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South African Anecdotes



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SOUTH AFRICAN ANECDOTES.

COLLECTED FROM VARIOUS
SOURCES, ORAL AND
WRITTEN.

By A. ELLMAN.

Johannesburg:
Transvaal Leader, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000

1914

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By A. ELLMAN.

Johannesburg:
"Transvaal Leader," corner of Harrison and
Anderson Streets.

1914.



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South African Anecdotes.

*Collected from various sources, Oral and
Written.*

By A. ELLMAN.

Some forty years ago a schoolmaster was imported from Holland to teach in the Zoutpansberg District. To their horror, the elders of the district one day discovered that the children were taught that the world turns on its own axis. The elders met and consulted regarding these new doctrines, and finally agreed to refer the subject to the minister, who requested the schoolmaster to explain. The schoolmaster said: "I teach them about the heavenly bodies, and that the earth revolves round the sun." The minister answered: "Well, this may be true, no doubt—and what the earth does in Holland, but it would be more convenient at present if in the Zoutpansberg district you would allow the sun still to go round the earth for a few years longer. We do not like sudden changes in such matters."

* * *

During the war, some troops marching to the relief of Kimberley halted at Hanover Road after a weary day's marching. "Call this Hanover Road!" exclaimed a "Tommy." "I call this h—l of a road."

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In the early days at Barberton there was a digger well known as "Charlie the Reefer." He was a successful digger, and soon after his arrival at De Kaap he came into town with a bagful of nuggets, which he exchanged for sovereigns at the Bank. He then proceeded to the Landdrost's office and said to the astonished official that he wished to deposit ten pounds.

"What is that for?" asked the official.

"To pay my fine."

Nothing was known of such a fine at the Landdrost's office. "Oh, that's all right," exclaimed the digger, "I am a careful man; I always pay my fines in advance. I'm off on a spree, and am sure to get run in, and it makes me feel more comfortable to know that the fine is provided for."

* * *

When Sir Charles Warren first arrived at the Cape, he had with him a silver presentation plate for Major (afterwards Sir) Owen Lanyon. The Custom House officials insisted on opening the package containing the plate, though the invoice stated exactly its nature. Sir Charles says (in "On the Veld in the Seventies") that he felt sure they would spoil it with their rough hands, so he said he would rather knock it into the sea than have any more bother with it, and gave it a good kick. This had the desired effect on the Custom House officers. They gave in at once, saying it could be of no value if he could kick it; and so he got it through without any injury.

Many years ago church services used to be held at Barkley in the canteen, and on one occasion, in the middle of the sermon, the preacher noticed that several of those present were smiling. He looked round, and found he had displaced a blackboard put up as a screen, thereby disclosing the following notice:—
 “Free-and-Easy to-night. Gags free.”

* * *

There was once in the Cape an old miser named Van der Pool. The best of wines were to be found in his cellars, but no one ever tasted them. He hated spinach, but since spinach grew in his garden he used to eat it, being loath to waste it. On one occasion his black cook, Saartje, brought him a big dish of spinach, rotten with long keeping. What then happened is given by Miss Juta (“The Cape Peninsula”) in Saartje’s own words. “Saartje,” say ole Bass, very gentle, soft like, “go fetch me from die cellar a best big bottle of ole Pontac.”

I run fetch ole Pontac. Ole Basses, he put die bottle just so in front of him. “Now,” he say, “Saartje, you trek.” I trek no ferder dan die door keyhole. I see ole Bass pur out best ole Pontac, and put die spinach in front, too. “Now,” he say, “Hendrik, you see dis fine, werry, werry, fine ole Pontac, you eat dis verdomte spinach first, den you drink dis wine, wot’s been standing, Hendrik, kerl, for werry many years.” Ole Bass, he eat, eat fast as I nebber seen him before; den, when all spinach done, ole Bass he pour die wine back in die bottle. He laf, laf, and he say, putting his finger to his nose: “Hi! Hendrick, I fool you dis time, I think, fool you pretty well.”

President Kruger could enjoy a joke, even though directed against himself. Volksraad Committees often met at the Presidency, on which occasions they were regaled with coffee and cigars. Once a member of a Volksraad Committee condoled with Mr. Kruger on his recent severe financial losses. "What do you mean?" indignantly demanded the President. "Oh, I am referring to your recent losses on the Stock Exchange." The President was now in a fury. "How dare you say that!" he shouted. "Well, there must be something in it" was the unconcerned reply. "But I tell you I have not lost a penny in any speculation whatsoever!" again protested the President, indignantly. "Then how is it we get no cigars to-day, President," said the member, with an injured air. "I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon!" was the answer, and with a hearty laugh the President himself produced the fragrant weed.

