

LAND OF THE BOERS.

Authentic Information Concerning Its Climate and Topography.

Snow in Winter Is Not Uncommon, But the Summers Are Very Hot—Cattle-Raising the Principal Industry.

[Special Correspondence.] The impression that the South African republic and the Orange Free State are tropical countries seems to prevail quite generally. Some imaginative newspaper writers have gone so far as to compare the climate of the two countries with that of Cuba and the West Indies. Nothing could be more misleading than such statements. While the climatic conditions of the district in question are not by any means ideal, still some sections, especially that called the "Hooge Veldt" (the high field), which forms the major part of the Transvaal, is very healthy. The heat of the summer is mitigated by great elevation on most places 4,000 feet above the



A TYPICAL BOER FARMER.

sea level), and the winters are quite cold, snow frequently falling on the slopes of the Drakenberg, a mountain chain whose summits are 11,000 feet above the level of the sea in several places.

Pretoria, the capital of the South African republic, has had a weather bureau for a number of years, and in its reports the January temperature is given as 90 degrees Fahrenheit, that of the winter months as 40 degrees. The summer is the rainy season, and storms with thunder and hail are frequently severe. The rains usually begin about the middle of October and last intermittently until April, almost the entire fall taking place during this period. At Pretoria the average rainfall is 30 inches. This increases toward the east, reaching a maximum in the mountain region, and decreases toward the west, in the direction of the Great Kalahari desert, a barren and dry strip of unproductive land, so that on the frontier it is not more than 12 inches. A climate such as this, of course, not favorable to the growth of timber, except in the river bottom lands. Consequently anything bigger than bushes is not often seen in either of the two states, although the soil supports an abundant herbage which, in the winter, becomes dry and brown, but springs up with renewed vigor and increased succulence with the first rains. Nature has made the Transvaal country a vast pasture, and that is why cattle raising is the chief industry of the burghers.

General farming is profitable only where costly irrigation plants have been established. The soil is adapted for the cultivation of all kinds of vegetables and fruits, and in some districts a very fine quality of tobacco is grown. Grain also does well in certain districts, but as a whole the two Dutch republics are purely pastoral in their industries. As the pasturage is scanty for half a year, the farms are necessarily large, for the stock must often be driven long distances in search of fodder. This accounts also for the small population



MAJUBA HILL FROM THE RAILROAD.

of the immense territory covered by the Boer states, the average in the Transvaal being seven inhabitants to the square mile and only four in the Orange Free State.

Until the discovery of gold the Transvaal was a country of farms. The gold regions are of small area, and nearly all controlled by English capitalists and miners. Although the Boers were given every opportunity to engage in mining, they stuck to their farms which, by the way, are truly picturesque establishments. They consist of sheep kraals, ostrich farms, Kaffir huts, where the boys eat and sleep, wagon houses and out-houses roofed with zinc. The dwelling house usually is a square, red brick building, with thatched roof, fronted by a low brick wall. The walls surrounding the sheep kraals are made of soil. The average Boer house consists of one big room, into which the front door opens. It is called the "sit kame," or sitting-room, and has no flooring beyond clay, or clay studded

with peach stones, to prevent the wear and tear of passing feet. It is furnished with a table, chairs and chairs, seated with strips of hide.

Large game of many varieties, antelope and giraffes were once abundant, but they are now comparatively scarce. Nevertheless, the Boers are still famous hunters and can handle a rifle perhaps better than their English neighbors in Cape Colony, Bechuanaland and Natal. Frequent troubles with the Zulus and Kaffirs have, moreover, given them quite a little knowledge of warfare. A British officer, who is thoroughly familiar with Dutch customs and history in South Africa, is authority for the statement that the older generation delights in remembering Majuba hill, Laing's Nek, Ingogo and all the rest of English humiliation, and some of them to this day retain their old guns, with a notch in the stock for every "rooinek," or Englishman, they allege to have shot. They fill their cartridge belt, put a piece of blinding in their pocket, mount their horses and ride off to war. Blinding, it should be explained, is sundried venison cut into strips, and is said to be very nourishing and sustaining. The Boers, when out on the veldt, live on it for weeks at a time and seem to crave no other food.

