, if it were a case of one without the other, to say which Mr. Rhodes would choose.

"The princely gift to the Irish Nationalist exchequer, a few years ago, while it witnessed the intensity of this feeling, defined it precisely. The declaration by Mr. Parnell which Mr. Rhodes thought worth £10,000 was an acceptance by the Home Rule dictator of the Colonial, or so called federal, reading of Home Rule. As long as Mr. Parnell was Mr. Parnell, and held by that, Mr. Rhodes would have held by him—the English passion for the finer personal ethics in a politician being a northern exotic which languishes at the Cape. But an Ireland under Separatist Home Rule Mr. Rhodes would fight against as hard as the most fanatical Unionist in the three kingdoms. "Your Bill, sir," he insisted to Mr. Gladstone in one of his stout, outspoken talks, "your Bill of 1886 would have created a taxed Republic. If I were an Irishman, and it had passed, I would have started a crusade for Representation or Separation the very next day!"

"Mr. Rhodes is an opportunist, yes: in the same sense as Mr. Gladstone, or Sir Henry Parkes, or the late Sir John Macdonald. The morality of the thing all hangs on the quality and steadfastness of the central idea. Here is a man who spends his time in persuading a great many other men that they all really want the same thing as each other and as himself—a man who one day is in close conference with Unionist aristocrats in a directors' boardroom, the next with Home Rule Radicals in the lobby, to-day lunching with a journalist at an hotel, to-morrow dining with Her Majesty at Windsor Castle; equally at home in a parley at the Foreign Office and at a Dutch dinner in the Paarl. To political purists and doctrinaires at one pole, to political cynics and men of the world at the other, such a man is bound to seem something of a humbug. All things to all men can hardly be one thing to himself. The taste for managing men is as dangerous as dram-drinking. I can easily believe what Cape gossip says, that Mr. Rhodes has been hard put to it sometimes to cheat that modern understudy of the political conscience—the shorthand reporter. You may accept the most flattering version of the famous ten years' work of Mr. Parnell (also in his day a Necessary Man) without affecting to acquit him of having somewhere fibbed to somebody. But the

extreme cynical view of Mr. Rhodes, like the too vaulting ambition and cupidity which it would ascribe to him, o'erleaps itself altogether. I once listened patiently to a detailed dissection of Mr. Rhodes by one who had "seen through" him, in which the only doubt was whether the poor man's politics are a stalking-horse for his finance or his finance for his politics; the one thing past doubt being the dark, and deep, and devilish nature of both. Not even genius was left—only the City swindler's vulgar art of "squaring the circle." Patiently I listened, until in due course the all-sufficient explanation was applied to Mr. Parnell's famous cheque. Then I breathed again. The touchstone of one supreme anachronism and absurdity sufficed for all the rest. A "man of the world" may believe that Mr. Rhodes, who at least is not a fool, sunk £10,000 in buying a parliamentary support which at any time would be valueless for an object which at that time he demonstrably meant to obtain by extra-parliamentary means. Not so anybody who knows anything about politics here and at the Cape.

"The fact is that Mr. Rhodes, like the rest of us, is a bundle of inconsistencies, at once headstrong and politic, keen and lazy, cynical and enthusiastic. With all his finance and his finesse, he can be bluff almost to brutality. Up to a certain point he is patience itself; no delay fatigues him, no objection proves too great for his accommodating skill. "Now, sir," says he, "you want this; I want that; will not so-and-so serve the turn of both of us?" But once pass that point, and you might as well try to move the rock of Cashel. About the time of the Kimberley amalgamation he came to Europe to raise a large sum of money, and wasted his time in the ante-chamber of a very high and mighty financier. At last the despot of the *bourses* said that he would consider the matter, and give Mr. Rhodes an answer in a few days. Now the matter had been well considered already, and this was *blague*. "Sir," said young Mr. Rhodes quietly and simply, "I will call again in half an hour. If you are not ready with your answer then, I shall go elsewhere." Mr. Rhodes had not to go elsewhere. First impressions, again, from the heavy build and step, the sauntering manner, and something dreamy in the prominent grey eyes, notwithstanding the masterful chin to the contrary, would put Mr. Rhodes down as a lazy man. A different tale is told, not merely by the work he has done, but by his way