* * *

In the pre-war days in the Transvaal many of the higher positions in the public service were filled by men whose only qualification was that they were friends of the "powers that were." An old friend of President Kruger had fallen on evil days, and came to the President for help. "I have lost my farm," he said, "and now you must give me an appointment." The President regretted that he could not get him suitable employment in the service of the

State. "But surely there must be some post open which you can give me," the applicant pleaded. "Not one," replied the President, sorrowfully. "I have tried everywhere. All the chief positions are filled up; and as to a clerkship, well, you know yourself you are too stupid for that."

* * *

A KAFFIR STORY.—Two Tambookies running from the field of battle hid themselves in a hole, but the leg of one unfortunately protruding caught the eye of some wary Icalaca. They pulled him out and were preparing to slay him, when he cried: "Spare me, and I will tell you something." They paused, and he said: "There is yet another man in that hole." The second hidden warrior, hearing this, called out from his place of concealment: "Don't believe him, kill him at once; he tells lies, there is no one in here." But it availed him nothing, and, after the custom of Kaffirs, the two prisoners were forthwith assegaied.

* * *

ANOTHER KAFFIR STORY.—Umthonthlo, a native chief, who was the terror of his neighbours in the seventies, was once buying some guns from a trader who thought to deceive him. Showing him two guns, the trader asked the chief what he thought of them. "Oh," said he, "this one is a Friday gun, that one is a Monday gun." When asked to explain, he

said: "Do I not know that all your artisans work well from Tuesday to Friday, and then all get drunk, and their Monday's work is worth nothing at all? Never show me a Monday gun again."

* * *

When the Reform prisoners were confined in the Pretoria Gaol they were frequently visited by the late Mr. B. I. Barnato, and on the occasion of one of his visits he chaffed them about the position that they had found themselves in, remarking that they had tried to play a game of poker with the Transvaal Government on a "Colley Thumper" hand. None of them had heard of this term before, and Mr. Barnato was asked to explain. He replied:—An English traveller with a not very extreme knowledge of poker, found himself on one occasion engaged in a game with an astute old Yankee on board an American steamer. Playing cautiously, the Englishman did pretty well until he suddenly found himself, to his great satisfaction, in possession of a full hand. The players alternately doubled the stakes until they were raised to £100. The Englishman then called the American's hand, and the American deliberately put down a pair of deuces, a four, a seven, and a nine. The Englishman, with a triumphant smile, put down his full hand, and proceeded to gather the stakes. "Stop," said the Yankee, "the stakes are mine; yours is only a full hand; mine is a 'Colley Thumper,' it beats every-

thing." The Englishman had never heard of such a hand before, but he determined not to show his ignorance, and reluctantly relinquished the stakes. The game then proceeded until at length the Englishman found himself in possession of a pair of deuces, a four, a seven and a nine. Betting went on freely until the stakes were raised to £500. The Englishman again called, and the Yankee put down a straight. "Ah," said the joyful Englishman, "mine is a 'Colley Thumper.'" "True," said the American, "but you forget the rules. It only counts once in an evening."

* * *

The following story illustrates the Kaffir's love of cattle. A German trader once presented Panda, King of the Zulus, with a watch. "What is the use of it?" said he. "To tell where the sun is? We can see it; when cloudy we remain in our huts; at night we sleep. Does it give milk?" "No." Does it give calves?" "No." "Then take your watch away."

* * *

With certain troops sent to quell a Kaffir rising in the Cape in 1875, was a staff officer who was wearing one of the recently introduced spike helmets. On seeing him, an old native said he knew which of the soldiers would be most successful with the rebels, pointing out the officer with the helmet, and adding: "A pretty ramming he will give them."

Years ago, when everything from South Africa was looked upon in England as strange, an enterprising American conceived the idea of bringing home a party of Kaffirs to astonish the citizens of London. Very wisely, instead of going into the wilds to find them, he contented himself with procuring some Kaffirs in the vicinity of Cape Town, and having instructed them in native dances and clothed them in the skin and war-paint of the savage Zulu, he brought them to London. The "wild" Kaffirs soon became the rage. A Dutch farmer from the Cape, named De Beer, who was then visiting England, strolled into the hall in Leicester Square, where the performance was going on. On seeing him, two of the "wild" Kaffirs rushed from the stage, and, seizing him by the arm, shouted in Dutch: "Here is old baas De Beer." De Beer then discovered that these warlike savages were no other than his own labourers, who had deserted from his service in the Cape for a reason which he had never been able to discover.

* * *

One of the most conspicuous concessionaires before the war was Mr. Edward Lippert, to whom the dynamite monopoly had been granted. This circumstance caused a local wit to paraphrase Madame Roland's famous exclamation: "Oh, Lippert E., Lippert E., what crimes are committed in thy name!"

