

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1899.

## WEALTH OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Almost in the centre of the great, undulating, desert-like plains north of the Vaal river on which some six thousand sturdy Dutch farmers established themselves after the great exodus, or 'trek' of 1836 stands the city of Johannesburg.

In the midst of a wilderness, almost trackless, devoid of trees, a huge table-land six thousand feet above the sea-level, on which the semitropical sun beats down and the clouds descend, belching torrents for which the name of rain is far too feeble, rises, like Aladdin's palace, a majestic modern city, alive with energy, electricity and bustle. It is thronged with vigorous humanity in breathless pursuit of wealth. It harbors nearly two hundred thousand persons of more than ordinary activity. It is a hive of busy workers without a drone. An oasis of intellect in a desert of dull squatters, a mighty metropolis compared with which the colonial capitals, Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg, or the Port of Durban, are as Pensacola to Chicago. Such is Johannesburg, the one spot in the tiny South African Republic which makes that quaint little nation of supreme importance to the whole world, for the possession of which the blood of thousands may be spilt, and which has focused upon the arid plains of the Transvaal the covetous eyes of powerful nations.

Although this mushroom city, until recently hundreds of miles from the nearest railroad was only marked off by stakes driven into the unbroken veldt and dignified with the title of a township on the twentieth of September, 1886, it has today hundreds of substantial and artistic stone and marble buildings, many miles of well paved streets, palatial club houses, magnificent mansions, a majestic stock exchange, five first class theatres and opera houses, hotels with elegant accommodations for thousands of guests, stately churches, hospitals, museums, electric street railroads, race tracks and polo grounds, with an unique proportion of gambling houses which are wide open night and day all the year round.

There is a misapprehension in the minds of many that Johannesburg is merely a mining camp, a rough and tumble collection of diggers' shanties, a sort of semi-tropical Klondike. This was so not more than years ago, when all the buildings were of corrugated iron which had been carted over hundreds of miles of trackless veldt on huge oxteams; but since the railroad connecting Johannesburg with Cape Town was completed, in 1893, the town has compared favorably with any of our flourishing Western cities having about the same number of inhabitants.

### Wealth of the Johannesburg Region.

Johannesburg is built upon 'Tom Tiddler's Ground.' Beneath it is buried perhaps more of the precious metal than the whole world ever saw. From the mines within a radius of twenty miles from Johannesburg Market Square was taken last year more gold than the whole continent of North America produced, more than was won from the entire continent of Australia, and hundreds of times as much as the Klondike has yielded up to date. The record of the Witwatersrand reef, over which Johannesburg is built, is already more than forty million ounces of gold, worth over \$800,000,000, and it is known that at least \$4,000,000,000 worth remains to be extracted.

On the spot where now stands Johannesburg, in the summer of 1885 was one solitary hut, inhabited by a Boer named Johannes Bezuidenhout. It is from this pithy and illiterate Dutch farmer that the town takes its name.

The nearest habitation to Johannesburg was probably ten miles away, for the Boers are an unsocial race, and should a neighbor crowd on them, establishing a home within a mile, the first occupant will merely grunt, gather together his belongings, and 'trek,' or move away. At this time there was a rush on the newly discovered De Kaap gold field, and hundreds of eager prospectors passed over the Witwatersrand, or White Water Ridge, on their way to Barberton and Komati, little dreaming of its marvellous riches. Bezuidenhout sat outside his shanty, sullenly refusing information or shelter, after the manner of the Boers, to the swarm of gold

seekers who flocked by. But one of them, an Englishman named Fred Struben, had observed indications on a farm called Sterkfontein as early as January, 1884, which made him linger at 'the Rand.'

Long previous to this a Dutchman, one Jan Marais, had hunted for gold in the Witwatersrand in spots where the soil resembled that of the Australian diggings, and upon his announcing the presence of the precious metal the Boer Government, in 1854 gave him five hundred pounds to keep his secret and sent him back to Holland. They did not want to be overrun by an invasion of foreigners, or 'Uitlanders,' at all strangers are termed. Fred Struben, now one of the richest men in the world, told the writer of the story of his discovery of the world's richest gold-fields in these words:

"On the second day of my prospecting on the Sterkfontein farm, to the west of the range, I found a reef showing gold which assayed on the surface six pennyweights, and at fifty feet had improved so much that some of it showed two ounces."

