

pc/117/9-6



CHAPTER I

1894-1906

His mother was ill, and lay in her bed in her small room in the small house in Rhee-de Street. From this street, as from so many others in this city, one looked up at the great mountain. Indeed one could not help doing so, for it loomed like a presence over the city. Life might take one later to the highveld of the Transvaal, or to the thousand hills and valleys of Natal, but there was nothing like the Cape, which Drake had called the fairest in the whole circumference of the earth, the Cape, with mountains falling everywhere into the sea, and some age and grace not known to the harsh hinterland, with its bitter problems of history and race.

While Deborah Hofmeyr was ill, ^{cap} she was visited by Nelly Morgan, a young girl just about to go to college. Nelly always remembered the Sunday morning when the small six-year-old boy with the heavy spectacles brought the two boxes into the room. She would have spoken to him, but his mother said, 'Take no notice of him.' He set up the two boxes to make a pulpit and put his books on it. Then he conducted the service, reading from the books, and preaching that morning on the words, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'

single quotes throughout. rom. not ital.

He spoke earnestly, using the English language. His mother watched him openly, for after all he had come to preach to her because she was ill and could not go to church. Nelly watched him covertly, knowing it was more than a spectacle. Later that year, when she had gone to College, he wrote to her:

Cape Town,
15.5.00

My dear Nelly,

How are you getting on? Nelly we are back again from Stellenbosch. I miss you very much. Do you like your school? I do not have church any more as mama is up. I am reading such a nice book. The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling. It writes about animals. My Aunt Anna is no longer with us. HESSIE and Lettice send their best love to you. Will you please write to me. Now I must end. With love from

Yours sincerely

Hennie.

indent letters lam
~~full~~
no quotes



He was christened Jan Frederick Hendrik Hofmeyr, in the year of his birth 1894, but his name Frederick dropped out of use. His names Jan Hendrik were family names, borne by many Hofmeyrs throughout South Africa, of whom the most illustrious was his father's cousin, the venerable statesman 'Onze Jan', member of the Cape Parliament, a founder of the Afrikaner Bond. The Hofmeyrs had been in South Africa for a century and a half, and had produced many illustrious men. The small boy's father, Andries Brink Hofmeyr, was not one of the illustrious ones. He was a quiet and unassuming man, and was business manager of the paper ONS LAND, and secretary of his cousin's Afrikaner Bond. He had been married before, and had four daughters by his first wife. In 1888, he married again, Deborah Beyers, of a well-known Stellenbosch family now dispersed, and daughter of Katrina Beyers, who was known throughout her part of the country for her kindness and hospitality. Deborah herself was known for her forthrightness and outspoken judgments. She was not highly educated, but was shrewd and practical, and one soon became aware of her imperious and indomitable will. She was ~~twenty~~ ²⁵ ~~five~~ years old when she married, which was a late age for those days. Men were not drawn to her, for she was too fierce for a woman. Her judgments were sharp and cutting, though spoken deliberately, and this deliberateness was heightened by a stammer. It was a surprise to all when she decided to marry the gentle Andries Brink Hofmeyr, with four daughters of his own.

It was not a happy marriage. Whatever it may have been at the beginning, it was embittered by her difficulties with her ~~step~~ daughters. There were four, but she always said there were three. That was because Susie, the eldest, when she had qualified as a teacher, ran away. The other three were Gertie, Hester, and Lettie. All of them knew that imperious will, that could brook no opposition. But she did not get her own way easily, especially with the two older girls. She made them obey, but she could not make them love her. She was to say years later, 'But now they know that what I did was for the best. It was I who c-conquered in the end.'

In the year following her marriage she gave birth to a son, Andries Beyers Hofmeyr, but he did not unlock the doors of her heart. He soon showed that he too had a will, and perhaps it was this that prevented the growth of any deep bond between them. It was more than five years afterwards, on 20th of March, 1894, that she bore her second son, Jan Frederick Hendrik. He was born healthy, with a great head. He soon showed a quiet and gentle nature, and was from his early years docile and obedient, and strongly attached to his mother.

