



W

CHAPTER III

1911-1913

12/11/79-8

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After he had taken his second degree in 1910 at the age of 16, Hofmeyr resumed his classical studies, and prepared to take his M.A. in the Classics. He became Treasurer of the College Magazine, of which Haarhoff was now joint editor. He was one of the important members of the Debating Society, and the first number of the Magazine for 1911 noted that

'Hoffie's legislative powers are accumulating. His knowledge of Parliamentary procedure is tremendous. He can call for divisions with the best of them.'

But his most vigorous contribution was to the Students' Christian Association, under the guidance of Oswin Bull. Bull was an attractive personality, tall and well-built, with a fine face and head, a strong voice, and a compelling presence. He was an Anglican but ~~an out-and-out Evangelical; therefore~~ his understanding of the Nonconformist Churches was deep and real, while his claim for a personal relationship with Christ was readily understood by them. Bull himself had become a follower of Christ, as distinct from a nominal Christian, by making an act of surrender and dedication, largely through his friendship with the famous Wilfred Grenfell of the Labrador.

The young Hofmeyr, with his mother's upbringing and his long association with the Baptist Church and the Rev. Ernest Baker, was strongly drawn to Bull, and he now entered into a more active phase of his Christian life. Bull made a big difference to the Students' Christian Association, turning it away from a narrow pietism to a more vigorous life of evangelism and service. Nevertheless the wider student world found the Association narrow enough, with its prayer meetings, its evangelistic missions on the beaches, its Bible study circles. Though Bull preached good works, they had to be works with a purpose, and that purpose was to get others to make the same surrender and the same dedication as he had done.

Therefore the College itself drew away from the small society, not so much because it had faith, but because its faith seemed to be intense and narrow. It was making religion too much of a business. A College man of the world could say of a member of the small society, and with a sense of grievance, 'He thinks he's a personal friend of God's.'

Bull had an ~~an~~ eye for key men, and it soon fell on the young Hofmeyr. He had no difficulty in attracting him, because his own religion was very like that of the young man - it steered a middle road between the fervour of Baptist ejaculation and the

ital.

decorum of Anglican response, between Baptist warmth and Anglican propriety. Though the young Hofmeyr had been brought up in a Baptist world, he had also entered another, the more austere world of pietas, gravitas, aequanimitas, virtus, where he and the young Haarthoff felt so much at home. He was slowly moving away, not deliberately or knowingly, from the world of Ernest Baker. But from the dedication of the will he did not move at all. There was less talk of sin, blood, and salvation, and more talk of service and dedication. Yet words are empty after all. It was really young Galahad with the shining armour and the shining sword, seeking the shining grail. Only the face did not shine, it was impassive; and the eyes, if they are the gate of the soul, were barred by the heavy glasses. He moved solitary, so made by gifts and love.

And Kalle Bay  
Under his encouragement some of the students become school preachers and help a missionary in the coloured slums of District Six.

Bull stirred the Association into new life. He started his students' camps, opening in the morning with prayers and coffee and a cold bath, after breakfast a hike over the mountains, camp sports, and a rowdy sing-song in the evening followed by an evangelistic talk and prayers. Some of the students he recruited as officers, and began to organise the same sort of camp for boys. ~~He enrolled a team of street preachers for the Coloured slums of District Six, and started a Boys' Club there also.~~ Seaside services were held for children on the sands of Somerset Strand. Bull and his helpers would decide on a pitch, and there would build a pulpit of sand, which with its banner attracted the children. They would organise games, and after the games, one of them would mount the pulpit and preach a children's sermon. Children's hymns were sung, and the ~~preaching~~ of sermon and hymns was constant, that even the young could enrol themselves as soldiers in a great army, which led by Christ could save and redeem the world.

In all these ventures the young Hofmeyr became one of Bull's righthand men. The boy turned to the man as he turned to few in his life, and the mother approved and encouraged the relation ship, for Bull was carrying forward a father's work. ~~But~~ he had also become a distant relative by marriage, for in 1911 he ~~had~~ married Helen Hofmeyr, youngest daughter of the Rev. Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, the ~~famous~~ <sup>seventy five</sup> predikant of Somerset East. The Rev. Jan Hendrik was the ~~son~~ <sup>father</sup> of the legendary Rev. John Murray Hofmeyr, captain of the Stellenbosch Rugby Fifteen; he was one of seven brothers, five of whom entered the Dutch Reformed Ministry. What was also remarkable was that the Rev. John Murray Hofmeyr had preceded his ~~son~~ <sup>father</sup> Jan Hendrik as the predikant of Somerset East, and that father and son had maintained an unbroken ministry for (75) years in this Western Province town. <sup>father</sup> <sup>son</sup>