President Kruger once accepted an invitation to a Parisian Ball, but no sooner had he entered the ball-room when he precipitately retreated, remarking "that they must have come too early, as the ladies were evidently not dressed yet!"

* * *

In 1875 there was a police corps in the Cape Colony known as the Frontier Armed Mounted Police, and the following anecdote is related by Mr. H. A. Broeme, who was then a member of the Force, in his book, "The Log of a Rolling Stone." It was a point of etiquette with the corps that if an express rider stayed overnight he should be offered the very best bed in the station, even if the lawful occupant slept on the floor, but there was a surly trooper who would always decline to extend this hospitality, although he had by far the best bed, so the other members determined one day to pay him out. One evening an express rider came, shortly after which the "surly one" went "down town" by himself, never offering anything to the tired rider. On his return he was met by several of his fellow-troopers most apologetically. They were sorry to inform him that the express rider had got a little bit drunk, and had turned in, boots and spurs and all, into the surly trooper's bed. Would the surly trooper mind? "I call it a blooming piece of presumption," said he. "D——d if I'll have it!" "You surely can't turn him out now," urged the others.

“It will discredit the station. Better doss down alongside on the floor, old chap, till he wakes. Here are some spare blankets.” This, with considerable reluctance and many oaths, he did, and it is presumed slept very roughly until after daylight. Then a fearful yell of rage was heard, and a pair of top boots, a peaked cap and bolster were seen flying through the air. The sleeping express rider was a dummy!

* * *

Discipline was not the strong point of the corps in those easy-going days. Occasionally, says the same writer, Sir Walter Currie, the Officer Commanding, would take an inspection tour, but none were more surprised than he if any of his men were brought up before him for breach of discipline. A delinquent having once been brought before him for not having cleaned his troop horse or equipments on saddle parade, Sir Walter gazed at him absent-mindedly for a minute or so, and then, turning to the Sergeant-Major, said:—“Sergeant-Major, fine the beggar half-a-crown.” That was all.

* * *

A Free Stater was once charged before the Circuit Court with the crime of murder, and the evidence against him was strong. Now a certain trader, for commercial reasons, was anxious that the accused should be discharged, but did not think that this was possible in view of the evidence, but he thought that a verdict

of culpable homicide might be obtained by a judicious pulling of the strings. A friend of the trader's was one of the jurymen, and him he induced to stick out for a verdict of culpable homicide. At the trial, the foreman, in reply to the usual question put by the Registrar of the Court, declared that they were all agreed save one. The jury were then locked up and remained at their deliberations for three hours, and then the foreman reported that they had come to an unanimous decision as to the verdict, which was culpable homicide. On hearing the verdict the trader was overjoyed, and hastened to congratulate his friend on his smartness in being able to bring round the rest of the jury to his way of thinking.

"Yes," said his friend, "it was hard work, I assure you."

"Why? Were they all against you?"

"Yes, I should think they were. They all wanted to bring in a verdict of 'Not Guilty.' "

* * *

Amongst the pre-war Boer leaders, General De la Rey was one of the most progressive, whilst his brother Piet, who was a member of the Volksraad, belonged to the reactionary party. Piet seldom spoke in the Raad, but on the occasion of the member for Johannesburg presenting a petition for permission to use the English language in the Courts of the Rand, he felt it his duty to say a few words. He said:—"English to be used instead of Dutch

in Republican public offices? Never! Rather than that I would take up my old gun again and trek into the wilderness, or to fight, as the President wished. Never will I consent while alive to such an abomination—for"—resuming his seat—"my land is my land, and my tongue is my tongue!" The General deeply resented his brother's speech. Now, Piet de la Rey's eldest son, Jan, was a Customs officer on the western frontier, and as such received a percentage on what he collected, and from him, a few weeks after he made the above speech, Piet received a letter from Jan expressing fear "that I may incur great liability, as all the way-bills are in English, and as you would never let us children learn that language, I have got to believe what they tell me about them. So, please, father, advise me what to do."

Piet consulted the General. The latter read the letter without saying a word. But Piet pleaded with him to tell him what advice to give to Jan. "Tell him," at last replied the General, "that your land is your land, and your tongue is your tongue!"

* * *

In the seventies, when Sir Charles Warren was in Kimberley, he had tea one evening with a Mrs. Barber. There were some nice cakes, and he ate a good many. Then some more visitors came in, and he went away. Mrs. Barber was then taking care of a meercat belonging to Sir Charles. After he had left,

and whilst she was feeding the meercat, she said to her guests: "Bother that brute Warren, he eats such a lot." "Of course," says Sir Charles (in his book "On the Veld in the Seventies"), it very soon came round to me that Mrs. Barber had called me a brute because I ate so many of her cakes. I took it as one of the usual stories afloat, but when I next saw her I told her what had been imputed to her. At first she was very indignant, but suddenly she said: "But now I recollect I really did say it. I call the meercat 'Warren,' and was abusing it for eating so much!"

