HE FOUND PEACE AT DOORNKLOOF

Jan Christiaan Smuts — born on May 24, 1870 of a simple country family on the farm Bovenplaats, near Riebeek West in the Cape Province — grew to so great a stature that in truth for him, was all the world a stage.

There was no South African in the modern sense — just the two impoverished republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State; only the Cape was prosperous and, even there, economic security was threatened by the opening of the Suez Canal and the consequent re-routing of shipping.

Smuts lived to serve as soldier and statesman in the years which saw one old, comfortable world die and another new, dangerous, exicting world come to birth. In the years 1900-1950, the first half of the 20th centurry, Smuts emerged time and time again from the lofty mountains and broad veld of his beloved South Africa, to "walk with Kings", to give guidance to the world's great leaders, to suffer with the common man and to inspire those ideals of united purpose and world government which are yet to be.

He died on September 11, 1950; the world paused in homage, for he who had left the stage was a world citizen.

Jan Christiaan Smuts had no fear of life or of death; he knew the infinite patience of life and had learned in the long years of his striving that "No man liveth or dieth to himself alone".

He loved all simple things; the flowers and grasses of the countryside, the companionship of little children; he was himself a flower of the human race, his greatness bred in the perils of war, his courage born of the brave Afrikaner people who gave this illustrious son, not merely to South Africa, but to the world.

In those early years, before his twelfth birthday, Jan Smuts had drawn so close to nature as to feel that he was of one family with birds and beasts, mountains, valleys and rushing streams. All his long life he was something of a pantheist and drew closest to his Creator when in the presence of natural creation. At Maclear's Beacon on Table Mountain in 1923, speaking at a war memorial service of the Mountain Club, he said: "The Mountain is not merely something eternally sublime. It has a great historic and spiritual meaning for us. It stands for us as the ladder of life. Nay, more, it is the great ladder of the soul, and in a curious way the source of religion. From it came the Law; from it came the Gospel in the Sermon on the Mount. We may truly say that the highest religion is the Religion of the Mountain."

Jan Christiaan Smuts was sent to school when he was twelve years old; a late start. Perhaps he had been kept at home because he was frail or perhaps his parents thought it quite enough to educate only the elder son. But the elder boy, Michiel his brother, died in 1882 and in the same year, Jan entered the school at Riebeek West as a boarder.

At first as shy and diffident as Shakespeare's schoolboy, Jan speedily discovered the world of books and learning filled all his days; and to the detriment of his health, too many of his nights.

Nothing more dramatically reveals his intellectual brilliance than his achievement in mastering in six days, without a teacher, sufficient Greek not only to pass the matriculation examination, but to come top of the list. Smuts himself considered that the most remarkable feat of memorising in his life.

Entering Stellenbosch in 1888, he moved easily onwards to a B.A. and the Ebden Scholarship which took him to Cambridge (England) where he read Law.

He attempted to read Philosophy but was discouraged by his tutors and was refused permission to attend lectures in this Faculty. He found comfort during vacations in the Derbyshire dales, in the mysticism of Walt Whitman and in his dreams of home. As he recedes into history, men tend to think of him as pure intellect but it was always an intellect tinged with the mystic and emotional.

A double First (at Cambridge he headed simultaneously both parts of the Law Tripos) were the open sesame to a serene, academic life, but his heart was in South Africa and his destiny the stormy seas of South African politics.

In London in 1894, he read for the English Bar and was admitted to the Middle Temple. He spent his scant leisure devouring every scrap of information about Walt Whitman, writing a book which has never yet found a publisher, Walt Whitman — *A Study in the Evolution of Personality.* Already he was absorbed with the idea of wholeness in the Universe — a concept which was to companion him throughout his long life.

Cambridge awarded him her highest honour, when on June 10, 1948, he was installed as Chancellor of the University.

Smuts was only seventeen when he first met Sybella Margaretha Krige. She was born on December 22, 1870, at Klein Libertas in Stellenbosch, the daughter of a wine and dairy farmer. When in later years, a Prime Minister's official residence was built in Pretoria, Mrs. Smuts chose to name the house "Libertas" after her childhood home.

By extraction two-thirds French, Sybella, or Isie as she was nicknamed, was slender and small with curly brown hair and blue eyes. Jan Smuts was a tall slender man with blue eyes and wavy blonde hair.