Mrs. Hofmeyr could therefore be grateful that her son was in such safe hands. She could be grateful too that the man was <sup>succeeded</sup>

father      minister      succeeded      father

ALAN PATON  
SECRETARY  
1911

clearly no rival for the boy's affection. And a mercy it is to know that your son is in such hands, that his feet are constant on the road that you wanted him to go, that he is chaste, honourable, industrious, clever, thoughtful, and, even at this age, obedient. A mercy it is to know that when he calls for you in the house, it is no deception, that he knows what you have done for him, and are doing, and that he is thankful, that he shows no signs of discontent, of wanting more than you have given him. Outside it may be godless and careless, but here it is constant and secure. And if a time must come when he must go out and fend for himself, then it must come, for a weaning time must come, though not just yet. But you hope he will choose neither newspapers nor politics, for they are hard lives, and seem to fill a man with care.

In ~~that year~~<sup>17</sup> of 1911, the ~~seventeen-year-old~~<sup>seventeen-year-old</sup> boy wrote his final Baptist Union Scripture Examination, for the group 17-21 years. The Wale Street Church Magazine noted that the First Prize in the Senior was won by Henry J. Hofmeyr, of the Wale Street School. In this examination he scored a hundred marks out of a hundred.

The College Magazine reported that the average attendance at the meetings of that hitherto neglected and undeservedly neglected College institution, the Students' Christian Association, had gone up to 22. The third number of the Magazine reported that the Debating Society was also looking up. It published farewell verses to Oliver Schreiner, who presidentially restrained our debate, and was regretful over his imminent departure. In his place the Society chose the young Hofmeyr as their President. In giving thanks, the new president said that an average attendance of 50 in a College of 300 was unsatisfactory. He rebuked those who were inattentive during debates.

*Full on*  This is particularly evident when members address the House in Dutch. Although this practice may be inconvenient for those who do not understand that language, and perhaps is rather inconsiderate on the part of those who can speak English equally well to speak in Dutch, yet it is hardly courteous, not to say in accordance with the dignity of the Society, for a storm of conversation to burst out immediately a speaker commences to address the House in Dutch.

~~The Magazine recorded, in Dutch, the following witticism.~~

Wit: Mr. President, can I speak in Dutch?  
Pres: You can.  
Wit: I can't.\*

\* I quote from memory, being unable to find my note.

The Magazine also recorded that the new President had made a happy little speech at the close of a debate between College and School, assuring the School that the Collegians, far from feeling superior, were proud of their Alma Mater. And well they might be, for in that year, of the eight South African regions competing for the Currie Cup in Rugby Football, four were captained by Old Boys, and seventeen Old Boys took part in the competitions. No other school in the country could approach such a record.

In this year 1911 the paths of Hoernlé and Hofmeyr parted for a while. Hoernlé had joined the staff of the University of Durham, and the Debating Society held a farewell meeting for him, and the young President made him a warm farewell speech. The Magazine published an open letter from the Philosophy students, written by Theo Haarhoff, in warm and generous language, lamenting the departure of a man for whom the students had such respect and affection.

The year closed with another triumph for Hofmeyr, a First-Class in the M.A. examination. He still had eighteen months to go before he could begin his studies at Oxford, so it was decided that he would still remain a student of the College, and that Professor Ritchie would keep an eye on his reading and study.

~~Then an exciting task was found for him. A Committee had been formed in Cape Town to arrange for the writing of a life of Onze Jan, and it was hoped that the Hon. F.S. Malan would write it. This Malan would not do, but he became Chairman of the Committee, and his distinguished associates were the Hon. David Graaff, ex-President Reitz, the Hon. Dr. te Water, and Messrs T.J.R. Hofmeyr (brother of Onze Jan), M.J. Brink, J.G. van der Horst, J.B.L. Vols-teedt, J.H.H. de Waal, and F.J. Centlivres. This Committee finally decided to offer the task to the seventeen-year-old Hofmeyr, with a remuneration of ten pounds a month while he was writing it. Modestly he accepted.~~

This was the first money he had earned in his life, and he handed it over in toto to his mother, who made him the first allowance he had ever had. He was no doubt the last of his contemporaries to have money of his own to spend, but he made no complaint. His mother's habits of thrift and frugality he had willingly made his own, and they persisted throughout his life, causing many to call him mean.