* * *

Mr. "Barney" Barnato once related the following story in the Christmas number of the "Pelican." When he first landed in Cape Town, en route for the Diamond Fields, he put up at the Masonic Hotel. There he met an individual clad in gorgeous raiment, ornamented with a profusion of large diamonds, who asked his name and where he was going to, and on hearing that the Fields were his destination, endeavoured to change his resolution, saying that he had himself cleared out all the diamonds that were there. Of course, "Barney" was a little cast down at this, but still stuck to his determination to see for himself. Years after he met the same stranger in Johannesburg. The stranger asked him how he managed to become chairman of the De Beers Company. "By not taking your

advice," was the prompt reply. The story was afterwards classed by its author amongst his many successful works of fiction.

* * *

Once a well-known individual borrowed £10 from Mr. Barnato at Johannesburg, and, although asked for the money several times, always put off payment. One day "between the chains" Barnato said openly to some friends:—"Mind you don't lend —— any money. He has £10 of mine, and it is time he was stopped." The man heard of this, and coming up to him said:—"I hear you have been talking about me?" "Yes; I want my money." "Well, here is your £10, and don't talk about me any more." A short time afterwards the same man asked Barnato for £25. "No, can't do it," was the reply. "Why not? I don't owe you anything." "I know you don't, but you've disappointed me once, and I won't risk another disappointment."

* * *

About the year 1877, Sir Charles Warren was travelling in a post-cart from Cape Town to Kimberley and had as a fellow-passenger a very taciturn young man who was diligently studying his prayer-book. Warren's curiosity was roused, but, being of a reserved nature, said nothing. Eventually his curiosity overcame his reserve, and he asked the young man what he was reading. "The Thirty-nine Articles" was the reply, and in this manner

the two got to know each other. The young man was Cecil Rhodes, on his way back from Oxford to Kimberley for the long vacation, and he was characteristically using his time in the post-cart before he plunged again into the midst of diamonds and finance, in learning the Thirty-nine Articles for his next examination at Oxford.

* * *

Early in the eighties General Gordon was employed by the Cape Government (of which the late Mr. Sauer was then a member as Secretary for Native Affairs) to go to Basutoland to arrange terms of peace with the Basutos. Rhodes was also in Basutoland at that time, and the two men saw a good deal of each other. During one of their conversations, Gordon said to Rhodes:—"You always contradict me. I never met such a man for his own opinion. You think your views are always right and everyone else wrong." Rhodes determined to get his own back. Noticing that the Basutos were making much of Gordon and very little of Sauer, he said to Gordon:—"Do you know, I have an opinion that you are doing very wrong. You are letting these Basutos make a great mistake. They take you for a great man, look up to you, and pay no attention to Sauer, whereas he is the great man here, and you are only in his employment. You ought to explain to the Basutos the truth, that he is somebody and you are nobody." This was said jokingly, but Gordon took it quite

seriously. At the next indaba, accordingly, Gordon stepped out before the chiefs, and, pointing to Mr. Sauer, explained, to their astonishment:—"You are making a mistake in taking me for the great man of the Whites. I am only his servant, only his dog; nothing more." After the indaba was over, he said to Rhodes:—"I did it because it was the right thing—but it was hard, very hard."

* * *

General Gordon once told Mr. Rhodes the story of the offer of a roomful of gold which had been made to him by the Chinese Government after he had subdued the Tai-Ping rebellion. "What did you do?" asked Rhodes. "Refused it, of course; what would you have done?" "I would have taken it," said Rhodes, "and as many more roomfuls as they would give me. It is of no use for us to have big ideas if we have not the money to carry them out."

* * *

When Dr. Jameson was Administrator of Rhodesia, he was one afternoon lying on his bed in his tent, when a burly, drunken prospector suddenly lurched inside, and, drawing his revolver, said:—"You are a good old doctor, but I am b——y well going to shoot you." Jameson remained motionless (says his biographer, Mr. G. Seymour Fort), puffed a whiff of cigarette smoke through his lips, and coolly replied:—"Yes, that's all right, but don't you

think you had better have a drink first?" The man agreed. Jameson called his servant and told him to take the man to the canteen, at the same time pointing with his finger not to the canteen but to the police camp. Off went the prospector, quite pleased, but soon discovered the ruse. A desperate struggle took place, the servant was thrown heavily to the ground, and the prospector was only just overtaken by the police as he was re-entering the tent, revolver in hand, and black murder in his heart.