Early in April, 1884 I first came across some water-worn pebbles on the very highest parts of the range, and I felt sure that the whole country must have been at one time submerged. This naturally led me to think that there must be conglomerate beds or drifts in the neighborhood which might carry gold, as in other parts of the world had been the case. It was not until March, 1885, that I struck beds of the 'blankee' formation, of a nature which hitherto had not been known in Africa. I showed these conglomerate beds to several people, among them a well-known expert, who only laughed. My brother and I crushed fifty tons, however, and lo! they gave eight pennyweights to the ton.

Such was the beginning of the South African gold fever. Within a few months the Rand was overrun by enthusiastic, determined and penniless gold-seekers, capitalists from the recently discovered diamond fields of Kimberly, adventurers from England and the colonies, and all classes of men from all parts of the world. The Boer government took no action concerning the new gold fields until July 18, 1886, when it proclaimed and threw open nine farms.

In November, 1887, there were sixty eight mining companies with a capital of \$15,000,000. In January, 1890, there were five hundred and forty gold-mining companies established there with an aggregate capital of \$35,000,000. Steadily the output increased until, in May, 1892, one hundred thousand ounces were taken from the mines. The monthly output has since reached nearly five times that amount the output for August, 1899, being 482,108 ounces.

### The Five Gold Reefs of the Witwatersrand.

The gold that was first discovered at the Rand cropped out of the ground in a series of five parallel reefs varying in thickness from one inch to four feet, the distance between the southernmost and the northern reef averaging one hundred and fifty feet. The original claims were 400x150 feet, the latter dimensions east and west along the reefs, the former north and south so as to take in all the five outcrops. A fact which makes the Rand the greatest gold-field in the world was not known then. It was not for two or three years that the true formation of the gold bearing veins was discovered. When it was at length found that the veins after descending to a depth of about two thousand feet curved off in a southerly direction, forming as it were, one side of a basin, and continuing at that level practically an indefinite distance, the whole world went wild over the riches of the Witwatersrand. This was as great a surprise to old and experienced miners as the first discovery of the gold was to the sleepy Boers.

Hundreds of claims were pegged out to the south of the outcrop claims, thousands of shafts were sunk to a depth of 2000 feet, always to find the rich conglomerate deposits. Hundreds of new companies were formed to work the deep levels at a distance of miles south of the outcrop.

A craze to find the other side of this marvellous basin also seized the people. It was argued, with some semblance of

reason, that perhaps hundreds, nay thousands of miles away, the southern edge of the basin should reach the surface, and fortune seekers penetrated where the foot of white man had never before stood. This craze aided the formation of the British South African Chartered Company. It was largely responsible for the support which has been given to the expansive plans of Cecil Rhodes.

The Government buildings are still little better than barns. The post office is a little one-story shanty, where the residents must call for their mail. The Government, though it collects the heaviest taxes in the world, gives no such return for the money as free delivery of letters. In spite of every obstacle placed in the way of improvements, the Uitlanders have built in the heart of the Transvaal desert such a city as would do credit to any civilized country.

Such is the past history of Johannesburg 'the gem of the Transvaal,' and yet in the event of war the first and probably the only really important and serious action of the Boers will be to wreck and ruin this modern city of Midas.

### THEIR TRANSVAAL CONCESSION.

An English Story of Oom Paul's Stewardship in a Business Transaction.

An exceedingly curious and interesting story about President Kruger has been related by a resident of Toronto who has spent a number of years in South Africa, and is well acquainted with conditions in that part of the world. The story was related to him by one of the principal actors in the incident, whose name the informant mentioned, although it would not be judicious to give it publicity. It will suffice to say that the name was instantly recognized as that of a person who is exceedingly well known in connection with South African affairs. It may be added that the story, so far as is known, has not been published.