This relationship was made yet stronger when at two years of age he fell seriously ill. The family legend was that he contracted hydrocephaly, or water on the brain, and that Dr. Symons, who had married a Hofmeyr, said that if the child recovered he would be either an idiot or a genius; but modern doctors think the legend

nonsense. One thing is certain, he was gravely ill. She nursed him with the greatest devotion, and his recovery set the seal on their relationship. She had always regarded him as a gift, but now she regarded him as doubly so, for in a sense God had given him twice. He was a reparation to her for her troubles with her step-daughters. Imperious as she was, her two elder step-daughters were also strong-willed, and could even reduce her to tears. Once he found her weeping, and comforted her.

His illness caused a crisis in the family. They were poor, and how were they to pay these heavy expenses? The minister in charge of the Groote Kerk, the Mother Church of the Dutch Reformed people of South Africa, failed to do what Mrs. Hofmeyr thought the church should have done. It was the Rev. Ernest Baker, the minister of the Baptist Church in Wale Street, who came forward to offer help. Baker was a disciple of the famous Spurgeon, and had been sent out by his master to the growing city of Cape Town. He was thought by many to be the finest preacher in the Colony, and was a stern moralist and an inflexible fundamentalist, believing that the Bible was literally the Word of God. He was also a man of big and generous heart, and his action turned Deborah into a devoted admirer; she became a regular worshipper at the Wale Street Baptist Church, and she took the small boy with her. She also turned against the Dutch Reformed Church, of which her family had been members for generations. Her husband did not approve of her action, and continued to take his daughters and eldest son to the Groote Kerk. But she, having made up her mind, went her own way with implacable will. This had one great consequence for the small boy; he learned his religion in an English-speaking church amongst English-speaking people.

When he was nearly ³three years old, his father died. He had been sent by his newspaper to a Farmers' Show at Stellenbosch, and had stood too long in the sun, and, so it was said, had eaten too many grapes. When he reached home he was unwell, and soon after that collapsed and died. He left the family poor. He had been building a new house for them, but Mrs. Hofmeyr could not finish it. Onze Jan was a great help to her at this time. Though he spoke vigorously on the public platform against Afrikaners who deserted their forefathers' religion, her defection made no difference to him. She was always glad of his advice, but otherwise she was fiercely independent, and although the future looked bleak, she would take no money.

continued to

Her love for her second son increased. He was never out of her sight, and she watched over his food and his health. Her step-daughters and her eldest son knew that this love was a thing apart, and while they did not like her any better for it, they did not like the small boy any less. They continued to worship at the Groote Kerk, but the friends of the family were largely drawn from

(literally, the language)
the Wale Street congregation, and were mostly English-speaking. She herself and her family were true children of the Cape, as confidently at home in English as in Afrikaans, which, in those days, was as often as not called ~~the Taal~~. Her husband had made it a rule that both languages were to be spoken in the home, and the children could move from one to the other without a thought.

5
Meanwhile something like a miracle was happening at the Wale Street Church. No one knew that the small boy had the gift of relating the black print of hymn-book and Bible to the sung and spoken word. His mother was ~~astounded~~ astonished to discover, when he was ~~five~~ five, that he could read, not only in the language of Wale Street but also in the Dutch language of his grandmother's church in Stellenbosch. She realised then that this was no ordinary child. The news of his genius spread through the neighbourhood; nothing like it had ever been known there before.