* * *

When Cecil Rhodes was at Oxford, he looked so little like an Oxonian that he was able to deceive even the Proctor. "The Proctor," related Mr. Rhodes, "took off his cap to me with the utmost politeness, and I did the same to him. 'Well, sir,' said the Proctor to me, 'your name and college?' 'My name is Rhodes,' I replied, 'and I have just come here from the Cape of Good Hope, and am making a short stay in Oxford; and now, sir, may I ask your name and college?'" Whereupon the Proctor apologised for what he supposed to be his mistake, and Cecil Rhodes escaped unfined.

* * *

Mr. Louis Cohen, one of Mr. Barney Barnato's earliest partners on the Diamond Fields, says that there was one man on the Fields whose business they both envied. He seemed to have a regular and large connection,

and made constant rounds, riding one old yellow, rather lame, pony. The partners tried to follow him to see which way he went, but without avail. One day Barnato said to Cohen : “ That chap ——— has a rare good connection ; we must get hold of a bit of it somehow.” “ All right,” said Mr. Cohen, “ we want it badly enough.” “ I know what we have to do to get ———’s customers. I have seen him come home three days running.” Mr. Cohen thought Mr. Barnato was fooling, and replied rather sharply :—“ If you had seen him go out and followed him up it would have been more to the purpose, I should think.” But Barnato soon convinced him that he was quite serious. “ Look here,” said he, “ I’ve seen him come back from his rounds three days running, and he always stops first at Hall’s canteen. Mind this, however, he does not guide the pony to the place, but just sits still all the while with loose rein, and the pony stops of his own accord. Now, it is my firm conviction that all day long he rides just the same way, and that the pony knows all the stopping places. I’ve known this for some days, but it didn’t help so long as he had the pony ; to-day he has seen some other beast he likes better, and wants to sell the lame pony.” The partners bought the pony, with the successful results anticipated by Barnato. “ I wonder,” says Mr. Cohen, “ whether any other man than Barnato would have been so closely observant as to notice that the pony finished his rounds without guidance

and so probably knew all the usual stopping places of each day.”

* * *

In his biography of Mr. B. I. Barnato, Mr. Seymour says that one evening Mr. Barnato and Mr. Louis Cohen went to the Court Theatre, London. No seats had been booked; Barnato, as usual, had no money on him, and Louis Cohen had only a sovereign. Barnato borrowed this, saying that he would engineer the other shilling for their stalls somehow. Under the portico of the theatre was a man not quite blind, but with defective sight, who solicited charity. Barnato turned to Cohen and said:—“Do you mind, Lou, if we go to the circle instead of the stalls?” “Oh, no; just as you please.” Barnato then went to the office and asked for two circle seats. “Very sorry, sir, but all are gone. I can give you two side stalls if they will do.” A huge smile broke over Barnato’s face. “I have not come prepared to pay for stalls,” said he. “Very well, sir. You can have stalls for circle prices.” Barnato took his vouchers for the seats, went out to the man, gave him the whole five shillings change, and, turning to Cohen, said: “Now that is what I call finance.”

* * *

This is how Kimberley acquired its name. In 1871 the farm “Vooruitzicht” was proclaimed as a diamond digging. This name was declared by Lord Kimberley, then Secre-

tary of State for the Colonies, to be unpronounceable. Some one then suggested the name "New Rush." This Lord Kimberley declared to be too suggestive of rowdiness. Some one else then suggested that the town should be called after the Minister. This was adopted, and so the town was christened Kimberley.

* * *

Mr. Rhodes was very careless about trifling personal matters. There was a function in connection with the Kimberley Exhibition at which he was taking a leading part. When he arrived at the gates of the Exhibition, he found he had mislaid his pass, and the gatekeeper, not knowing him, refused him admission. Putting his hand into his pocket, Mr. Rhodes enquired the price of admission. "Two shillings," replied the gatekeeper. Mr. Rhodes then discovered that he hadn't any money about him. "I am afraid I have left my purse behind," he said, "but I suppose my watch will do." He then discovered that he had mislaid his watch also, and told the gatekeeper who he was. That functionary, however, was unconvinced, and it is probable that Mr. Rhodes would not have gained admission to the Exhibition had not some one lent him the required florin. Mr. Rhodes subsequently sent the gatekeeper five pounds as a reward for having so unhesitatingly done his duty.

* * *

Mr. Stuart Cumberland, in his book, "What I think of South Africa," relates the

following anecdote about "Barney" Barnato:

"I was a witness," he says, "of a little joke Barney played upon a very august corporation. He was asked to write upon a form his name, place of residence and occupation. Down went the first, 'B. I. Barnato,' then 'Spencer House,' but when he came to occupation he hesitated. 'How shall I describe myself?' he asked. 'Gentleman?' no, that's too elastic. 'Dramatic author,' I meekly suggested. (Barnato was then working at a play with Haddon Chambers). 'That might do,' he said, 'only we should have Haddon Chambers saying I wasn't, and then how should I stand? I have it—*toff*.' And down went 'toff' on the paper. Presently the form came back with the enquiry what 'toff' meant. 'Oh,' replied Barnato, with an imperturbable countenance, 'that's the Hebrew for financial gentleman.'"