The young Hofmeyr was to write the biography, but ex-President Reitz undertook to collaborate in the production. It was certainly the intention that Reitz should supply the wisdom and experience that would be lacking in so young a writer, but in the end it was clearly the young man's book. ~~Reitz was content to record his objections to this and that in the text.~~

CHAPTER III

Then an exciting task was found for him. A strong committee was formed in Cape Town under the chairmanship of the Hon. F.S. Malan, to arrange for the writing of the life of Onze Jan. It was hoped that Malan would write it, but he would not, and ~~the~~ committee then offered the task to the ~~seventeen~~<sup>7</sup>-year-old Hofmeyr, at a remuneration of £10 a month while he was writing it. Modestly he accepted.

This was the first money he had earned in his life, and he handed it over in toto to his mother, who made him the first allowance of his life. He was no doubt the last of his group to have money of his own to spend.

Young Hofmeyr was to write the book, but ex-President Reitz undertook to collaborate in the production. In the end it was clearly the young man's book. Reitz was content to record his objections to this and that in the text.

*kal.*  
*kal.*  
Mrs. Hofmeyr certainly never regarded the Life as owing anything to any person but her son. Her pride in it was immense. She could not see how a mere child, 'n bogkind, could tackle such a task. <sup>1</sup>Of the worth of the book as a book, she had no idea whatsoever. To her it was not a book, but a monumental piece of industry performed in a snatch of time. She was proud not because of its truth or insight or power, but because it took only one year, and was then translated into Hollands by the author before he sailed for England six months later. Professor Arndt, in his memorial tribute written <sup>53</sup>years later, wrote that meanwhile the short-trousered boy also still found time to coach privately for their examinations several grown-up men. <sup>2</sup>

*spell out*  
It was the young Hofmeyr's new task that brought him the first letter that he ever received from the great General Smuts, then Minister of Mines, Interior, and Defence in the first Cabinet of the new Union of South Africa. Smuts was distantly related to the young man by marriage, for his wife Isie was related to Deborah Hofmeyr through their common descent from the Retief family which had produced the great Voortrekker hero, Piet Retief.

Smuts wrote to the young Hofmeyr from the Treasury, Pretoria, on September 6, 1915, in a form of Nederlands already showing concessions to the new language Afrikaans.

*kal. w.l.c.*  
*Ja*  
<sup>1</sup>Prof. Arndt, HULDIGINGSWOORD BY JAARVERGADERING VAN S.A. AKADEMIE VIR WETENSKAP EN KUNS, 1949.

<sup>2</sup>~~One~~ One of them was ~~Mr.~~ C.F. Schmidt, later Rector of the University of Pretoria.



leu ident  
J.C.S.

Waarde Mr. Hofmeyr,

Vergeef mijn verzuim met het beantwoorde van uw brief dd. 15/7/13. Ek heb nie tyd gehad mijn oude correspondentie deur te gaan, maar vind dat mijne vrouw alle belangryke briewe vernield heeft tydens de Engelsche occupatie van Pretoria daar haar huis herhaalde male onderzocht werd voor compromitterende litteratuur. Ek heb dus niets dat licht werpt op het belangryke tydperk door u onder behandeling.

Met beste wenste voor de goede vordering van uw belangryk werk

t.t.  
J.C. Smuts. \* (3)

It was to be expected that young Hofmeyr would produce a competent and painstaking biography. It dealt meticulously with every event in which Onze Jan took part, but of the man it said nothing, except that he was wise, conservative, honourable, and almost without fault. Young Hofmeyr had no interest in, and at that age certainly no gift for, psychological observation. He refers twice to pessimism so characteristic of Onze Jan, but it certainly does not characterize the life as it is related.

The biographer recorded that in 1884, when Onze Jan sailed to England, he spent much of the voyage talking and reading, but at times, too, we are told he would seek some lonely spot, where he would sit musing with a sad, far-away glance in his eyes. But why? If the biographer knew, he did not tell. And if he did not know, he certainly did not guess.

The dramatic relationship between Onze Jan and Cecil Rhodes

leu ident

(3) Dear Mr. Hofmeyr,

Forgive my delay in answering your letter of 15/7/13. I have not had time to go through my old correspondence, but find that my wife destroyed all important letters during the English occupation of Pretoria because the house was repeatedly searched for compromising material. Thus I have nothing that throws light on the important period you are dealing with.