The same authority says that when taking the field the Boers harass themselves with no cumbersome commissariat or ambulance wagons. Everything is left to chance, and in the war of 1881 it seemed truly wonderful how they escaped all manner of horrible dangers. If they get wounded they seek a refuge in the nearest farmhouse. If they are mortally wounded they look upon it as a decree of Providence.

Practically every Boer is mounted, and although they have no regular constituted regiments they join together in what is called "commandos." These are the aggregate collections of the farmers and their sons from one particular district gathered together in a heterogeneous mass under the leadership of the "field cornet" or the commandant of that particular district. In the past the Boers have never fought in the open, but in the war now in progress they have several times made bold charges and accepted hand-to-hand encounters. They have also added field hospitals to their equipment, and the forces around Ladysmith are accompanied by an ambulance train and a staff of Boer physicians, who are, almost without exception, graduates of Edinburgh.

The Boer women excel in marksmanship; and when the British troops shall finally succeed in invading the Transvaal they will find their enemies by no means to be despised. They handle a rifle with ease and can shoot a bird on



THE BOERS AT WAR. (Handing Out Ammunition to a Commando Near Ladysmith.)

the wing without missing more than once in ten times.

In view of the fact that Sir Redvers Buller, commander in chief of the British forces in South Africa, is about ready to start on his march of conquest, the topography of the country to be subdued is of timely interest. The two allied Dutch republics are separated by the Vaal river only, and in physical geography are practically one region. Natal cuts off the Orange Free State from the Indian ocean, and Zululand and Portuguese East Africa do the same for the Transvaal. Both states have British territory on the west, which also forms the northern boundary of the one and the southern of the other. The principal natural defense of the Boer country lies on the eastern side, where it is protected by mountains. In fact, the two states have been described as a vast upland plateau, bordered on one side by a group of mountain ranges.

The Drakenberg separates Natal from the eastern part of the Orange Free State; then enters the Transvaal, having Portuguese East Africa between it and the ocean. North of the granite region of Basutoland the Drakenberg is not imposing, the mountains being rounded and consisting of stratified rock, sandstone and shale, capped occasionally by sheets of basaltic rock. Cliffs now and then offer some striking scenic variations. Majuba hill has such a structure—alternating sandstone and shale, capped with igneous rock; it and the adjoining ridge, to which it sinks down, is Laing's Nek, over which the road from Natal to the Transvaal ocean, and which is now pierced by a railway. The mountain barrier once passed, the great South African plateau, of which the two Dutch republics in the eastern portion, is entered. This plateau extends westward beyond Mafeking and Kimberley; and that is the reason why these two towns were so easily reached by the Boers who are now besieging them.

After the British troops have once ascended this great plateau they will have no difficulty in maintaining a direct line of communication with Cape Town, nor will they experience much trouble in carrying artillery across the mountains. That is why the Boer generals invaded Natal and fortified the passes leading to Johannesburg and Pretoria. They know that the doom of their country is sealed as soon as the British have crossed the Drakenberg.

G. W. WHIFFERT.

"Kurnel Bunker."

His Bill Was a Good One, But It Didn't Pass the Arkansas Legislature

By M. QUAD. (Copyrighted)

"Very fair, sah—very fair for this season of the year," said Kurnel Bunker, as he drained his glass and set it on the calling of the veranda. "And now, sah, you want to hear about what was called 'Kurnel Bunker's Purge Bill,' which would have made a paradise of the state of Arkansas had it become a law. The state of Arkansas, sah, as you may have observed, is the natural home of the mosquito, the gallinipper and several varieties of flies. It has been my proud boast, and the proud boast of other prominent residents of the state, that only within the confines of the state does the horse-fly reach a luxurious extravagance of growth. Here he passes the fly-stage at the age of four weeks and becomes rather a bird of prey. Here you find the gallinipper at his best—here the mosquito would be able to pull down a young chicken if the summer lasted a month longer. In a way, sah, as showing what nature can do and does for us, I speak of these insects with pride; but on the other hand I am compelled to realize that they are a drawback to civilization and progress. It was for this reason that I introduced the celebrated Purge Bill. Of course you saw it referred to in the press at the time?"

