

# The Late Empire Builder

Cecil Rhodes, empire builder and un-crowned king, whom "Oom Paul" Kruger hated as a "murderer" and the rest of the world regarded with fascinated wonder, is dead. His death is inopportune. It gives a suggestion of tragic fatality to his superbly picturesque career that the man responsible for the struggle between British and Boers should drop out of the game while his countrymen are still "paying the price that staggers humanity," while Kruger, his arch-enemy, is still alive, and while the conquest and amalgamation of South Africa are still only a possibility.

Nevertheless Rhodes has won fame enough to survive him for centuries. Not yet fifty years old, he had achieved what few men have the imagination even to dream of. Of limited nominal authority, he had the actual power of an emperor. A "self-made" monarch, he had for years consulted with actual sovereigns on terms of admitted equality.

With no early advantages of wealth, influence or prestige, yet with a priceless capital of strength, imagination, daring and none to delicate scruples, this man became a millionaire countless times over, a dreamer of colossal dreams and an achiever of colossal enterprises, an unforgettable example of success because he had perhaps been the one man who most perfectly exemplified the spirit of his age.

### WHAT RHODES ACCOMPLISHED.

Anybody with his eyes open and the map of Africa at hand can see what Cecil Rhodes has done. Not many people really know what Cecil Rhodes was. Plenty of men have told their impressions of him, but they seldom tally. "Greater than Napoleon," some have called him. "A dull, fat man who said commonplace things," said some one who met him at a dinner in London. "An adventurer on a large scale," was another verdict.

Adventurer or patriot, however, he has had to be reckoned with more steadily than any other man of his generation. His place in history is not likely to be an insignificant one. And even now certain things are definitely known of him which can be summed up with reasonable accuracy.

Physically Rhodes was, as they are fond of calling him, a "Colossus." More than six feet tall, broad and massive, he gave an impression of enormous latent strength combined with indolence. You could easily imagine him an easy-going merchant, devoted to his dinner and his after-dinner naps. But of course this is misleading. Nobody was ever less indolent than Cecil Rhodes.

His head was of appropriate size—appropriate to his intelligence—though set on a rather heavy neck. His forehead was high and broad and his grey hair tumbled over it in a fashion perfectly illustrative of the man's scorn for conventionality. His face was rather red, his nose large, his eyes blue-very blue—and his mouth non-committal.

### HIS GREAT AMBITION.

One thing his appearance correctly indicated—he had no personal vanity nor love of personal luxuries. Right or wrong in his ambitions, he was never petty. His schemes were always stupendous and rather impersonal as well. The personal triumphs that are associated with wealth and power he had no taste for.

To color the map of Africa red—that is to say—to make it British, to wrest millions here and millions there and to buy and sell continents with the dazzling total; to control the destinies of a dozen races—these have been the ambitions of this very modern Caesar, this Briton who was more American than the Americans.

Rhodes began to be an individual very early in life. Stolidly intolerant of authority, he amazed his mother and his nurse by doing exactly as he pleased and submitting as a matter of course to whatever penalty might follow. After awhile they gave up questioning the young autocrat. At the age when the ordinary child is weaving straws in the kindergarten, Rhodes was in his little way a sovereign.

Later on the domestic imperialist grew sickly. And just as he had entered Oxford college, it was decided that he was too ill to remain in England any longer, and was accordingly shipped to join an elder brother, Herbert, in Natal. The South African climate cured the boy's lung trouble, and at the same time his career began to shape itself. He had been intended for the church and was indeed already a student of divinity. But a look at his brother Herbert's cotton fields decided him. He would be a cotton planter.

### HIS DREAM OF MILLIONS.

One of the most remarkable things about Cecil Rhodes was that he had

always known exactly what he wanted to do. And though he was greatly taken with the idea of becoming a cotton merchant, he knew at the same time that he wanted to finish his course at Oxford. So for a few years he alternated between the two, recuperating from his application to his books with long vacations devoted to the exciting pursuits that had already taken such hold on his imagination, for the cotton trade had already been supplemented with a dash at diamond digging. After a while he gave up cotton altogether. The wonders of the Kimberly mines were dawning. Rhodes began to dream of millions.

A great many stories are told of the supplementary schemes adopted by the young miner to insure success. But, however, he succeeded in preventing the natives from stealing the precious stones, and whether or not, as is claimed, he profited by selling them a villainous quality of liquor, he did become swiftly and stupendously rich.

One day some one found him pouring a mass of glittering diamonds from one pail into another and reveling in their possession. But he shortly passed that stage. It is a great many years since the Napoleon of South Africa has been able to take satisfaction in anything as tangible and concrete as a pail of diamonds.

### HIS IMPERIAL SCHEMES.

If Cecil Rhodes had been an ordinary man he would have been content with this marvellous success as a diamond miner. As it was, he began to develop vast imperial schemes of consolidation. And his genius was so well adapted to his inclination that he succeeded in consolidating all the diamond diggings of the whole country into one gigantic concern, the greatest mining company in the world.