She matriculated at Victoria College, Stellenbosch, almost as brilliantly as Jan Smuts himself and soon after took a post as a schoolmistress.

Isie had wanted to study medicine but her parents had younger children to educate and it was almost unheard of that a young woman of her day, and in so small a town, should have such ambitions. They were in the end funfilled — not in Isie — but in her daughter, Louis, born at Irene in 1914 and as Dr. Louis McIldowie, present at her father's deathbed in the same house in 1950.

Louis, a girl, was given a boy's name in honour of General Louis Botha. She is the youngest of the nine children of General and Mrs. Smuts.

Jan and Isie had known each other for ten years before they married; the courtship had been staid and decorous; there was the long absence when Smuts was in England but the wedding itself was precipitate. Unannounced, the young man arrived one day at Isie's home in Stellenbosch and asked her to marry him the next day, as he had to return immediately to the Transvaal, where he was in practice as an advocate. The marriage took place on 30 April 1897.

Very recently relics of these early days at Stellenbosch have come into the hands of those who care for Doornkloof. Sybella (Isie) Smuts had a younger sister called Queenie. She was the girl in a story of a long ago love affair, when, in the 1890's, she fell in love with a boy called Peter Louw. Peter and Queenie were first cousins and, therefore, were not permitted to marry but, in 1956, Peter, widower, Queenie, a widow, and the law having changed, they came together, married and enjoyed nine happy years.

Queenie died on August 31st, 1964 and her husband, Peter, more generally known as Tuffy, has turned out the treasures of a lifetime and presented many interesting things to the General Smuts War Veterans Foundation for display at Doornkloof.

There are a large number of photographs and some paintings, all of which are being carefully catalogued and will soon be displayed at the Big House at Irene. These pictures show little-known aspects of the early life of both the Smuts and Krige families. There are programmes of concerts long forgotten, newspaper cuttings, poems written by Ouma Smuts and her translation of *The Century of Wrong*; the original classical dictionary which General Smuts used at Stellenbosch, ledger sheets from a drapery store in Stellenbosch, reflecting the purchases made by Ouma when she was a young girl and by her mother and sisters.

Evidently they were good needlewomen and skilled with the crochet hook for one gift is a beautiful crochet cotton bedspread made by Isie Krige and her mother. There is also a 1911 treadle sewing machine.

Queenie and Isie Krige were two of the daughters of Sanie Krige, who had been born Sanie Schabort. Sanie Schabort had a sister called Gita, who became Mrs. Louw. Gita's son was Peter Louw, so that explains why Peter and Queenie were first cousins and, therefore, unable to marry.

Sanie Schabort, the mother of Isie and Queenie, was descended from a Dr. Schabort, who first came to South Africa in 1714. He was a ship's doctor on an East Indiaman who, after many voyages to the Far East, decided to retire at the Cape. He purchased two farms in the Durbanville district, some 18 miles from Cape Town. Portions of these wine farms, Eversdale and Vyeboom, still belong to the Schabort family.

The Schaborts, well and truly settled at the Cape, figure in the social history of last century. There were eight beautiful Schabort girls somewhere in the 1880's and when the Duke of Clarence and Prince George (who became King George V), visited Cape Town, these lovely girls were chosen as partners for the Royal princes, who were then junior officers

in the Royal Navy on a visit to Simonstown. The grand ball given in their honour was held at Admiralty House. Sanie Schobart, the mother of Ouma Smuts, danced with the princes.

The Schabort damsels were not only beautiful but accomplished in the early Victorian sense of the word. They were carefully nurtured and educated by English governesses. Their brothers had tutors, also from overseas, until they were old enough to go to school in Stellenbosch.

The Schabort family were direct descendants of Sophie, Grand Duchesses of van Furstenburg of Bohemia. German culture appears to have played a large part in their early education and, naturally, since the English princes were also of German descent, the young people must have found much in common on the night of the famous ball. Their principal sport was riding, side-saddle, of course, and they were all accomplished horsewomen, attending regularly the meets on their father's Durbanville estates.

Queenie and Peter, Isie and Jannie met and fell in love at the house they knew as Libertas Parca, now more commonly known, in Afrikaans, as Klein Libertas. It was there that Isie helped Jannie with his studies for the B.A. and LL.B. degrees. Peter Louw tells us that the little portable writing desk which he has presented to Doornkloof, was the desk they used when they went off into the oak woods near Stellenbosch to spend the day with their books. Libertas Parva was, of course, the home of Mr. and Mrs. I. D. Krige and their children.