He waited for me to reply, but I was so long about it that he bestowed a glance of pity and continued:

"After extensive reading and many experiments I framed and introduced my bill. I have several printed copies at home, and will mail you one tomorrow. The bill, sah, provided for the purchase and use of \$1,000,000 worth of chloride of lime. Ten thousand persons were to be appointed to scatter the stuff throughout the swamps and lagoons of the state. The idea was to disinfect and annihilate at the same time. In my experiments, public and



Come to Fight a Duel With a Crow Bar.

private, I had proved that chloride of lime was a sure annihilator. The idea was a new one to our legislators, and like all new ideas it brought criticism and ridicule. It was Majah Baker who offered a substitute for my bill. He moved that the sum of \$1,000,000 be appropriated to found four new idiot and lunatic asylums, and that one of them be located in my town. I did not lose a moment in waiting upon the majah. I found him in a committee-room, and addressing him as one gentleman addresses another I said:

"Majah Baker, the grounds of my friend, Kurnel Treman, are only across the way, and these two gentlemen will no doubt set us our seconds."

"The majah was game, sah, as I am happy to state. In another ten minutes we stood with pistols in our hands, and I had selected the spot in which to plant my bullet. We were about to get the word to fire when he lowers his pistol and says:

"Kurnel Bunker, I am heah to fight you, but it has just occurred to me to ask why we should shoot at each other?"

"Because of your substitute for my bill!"

"Then the cat came out of the bag. Egad, sah, the majah, who is a very absent-minded man, had caught it that my bill provided for spending a million dollars a year to raise sunflowers to keep the ague away. He was with me heart and soul on the insect question, and was ready to contribute ten barrels of lime as a free gift. You can't shoot a gentleman who is laboring under a misapprehension, you know, and so our duel was called off. Close shave for the majah, though—mighty close squeak. While I was standing there, pistol in hand, the Hon. Jordan Jones was making a set speech against my bill in committee of the whole. He characterized it as a visionary and extravagant experiment, born in the brain of a lunatic, and he even did not hesitate to declare that I had apparently outlived my usefulness. Of course I waited upon him without delay. No gentleman ever procrastinates in such matters. Our greeting was courteous, and the smile never faded from the gentleman's face as I said:

"Befo' attacking me as you did this afternoon you must have figured on the consequences and are therefore ready to accord me satisfaction?"

"With the greatest of pleasure, sah," he replied, and a meeting was speedily arranged for sunrise. I slept like a babe that night and was on the ground at sunrise. The Hon. was

only a trifle behind me, but there was a wide difference between us, sah—a wide difference. While I had an exultant feeling, bo'n of the firm belief that he would fall at my fire, he was shaky and ill at ease, and I think he had a presentiment that death stalked at his side. A fine orator and a gallant man was the Hon. Jordan Jones, but not of the stuff of which warriors are made. Egad, sah, but I never think of him except in sorrow. We had taken our places and the word was about to be given, when what did he do but fall dead of heart trouble—throw up his hands and fall like a log! That ended the affair, of course. No gentleman ever fights a duel with a dead man. I should have killed him, but I reckon it was better as it was. Should a person of color be visible from your standpoint you might place me under renewed obligations."

He was promptly and duly "placed," and after an interval of ten minutes he returned to the subject in hand by saying:

"As I conscientiously believed that my bill was for the best interests of the commonwealth, I pushed it as vigorously as I could. There were opponents by the dozen. Some I brought over to my way of thinking by argument and experiment, and some I called out. I cannot recall at this moment that any of the duels resulted fatally, but at least a few of them must have, and as I am here alive and well to-day it must naturally follow that the other parties sleep in honored graves. That bill would have gone through a-flying with an appropriation of \$50,000, but I had introduced it according to war tactics—crush your enemy with one blow. The idea was to make such a wholesale attack all along the line that the pesky insects would be knocked out in a day."



Come to Fight a Duel With a Crow Bar.