Possibly this remarkable young man had dreamed of political eminence from the beginning. Perhaps the sense of power that millions give first inspired him with this ambition. At all events it was when engaged in the Kimberly-DeBeers consolidation enterprise that Rhodes first revealed his political ambition. In 1885 he said one day, laying his hand upon a map of Africa so as to cover the entire portion from the Cape to the Zambesi, "All this must belong to England. That is my dream."

Henceforth diamonds were the means, not the end. Fast on his way to becoming one of the few richest men in the world, Rhodes was neither miser nor spendthrift, nor spendthrift, nor indeed pre-eminently a financier. Millions brought power. And Rhodes began to see that power was his rightful inheritance.

With that large prophetic point of view which no small man ever attains, Cecil Rhodes saw that South Africa must some day take its place among the nations of the world. But this could be achieved only by welding together the political and racial fragments of which it was composed.

### HAD NO WOMAN FRIEND.

A federation of South African states, modelled on the United States of America, seemed to him, therefore, the desirable political future of the country. But it was a future he had no intention of leaving to chance. This glorious federation must be England's—every inch of this incoherent, unrelated mass of semi-civilization must be British. To make it such had been Cecil Rhodes's life work. That he is dead with it unfinished, of course, does not affect the real sublimity of the undertaking.

Since then Cecil Rhodes had been member of parliament, premier of Cape Colony, treasurer-general of the Cape and so on. But no office that he could hold would indicate the real extent of his power—the power that after all has not been sufficient to make Africa British "from the Cape to the Congo."

Cecil Rhodes never had confidants. His life was passed in first conceiving projects, then developing them. He believed that this sort of thing may be better done alone. It is possible for this reason that he always shunned women. He never married and was never known to have had any woman for a friend. They were unsafe, he believed, as repositories of confidences; and for social and decorative purposes they did not interest Cecil Rhodes. "Rhodes had no private life," somebody who knew him once said of him.

### THE MODERN NAPOLEON.

"Scorning delights, he lived ferociously laborious days, his only pleasure in his work—a self-denying human machine, always traveling at full speed, in tow of a lengthy train of responsibilities, whose horizon continually recedes."

The steam engine simile is one fre-

quently used by commentators on this remarkable man. A less flattering critic has said of him:

"He is strong with the strength of a coarse, ruthless, greedy egotism, the strokes of whose piston rod force the minds and the money of weaker men into its reservoir. He hates women, whom he regards as unnecessary impediments in the campaign, and he has no idea of friendship; he only recognizes instruments to be used and enemies to be dealt with."

Africa is not yet "red from the Cape to the Congo," but to have conceived it would have made Cecil Rhodes, the modern Napoleon, remembered.

### ANECDOTES OF RHODES.

One of the many instances of the sublime audacity by which Rhodes reached his power is that of a visit he once paid the Rothschilds. He was then a young man and in the first frenzy of success in his diamond mining. To carry out his consolidation schemes he needed rich allies. The Rothschilds deliberated. After all, they knew nothing of this ambitious young man.

"Come in a few days," they said, "and we will give you our answer." "Sir!" said the young speculator, "I will call upon you again in half an hour. If you have not then decided what to do I shall go elsewhere." Whereupon they saw he was not to be trifled with, and Rhodes went back to Africa with the Rothschilds' financial backing.

### NOT EASY TO RUFFLE.

"The Colossus" was a difficult man to ruffle.

During one of his absences, in a Zulu uprising, his beautiful country house, Grooteschuur, with its collection of curios, was burned. Somebody, trying to break the news gently, said:

"Mr. Rhodes, I have had news for you."

"What is it?" he asked anxiously. "Grooteschuur is burned."

"Oh," said Mr. Rhodes, "is that all? I thought you were going to tell me that Jameson was worse."

Jameson happened then to be in prison and sick.

### TILT WITH BARNATO.

When Rhodes was trying to consolidate the diamond business a time arrived when he was obliged to consult the other men then in control of the mines. These were Alfred Beit and Barney Barnato. The matter was difficult to arrange. Each man hated to make concessions. So the three sat together till 4 o'clock in the morning, Rhodes, arguing, persuading.

Finally the other two gave way, Mr. Barnato observing: "Some people have a fancy for this thing, some for that thing, but you have a fancy for making an empire. Well, I suppose we must give it to you."

### AFTER THE GOLD.

Once Gen. Gordon told Rhodes of the offer that had been made him by the Chinese government after the subjugation of the Tae Ping—it was nothing less than a roomful of gold. "What did you do?" asked Rhodes. "Refused it, of course," said Gordon. "What would you have done?" "I should have taken it," declared the Colossus, "and as many more roomfuls as they would have given me. It is of no use for us to have big ideas if we have not the money to carry them out."