With best wishes for good progress in your important work

t.t. [totus tuus]  
J.C. Smuts.

does not emerge in any dramatic form. The Jameson Raid destroyed it, and Onze Jan would have nothing further to do with Rhodes. When Rhodes was dying in Cape Town, Onze Jan cabled from Naples, God be with you - Jan Hofmeyr. The young biographer wrote:

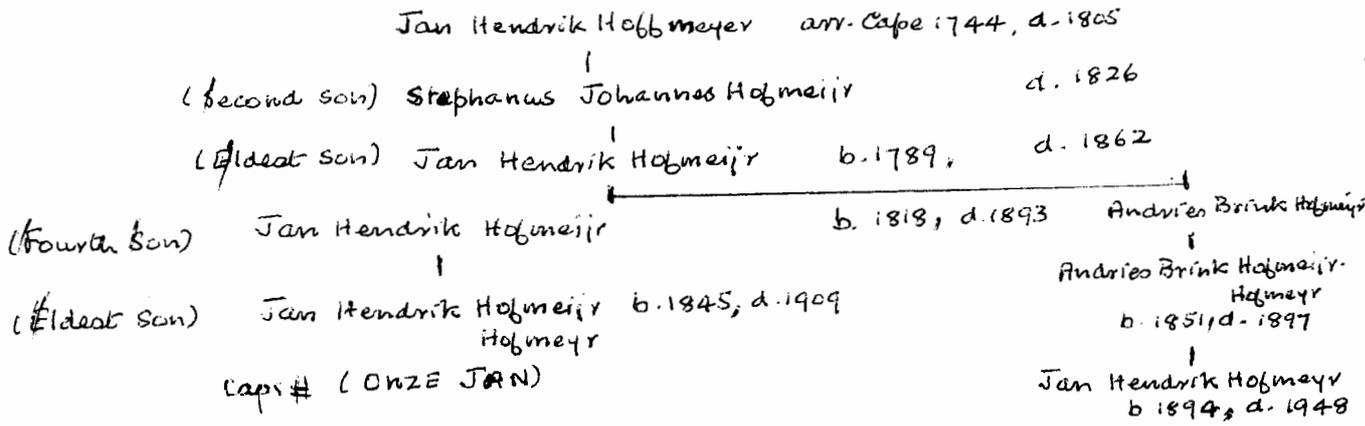
'It was a graceful action, the pity is, that Rhodes was already unconscious, when the message arrived.'

Bull said to the young author, 'You put in too many commas.' Hofmeyr would re-read the chapter, but could never bring himself to take out more than one or two.

The language of the book was undistinguished, and in parts bad. The wife of the first Hofmeyr, who arrived at the Cape in 1744, fell away in 1763, and his second wife followed her to the grave six years later; but the third proved a less fleeting companion, and was destined not to pass away till 1813. In 1884 Onze Jan's own wife glided gently away into her last sleep. Young Hofmeyr wrote twice of windows being thrown in, this under the influence of the Afrikaans word ingooi; this was no doubt a common error in the English of that time and place.

Hofmeyr was later to be acknowledged by many as the finest speaker of English in South Africa, but his mastery was distinctly utilitarian, a fact disguised by his ~~oratorical~~ oratorical skill. He was no poet, not even in prose. This too was often disguised by his

4 From the LIFE OF ONZE JAN, we learn the history of the Hofmeyrs. The common ancestry of the young biographer and his illustrious senior cousin is shown hereunder.



- NOTE 1. Onze Jan was invariably referred to as the young Hofmeyr's Uncle.  
 2. One of the members of the Committee, Mr J. H. de Waal complained of the new spelling Hofmeyr. He said Onze Jan had always used Hofmeijr.  
 3. The late Mr J. G. Strijdom, one-time Prime Minister, would not accept the new spelling.  
 Strijdom  
 (The Biographer)

love of quoting verse, but this he did - with rare exceptions - to drive home some moral lesson, or to encourage his audience to greater moral effort. For him the sound of 'woman wailing for her demon lover' came from an incomprehensible world.\* He was more at home with Newbolt's 'VITAI LAMPADA':  
*rom. u. l. c.*

*ital.  
no quotes*

It's not for the sake of a ribboned coat  
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,  
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote,  
Play up! Play up! and play the game!