Transvaaler throughout
3
The year the small boy turned ~~five~~ five was an anxious one for South Africa. The threat of war between Great Britain and the Transvaal republic hung over the country. Lord Milner was determined to secure control of the Transvaal, and President Kruger was determined to resist him. If any two men could have averted war, these were not the two. The greatest anxiety of all, as felt by the Afrikaners of the Cape Province, who were bound by blood and language to the Transvaalers, and yet had been British subjects for nearly a century. Onze Jan, proud of his ancestry yet loyal to the Queen, strove to prevent the coming calamity, but his earnestness and goodness were unavailing. On October 11, 1899, war broke out, and was at its height when the small boy celebrated his sixth birthday, for which his mother gave him a party. Two of the guests were William Janisch and his wife, Janisch being one of the pillars of the Wale Street Church, a good, upright man whom Mrs. Hofmeyr held in deep respect. Janisch always remembered the polite and proper child whose party it was. He was the model child of those days, quiet until spoken to, but when spoken to, strangely quiet and self-possessed. He was the pride of the Wale Street Sunday School, forgetting nothing that he was taught, reading faster and better than many an older child already at school. He would go to the corner of the street to fetch the morning paper, and when he came back he would tell his mother what there was to read, and sometimes that there was nothing worth reading at all. Another regular attendant at the church, Mr. A. J. A. Rowland, was one day astonished by the small boy's powers of memory. Walking back up the Avenue with mother and son on a Sunday morning, he had asked the small boy what the sermon had been about, and was overwhelmed when he heard Mr. Baker's sermon repeated, word for word it seemed.

*~~the Taal means literally the language~~

After this birthday the small boy went to visit his grandmother at Stellenbosch. For a brief time he attended a kindergarten school, and there learned to write. Also he learned in his grandmother's home a new version of the War, more bitter than the one he knew. When he returned home his mother offered him a British Soldiers' Testament, which a friend of the family had brought for him. When he saw the Union Jack on it, he would not take it. His mother rebuked him, saying that the Lord was the lover of all peoples, and he then agreed to accept it, provided she wrote his name in it in the four colours of the Transvaal Vierkleur. She liked to think that that was the beginning of his generosity in all matters of race, ~~that~~ was to make him so many friends and so many enemies when he grew up to be a man.

From his mother he learned also a fondness for cats. His own cat was white and small, and her name was Floss. She was his constant companion, for he used to carry her about with him inside the blouse of his sailor suit. The story was told that one of the cats had kittens, and there was no room for more cats in the house. So the small boy took the kittens to the shopkeeper at the corner of the road. When the shopkeeper, who knew the family well, protested that he too wanted no more cats, the small boy said to him, But you ought to take them, because your cat is their father.

The next year he went again to Stellenbosch, and now of course he could write to his mother regularly. One of his letters went astray, and his mother wrote to reproach him. In his turn he wrote reproaching her for thinking it possible that he had not written. As for the lost letter, he wrote, let us leave it, all will come right in God's own time.

Then she wrote to tell him that Floss had died. He wanted to go back at once to Cape Town to give her a proper funeral. He did not weep or rage, he was not that kind of child. He was restless and anxious, and made his grandmother anxious too. When he got home, he asked his mother about the immortality of cats. He was disturbed that the Bible, which Ernest Baker taught was the literal Word of God, spoke of the beasts that perish. He went through a brief period of what might be called intellectual doubt, but his mother told him to trust in the love of God.

His religious upbringing was strict. His mother was a praying and worshipping woman, and a daily reader of the Bible. Family prayers was the custom of the house. She was also a stern moralist. She was honest in money matters to the extreme degree; there was no talk in her house about bus rides where the conductor forgot to ask the fare, or about shop-girls who gave back too much change. In matters of sexual morality she was inflexible. Her whole life long she frowned on divorce, and would dismiss some person with the words,

of course he was divorced.) It is almost certain that she never fully realised her own woman's nature, and that sexual expression, unthinkable as a purely physical pleasure, unrealised as a pleasure of the whole personality, was to her a duty allotted by God to married women. Her own experience gave a bitter quality to her character and tongue, so that she enjoyed any story of these sexual and marital deviations of others. Yet no one could call her a hypocrite; she was too proud, too fierce, for that. She was scrupulous in those outward observances that in her opinion showed the world that one is faithful, in church-going, Sunday observance, and in the leading of a moral life. This morality was concerned mainly with sex, marriage, work, money, liquor, dancing, gambling, duty towards children, duty towards elders, obedience to the laws and to those in authority. She exalted one virtue at least to the level of a morality, and that was punctuality. Those who were late for a meal or an appointment often felt the edge of her tongue. She did not shout or rage; in anger she showed rather the nature of a basilisk.