Soon after their marriage, Jan and Isie Smuts settled in Johannesburg in a modest home at the corner of Twist and Kotze Streets in Hillbrow; today a multi-storey building stands on the site but a plaque records this scrap of history. Smuts at that time opened an office in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg and began to practise law but soon moved to Pretoria, where, at the early age of 28, he was appointed State Attorney of the Transvaal, two years younger than the minimum age required but Smuts had hurried to the defence of Kruger and had earned the old President's gratitude — the circumstances concerned the flare-up of feeling following Paul Kruger's arbitary dismissal of Chief Justice Kotzé.

Smuts then was a gaunt young man with cold, staring, steely eyes, an inexhaustible capacity for work and an amazing efficiency.

President Kruger, seeing far into the future, said: "Smuts will yet play a great part in the future of South Africa."

In 1909 General Smuts purchased 4,000 acres of land in the township of Irene and on it built the home known throughhout South Africa as "The Big House".

This is a building of considerable historical interest for it was originally an officers' mess at Kitchener's headquarters at Middelburg in the Transvaal. Smuts bought it from the British and transported it to Irene where it was re-erected as a family home. He felt it would give his family security. The house, which is of timber and iron, cost him originally £300 (R600). Its re-erection on its present site took one year and more than £1,000

(R2,000) was spent on the rebuilding. As the years have passed, more rooms have been added and verandahs enclosed, but substantially the famous old house is as it was 50 years ago — square, single storied, of no particular style, with a narrow verandah all the way round. From the outside as you approach it, it seems a modest dwelling but several of the rooms are very big and there are eleven bedrooms.

This home was always for him the peaceful background. His life knew many stormy passages and active warfare accounted for 13 years. The sad stories of war in his homeland and the two great European conflicts have been told so often and even in Doornkloof there are memories of the time when Smuts saw this now peaceful district as he marched with 400 men to establish in Irene a defence post in the last stages of the South African War. The year was 1900: the aim was to defend Pretoria. Smuts was already a General, carrying in his knapsack not the Field-Marshal's baton, although that accolade too was to come to him. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and a *New Testament* in Greek were his companions. Kitchener personified the enemy yet sowed in the heart of Smuts the concept of Empire.

The humiliation of Vereeniging found Smuts in attendance but in no official capacity. He wrote: "The nation calls out . . . From the prison, from the camps, the graves, the veld, from the womb of the future, the nation cries out to us to make a wise decision.

"It has been a war for freedom. Its results we leave in God's hands. Perhaps it is His Will to lead our nation through abasement, yea and even through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, to the glory of a nobler future, to the light of a brighter day."

Smuts learned to love and admire a former enemy; the people of Britain, and addressing a joint session of the two houses of Parliament in London on October 21, 1942, General Smuts paid tribute to the courage of the people of the British Isles in those grim years: "The people of this island are the real heroes of this epic, world-wide drama, and I pay my small tribute to their unbending, unbreakable spirit. I have been absent from this country for almost ten years, and coming back now I can see for myself the vast change which the trials and sufferings and exertions of the war period have wrought.

"I remember the smiling land, recovered and rebuilt after the last war, where a happy people dwelt securely, busy with the tasks and thoughts of peace. And now I have come back to a country over which the fury of war has swept, a country whose people have had to face in their grimmest mood the most terrible onslaught in its history.

"Many of its ancient monuments are damaged or gone forever. The blitz has passed over cities, ports, churches, temples, humble homes and palaces, Houses of Parliament and Law Courts. Irreplacable treasures of one thousand years of almost uninterrupted progress and culture and peaceful civilization have disappeared forever.

"But one thing is not lost — one thing, the most precious of all, remains and has rather increased. For what will it profit a nation if it wins the world and loses its soul? The soul remains. Glory has not departed from this land.

"I speak rather of that inward glory, that splendour of the spirit, which has shone over this land and from the soul of its people, and has been a beacon light to the oppressed and downtrodden peoples in this new martyrdom of man.