In 1884 Paul Kruger, Jorissen and two other delegates from the Transvaal were in London negotiating with Lord Derby the famous London Convention which has been so assiduously canvassed of late. No one has ever accused the burghers of the Transvaal of being an especially docile set, and during the absence of Kruger and his fellow leaders one of the not infrequent civic commotions took place at home. Not particularly important in itself, it had the disagreeable effect of stopping supplies for the country quartette of diplomats; and Oom Paul and his friends found themselves stone broke. They could not pay their hotel bill, and their circumstances were awkward in every way.

At this juncture the Englishman appeared on the scene. He was staying in London, was familiar with South Africa and its public men, and knew the Transvaal delegates well. He became aware of the scrape in which they found themselves. An acute business man, he saw an opportunity. It was before the days of the Witwatersrand, and the Transvaal Government was eking out its insufficient income by grants of monopolies and concessions. The Englishman had an uncle, a wealthy Yorkshire woolen manufacturer. Enlisting his uncle's aid, he made a proposition to Mr. Kruger. The two Englishmen would pay the obnoxious hotel bills and would supplement it with a cash gift of £1,000. In return they asked a concession for the monopoly of the wool manufacturing and the wool washing of the Transvaal, in which it is to be recollected, considerable flocks of sheep are kept by the Boers. Mr. Kruger thought it over, and accepted. The hotel bill was wiped off the books. The thousand pound check found its resting place. Thus provided with the sinews of war, Kruger and his fellow delegates continued the negotiations. The London Convention was signed.

The Englishmen went ahead with their plans. They intended to erect a mill to manufacture certain woollen goods that would find a local market and to control the export of the surplus wool. They were to get a certain tract of land 75 acres in extent. The City of Johannesburg today stands upon that tract. They bought their machinery and were ready to ship it. Just then they mentioned their good bargain to a friend who was an official in the Colonial Office.

"As an official," observed that friend, "my mouth is closed. But, speaking as a

friend—don't ship that machinery until the concession is ratified by the Volksraad."

Second thoughts prevailed. The Englishmen waited. The Volksraad met, and President Kruger submitted the proposed concession to them, exhibiting no warmth in its advocacy. The Volksraad threw it out summarily. The Englishmen were glad that they had not shipped that machinery.

Then the Englishmen broached to President Kruger the question of that thousand pounds and that hotel bill. The President was as suave as Oom Paul ever is. Those sums, he explained, were to be charged against the republic. As Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger he had nothing to do with the matter.

Neither, it seems, had the republic, for the Englishmen are still minus their little investment.

### JUST HOW IT WAS DONE.

The Green Goods Story From the Viewpoint of an Aroostock Purchaser.

A very excited man paced up and down the floor of Max Lizotte's office in Lewiston Wednesday morning. His hat was on the floor in a corner, and he hugged a little tin box with a brick in it under his arm, and good round Aroostock adjectives came in between every few words of hot old English that came from his lips. He was a friend of Mr. Lizotte's, a farmer from the land of big potatoes and the sun rise, who had dropped off at Lewiston on his way home from New York where he had acted as the confidential agent of three or four of his friends. After considerable soothing from Mr. Lizotte he stopped walking long enough to sit down and tell over his story to a newspaper man who transcribes it here.

This Aroostock gentleman is town clerk or was a year or so ago of an Aroostock town.

"Two years ago," he said, "I got a letter from a New York man who enclosed a dollar bill which he said was a counterfeit. He and his friends were making them in New York and he said that this bill had been in circulation, and that I would have no trouble in passing it. He warned me not to answer the letter. In a few weeks he wrote again and this time he sent me a five dollar bill, which he said was also a wrong one. I passed both of them at the bank and found no trouble. Acting upon the advice of the New York man I talked the matter quietly over with three of my neighbors and after awhile they decided to send me to New York after some of the money."

"The folks up there were given \$1,000 for \$100, and we raised \$1,600 in cash to buy a lot of it with. I was to go to New York to a certain hotel, and occupy a certain room. At a certain hour a man would call with a card, and I was to admit him and take his guidance. I was in the hotel at the appointed time, and at the hour exactly the recognizable knock came at the door."

"I admitted the man and he told me more of the plan. The money was all like that which we had received through the mail. It could be passed and looked all right, and had been passed, but was not all right."