The young Hofmeyr made it clear that he strongly approved of Onze Jan's tolerance in matters of race. He did not however call it liberalism, which in those days meant the religious liberalism which was challenging the orthodoxy of the day. Onze Jan's racial tolerance was a remarkable one, full of inconsistencies not apparent to the young biographer. Commenting favourably on the treatment of servants in the home of Onze Jan's childhood, young Hofmeyr wrote:

*man 31*  
'...it is to the spirit of the better sort of masters of the old slave days - the spirit of firmness tempered with kindness - that one must today go back for a solution of the native problem.'

Onze Jan spoke out openly against a proposal 'to exclude natives' from the Gill College at Somerset East.\* In 1882 when the Farmers' Protection Association amalgamated with the Afrikaner Bond, he spoke against an amendment to limit membership to white persons, and won his argument by 47 votes to 12. In that same year he declared in the Cape House, that if 'the number of those who speak some native language is strong enough to return two-thirds of the House', he would be willing to give them the right to use their language. In 1891 however he proposed to raise the qualifications of the Cape franchise in order to limit the number of non-white voters, and young Hofmeyr wrote that the 'native franchise', excellent in itself, became a danger when it threatened to produce a contest between civilisation and barbarism.

Young Hofmeyr said that Onze Jan's policy had two sides, which were friendly treatment and a recognition of racial differences. He told two anecdotes to illustrate them. →

~~\*From S.T. Coleridge's KUBLA KHAN.~~

⑤\*\*The word native is used in <sup>this</sup> the book only when it is part of a quotation.

~~and he told two anecdotes to illustrate them.~~ The first was that Onze Jan stooped to pick up the hat blown off the head of a black man on a passing cart and restored it to him; when a friend remarked on the unusualness of such an action, Onze Jan replied, 'why, he would have done the same for me.'

The other anecdote illustrated the second side of Onze Jan's policy. A deputation of coloured voters asked whether they might join the Bond which had no colour bar.

*Follow out*

□ 'Mr. Hofmeyr made no reply; instead he invited the deputation to dine at his house. The men saw the point; they felt it was impossible for them to accept such an invitation, neither therefore, could they expect to be treated as the white man's equals.'

18 Nothing could show more clearly the strange nature of Onze Jan's tolerance, of a Bond which had no colour bar but wanted no coloured members, of a courtesy that would allow one to pick up a black man's hat but not allow one to have him to dinner. The young Hofmeyr was certainly not questioning this world at the age of eighteen. The conflict between Christian principles and racial policy was not yet a fierce one. As in the early stages of a total eclipse of the sun, the shadow was there, bringing a faint chill to the air, imperceptible to most, and leaving ample light to see by, so that few knew that there was a darkness growing over the land.

Of such a darkness, the young Hofmeyr knew as yet little. In his own world the doors of opportunity opened to him before he had even knocked. He was so full of activity, so conscious of achievement, he had such a mother to guide him, that he had nothing but hope for the future. He closed his biography with these words:

*Full out*

□ 'In a young nation like South Africa, possessing as it does all that is necessary for the attainment of greatness, the seed once sown cannot but spring to glorious fruition; the great destiny which Jan Hofmeyr believed to be apportioned to his people shall come to pass, and to that destiny it will be possible for a South African to attain in such measure, as we allow ourselves to be inspired and enthused by the spirit of our lost leader.'

He finished his big task in January 1913, and submitted it to his 'collaborator', ex-President Reitz. He received from the old man a list of objections and suggestions, and was able to deal with most of them diplomatically. But they decided to disagree about the Anglo-Boer War. Young Hofmeyr wrote in his preface that he must be held solely responsible for

'some of the statements in Chapter XXXI, especially in so far as they convey strictures on the Transvaal Government.'

The strictures were mild. The biographer was writing in the 'forgive and forget' period, and he obviously tried to show that there were faults on both sides. At one point he described Kruger as not 'very tractable', at another he called Milner 'one of the ablest men of his generation'. Small wonder that he ex-President of the Orange Free State could not be so impartial.!

