

\$300,000 FLYING WEDGE.**"BARBARIAN" BROWN GETS DAMAGES IN THE TRANSVAAL.**

He Formed His Wedge in a Gold Rush in the Rand—Was Pushed Through a Mob of Thousands, and Reached the Commissioner Only to Lose his Rights.

"Barbarian" Brown, otherwise R. E. Brown, an American, has just received an award of damages amounting to nearly £60,000 from the Transvaal Government. It is the sequel of the wildest gold farm rush of South Africa, in which Brown pursued the tactics of the football field, and had himself driven through an immense mob of lawless rushers by a flying wedge of 300 armed men. It was an exploit of a football captain and frontier American.

"Barbarian" Brown came to South Africa with a reputation for nerve gained in the famous Coeur d'Alene strikes, where he took the part of the mine owners and never receded from his stand, though daily threatened with death. He even edited a paper enunciating his opinions, called the Barbarian. This furnished the sobriquet which clung to him when he reached Johannesburg.

Once here Brown secured a place with one of the most important mining companies on the Rand. He was an expert consulting engineer, and soon made himself valuable to the company by gobbling up the very richest claims on the Murchison Range. It was as their representative also that Brown planned and carried out the football rush. Twelve thousand miners, the very roughest men in the gold fields, made up from nearly every nation on the globe, took part in this rush, which occurred on a level stretch of ground in September, 1895, and the goal was a galvanized iron shanty, six feet square wherein stood a Government Mining Commissioner, whose business it was to sell licenses for claims on the Witfontein farm.

This farm lay directly on the gold reef and belonged to the Government. It was one of the last of the rich farms whereon the old Boers had for years been raising their crops of mealies, all unconscious of the hidden wealth. The exodus began ten days before the opening. The Rand was in an uproar. Every mining company there prepared for the occasion. It was well known that the Witfontein lay along the richest part of the reef, and that a claim there would yield fortunes.

The Pretorian Government knew this, too, but had not counted on any such demonstration as followed, or the claims would have been disposed of by lottery, the plan afterward adopted. The proclamation in the Pretoria press gave permission to any one to prospect the farm, so that all buyers had an opportunity for locating the best claims. But first they must obtain a license at the little iron shanty three miles from the farm. Consequently every vehicle in Johannesburg had been hired or bought to transport men to the spot.

The road from Johannesburg to Klerksdorp, which lies near the Witfontein, looked like the route of an army transportation. Tents, cooking outfits, cases of whiskey and roulette tables were all jumbled together on a wagon. It was estimated that on the day of the opening 12,000 men occupied the camp, in addition to many Boers who came from all parts of the Transvaal to witness the scene.

John Hays Hammond was then consulting engineer for the consolidated Gold Fields Company, and he assumed direction over nearly 1,000 men, who were expected to tear a hole right through the mass and smash everything. The whole camp was armed to the teeth. Every man carried at least one revolver and expected to use it, for it was a fight for big stakes, and each company promised protection to its men. There were practically no danger of arrest, however, for the Zaps, or Boer policemen, trembled with fear at that armed mob.

The plans of each company to effect the coup were much the same. Barney Barnato, J. B. Robinson Beit, the Joels and every one interested in gold mining in Johannesburg, great or small, took a vital interest in the struggle and put forth every effort to gain the prize. Each company hoped to push its man up to the window first, purchase the license, hand it to an armed rider and hurry it off to the farm, where the engineers and peggers were waiting to jump in and stake off the richest claims.

Six firms even went so far as to sink strong wooden posts just by the window and to these lashed men with ropes, so that they could not be pulled away. But these precautions availed nothing, for when the struggle began sharp knives severed the thongs and both men and posts landed on the outskirts of the crowd.

Personally, Brown was not formidable. With 5 feet 8 inches of height and smooth boyish countenance, he was not dangerous

looking. But those who had seen him glance down the barrel of a .45 Colt without so much as moving an eyelid knew him as absolutely fearless Brown was on speaking terms with the rough element, and he utilized these to form a flying wedge, which at that period had just been developed by the American football teams.

To get all these men under one flag he hired the seven most desperate characters on the Rand—Alec Love, Jim and Jack Maloney, Manny Garchel, 'Butch' Wilson, Jack Hildebrandt and Danger. They were men who would fight at the drop of a hat, and cut your throat and take chances on escaping punishment. Love, who is now serving a sentence for highway robbery, was a good-looking man, well educated and quite gentlemanly when sober. He had received a college training in the States. He had red hair and a red mustache was very handsome and massively built.