* * *

When the synagogue of the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation was built, President Kruger was invited to perform the opening ceremony. He accepted the invitation, but the amazement of the hundreds of Israelites present may be imagined when the President announced, in his loudest tones:—"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I declare this building open."

* * *

Mr. Rhodes was very fond of discussing the various points of English politicians, and

there was one member of the Gladstone Government of 1892 whom he cordially detested. He told me once, says Sir Lewis Michell, how he found himself seated next him at a dinner-party in London, and was so bored with him that in the middle of one of his arguments on some political problem he turned away from him and began talking to his other neighbour. "It was very rude of me, I know," he said, "very rude. People who live in London can't do these things—I can. I can do it on the basis of a barbarian!"

* * *

An old pioneer, invalided from Rhodesia by fever once called on Mr. Rhodes at Groote Schuur for relief. Out of work, out at elbows, and reduced to a pitiable state from privation, he was about to venture to state his case, when, to his inexpressible delight, he was hailed by name. Rhodes had recognised him, despite all changes. Putting his hand on the man's shoulder, Rhodes said:—"Not a word, a good square meal first!" And to the kitchen he took him for that purpose, telling him to return to the stoep afterwards. He then heard his story, and gave him an order on his secretary in town to give him money for what clothes he wanted, and telling him to return the next day, which he did. He found Rhodes in a passion. "You only took ten shillings," he cried. The man had been ashamed to ask for more. Rhodes at once took him to town in his own cart, went himself to the outfitters, completely clothed

him, gave him money and a free pass back to his work. "I never," he said, "forget an old face."

* * *

An officer of the Cape garrison purchased a pair of leopards, and requested permission to bring them into his quarters in the Castle, but, as there were many young children in the barracks at the time, he was refused. He therefore left them in charge of a Malay in the neighbourhood. On going to claim them, the Malay said to him, much to the officer's consternation:—"There are the pair," pointing to one animal, "but one has eaten the other."

* * *

The ignorance of colonial affairs formerly displayed in England is illustrated by the story of a War Office official who desired to know the reason why the chaplain at Grahamstown could not perform his evening service at Kingwilliamstown, being, presumably, entirely ignorant of the fact that the two towns are ninety miles asunder.

* * *

During the Boer War of 1881, when Pretoria was under martial law, a certain garrison officer was summoned upon two boards of enquiry—one referring to the case of a sick soldier, and the other to an attack of glanders in a horse. Mistaking the board when called in to give his opinion as to what was best to be

done, he horrified the Court by advising them
“to shoot him at once!”

* * *

Mr. Rhodes was once accused of changing his views rather hurriedly. “Yes,” he replied, “as hurriedly as I could, for I found I was wrong.”

* * *

Once, when twitted with his preference for young men, Mr. Rhodes retorted:—“Of course, of course, they must soon take up our work; we must teach them what to do and what to avoid.”

* * *

On another occasion, his sentimental attachment to the Boers was the matter of a jest. “They were the voortrekkers,” he replied, “the real pioneers. They have always led the way. It is your business to see that the flag follows.”

* * *

In 1881, during the visit of a showman named Duval to Kimberley, the following conversation between a country Dutchman and a town Dutchman was overheard on the market square of that town:—“What large bills are those on the walls?” asked the former. “Oh,” was the reply, “that is the advertisement of Duval, and Kimberley people go and see him every night.” The countryman expressed his

abhorrence of “de duivel,” and declared he would not visit his Satanic Majesty’s play. The townsman then explained himself, but unfortunately added a description of the sudden metamorphoses effected by the actor. The countryman then put down his foot and raised his hand, declaring:—“Nu weet ek dat hij de duivel is; mij Bijbel zeg net zo van hem. Ik zal nooit om zo’n ding zien.” A free translation of which is:—“Now I know he is the devil; my Bible speaks of him just so. I will never go to such such a thing.”

* * *

Mr. Rhodes once received a letter from an educated native, which contained the following passage:—

“I never forgotten the well-treatment I received from you at Queenstown. I consider you my father, and beg to inform you that I want to come and work for you at Cape Town.”

It is evident, says Sir Lewis Michell, that employment was given, for the letter is endorsed, in the handwriting of Rhodes:—“The faithful native! He worked a week, but found household duties beneath his dignity.”

* * *

There is a certain type of man in South Africa whose cry is: “Ah, you should have seen it before the war!” When the British Association paid their visit to South Africa a few years ago, and were admiring the beauties

of the Southern Cross, a pre-war resident coming up gloomily from behind, cried: "Ah, you should have seen it before the war!"