I made the fight of my life on that bill sah—the fight of my life. On one occasion I spoke for fo'teen hours on a stretch, and on another 11. If my memory serves me right I issued nine challenges and accepted six. I made 12 set speeches, won over 22 weekly papers and adjourned the senate eight different times when the opposition had fixed times to do me. At length I came to know the head and front of the opposition was the governor himself, and that he had used certain disparaging remarks of a personal nature. I called on him at 11 o'clock at night. He refused to come down and open the door, but stuck his head out of a chamber window and asked my business.

"Governor," says I, "is the report that you have referred to me as a visionary noodle-head correct?"

"It is," he promptly replied.

"Will you give me satisfaction?"

"I will."

"Can I hope to greet you on the field of honor at sunrise?"

"You can; and now get out or I'll whistle for the police!"

"That was the sort of governor we had, sah," explained the Kurnel in an injured tone, "and it may not surprise you to hear that he reached the dueling ground next morning with a crow-bar on his shoulder. Yes, sah—come to fight a duel with a nigger's crow-bar, and he was even abusive about it! As a gentleman I could not resort to such a vulgar weapon. Indeed, sah, as a gentleman I could not fight at all with a person who resorted to such practices. I turned my back on him, sah—turned my back and walked off the field and denied that I had ever heard his name. I went further, sah. As a prominent member of the senate my honor forbade me further relations with the governor, and I promptly packed up my belongings and went home for the rest of the session. My purge bill was dead, of course, and I was no longer on hand to defend it, but the day may come, sah—the day may come—"

"When, what, Kurnel?" I asked.

He looked mournfully at his empty glass and fanned himself with his hat.

When He Talks.

"She says her husband talks when he's asleep."

"I think that must be a mistake. He talks when she's asleep."—Chicago Post.

Rural Industry.

Tottering Tom—Did you ever work a farm?

Flodding Phil—No; but I've worked the farmers.—Yonkers Statesman.

HE VISITS PELZER, & C.

Bill Arp Lectures in That Thrifty Little Town.

Larger Than Cartersville—Prosperous Place of 7,000 Inhabitants Without Any Officers, Lawyers, Editors or Saloons.

A few days ago I received a letter from a friend and it was post-marked Pelzer. He said I was wanted there to talk to the people, and he ventured to fix the day and the compensation for loss of time and waste of tongue. I had never heard of Pelzer nor could I find it on my antiquated map. But I did find it on one of later date, and supposed it was some small village that had a cotton mill and a dam on the Saluda and some tenement houses. Nevertheless, I accepted the call, for the offer was liberal. The next mail brought a similar invitation from Piedmont, another mill town, only six miles from Pelzer.

So I journeyed from Atlanta to Greenville, and there changed cars for my destination, which was only 20 miles away. It was night when I reached the place. My good friend, Mr. Padgett, who is the democratic postmaster, took me to his house. I had not seen the town, for it was quite dark. "What is the prospect for an audience?" I inquired. "Very good," he said. "I think you will have several hundred people out to hear you." "Why, how large is your town? What is your population?" "About 7,000," he said. I was amazed. A town twice as large as Cartersville, and I never heard of it, and it is not on my map. He explained by saying that it was only 12 years old, and had four large cotton mills that employed over 2,000 operatives, and consumed nearly 100,000 bales of cotton, and the company owned some 3,000 acres of land, and all the houses and stores and churches and several miles of the river. "Did you advertise me pretty well?" I asked. "Oh, yes!" he said. "We church folks told it to everybody we met, both in the town and in the country, and they all said they were coming." "Publish it in the papers?" said I. "No, no. We have no papers here, and no printing office. We didn't even have a poster or a handbill, but we talked it a good deal." Well, I listened and wondered, and my confidence was shaken. After a bountiful supper and a little mixing up with the children, we went to the large church where I was to hold forth, and found it already pretty well filled. In a brief time I stood before more than 800 people, and was inspired to make my best effort, for I had an orderly and attentive congregation, and we all fell in love with one another. I never have had a more gratifying lecture occasion. Next morning was spent in viewing the city and the mill and the library. The merchants carried immense stocks in large stores, and there were many nice residences for the managers and heads of the various departments, but they were all built and are owned and leased by the mill company. This company owns and controls every foot of land and everything that is on it. Capt. Smythe, of Charleston, is the king, the czar, a big-hearted, bralmy man, and everybody respects and loves him. He is a son of that celebrated Presbyterian minister of Charleston who, during his ministerial life, was a notable man in religious circles. I remember that he was one of my father's friends. "Who is your mayor?" said I. "We have none; no mayor nor aldermen, nor municipal corporation, nor marshal nor police. Capt. Smythe runs the town. Everybody who comes here for employment is investigated carefully. His antecedents must be good or he can't stay. We have no lawyers nor editors; don't need any. We allow them to come in and look around." "Did you know that I was a lawyer?" said I. "Oh, yes; but we learned that you had quit the practice and reformed, and so we invited you."