### RHODES HAD THE SUIT.

There are not many men of prominence in the present generation who have not had to realize at one time or another what a mighty power this Cecil Rhodes has been, but many seasons ago a famous American millionaire and newspaper proprietor occupied for a time a suit of rooms at the Burlington hotel in London that completely conformed to his fastidious requirements. On leaving he complimented the management of the hotel and definitely engaged the rooms for the following season.

On his return, however, there was a difficulty. The rooms were occupied. The proprietor hesitated.

"But that makes no difference," said the great journalist blandly. "Let the present occupants have other rooms, better rooms if you have them. I will make up the difference financially. But I must have these." "My dear sir," cried the proprietor, "you are trying to buy off the richest man in the world! Cecil Rhodes has your rooms!"

### A BATHING INCIDENT.

When premier of Cape Colony, Mr. Rhodes opened an extension of the Cape Town Suburban Railway. Many notable persons gathered for the occasion. Everything was in readiness for the ceremony when it was discovered that the central figure was missing. Messengers were despatched in all directions, and presently the prime minister was found taking a bath in the near-by bay. Realizing the situation, he hastily abandoned his swim, and with head still dripping, declared the line open for traffic. The story has often been

told as illustrating the great man's contempt for formality or etiquette of any sort.

A HORROR OF OLD AGE. Rhodes has had a horror of death. Mortimer Menpes, the artist, who has seen much of Rhodes at home, has written of him:

"We were both talking of growing old. As I sat by this great man and heard him talk I realized the horror he had of it. I thought of the work he had set himself to do; the pathos of the thing almost overpowered me, and I burst out with: 'Rhodes, you'll never be old. Your mind is young and you are young; you must always be a boy!'"

"Rhodes loved me for it, and kept repeating in an exultant way, 'I am a boy! I am a boy! Of course I shall never grow old!'"

"He drew himself up, this huge body of his, and said, 'I never felt younger!'"

### RHODES'S LOVES.

Here is another Menpes story:

"Then I talked of the romance of his life, and Rhodes listened delightfully, simply because my thoughts ran parallel to his. 'Of course I am romantic,' he said. 'Why do I love my garden? Because I love to dream there. Why not come and dream with me in my garden at Kenilworth? Come tomorrow morning!'"

"I went in the morning and did dream with Rhodes for hours. Yes, certainly it was for hours, for we had no breakfast that morning."—New York World.

### Power of Speech Destroyed.

San Francisco, April 15.—As the result of injuries sustained in last Wednesday's street car accident Percy J. Meyer, a dental student, has lost his power of speech. His vocal chords have been paralyzed and an artery leading from the larynx has been severed. Since last Thursday the young man has been unable to utter a syllable.

The young student resides with his parents at 2519 Laguna street and attends the College of Dentistry. He would have graduated from the institution next May, but his affliction will probably prevent him.

The injuries which have developed such results were sustained by young Meyer in a smashup which occurred last Wednesday, when a Sutter street car struck the bumper at Polk street. Several persons were injured in the collision, but the bruises sustained by Meyer were thought to be of trivial consequence. With his brother, Dr. Herbert S. Meyer, the young student was seated on a front seat on the dummy. When the car struck the bumper he was thrown violently forward. His throat came forcibly in contact with the front rail and he was momentarily stunned. At the time of the accident he felt no effects of the collision other than a severe pain in his throat. He was taken home by his brother and on the next day he found that he was unable to utter a sound. A specialist was summoned and immediately found that the vocal chords were paralyzed. No hope is held out that the young man will recover his power of speech. He was a skillful flute player, but since the mishap the accomplishment has been lost to him.

Meyer is compelled to resort to writing to make himself understood. He tells of his affliction in the following words: "When I was injured I was at first able to walk with difficulty. On the following morning I awoke to find that I was unable to utter a single sound. The pain in my throat was intense. The doctor will not tell me whether I will be afflicted with dumbness for life or not. I am afraid I will be unable to follow my chosen profession."

### Major Low's Niece.

Cincinnati, April 15.—There is a pretty and accomplished society woman in the last row of the "Messenger Boy" chorus, who makes her appearance as an "art girl." She is a niece of Mayor Seth Low of New York, and President H. P. Woolbridge of the American Bankers' Association, the wife of John Carr, nephew of Admiral Stanley, and the ex-wife of W. Newton Sharpe, a New York broker. She is Catherine W. Carr. She comes of a prominent Southern family.

"I was visiting my aunt in New York and the fancy struck me to go on the stage," she told a reporter today. "I called on Manager Bloom, and without telling him who I was secured a place in the 'Messenger Boy' company. My mother was very much surprised."

"I don't like the life, and shall leave when I get back to Philadelphia. I can't become acclimated to the theatrical atmosphere. Then, too, I have no lifts to say, and I sing only when the chorus does. When at home I contracted expensive habits that a chorus girl's salary will not meet."

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