It was under this rule of love and law that the small boy grew up, in a confusion of greater and lesser moralities. Yet though there was this confusion, the greater moralities were great enough. From her he learned that God was no respecter of persons, that rich and poor, white and coloured and black, were all alike to Him. From her he learned no angry pride of race and blood. From her he learned that though a Christian child should honour his mother and the magistrates, it was to God alone that he owed the ultimate obedience.

So it was not strange that when he heard the bells he would be all eager to go to church. They were proud of him there, the six-year-old boy, spectacled and grave, who, though he had never been to school, could read and speak like a sage. It was the infant Samuel come back to life.

It was the same in Stellenbosch too. His grandmother was a strict disciplinarian, and after family prayers, she would question the children about what she had read, and keep them behind for a re-reading if they answered badly. But not the small boy. If she questioned him it was only for the pleasure of showing that he remembered all. Katrina Beyers's home was the centre of the neighbourhood. She was sweet and tender, and people were in and out of her house the whole day long. Her kitchen was a place to remember, with its shining pots and pans, and so was her pantry, with those long rows of jars, the white pears, the yellow peaches, the pink guavas, the red plums and the jams and konfyts. It had a smell to remember.

One of Katrina's sons had a farm at Caledon, and the small boy would go there too. Sometimes the pigs were let out of the sties, and allowed to root about the farm. Then the small boy from Cape Town was given the job of keeping them out of the vegetable garden. So he was able to say in later life, with an irony sharp

but not bitter, 'Smuts looked after the sheep, but I looked after the pigs.'

8
He was almost eight before he went to school. His mother held him back because of his health, but his step-sister, Hester, who had become a qualified nurse, thought his health quite normal. Before he went to school he was known at the Public Library, where he would sit reading with his cat asleep inside his blouse. One of his favourite interests was cricket, and he would go to the Library to read the latest reports. It was more than an interest, it was a passion. His mother had given him a cupboard under the staircase, and there he kept newspaper cuttings of all the games.

S. A. C. S.

Caps ~~with~~

He went to SACS, the South African College School, on the 24th January, 1902. The headmaster was the famous Billy Baxter, and the school taught in English, but had a strong non-political tradition, and was proud of educating English-speaking, Afrikaans-speaking, and Jewish boys in harmony together. According to the historian Eric Walker, the school 'had blown neither hot nor cold' during the Anglo-Boer War, and because of that, it was regarded with suspicion by both the ultra-British and the ultra-Afrikaner elements at the Cape.

the |
When the small boy first went to the school he could read both English and Nederlands, and could write in the first. He was physically not a beautiful child. He was below average height, and wore thick glasses that concealed his eyes. His arms and legs were short and thick. So were his fingers, but unlike those of many children, they did not change in later years. They remained short and thick, of a piece with his short and stocky body. His most striking physical characteristics were his head and brow, which matched ~~the~~ massive gifts that he had already shown.

The education of a wonder child presents many problems. The solution of 1902 was simple and devastating. Such a child went forward as fast as the authorities would let him go. His growth in breadth and depth was left to the gods. In the classroom he stood alone because he could do everything. On the playing-fields he was even more alone because he could do nothing. The small Hofmeyr boy was no exception. He wandered through the grounds in his sailor's uniform even when he was high up in the school, and his classmates were walking like lords in their football blazers and cricket flannels. He was in his way the most notable boy in the school, but he was not a member of its community. Big boys said to him, 'Hennie, I wish I had your brains,' and put the thought out of their minds, where it had

set firm in 8 pt on 10 pt. with first line indented, throughout

(1) In 1902, the word used was Dutch-speaking. In actual fact the spoken language was Afrikaans, and the written language Dutch. Afrikaans was however rapidly becoming a written language.