"I don't see any negroes about here," said I. "No, we don't want them. There are a few, but they live outside. Some of them cook and wash for us, but Capt. Smythe don't want us to mix with them or depend upon them. He wants everybody to depend upon themselves as much as possible." "And you have ruled out lawyers, editors and negroes?" "Yes," said he, "and there are no saloons or blind tigers or cigarrettes." "How about doctors?" I asked. "Oh, of course, we have doctors; yes, we have two doctors and one dentist and four preachers, all select, and one photographer." The company has a good public library and pays a man to keep it.

I visited mill No. 4, an up-to-date mill in all respects. It is operated by electricity that is generated two miles distant at some falls of the Saluda river. This mill amazed me. No coal and no steam. It is 128 feet wide and 528 feet long, and is four stories high. In one great room I saw 60,000 spindles turning. In two others there were 1,400 looms. It requires 1,100 operatives to attend to this mill, and it takes 56,000 bales of cotton for a year's supply. Just think of it. The superintendent, Mr. Guy, had the elevator to stop about half way up between floors so that I might have a good view of the machinery, and the busy boys and girls in this spinning room. This room as called the children's room; not the children's room, but my children's room, he said. Scores of little chaps not more than ten years old who looked their love for him. They were the brightest and healthiest; children I ever saw in a mill, and earn from 25 cents to 60 cents a day. Many of the grown girls earn from 60 cents to \$1.25 a day, and the average pay of them all is 62 cents. This is good wages, for their work is easy and healthy. The rooms are never too hot or too cold; for the temperature is kept uniform by fans and heaters in the basement. No grease or fatty matter is used on the machinery—nothing but pure mineral oil. These children are required to

HIS NOTION OF THE DAY.

President Rogers, of Northwestern University, Gives His Views of the Day.

President Rogers of the Northwestern university, takes an eminently progressive view of Thanksgiving day. "It," he says, "originated with the Pilgrims at Plymouth in 1621, and for two centuries its observance was peculiar to the New England states, although it gained some recognition in the middle states during the revolution. From these states it extended gradually to the other states. In 1863 President Lincoln appointed the last Thursday of November as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. The practice, which had hitherto been local, now became national, and we have ever since had a national Thanksgiving day. In its origin Thanksgiving day was a period of recreation as well as of thanksgiving. The first thanksgiving festival, that of 1621, appointed by Gov. Bradford, lasted for several days. Religious services opened each day, without doubt, but these were followed by a round of amusements. To be sure their amusements were the simple, rustic amusements of the times, and not those to which we are to-day accustomed. But the material point is that originally it was not exclusively a religious festival, and I feel free to say that I do not agree with those who think that it ought to be converted into a strictly religious festival.

"We ought not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together in the churches on that day, but, having conscientiously performed that duty, it is a mistake to assume that the rest of the day is to be observed as though it were Sunday. Recreation and amusements of the right kind are a necessity, and they are not to be frowned upon as something inconsistent with the highest type of morality and manhood. And the days in which we can best indulge in recreation and amusement are the holidays. But good people everywhere ought to insist, and they will insist, that those amusements be not permitted to encroach upon the religious side of Thanksgiving day. The universities are not likely to forbid the playing of football on that day, out for them to allow these games to be played at a time which commences with the church services peculiar to the day ought not to be permitted. The thing itself would be wrong, and would properly give great offense to the Christian sentiment of our land.

"The Thanksgiving day of the future will be like that of the past and the present, characterized by religious services, by amusements and by feasting and good fellowship. For one, I would not have it otherwise."