"But for this country — the stand it made from 1939 onward, its immeasurable exertions, its toil and sweat, its blood and tears — this world of ours might have been lose for one thousand years, and another dark age might have settled on the spirit of man.

"This is its glory — to have stood in the breach and to have kept the way open to man's vast future. And when, after a long absence, I see today this flame of the spirit above the flame of the blitz, I feel that I have come to a greater, prouder, more glorious home of the free than I ever learned to know in its palmiest days."

Idealism and the broad vision characterized Smuts' military career and dominated his politics.

Smuts, statesman and politician, was foreshadowed in his own words to Chief Justice de Villiers in 1910, when the Transvaal so bitterly opposed the creation of the Union. Of South Africa Smuts said: "We who love South Africa as a whole, who have our ideal of her, who wish to substitute the idea of a United South Africa for the lost independence . . . we are prepared to sacrifice much, not to Natal or to the Cape, but to South Africa."

Had Smuts pursued the profession of law for which he had originally trained, it is certain that he would have adorned the Bench or have acquired an international reputation in the field of jurisprudence. It was, in fact, his concept of justice which led him to play so vital a part in international affairs. But neither high office nor wealth attracted him. He said once: "What do I want with money? Money would be a nuisance to me — I don't find money interesting."

It was achievement, the expression of ideals, the creation of wholes which he found of absorbing interest.

The oneness of civilised man was his gospel. "Civilization is one body and we are all members of one another," he wrote.

In this year 1965, which has seen the passing of Sir Winston Churchill, it is appropriate to recall Churchill's own comment about Smuts, in England in September 1940. Churchill said: "The great General Smuts of South Africa — that wonderful man with his immense and profound mind, his eye watching from a distance the whole panorama of European affairs . . . "

A year later Smuts was in London again and his son J. C. Smuts recorded his many meetings with the leading personalities of the day. "He stands out head and shoulders above any other person here. His pre-eminence as a statesman no one has disputed. — He is a symbol of stead-fastness and security, and the embodiment of optimism and the higher

values of life. He talks thoughts, not words . . . and that is why his utterances are so full of precious substance."

Around this time, General Smuts delivered a sermon in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in response to a personal request from the King. He was diffident and reluctant; he mentioned the Creator twice only in the address which was subsequently described by a member of the Household as the "most religious sermon" he had ever heard.

For Smuts, holism was alway the centre, a basic concept of life from which his other great contributions flowed naturally.

Sarah Gertrude Millin in her biography of Smuts, defines the essence of holism as being the reconciliation of "matter and spirit, the temporal and the eternal, the finite with the infinite, the particular with the universal". F. S. Crafford said the same thing, in almost the same words.

Professor A. C. Cilliers pointed out in his booklet *British Holism and South African Nationalism* that there was a distinct parallel between Smuts' philosophy of holism and his political record, at home and abroad.

He saw the possibility of wholeness in the most unlikely circumstances as, for example, at Vereeniging, during the bitter aftermath of the South African war; when already he saw the great possibilities for South Africa is she were allowed to develop freely within the much larger "whole" of the Imperial network of nations.

The holistic idea dominated his thinking in the field of biology and indeed his great work *Holism and Evolution* is largely illustrated by scientific and biological examples. He uses natural science to prove his philosophic point.

As a philosopher, he was largely self-taught, deriving his knowledge from his ardent appreciation of the natural world.

Holism and Evolution was not, in fact, his first philosophic work. By 1912 he had written some 90,000 words on the subject *An Inquiry into the Whole.* The book was never published but the idea seethed in his mind for another decade.

He was trying to describe what it means to a man to discover his own significance within the universe and the book ended with the triumphant claim: "He walks straight from darkness into light".

In the Parliamentary Election of 1924, Smuts was defeated, losing his seat in Pretoria West. His presence in the House of Assembly was essential for he was now, suddenly, unexpectedly Leader of the Opposition. He accepted the offer of the Standerton seat and in the first eight months in the Opposition, still involved with the hurly-burly of politics, he wrote his great book *Holism and Evolution.* His son tells us that it was accomplished so quietly and unobtrusively in the study at Doornkloof that even his family did not entirely realise that the great work was being written. Smuts did not employ stenographers; it was all written in his rather cramped and difficult longhand, only later to be deciphered and typed by his then secretary, Jan Dommisse.

The book links the physical with the metaphysical and expresses, in language which is, at times, poetic, the basic optimism and true spirituality of the author.

