

# CECIL RHODES, THE EMPIRE BUILDER

By E. F. MURPHY

Cecil John Rhodes, the fifth son of the Rev. F. W. Rhodes, was born July 5th, 1853, at Bishop Stratford, England, and received his early education at the grammar school in that place. In June, 1870, he was sent to Africa that his shattered health might be restored. In 1871 he worked his first diamond claim. Two years later he returned to England and matriculated at Oxford, and in 1881 took his M.A. degree. The chief events of his South African career may be summed up under the headings of his entrance into Parliament, northern expansion scheme, consolidation of the mining interests, founding of Rhodesia, war with the Matabele, trans-African Railway scheme, the Raid, his trial, and his besiegement at Kimberley. He died March 26th, 1902. The bulk of his estate has been left to a vast Imperial scheme of education.

**P**HILOSOPHERS tell us that the history of civilization is the history of great men. Granting this premise to be true and just, we may say that when the perspective of Time has told its tale, the unique figure of the Right Hon. Cecil John Rhodes will occupy the position of the greatest Anglo-Saxon of his day. The history of his life will strengthen the generations that are to come after. In his name are embalmed some of the most stirring and dramatic episodes that have been chronicled in modern times. He died occupying no governmental or military position, and yet he bulks larger on the horizon than any other figure.

The Anglo-Saxon hungers for heroes, but heroes are rare. This is why the big heart of the world has spoken out its sense of irreparable loss in the passing away of the African Colossus. Had he cared for the trappings of power, he might have been buried in our Temple of Fame at Westminster, but he bade them carry him back to the lonely Matoppo Hills and lay him in a tomb hewn out of the living rock. This quiet kopje where he elected to be laid is called "The View of the World." It is a notable spot, for it has been fabled as the scene of King Solomon's Mines. It is notable, too, because it overlooks the jungle where in the Matabele war, Major Wilson and his thirty-three brave fellows held out against three thousand warriors till every

white man fell and every cartridge had been fired. Then, staggering to their feet, the little handful still remaining alive stood shoulder to shoulder in a circle, with their faces to the foe. Raising their hats they held them aloft and joined in singing an old song, and while they sang the Africans swept down upon them like a black river and speared them to death. The song of our men in that supreme moment was the British National Anthem.

This burial place of Rhodes is famous too, because within sight of it, he himself ventured unarmed into the rebel stronghold, among the savages whose hands were yet red with the blood of his kin, and talked with them till they surrendered.

It is a thrilling story. Carrying nothing but a little riding-whip, he threaded his way through the gloomy recesses of the Matoppo till he reached the camp of his enemies. To hesitate meant instant death, and so he moved quickly and as one having authority, till he stood face to face with the leaders. He urged them tell all their troubles, for he had come to them with peace in his heart. When he had promised redress for their grievances, he turned on his foes with the suddenness of an electric bolt and fiercely upbraided them for their base murder of English women and children, till the blacks cowered like whipped dogs. He was answered by an old chief, who advanced to Rhodes and said, "See, this is my rifle—I cast it at your feet; and this is my spear, which I likewise cast at your feet;" and all the chiefs shouted in assent. The rebellion was at an end.

And now wise men are asking where were the hidings of this man's power?

## What was his Master-Passion?

His life is the story of a man with an ideal. Rhodes was a supreme idealist and at the same time a supreme realist. Like Moses, through the sight of the invisible