S. C. A.  
In 1913 young Hofmeyr turned himself to the translation of the book into Dutch. But it was by no means his sole activity. At the beginning of 1912 he had been elected President of the Students' Christian Association, and he represented this body on the Students' Representative Council. This period, from March 1912 to June 1913, was one of great religious activity for him. He went to Oswin Bull's Boys' Camp at Hout Bay in April, and in July he attended the SCA Conference at Worcester. It was at that conference, according to the Rev. W.M. Douglas, that the young Hofmeyr 'declared himself as the Lord's'. Douglas and his friend Abram Louw, who was sitting next to him, united in ' fervent praise'. Douglas asked, 'what will this lead to?', but Louw could not say. The young man himself said of the conference that it was one of the happiest weeks of his life; he had made a decision that would give purpose to his entire life.

Don Craib, when he went up to the College in 1912, fell under Hofmeyr's spell. Craib's mother was a Hofmeyr, and Craib was proud to be the kinsman of a senior student of such brilliance and prestige. Everything that Hofmeyr did had for Craib a kind of celestial quality. The days were past when Hofmeyr could be looked upon as a College oddity. Students were flattered when he noticed them, and did not laugh at his cricket and football.

Young Craib had come from a religious home in a country town, and to use his own words, was 'very interested in religion'. Hofmeyr asked him to join the Students' Christian Association and he agreed at once. He admired Hofmeyr for preaching in District Six, and for the purity and selflessness of his life; he saw in his hero a kind of Galahad. Nevertheless he himself could not accept an extreme rule of conduct. He liked life, he liked dancing, he liked girls. He rebelled against devoting himself to religion when Cape Town and the College were so exciting. He realised that his idol

held an extreme view of free will, which seemed to regard too light-heartedly those three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Craib could not help admiring one who regarded these three as ripe for conquest, but he could not help being afraid of him also. He felt that mother and son exaggerated the truth of the saying, where there's a will, there's a way. Thus they became intolerant of failure, even to the point, Craib would say in later life, that if they had seen a man slip on a banana peel and break his leg, they would have said it was his own fault.

~~held an extreme view of free will, which seemed to regard too lightly the strength of the world, the flesh, and the devil. He could not help admiring one who regarded these three as ripe for conquest, but he was a bit afraid of him. What his hero could do so easily himself, he expected also of others, and although an enemy of sin, he was no lover of sinners. Craib's respect for him was compounded with awe rather than affection, and this applied also to that redoubtable father.~~

In fact Hofmeyr was not free of religious doubt, but he had the Rev. Mr. Baker to fall back on. He could also go to Kloof Lodge, the Baker home, and discuss his difficulties. Such visits removed doubt, for Baker not only believed uncompromisingly in the literal truth of the Bible, he also had a strong and compelling personality. Hofmeyr, at that age, if he had been asked to choose between firm belief and strong character on the one hand, and doubt coupled with irresolution on the other, would have chosen the first, while acknowledging that the mind found it difficult to comprehend all the truths of Scripture.

At the end of 1912 he attended the Seaside Services at Somerset Strand. Bull and his wife were there, and J.D. and Edith Rheinalit Jones, Theo Haarhoff, and the popular Pisang Steyn. The Bull's ten-month-old daughter Helen was there too, and when people teased the young Hofmeyr about girls, he used to reply, 'I'm going to marry Helen Bull.'

After the services were over, sitting in the train for Cape Town, he wrote to Don Craib. He mentioned that C<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>1</sub> had been at the services, but he was disappointed in D<sub>1</sub> because M<sub>1</sub> (a girl) was there, and we hardly ever saw him. <sup>6</sup> So take my tip, if you mean to do any seaside work, you must just put thoughts of girls out of your mind.

Hofmeyr told Craib of his nervousness in preaching on the sands.

*full on*  
□ I tell you I felt like sinking through the earth, but the sand would not let me sink more than a few inches, but somehow as soon as I got on the pulpit of sand I felt alright and just knew that Jesus would make everything right.'

For all his advice to Craib about girls, there has persisted a legend about himself. According to the legend, young Hofmeyr did fall in love with, and was attracted by, a shy gentle girl who

⑥ In his letter, all four names are given in full.

was a member of the SCA. The young man, being what he was, heavy of body and gesture, with eyes hidden by the heavy glasses, this attraction would have gone unnoticed by many. But one person would have noticed it at once, and that was his mother, for their <sup>symbolic</sup> relationship was such that each would have sensed at once any variation in the behaviour of the other. The legend says that she spoke strongly to him about both the folly and the unfairness of entering into such a relationship, when so many years of absence and hard work lay ahead of him, that she reminded him of her devotion and of her task not yet completed. Whatever the incipient relationship may have been, it came to an end.