The word *holism* was derived by Smuts from the Greek *holos* meaning whole. He claimed that evolution was "a rising series of wholes from the simplest material patterns to the more advanced". "This," wrote Smuts, "is a whole-making universe; it is the fundamental character of the universe to be active in the production of wholes, of ever more complete and advanced wholes. The evolution of the universe, organic and inorganic, is nothing but the record of this wholemaking activity in its progessive development-, human personality being the consummation of this forward movement. The tiny atom of oxygen, for example, was a whole. It combined with two atoms of hydrogen (two separate wholes) to form another whole, an entirely new substance, a molecule of water. Carbon atoms again combined in their turn with water to give man the important carbohydrates, his principal food. So with ever-increasing complexity and ever more perlexingly entangled intricacy of pattern evolution progressed, always froming greater, more involved, and more important wholes until the range of human life is reached."

One aspect of his whole philosophy still awaits fuller examination. One might call it the philosophy of common sense. It is implicit in all that Smuts wrote. It will be recalled that as a young Boer soldier he had travelled with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in his knapsack. Kant explains man's vast ideas about God, the Cosmos and the Soul, the whole noumenal universe, in terms of Reason, as a distinct faculty of mind. Smuts crossed swords with him. The argument is long and subtle, perhaps incomprehensible save to philosophers. Kant claimed that the Supreme Being alone possesses the faculty of intellectual intuition; Smuts claimed that this gift is shared by the humblest of God's thinking creatures. He wrote: "It varies in clearness and power in different men; the genius has more of it than the ordinary man; the mystic aspires to cultivate it to the exclusion of his separate mental functions. But in one degree or another, it is possessed by all sane men; and it is the function by which each human being in some degree or other has a glimpse and glimmering of the whole."

Professor W. K. Hancock (Sir Keith Hancock) in his first volume of the Smuts biography *The Sanguine Years,* commenting on this subject says: "Smuts believed that this power of intuitive understanding was so spontaneous, so deeply rooted in the common experience of mankind that one might almost call it common sense."

Untrained in scholastic philosophy, Smuts was also untrained in natural science, yet was a botanist of repute and a great authority on the grasses of South Africa. Professor Hancock tells a delightful story of a botanical expedition in the 1920's. A distinuished American woman botanist, on a visit to South Africa, was one of the party. She asked the Professor in charge to identify a grass. He referred the question to General Smuts

who named the grass and vividly described its distribution and ecology. "How is it," exclaimed the lady, "that I am learning all this not from the Professor but from you, a General?" "But my dear lady, I'm only a General in my spare time."

The enclosed verandahs at Doornkloof were full of his botanical specimens and presses and his whole manner of life in this peaceful old house expressed his longing to be close to nature, to have the veld at the front door.

Once, when he was being pressed to remain longer in Europe on some diplomatic mission, he refused, saying: "I am not really happy except on the veld."

In his own opinion, the crowning honour of his life came in 1931 when he was invited to preside at the Centenary Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. His main address on *"The Scientific World Picture of To-day"* was masterly.

He reviewed the evolution of physics from Galileo and Newton to that strange new world of the 1930's when electrons and protons had emerged from atoms and molecules, when the Quantum theory of Max Planck seemed even more revolutionary than the space-time concept of Einstein, when matter itself had disappeared into electrical energy and when the great gulf between inorganic matter and life was being bridged.

He reintroduced his concept of holism and defined science in terms of human values. "Science," he said, "in its selfless pursuit of truth, in its vision of order and beauty partakes of the quality of both art and religion". He pleaded that men should link science with ethical values to remove the great dangers threatening the future.

Astronomy he said seemed to depict life as a lonely and pathetic thing in the physical universe, but the optimistic, holistic Smuts dismissed the thought: "The human spirit is not a pathetic, wandering phantom of the universe, but is at home and meets with spiritual hospitality and response everywhere."

He concluded by hinting that only in terms of evolution could we understand the "immensity, profundity and the unutterable mystery of the universe".

Sixteen years later, in London for the wedding of Princess (now Queen) Elizabeth, he addressed the Royal Institute of Philosophy: "We are passing through grave and critical times, times of deep heart searching. Men are hungry, not for bread but for the things of the spirit. Are they not to be fed? We are starved not only for dollars but for lack of spiritual currency."