* * *

Sir Bartle Frere once visited a farm owned by a man named Oberholzer, with whom he had a long conversation, astronomy being amongst the subjects discussed. Having explained that the planets shining above them were worlds like ours and composed of rocks and minerals much the same, Oberholzer pointed to the moon and expressed the opinion that, although it might contain many valuable minerals, he was sure there were no diamonds there.

"Why do you think that?" asked Sir Bartle Frere.

"Because," replied the farmer, "if there were diamonds there you English would have annexed it long ago." (At that period the dispute over the annexation of Griqualand West with its Diamond Fields had only just been settled.)

* * *

In 1896, whilst Rhodes was returning from England to South Africa by the eastern route, he decided to interview the Sultan of Turkey for the purpose of getting some stud Angora goats from him in order to endeavour to effect an improvement in the South African herds, which, owing to in-breeding and neglect, had deteriorated very greatly. His friends laughed

at him, and said he could not possibly succeed; they even said: "You will not as much as be granted an interview." "Well," he replied, "I shall try, and if I fail it will be some satisfaction to know I have made an attempt." The services of Sir Phillip Currie, as he then was, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, were enlisted on his behalf, and to his delight an interview was arranged for the following morning. About 10 a.m. the next day, he turned up at the Palace in his ordinary garb—a suit of flannel—and was met there by the Ambassador, whose face fell very much on seeing his costume. "Good gracious," he said, "you can't go to see the Sultan like that; you must go and get your frock coat." "That is impossible," replied Mr. Rhodes, "for I don't possess one." In the end a compromise was effected by his taking off his flannel jacket and squeezing into the Ambassador's overcoat, which was very much too small for him. He met the Sultan, who was much taken with him, and agreed to let him have a considerable number of his Angoras, the benefit of which South Africa is reaping to-day.

* * *

When Sir George Grey was Governor of the Cape Colony he had occasion to travel up-country in a Cape cart, and on the road stopped at a wayside inn for breakfast. The bill for half-a-dozen boiled eggs and the same number of cups of tea was two pounds ten shillings. As the party were taking their seats in the Cape

cart again Sir George observed to mine host "that eggs must be scarce on that line." "Your Excellency," observed the innkeeper, "eggs is plentiful. It is Governors that is scarce on this road."

* * *

During one of the Matabele wars, Cecil Rhodes was lying down by his wagon, reading a book, his companions having left him for some purpose or other, when a trooper came across from the laager and said, "Good day." "Good day" replied Rhodes. "Have you got any fish?" asked the man. Rhodes tumbled to the situation at once. "No," said he, "I am sorry to say I've got no fish." "Got no *fish*," said the trooper, "have you got any *jam*?" "No," replied Rhodes, "I'm sorry to say I'm out of jam." "You've got no fish, and got no jam; what *have* you got?" said the man. "You may as well ask that," said Rhodes, "I've got precious little left, and what I have got they are trying to take away from me as fast as they can." "I am sorry for that," said the man, "but (looking at some six or eight books lying on the ground) you've got some books, I see," and (picking up one on Buddhism) pretty deep subjects, too!" "Well," said Rhodes, "I certainly do read a bit, that's my recreation. You see, it's pretty hard work selling fish and jam *all* day." "I should think it must be," said the man. "Well, I'm sorry for you, for you're a civil-spoken kind of chap, and I'm still more sorry that you've got no fish or jam,

but it can't be helped—good day.” “Good day,” said Rhodes, and the man went back to the laager. One wonders, says Sir Lewis Michell, in narrating this anecdote, what the man's feelings were when he saw Rhodes riding with Plumer the next morning at the head of the column, and discovered that the man he had mistaken for a purveyor of tinned stores to the troops was the greatest Englishman of modern times.

* * *

About thirty years ago, a certain Cape Governor had occasion to visit a small dorp in the northern part of the Cape Colony. This dorp consisted of about a dozen houses, mostly built of tin, but an enormous area of hill, vale and plain spread around it on every side. At the end of the address which was presented by the Mayor and Corporation, there was a request that the Governor might be pleased to sanction an allotment from the revenue of the Colony of some thousands sterling for the purpose of carrying out a complete system of municipal drainage. One of the houses composing the town stood on a broad eminence; the remaining structures occupied detached points in a rather swampy valley. “I wondered what he would say,” says Sir William Butler, who was present on the occasion in question as a member of the Governor's staff, “when the time came for the Governor to reply.” “Gentlemen,” said the Governor, after thanking the municipality, “I entirely sympathise with you in your natural

desire to have your promising town placed in a position in regard to its drainage and sanitary conditions which will enable it to fulfil the requirements of its undoubted future, but the scheme you propose would be a costly one, and the finances of the Colony are not for the moment too redundant. Would it not be less expensive if we were to move the town up to the top of that hill where the single house now stands. It would then practically drain itself."