~~The girl never married. Today a shy, gentle woman of nearly seventy, she shrinks from the most indirect questioning about those far-off days. One might be tempted to imagine that it was the love of her life, denied to her by a possessive mother. But perhaps she shrinks from questioning, not because love once came to her, but because it never came at all. Was that indeed love, to be the indirect object of attention of a shy stolid boy, who might carry one's books and render one some service in some oblique impenetrable way, impenetrable that is, to all persons but one? Then perhaps the boy, who had so far as aid so little, said no more at all, and went back to his work and his mother.~~

It is all speculation, but it is speculation about the possible. One thing is certain, that whether this legend be true or not, whether some other similar thing happened or not, young Hofmeyr learned that the price of his mother's devotion was his own devotion. If he was to break with her, then was the time. Boys have been known to wean themselves from possessive mothers, but men seldom. For a moment young Hofmeyr was able to thrust his head out of the <sup>symbolic</sup> shell, and see what was happening there within, to himself and his mother. He was able to realise that, although years of absence and hard work lay ahead, they were not her deepest reasons. He was able to realise that if ever he wanted to be free, it would create such a crisis of recriminations, claims, self-pityings, and other ugliness, that he could not have borne it. So he came to heel.

Many years later Judge Leslie Blackwell, a man <sup>almost</sup> ~~insensitive~~ and forthright to the point of rudeness, asked her, 'why didn't you let the boy marry?' To which she replied, 'I never tried to stop him MARRYING, IF THE RIGHT GIRL HAD COME ALONG, I'd never have stood in his way.' The judge said to her sceptically, 'You knew the right girl would never come along, so long as you were alive.'

Mrs. Hofmeyr laughed at him, but if it had been someone else, she would have been unspeakably angry. If someone else had said deferentially to her, 'why didn't your son marry?', she would have answered, 'he's like that. he has no interest in women.' If she



felt it necessary to stress the point, her voice would rise, and she would say, with that slight stammer that gave such distinction to her sayings, 'Don't think I haven't told him, but he won't listen to me.' It was magnificent play-acting, but the rising voice was a warning that she did not want to talk about it any more.

*PP*  
*h*

Mother-possession delays the sexual development of a boy, and in young Hofmeyr's case this was true. ~~Some people said that at the age of 18 he still slept in her bed. Professor records that in 1912 he was still wearing short trousers.~~ At no time in his later life was the attraction of a woman strong enough to make him defy his mother, or take the step that would involve them both in ugliness and pain. If he had spent some time away from her, it might have happened. While he lived with her, any relationship with a woman was impossible.

*Symbolic*  
*h*

Some insinuated that he was a practising homosexual, and his interest in boys and boys' camps, which lasted throughout his life, was adduced as proof. To anyone who knew him, the insinuation was absurd. Something quite different was true, namely that he was sexually normal, but pretended to be asexual, and joked about his bachelordom because he could hardly have joked about his mother's possessiveness. All through his life he was attracted by women, and made infinitesimal sallies towards them; all through his life his mother knew when such a sally was being made. She was instantly aware of the slightest deviation from the symbolic pattern, and he knew at once that she knew.

*Symbolic*  
*h*

Was his sexual temperature, so to speak, low? It was, I think, but not inherently. It was low because of the symbolic shell in which he lived, and if he could have broken out of it, his temperature would have risen to normal. Why did he never break out of it? Was it too comfortable? Or was he merely used to it? Or was he unwilling to face the emotional upheaval that he would cause by breaking out of it? One thing is certain; he never, in the language of the Bible, knew a woman, and one could hazard the guess that he never, except in the most decorous fashion, kissed one either. Another thing is certain, that, aided no doubt by the lowness of the temperature, he lived a chaste and disciplined life.

After his own fashion he had many friends. Two of the closest were Theo Haarhoff and Henri Pierre Cruse. Cruse was Hofmeyr's vice-president and right-hand man in the Students' Christian Association; he was the son of a wellknown minister of the Dutch Reformed Church; he graduated at the South African College, studied under Kirchensteiner in Germany, and was subsequently appointed

\*Arndt, Huidingswoord by Justiese Vergadering van S.A. Akademie van Wetenskap en Kuns, 1949. When Hofmeyr changed to long trousers, I cannot discover. It was between January 1912 and September 1913.