We return to Doornkloof, for it was here that General Smuts died. He had celebrated his 80th brithday on May 24th, 1950, with great festivities organised in the City of Johannesburg.

Another party followed in Pretoria; yet another had been planned by Durban and then he hoped to visit Cambridge University. It was not to be. On May 27th, 1950, he sustained a coronary thrombosis. Pneu-

monia followed; he was desperately ill for seven weeks but unaware himself of the condition of his heart.

He recovered sufficienty to enjoy country drives and visits to his bushveld farm. September is springtime in South Africa and on Sunday, 9th September 1950 he enjoyed himself in the garden at Doornkloof with his grandchildren. His apparently improved health was maintained throughout the next day when he found pleasure in two drives and returned home to preside at dinner at the head of his table.. At 7.30. p.m. sitting on the side of his bed he died in the presence of his two daughters.

One of the physicians who attended him has described the last days of General Smuts and how he was not told of the serious condition of his heart.

One evening General Smuts talked to his doctor about the importance of the family unit in the life of a nation: "The nation, he thought, that loses its family unit cannot survive. He thought that Russia would destroy herself by belittling the family unit. On that same night, after a half-hour's chat about the importance of family life, he asked me to call in 'the ladies', but would not state why. I did so, and in came Ouma, Louis and the others, all just a little concerned about why they were being so called. When they had assembled, he told them how good they all were and how they were to be commended for the way they were bringing up their families, and, he ended, would they please now find a wife for me. The interview ended on a hilarious note."

In this same memoir the physician speaks of Mrs. Smuts: "Ouma went about her daily household duties in the normal way, doing her usual little bits of personal laundry and ironing, always seeing that the 'inside' cats (the cats that lived in the house) and the 'outside' cats (they were the cats who were rarely seen by day, but who came from the surrounding trees and bush each night to look for their food on the stoep) were properly fed; the hollow stones at the front steps leading up to the stoep were kept full of water for the bees from the many swarms that hived between the wood and the galvanised-iron sections of the walls of Doornkloof.

"Regularly every day, the *plakboek* was given attention. These scrap books of news cuttings about the Oubaas went back over many years, and she now found great difficulty in keeping up with the press accounts of his illness. 'Please', she said to me, 'do not make your bulletins too long. I cannot keep up with the cuttings'."

Readers of *Historia* will recognise the historical significance of this famous Transvaal house, which welcomes tourists and visitors from all over the world.

For six years after the death of Ouma Smuts, the house stood empty but in 1960 a Pretoria attorney, the late Guy Brathwaite, heard that Doornkloof was to be sold to a business organisation which planned to turn the old house into a sanatorium.

Brathwaite knew the story of its origin in the South African war.

This unpretentious wood-and-iron building strikingly illustrates Smuts' indifference to luxury and ease of living and here he spent the happiest hours of his life.

The property belonged to Mrs. Kitty Smuts, widow of Japie Smuts, the eldest son. Brathwaite bought the house and the 25 morgen that surround it, from her for £7,000.

He regarded the house as the most appropriate memorial to Smuts, and said: "I thought of the hundreds and thousands of men and women in Great Britain, the United States, the Commonwealth and Europe who have been brought up to regard him as one of the great men of the 20th century.

"When they visit South Africa, as more and more of them will do as the years go by, they will want to see the simple house in which he lived. I said to myself: 'They will be prepared to make a pilgrimage to Pretoria just to visit te old house.'

"Also there were the ex-servicemen of South Africa, 200,000 strong. They wanted a memorial to their leader, the Field-Marshal who remained a general to his troops and who was even better known as 'the Oubaas'. What finer memorial could they ask than his old home?"

Brathwaite called a conference of ex-servicemen's organisations and, with their full approval, founded the General Smuts War Veterans' Foundation.

The Foundation is a non-profitmaking company, the shares held by ex-service organisations. The Doornkloof Society was established to assist in preserving the old house. The ownership of the house and grounds was vested in the Foundation but a subscription to the Doornkloof Society gives the subscriber, whether he is an ex-serviceman or not, life membership and free admission to the house and grounds.

In 1962, Guy Brathwaite, to the sorrow of all who knew him, died at the early age of 49.