Brown selected him for his captain and gave him carte blanche financially. Each ringleader brought his particular friends, and Brown promised them \$25 a day and good bonus if they pushed him through. When this regiment of toughs made its first appearance in the little town of Klerksdorp the citizens fled for their lives. When this company reached the camp many firms immediately made overtures to the men and tried to win them over with drink and money. A number of Americans started for John Hays Hammond's camp, but Alec Love stood in front with a drawn revolver and threatened to shoot the first man who left.

Brown found that the only way to hold his men was to keep them drunk, so for five days previous to the opening whiskey flowed like water and the ringleaders boosted up their cohorts with bad liquor. On the day of the rush, however, no man was so drunk as to forget about the flying wedge, which had been thoroughly explained and illustrated. At the very peep of dawn the great mass began to push, though the sale was not until 9 o'clock. Lines were formed, and the entire gathering was soon engaged in a vicious free fight. Men emerged with ears bitten off, eyes blackened, noses broken and teeth loosened. As soon as a company got its man to the window he was dragged away and either passed back overhead or nearly trampled to death. Many succeeded in reaching the spot, but it was impossible to hold a man there long, for he was soon borne down by force of numbers.

Brown and his henchmen, in the meantime, held their position on the outskirts. It was not until half an hour before the time appointed to open the window that he began to form his wedge. Probably 6,000 men were massed between him and the goal at that moment, but this never feazed the indomitable Yankee. With thongs of rawhide he lashed himself to Alec Love and Jim Maloney, and, with his feet barely touching the earth, gave the signal to move.

At the first impact with the human wall there was a terrific howl of pain, followed

by imprecations, and a man staggering out of the crowd with the blood spurting from his leg. Maloney had run his knife into him several inches. In a few minutes these cries echoed on all sides and the attention of the mob became divided, some turning to face the wedge, which hung together without a break and seemed to gain velocity as it neared the goal. Maloney and Love with heads down, darted into every opening, and where there was none, made it with a jab of a knife. Brown was hustled along breathless and bleeding, until within a dozen rods of the window.

Here several Cornishmen' great hulking fellows, with plenty of strength and grit, made a stand that bade fair to spoil the rush. They smashed the apex and were mowing down the pugilists when the rest of the wedge broke through, and cleared the way. Brown though badly bruised, continued to shout out promises of reward to his men if they pushed him up on time. There were but a few minutes left then, and the office was rocking to and fro with the tide of humanity.

Pounded and beaten on every side, the great flying wedge made one last effort, and with a zigzag movement and many knife thrusts finally broke through and fairly hurled Brown against the office. With a good right hand blow a pugilist smashed in the window and Brown clutched the frail partition with a death grin. At the same moment a gun was fired, announcing 9 o'clock, and the whole mass, as the man, heaved up against the little galvanized iron booth, crushing Brown almost flat.

Surrounded by a remnant of his flying wedge, however, he continued to hang to the window, and was just getting at his wad of five pound notes when the Government commissioner threw open the door and announced President Kruger's order suspending the opening. It nearly cost him his life, for bullets rained in the shanty from all sides, and the mob pushed harder than ever, and Brown was on the point of giving up his position when one of these happy inspirations which occur to men of quick thought and action urged him to demand a license.

'Here I am,' he yelled at the frightened commissioner, sticking through the window a face covered with blood. 'Here's my good hard-earned money. Now give me my license or I'll sue the Government for 1,000,000 pounds.'

A sudden pitch of the mob nearly pushed the plucky fellow through the window and nearly shattered his shoulder blade, but he waited to hear the refusal and have it witnessed, and then allow himself to be passed out on the valdt.

Out of the thousands there he was the only one who had the foresight to do this, and though it took a long time, he finally received his indemnity. This amount has been kept secret, but it is variously estimated by the Johannesburg papers between £50,000 and £75,000.

During the entire time that the suit was being tried, and it passed through a number of courts, the flying wedge hovered about Brown, many of them not doing a stroke of work, all existing on the hope of receiving their share of the reward, but as Brown left Johannesburg before it was granted these choice spirits were doomed to disappointment.