RHODES IN '90]

of doing it. Friends have queer reminiscences of the amalgamation years—the years of infinite plotting and plodding which built up "De Beers' Consolidated." "We would be riding out together, chatting indifferently," said one, "when suddenly Rhodes would wake up, as it were, and exclaim, pointing with his whip, 'We must have that property.' The rest of the ride would be a brown study. A week later I would hear that the property was bought." "In the middle of the night," said another and more intimate friend, "Rhodes would jump out of bed, come round to me, and wake me up. He would say, 'I've just hit on an idea,' and then he would unfold the solution of some knotty problem that had been worrying us for weeks." "Rhodes does half his business in the street," a third observer told me. "He pulls out his cheque-book, and settles a big transaction while other people would be passing the time of day." I have heard Mr. Rhodes defined as a cynic whose one formula for success was "Find the man's price." If you read price in a large enough sense, I am not disposed to dispute that, nor to deny that even when the price is of the most sordid quality, Mr. Rhodes will often use the man for ends worthy a better instrument. But if he is a cynic, he is also an enthusiast, and he presses the former's quality into the latter's service. Money, either to hoard or to spend, he does not care for. Power is his idol: creative power, efficient energy, control over men and things in the mass. In the British Empire he recognises the most perfect and far-reaching machine for this purpose which the world has yet seen, and the Empire, accordingly, is his religion. "Sentiment," he once said to me, when I objected that some idea or other, on which he laid stress, was "mere sentiment," "sentiment rules half the world." We have seen what is the sentiment which rules Mr. Rhodes. "The brother who eats a whole country for his dinner," as he was described at Lobengula's kraal, is a vivid embodiment of the earth-hunger which has set in among the nations, and which in Mr. Rhodes' countrymen at least is more than a mere instinct for idle land-grabbing. "The time is coming," says Mr. Rhodes again, "when every square mile of the earth's surface will be valuable;" much more, then, every territory where men of the dominant white race can thrive, and work, and dig power out of the earth. For some millionaires it is enough to run a yacht. Mr. Rhodes' hobby is running an Empire. He has that inclusiveness of mind, that passion for the

RHODES IN '90]

grand scale, for generalizing and combining in the gross, which goes to make Newtons, and Napoleons, and Darwins, and Bismarcks—each in his own field of thought or action. He is always thinking of the next move but one; he is the general who carries the whole line of battle in his head. When he was in England, nominally absorbed in the "Manica Question," he was really as full of Canada as of the Cape. No doubt the tariff crisis in the American Continent, taken in its Imperial bearing, was a much bigger matter than a wrangle with a tottering Power on the East Coast of Africa. But Mr. Rhodes, at least, might have been excused for not seeing that. The same sense of true perspective serves him as to the relation of names and things. So long as he governs, who will may reign. The opposition of the Pungwe short cut and the Kimberley Railway opposes the Managing Director of the Chartered Company to the Premier of the Cape; the opposition of the new Wesselton Mine and the De Beers monopoly opposes the Premier of the Cape to the Managing Director of De Beers. To-day all these persons are one—Mr. Cecil John Rhodes. Within the year that may become impossible; then Mr. Rhodes, without a moment's doubt, will resign the Premiership.

"The personal charm which Mr. Rhodes seems able to exercise over men of the most various temperaments has nothing to do with that "sugar-doodling" which somebody defined as the secret of the same knack in Laurence Oliphant. He is brusquely frank. With Mr. Gladstone we have seen him. Lord Salisbury bears almost plaintive witness to his "considerable force of character." Sir William Harcourt he provoked to that amusing parody of his views on the Native Question and Imperial Zollverein: "Reasonable man, Mr. Rhodes—so easily satisfied! All he asks us is to give up free trade and restore slavery."[1] He has had many a brush with those "Little England" Liberals who see the town-pump of Ballymahooly so out of focus that it dwarfs nations and continents. "You make it very hard for us colonists to be Liberals," is a phrase of his. But *brusquerie* and *bonhomie* go together. A man in the mines at Kimberley told me a pleasant tale of a *rencontre* of his, when new to Kimberley, with the Diamond King incognito. In talk with an unknown visitor, who seemed

[1] I owe this story to the *Review of Reviews*.