In 1963, the directors of the Foundation elected as his successor Dr. the Hon. Henry Gluckman, who had served as Minister of Health and Housing from 1945 to 1948 in the Cabinet of General Smuts.

Those responsible have ever kept in mind the picture which General Smuts himsef had of his home. Visitors to Doornkloof are able to recapture what it was about this place that Smuts loved so deeply.

His tastes were simple, almost austere. He slept on the stoep on a narrow, hard bed. His bedside table was a kitchen chair. His bedroom furniture and other furniture from the house are now in the Old Transvaal Museum, Pretoria. Ouma Smuts' bedroom remains just as it was, to the last degree simple and plain.

To Smuts, a return to Doornkloof was a return to peace. He would rise early in the morning and, in old, shabby clothes, attend to his collection of plants. Botany, and particularly the study of grasses, was his favourite hobby. The veld was an entrancing treasure house of nature. Two internationally famous botanists were close friends and frequent visitors to Doornkloof — Dr. Marloth and Dr. Pole-Evans; Smuts persuaded

the latter to come to South Africa from Kew Gardens to improve the grasses of this country. It was the wild life at Doornkloof that attracted the General. Formal flower gardens had no appeal. He loved the trees and the open veld. He was fond of horses but not of game shooting or other forms of hunting.

He owned several farms and, like all true South Africans, loved the land — especially Doornkloof — for here was peace and the simplicity he craved.

Much has already been done; the house and grounds are completely free of mortgage, owing largely to generous donations from mining houses and other organisations. Other donors have helped to restore the property.

The next big task is the establishment of a botanical garden surrounding the house. As the years go by, more and more peole will visit Doornkloof. For many it will be a long, and sometimes dusty journey. It has been decided, therefore, to surround the house with a natural park planted with indigenous trees and shrubs; a place of beauty and botanical interest. Nothing will be done to disturb the peace of Doornkloof. The veld will still "come right up to the front door" of the house as Smuts insisted that it should when he lived there. A path through the veld to Koppie Smuts provides an easy walk to the hallowed spot where the General's ashes were scattered and where each year on his birthday, a memorial service is held.

Many interesting plants have already been collected by Mrs. Carl Jeppe, some of her botanical finds including rare aloes and cycads.

On 30th January, 1964, Sir Winston Churchill and Earl Attlee sent a letter to *The Times,* London — an appeal to the people of Britain. They wrote: "Sir, — in 1950 Field Marshal Smuts died at Doornkloof, his farm near Pretoria, where he had lived for over 40 years.

"Doornkloof is a simple wooden farmhouse which has remained as Smuts left it, with the wild gardens he designed. The old house itself is being cared for and visitors from all over the world are welcomed. But inevitably, as time passes, the property demands more preservation, and the grasses, trees, and shrubs need skilled care.

"We believe that the people of Britain may wish to share in a memorial to Smuts by contributing to a fund to preserve Doornkloof in memory of this man who shone among his contemporaries, was a devoted friend of this country, and whose counsels and initiatives in war and peace were on a high plane of statesmanship and humanity."

Many people in the United Kingdom responded to this letter and are now members of the Doornkloof Society.

In the early months of 1965, since the death of Sir Winston Churchill, journals have repeatedly called attention to the friendship and understanding which existed between these two men, so different and yet such great companions in war and in peace.

A visit to Doornkloof is a charming drive for visitors coming either from Johannesburg or Pretoria. From the main road there is a three-mile

trip to Irene and the way to Doornkloof is clearly signposted on the far side of this beautiful little village.

Arriving at Doornkloof the visitor may obtain tea, see many of the family's possessions and purchase books, pamphlets and picture postcards as souvenirs of the trip.

No single man will ever succeed in painting a complete picture of Jan Christiaan Smuts. Perhaps it is as a philosopher that he will live longest in the annals of mankind.

Millions of words have been written in an attempt to interpret the enigma that he was: his biographers are many: he has been portrayed as a soldier, stateman, scholar, philosopher, mystic, politician and as a simple son of the veld. He played all these parts and homelier roles; a father romping with his children, an adored grandfather, a botanist who let his wild grasses grow over his doorstep. For every man who crosses that threshold, he has a message.

Come quietly to Doornkloof and let his memory remind you that valour and wisdom, vision and hope are not dead, nor shall they die while there remain men and women to honour his name.

Phyllis S. Lean.