**OPENED ON DEUCES.****A Jack Pot Won by a Risky Game and Afterward Restored.**

'The man who opens a jackpot without holding the openers takes about the longest chance possible in card gambling,' said a Colorado man who has seen some historic doings in the American game of draw. 'It's risky work. It means bullets in a good many sections of this country, and even in peaceful committees the man who's caught at it has a heap of trouble in squaring himself, whether he has actually made a mistake or not. I only recall the case of one man getting away with that kind of proposition, and he was on the level and made good afterward.'

'This man was Byron McGregor, who, back in the swirling days of Colorado, ran the swellest establishment for money-hazarding purposes in Denver. McGregor was a finely educated and polished man, and he was in a game with three of the most prominent citizens in Denver, one of whom afterward became a United States Senator—no, not Ed Wolcott; another man. The game was served out in the private parlor of one of the players, and I was one of half a dozen witnesses of it. There wasn't a high-grade man with a liking for draw poker out that way who wasn't content to sit into a game in which Byron McGregor was one of the players. All in all, McGregor was about the most perfectly honest man I ever met up with. He could beat any magician I ever saw at card tricks, but when it came to inserting any of 'em into a legitimate game, McGregor wasn't there. He played a magnificent game of poker, of course, although he was often a big loser after long bouts at draw with heavy-playing friends.'

'In this particular game McGregor was 'way loser after the first couple of hours—nearly \$4,000 in the hole. He wasn't bothered a little bit over this, for he was a thoroughbred loser, and, besides, the receipts from his rooms frequently netted him \$8,000 or \$10,000 on nights of big plays at the cases. But he didn't like the

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way the cards were running, and he finally pushed his chair back, remarking: 'This isn't one of my nights. Make it a triumvirate, you three. I think I'll stay out.'

'Better hang on a bit, McGregor, and get some of it back, so you won't have to smoke a pipe,' said one of the players demurring. 'Stay in a while, anyhow. Such easy ones as you don't come our way very often.'

'Oh, well, we'll play a final jack pot,' said McGregor. But, win or lose, I've got chilblains so far as continuing play tonight is concerned. One more jack.'

'McGregor dealt the hand himself, and I was behind him as he did so. The best he gave himself was a pair of deuces. It was a \$100 jack, and the \$400 was in the centre of the baize in gold. It passed around, and none of the three opened it.'

'Well, if I've got to smoke a pipe, I see my way clear for \$400 worth of smoking tobacco, anyhow,' said McGregor, when it was up to him. 'She's open.'

'I couldn't believe that he'd do a thing like that, and maybe McGregor heard me gasp behind him, for, upon the pretence of coughing, he turned his head around and screwed up his left eye at me.'

'The three of 'em stayed along and drew to their hands. They all filled too. McGregor drew two cards to his pair of deuces and the eight spot he held up, and he caught another deuce and another eight—a comfortable looking full house, deuces atop of eights. When it came to betting McGregor poked them to a standstill, and the three of 'em had finally to look at each other and say:

'If anybody in the crowd's got 'em it must be McGregor.'

'And so they called him. He showed down his full hand and scooped in \$5,800. Then he yawned, put on his topcoat and stuffed his winnings into the pockets thereof and left. The three others played on for an hour or so, and then the game broke up and they went down to the lobby of the hotel. When they made their appearance the night clerk of the hotel called them. He had three envelopes in his hand, one to each of the three players with whom McGregor had been pokerizing.

Mr. McGregor left these for you gentlemen before he went out a while ago with instructions that they were to be handed to you when you came down,' said the clerk, handing the envelopes to the gentlemen addressed.

'Each of the envelopes contained a check signed by Byron McGregor for the amount each of the players had involved in the phony jack pot, together with a note reading:

'I didn't want to get shot to pieces, so I employ this method of stating that deuce-opened jackpots are vicious in principle and dangerous to the peace of society, especially in these parts. Never mention a tobacco pipe to a loser. It vitiates his sense of squareness. Check inclosed. Query: 'Who's the laugh on?'
'P. S.—I guess it's on me.'

'B. McGregor.'

Not Like Nature.

A visitor to a museum reports that he saw a countryman standing before the bust of a woman in a collection of statuary. The woman was represented in the act of coiling her hair, and as the visitor came up the countryman was saying to himself—'No, sir; that ain't true to nature. She ain't got her mouth full o' hairpins.'

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