(2) Yet a very appealing photograph of him was published in DE GOEDE HOOP of April, 1905. w/tribel

no place amongst the thoughts of cricket and football and girls. How sincere their envy of him was, who can say? But his of them was sincere, because of his passion for cricket.

Although the problem of the gifted child is still a real one, the schools of today offer music and art, they have rooms for hobbies, they teach you to make tables and chairs and cupboards. The small Hofmeyr boy had none of that. Music and Art remained closed to him his whole life long. Of the birds and flowers and trees of his country he knew almost nothing. He never made a table or a chair. Of great areas of life lying to right and left of him, he knew nothing, because he was allowed to go forward at fantastic speed. It was wonderful, everyone thought it was wonderful. Everyone, his mother, Onze Jan, his school, his brother, his stepsisters, basked in the radiance of his success.

No one was prouder of him than Onze Jan. He was now a kind of unofficial guardian to the child. There was not only a strong facial resemblance between them, but also a strong attachment, and Onze Jan was often at the small house. He used to say to Deborah Hofmeyr, 'when I want information, I come to Rhee-de Street.' He told her she should have been a detective, but she replied, 'Things just come to me, I don't go out looking for them.' Once Onze Jan's wife said to him, 'if I didn't know better, I'd have said it was your son.'

His own part in politics had been a strange one. He had made the Afrikaner Bond ^{into} ~~and it was~~ a powerful weapon, but he always used it to influence government, not to capture it. After his death J.H.H. de Waal, one of the pioneers of Afrikanerdom resurgent, had written in the new language Afrikaans, by no means unsympathetically that only the English word timidity could properly describe Onze Jan's reluctance to wield power. Between Rhodes and Kruger, and later between Milner and Kruger, he was the voice of reason and moderation lost in the thunder of the storm. He lacked the quality that he found in the small boy's mother, the same quality that there was in Rhodes and Kruger, later to be seen again in Smuts, a supreme confidence in one's self and one's mission. Nor had he that quality of personality that impresses itself at once on the beholder, nor had he the gift of making himself immediately known, of entering immediately into a bond with some other person, who would then always remember him. When the Afrikaner Bond, after years of knowing him, suddenly decided to call him Onze Jan, Our Jan, he was deeply moved. It was not the result of the flame and fire of personality, but the reward of devotion and integrity, and a recognition of goodness and gentleness too. Perhaps it was this same gentleness that he saw in the small boy, so that he was filled with fatherly feeling for one whom life could not help but wound. He himself had written in 1894, 'I am dead tired of the whole business,* and in

from no quotes

1895 he had resigned from Parliament while he was away on tour with the Cape Town cricket team.

Therefore he watched the small boy enter the world of school with feelings of pride and responsibility, and felt no constraint in counselling and encouraging him as a good father would have done.

The small boy's progress was quite astonishing. In January 1902 he went straight into Standard I, but on ~~March 26~~, his report came from Standard II. ④ In 1903 he was in Standard III for one quarter, in Standard IV for another, and in Standard V for the rest of the year. Though he had started school late, he was already two years below the average age, and the authorities wanted to keep him in Standard VI for a full year. But they gave it up, and in the middle of the year allowed him to go up to ~~St~~ Form A, the lowest of the four forms of the ~~Upper~~ School. In 1905 he entered Form B, and ended the year in Form C. DE GOEDE HOOP published a photograph of him in April of 1905, under the heading EEN SPES PATRIAE, A HOPE OF OUR COUNTRY. One looks with astonishment at the mere child who is now almost at the top of the high school. DE GOEDE HOOP reported that the small boy had been sickly for the last eight years, and was sometimes ill for weeks at a time. He was no book-worm, it said, but played happily with his friends - and they like him. ⑤ He could tell you of speeches in Parliament in 1903 and 1904, and knew the records in European and South African sport!

□ ————— 'That he is not proud, that he is religious,
← ————— that he has a heart of gold - for that,
← ————— next to God, he must thank his virtuous
← ————— mother.'