RHODES IN '90]

anxious to learn, my man held forth with the dogmatism of the practical worker on some point or other in which Rhodes was at fault—"this Rhodes, who thinks he knows all about it, I suppose." The inquisitive visitor turned out to be "this Rhodes" himself—but both parties profited by the meeting. In conversation Mr. Rhodes is no show talker. But he has a zest, a grip, a strong sense, a straightforward heartiness, which are simply irresistible. You feel that he has read (for a business man) much, thought for himself, and knows just what he means. As a public speaker he is much the same. His manner is awkward, his tone colloquial. He is no more an orator than Lord Hartington, but he has Mr. Healy's knack of shoving the gist of the matter into some blunt phrase. His tastes are simple to a fault. He cares not a pin what he eats and drinks, so there be enough of it, or wherewithal he shall be clothed, so there be not too much of it. The Premier's is the dowdiest hat in the House of Assembly. He lives in chambers and at the club. His unconventionality shocks the sticklers. They were opening an extension of the Cape Town suburban railway the other day—an extension at the edge of one of those tempting blue bights which fret the Cape peninsula. Suddenly the central figure of the ceremonies was missed—and descried a short way off, stalking out of the water to rejoin his clothes. Lastly, Mr. Rhodes is still an unappropriated match, and not, so friends declare, a "marrying man"; which is a pity, for the man would be none the worse for a few more feminine traits about him.

"Such, as well as I can sketch him, is the Colonial statesman who has lately burst upon the public consciousness as in some vague sense "the coming man"; who a few months ago carried London before him; whose "amalgamating" quality sufficed to bring together round the same table men in society and politics who had not met before for years; whose praises as an Imperialist were sung in chorus by wiseacres who used to shake heads at him as an Afrikander. They have realized at last that he is the one in spite of the other. Perhaps some day they will realize that he is the one *because* of the other, and both for the same reasons.

"One day, some six years ago, Mr. Rhodes, then busy with the amalgamation of the Diamond Mines, was looking at a map of Africa hung in the office of a Kimberley merchant. After gazing intently at it for some time, he placed his hand over a great slice of Southern and Central Africa, right across the continent; and,

RHODES IN '90]

turning to a friend at his side, "There," said Mr. Rhodes, "all that British! That is my dream." "I give you ten years," returned the friend—who told me the story himself on the very scene of the incident. More than half the allotted term has passed, and more than half Mr. Rhodes' dream is already accomplished. It is of good omen for the rest.

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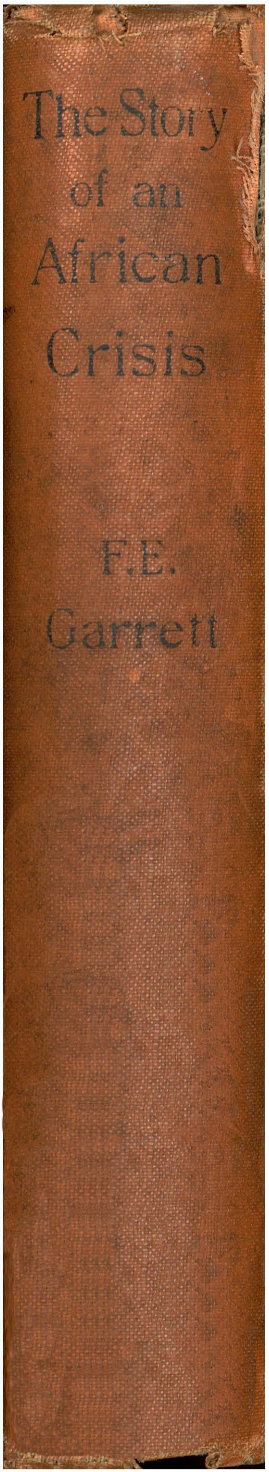
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