He was minute in his explanations, and gave me a lot of advice. I had never been in a city before, and was not sharp enough to keep my mouth shut. We got into a cab and rode about for an hour, and then stopped at a restaurant. There were two other men, who took me and carried me away again to Jersey City. At 10 o'clock that night we found our way into a yard with a high brick building and a good big brick wall around it. Here two more men met us, and the others went away. They escorted me into a room, where they explained the system more carefully. They acknowledged that they were doing wrong and that they knew it, but it was not their business, and if they were caught I should not suffer, but they would."

"In another room where there were four or five men around a table they showed me the money, about \$10,000. I should think it was all good money. It looked well, was worn by circulation, and had all the appearance of good money. I was a little scared, though, and I said that I would take only \$400 worth of it. They counted out \$1,600 and handed it to me for inspection."

It was all right.

"Then I handed it to them, but they held out the tin box for it, and I put it in, and they sealed the box up before my eyes and handed it to me. As I was going out the door my courage again arose, and I went back, and said, 'Damn it all, I guess I might as well take it all. I have \$1,400 to invest in it.' At that they grew excited and said: 'Of course you want to invest it all,' and took-like I did. They took the box and put the money into it right before my eyes and again handed it to me, and I went out with two of them. I was conscious of a good trade and was happy. I hugged that darned old tin box for dear life, and was as happy as if I had sold a pair of sheers for double price. It was a wonder. The two men told me that now there was a danger that I might get caught and that the thing was for me to buy a ticket to Bangor at once. They went with me to a restaurant and we ate supper, and then went out and got one drink of beer around, and they went with me to the depot. I didn't know just where I was, but one man bought a ticket for me, and gave it to me. It was from Jersey City to Bangor Me., and I took it and got aboard still hugging the box. On my way through I remembered that I had a brother-in-law in Massachusetts and thought I would stop off there and get a look at him and at my money at the same time."

"I went to a hotel in Lawrence and hired a room. I was hungry and tired, and needed a shave and wash, but the first thing I did was to sit down on the bed and undo the wrappings of my heavy tin box. I found that it was locked and that I had not the key. They had not given me any key, and for the first time I felt it was a little crooked. I burst open the iron lock of the box and in a lot of tissue wrappings was a one dollar bill on top, and under that—a common red brick with tissue paper all around it to keep it from rattling."

"My heart coiled out my boot heels."

"I sat down on the bed and stared at the brick, and then I rushed out to telegraph to New York to set the police at work. It was a wicked old sensation for me. I went back with telegraphing and after a little took the train for home, but when I got to Brunswick last night I stopped off here to see Mr. Lizotte, to try and see if there was anything I could do. I met him a few years ago in Aroostock when he was campaigning there."

"What I dread most of all is the going home and facing my neighbors, though."

The man felt very bad, but was not ready to have his name attached to the story, and wanted to get home quietly before it came out. Mr. Lizotte of course told him that there was nothing to be done. He left on the morning train for the East.

### CALLIOPES AND FIRE WAGONS.

Features of Political Processions That Sufferingly Says are Neglected.

"I hear now," said Mr. Saddy, 'the bringing of the big brass drum, or the pounding of the steel bar that serves as a bell, within the transparency-covered wagon of the political candidate as it is drawn about the streets. As home would be without a mother, so would be a political campaign without these wagons, with the sound of the pounding issuing from within and drawn by horses warranted not to run away. Welcome, wagon, am glad to see you, and to hear your booming drums and you bring to my mind long cherished fancies concerning two features that I would like to see introduced in political processions, these being the calliopes and the fire wagon."

"We have in the processions torches and banners, transparencies, flags and fireworks and bands. Why not a calliopo or two in the line to cap the climax and sound the campaign songs in notes that could be heard above the tumult of the applauding multitude, eh?"

"And the fire wagons would be simply wagons or carts with iron bodies, into which red fire could be shovelled to burn as the procession moved along. That's all; but would I be effective? Well, I should snort."

These, as I said, have long been pet fancies, and I long to see them realized; to hear the calliopes screaming and to see the red fires glow. The pounding of the big brass drum within the wagon of the candidate soothes me some; but if ever I get the management of the procession department in a political campaign I shall have in every night parade no end of calliopes and fire wagons till you can't reef."

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