Professor of Education at the University of Stellenbosch. He became a notable mayor of Stellenbosch, and paid particular attention to the welfare of its coloured citizens.

*Speculant on  
chance of children*  
x  
*w/keitel*

Early in 1912 Hofmeyr and Haarhoff were appointed joint editors of the College Magazine, and their <sup>first</sup> was Jackie de Villiers, the one who later became Judge-President of the Cape Division of the Supreme Court. The sports editor was the same B.G. Melle who wrote Hofmeyr's examinations when he broke his arm, and who later became a distinguished surgeon. The friendship with Haarhoff was particularly close, ~~even though the final intimacy was barred.~~ Haarhoff's scholastic career had also proved brilliant. At the close of the year he took honours with distinction, and was awarded both the Queen Victoria and the Rhodes, of which he chose the second. He was continually in the Hofmeyr home, and looking for something to do before he went to Oxford. Mrs. Hofmeyr offered to get him a junior reporter-ship on ONS LAND, but he not only refused that, he also decided to postpone taking the Rhodes for a year, and to go off to the University of Berlin. This annoyed Mrs. Hofmeyr, not only because it seemed to show too care-free an attitude towards life, but also because for some reason she had an antipathy to all things German.

Haarhoff was not due in Berlin till the beginning of 1914, so he accepted a temporary lectureship at Stellenbosch, and it was then that he and Hofmeyr began to pay more attention to the new language Afrikaans, and to write many of their letters to each other in this language.

*S. C. A.*

Hofmeyr's last SCA function was the biennial conference at Beaufort West. There were addresses on 'The Moslem Peril', 'The Native Question', and 'The Poor-White Question', and the theme for the Bible study was 'Sin'. He and Cruse and Haarhoff played a prominent part, and the general opinion was strengthened that in Hofmeyr South Africa had found a young Christian whose future contribution might be of great importance. The SCA Notes in the third Magazine of 1913 paid him a generous tribute. Under him average attendance had climbed from 24 to 43, and he had 'proved himself an indispensable factor for starting any new move.'

One of his last debates was on 'South African Native Policy', and he championed the tradition of Cape liberalism, which aimed at a tolerant society, in whose government non-white citizens, if they possessed the necessary qualifications, could participate. He said:

*Full out*

□ There are in general two broad Native policies possible with no via media. The first is the policy of segregation, the policy of repression, the policy of the dark ages. The other is the enlightened policy which we put forth this evening, the policy inspired not by

prejudice but by political wisdom, the policy of justice, expediency, and necessity.'

~~He condemned the policy of the Transvaal as repressive, and declared that Oom Paul had persecuted and imprisoned the first missionaries.~~

There were two dangers which threatened the satisfactory solution. They were

(i) the tribal system (ii) the intermixture of black and white as a race, i.e. the of race feeling and feeling of being separate. It is between the Scylla of repression and the Charybdis of fusion that the Cape policy steers.

He appealed to the white conscience.

The natives have been committed to white men as a sacred trust. It is ours to use this trust or to misuse it...it is ours to reflect on the fact that the country we live in was a black man's country and not ~~always the home of a white race.~~

He warned against the attempt to stave off the inevitable:

~~He said~~

*Full on*  
□ '...the French revolution was caused by not giving the vote to eligible men... the day may yet come when inspired by the sense of unjust wrongs they may sweep the whites of South Africa into the sea, and South Africa may come to be a black man's country again ...you may build a wall over the roots of a tree, it will spring up all the same. You may refuse to educate the native but educated he would be.'

Here we have to deal with a young man whose religion, having concerned itself with personal conduct, was now beginning to concern itself with politics. He was beginning to concern himself with the profound problems of love and justice and power, and the profound difficulties of reconciling their claims in the life of the State. His leader in this venture was not Plato or Mill or Marx, but Jesus of Nazareth, and from that loyalty he did not deviate, his

whole life long. Gradually but inexorably it was to lead him to question, and if necessary to challenge, the beliefs and customs of his people and his day. A gentle and obedient child could hardly have chosen a harder way.

On the twentieth day of September 1913, on the Royal Mail Steamer SAXON, he and his mother set sail for England, Oxford, and Balliol College. He was now wearing long trousers. ⑦

⑦ Prof. Arnat, in his Halbeschwerts Stulde says...

says that young Hofmeyr was still wearing short trousers when he was writing the biography. When Mrs. Bull first met Hofmeyr at the end of 1912 he was wearing long trousers.