DE GOEDE HOOP hopes that the boy's life ^{would} ~~will~~ be spared, for the blessing of Land and People, which in the future even as now ~~will~~ need great sons. ⑥

In 1906 the small boy entered Form D, the Matriculation Class. He was not quite ~~twelve~~ years old, and for the first time was to spend a full year in a class. ⑦

His school reports over these five years were always excellent, except in respect of his writing, which declined from very fair to fair, then to untidy, which it remained for the rest of his

④ In the School records the Standards are called Classes.
⑤ (The records show that his attendance varied from fair to perfect.)

⑤ In Nederlands, 'en zij houden van hem.

⑥ In this same article DE GOEDE HOOP reports that he started to study Hollands (Nederlands) in 1904, and had not learned it before. Yet Mrs. Hofmeyr told me that he could read it at the age of ~~five~~ 5. I presume therefore that DE GOEDE HOOP is referring solely to formal instruction.

⑦ All this material from the records of the S. A. College School.

life, except when he made a special effort, as he did when he was writing a letter of condolence.

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irat.

Meanwhile he took some examinations on the side. At the age of ten he passed his Taalbond examination, which at that time was in Nederlands, not yet in the new language, Afrikaans. There were still conservative Afrikaners who, although they always conversed in Afrikaans, thought it more proper to pray and write in Nederlands. Even amongst the supporters of Afrikaans, there were controversies. One of the lesser ones was over the Nederlands word for the first person I, which in Nederlands was ik, but in the Taal was pronounced as ek. Onze Jan said ik, and thought ek was very ugly. There was a story that once in a clever company Onze Jan was condemning the use of ek, and he turned suddenly to the small boy and said to him in English, 'What do you say in the Taal for I?' whereupon his brilliant protégé, anxious to justify his confidence, replied firmly, 'Ek se ik.'

When in his third year the small boy shot up into the Upper School. his mother said to him, 'You mustn't think too much of yourself, because you can do things better than other boys.' He replied, 'I know. it's a gift of God, and could be taken away.'

11-14/
14-17/17-21

His successes in the country-wide Scripture Examinations of the Baptist Church paralleled those at school. In the Under-11 Eleven examination, he failed to come top, and she was disappointed. He did not disappoint her a gain. He came top in the Eleven to Fourteen, the ~~Fourteen to Seventeen~~, and the ~~Seventeen to Twenty-one~~ examinations, taking each at the earliest allowable age.

Ah, she was proud of him! She watched over him incessantly, especially over his food. She held the theory that a great brain required a great deal of strengthening food. She hardly needed to coerce him, he was always quick to obey; and if she had to rebuke him, he would obey too. It became understood between them that in the matter of food, her word was law. But it was love as well as law. Her love was poured out over him, enveloping and possessing him. Her love and his genius isolated him from the world.

The small boy's genius was not troubled or tormented or sublime or dazzling. It was a sober and industrious and polite genius. Though he came top with such ease, he read and studied much. He played marbles and impromptu cricket, but it was no hardship to return to his books; not just school books, any kind of books. When he was eleven his mother was unwell and in bed, and Dr. Julius Petersen, from the big house in Hope Street, walked with his wife to Rheede Street. While the doctor went upstairs, she said to the small boy with his Latin book, 'What a pity to be doing lessons when everyone is out playing.' He smiled at her politely. 'I've finished my lessons,' he said, 'now I'm amusing myself.' As she and her husband

walked home, she said to him, 'He was amusing himself, translating from one language to another.' Her husband said to her, 'Don't you realise you've been talking to a future Prime Minister?'

When the time came for him to write his School Higher Examination, he fell from a tree and broke his right arm. The papers had to be written by others, mainly by Basil Melle from the form below, which was a relief for his examiners. He came seventh in the Colony, and passed in the First Class. He was awarded the English and Dutch prizes, and a Major Bursary of £15. He sat also for the special examination for the Victoria Scholarship, and was awarded this, together with Oliver Schreiner, who later became a Judge of the Appellate Division. When his mother asked what she should give him, he settled for a tin of condensed milk. (8)

caps
Division

So at the age of ¹¹eleven he passed into the highest class of the school, and the first issue of the SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE MAGAZINE of 1906 remarked, 'One does not hear of innocent Eleven in the Matriculation Class as often as of sweet seventeen or dense eighteen.'

ital u/s.

Now he worked as hard as ever. Dr. and Mrs. Petersen went off to Europe, and left their two sons in Mrs. Hofmeyr's charge in Rheede Street, where his intense industry appalled them. When the Petersens returned, they took the small Hofmeyr boy and their two sons to Onrust, one of the coastal resorts under the southern mountains. They bathed in the lagoon because the sea was dangerous, and did not think to ask if their small guest could swim. It was Mrs. Petersen who saw him rising and sinking in the water; he was doing so with a nonchalance so foreign to him that she drew her husband's attention to it. 'The boy's drowning,' he cried, and they pulled him out and had to give him artificial respiration. For the rest of his life he had a fear of being under the surface of water.

A Young Ladies' Seminary in New Jersey wrote, in his final year, a letter to

The Youngest Boy,
The Highest Class,
The Best School,
Cape Colony,
South Africa

and the Post Office delivered it to young Hofmeyr. He would grow more and more accustomed to the beating upon him of the white light of publicity. Whatever he felt, he ~~was~~ showed neither liking nor dislike for it. He neither sought it nor retreated from it. When

(8) There are many versions of this story. This is his mother's.

it beat upon him, he behaved with irreproachable modesty. Duty and responsibility, already compelling in themselves, were made more compelling by the beating of the light. This was not merely because one is always more dutiful in the light, but because it was in a sense the light of the Holy Grail, and he the Galahad that moved in it. Yet though it shone upon his outward form, upon the armour and the sword, the soul within moved privately.

In the Matriculation he was first in the School, third in the Colony. DE GOEDE HOOP recorded his achievement, again mentioning his sickness, and warning against placing too great a strain on his brain. (9) He won the Latin and Mathematics prizes, and shared the Physics prize with C.A. Wahl. He won the English prize, and a second was given to Oliver Schreiner, who came sixteenth in the Colony. In the form below, Basil Melle, later to be Rhodes Scholar, and well-known sportsman and doctor, took the Mathematics and Physics prizes. In the form below that, Theo Haarhoff, life-long friend of Hofmeyr and classical scholar, took the prize for Dutch. And below that, J.E. de Villiers, later to be Judge-President of the Cape Division of the Supreme Court, took the Class prize. It was no mean school, this 'best school' of the Cape Colony.

Young Hofmeyr won a ^{cap} Major ^{cap} Exhibition of £30 in this examination. In addition the Council of the South African College created a special Council Scholarship for him of £60 for three years. His mother offered him a trip to Robben Island, a box of chocolates, or condensed milk. He insisted that the Matriculation was worth a dozen tins, but she thought a dozen would make him sick, and finally made it three, which he shared with the Petersens. (10)

By this time Mrs. Hofmeyr had her two sons alone at home. A.B. was ¹⁸eighteen years old, taking articles with the legal firm of van Zyl & Buissinne. He was a man, and to a great extent went his own way, so that Mrs. Hofmeyr and Jan Hendrik had the house a great deal of the time to themselves. Now that Jan Hendrik was going to the College, she asked Onze Jan to give the boy a fatherly talk, which he did, on the theme that character was more important than intellectual achievement. The talk made a deep impression on the ¹²twelve-year-old boy. Its theme he was to repeat on many occasions, in conversation, in talks to boys at camps and prize-givings. What was more, he accepted it with heart and soul for himself.

So he set out to conquer yet another world, a world not of boys, but of young men. In his short trousers he set out to conquer it.

(9) DE GOEDE HOOP, April 1907.

(10) There are many versions of this story also. This is his mother's.

What was more
all three were
to be Rhodes
Scholars.