* * *

Once there was a slump in Johannesburg, and a deputation from the Rand went to interview President Kruger in Pretoria. "Times are bad," they said, and it was not their fault. The Government must do something for them. Oom Paul listened in silence, smoking. At last he took his pipe from his mouth, and replied: "Gentlemen, you remind me of a pet monkey I once had. He was very fond of me; he would never leave me alone. When anything happened that he did not like, he always ran to me. One winter's night he was at my feet by the fire. Monkeys never sit quiet for long, and he kept twisting himself round about until at last he got his tail into the fire. He did it himself, gentlemen; I didn't even know he was doing it, but all the same he turned and bit me in the leg."

* * *

A certain smouser once visited a farmer, bought his wool, and after the wool had been

weighed and the price per pound fixed, the smouser said: "So many pounds at so much comes to so much," mentioning a sum about half the actual total. "No," said the farmer, "it should be so much," stating the real figure, and, to the smouser's amazement, produced a ready reckoner! With an air of surprise, the smouser said: "Let's look at that book." The farmer handed the book to the smouser and triumphantly pointed out the place. The smouser looked at the calculation, then turned to the title page and pointing to the date of publication, exclaimed, with an exultant laugh: "Why, you've got hold of last year's ready reckoner," and actually convinced the farmer that he had been swindled, not by the smouser, but by the man who had sold him the book!

* * *

A certain Frenchman, on hearing the news of the relief of Kimberley by General French, exclaimed: "Bon! Fashoda finds itself avenged. Behold, ze English are in the ze consomme, for ze French are in Kimberley."

* * *

During the Zulu War of 1878, a Zulu spy was captured by some members of an irregular corps. The Sergeant-Major of the corps asked the O.C. what should be done with the spy. The officer at that particular moment was suffering from an injured shin and, being in a bad temper in consequence, replied shortly:

“ Oh, hang the bally spy!” Subsequently a court-martial was summoned to try the spy, and the Sergeant-Major was ordered to march up the prisoner. The Sergeant-Major, who was an Irishman, stared open-mouthed for a few seconds, and then said: “ Plaze, sor, I can’t, sure, he’s hung, sor.” “ Hung!” exclaimed the Commandant, who was standing within ear-shot. “ Who ordered him to be hung?” “ The O.C., sor,” replied the Sergeant-Major. “ I ordered him to be hung?” then ejaculated the O.C., who was also present. “ What do you mean?” “ Shure, sor, when I asked you what was to be done with the spy, did you not say, sor, ‘ Oh, hang the spoy,’ and there he is,” pointing to the slaughter poles, and sure enough there he was. The court-martial was postponed *sine die*.

* * *

In 1879, when Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood—then Colonel Evelyn Wood—was in command of the column then encamped at Kambulu, in Natal, a trader came into the camp with wagons and asked permission to sell groceries to the troops. Permission was granted to him on the understanding that he had no alcohol of any description. It was later discovered that he was selling gin to the soldiers at a shilling a glass, and Colonel Wood executed summary justice by having the trader tied to the wheel of his own wagon and giving him two dozen lashes. A few weeks later Colonel Wood received a summons issued on behalf of

the trader, claiming damages to the tune of £5,000. This summons he ignored. "Some time afterwards," say Sir Evelyn Wood, in "From Midshipman to Field Marshal," "I was riding one morning into Utrecht when I met a horseman, who, stopping me, asked if he was on the right road to Colonel Wood's camp, and also whether the road was safe. I told him he was quite safe until he got to Balte Spruit. 'What sort of a man is this Colonel Wood?' he asked. 'Well,' I replied, 'some people like him and some people dislike him.' 'I have been told that he is very rough.' 'Yes, that is so—when he is vexed.' 'I am an officer of the High Court of the Transvaal, and I am going to him with a writ; do you think he will be violent with me?' 'Oh, no, I am certain he won't.' 'Then you think there is no risk so far as he is concerned?' 'None whatever; but you had better not mention your business in the camp, as his own battalion is at Kambulu Hill, and it might be bad for you if the men got to know your errand.' 'Why, what do you think they will do to me—kill me?' 'Oh, no; the worst that would happen to you would be to be tarred and feathered.' 'I don't like this job that I am on. I think, if you will allow me, I'd like to turn back and ride with you to Utrecht and send the document by post.' Accordingly we rode along together, and I showed him the post office in the little town before I went about my business."

When Mark Twain visited South Africa, he was asked by an eminent Africander what he thought of South African affairs. "Well," replied Mark Twain, "after I had been in Cape Town a week and had heard both sides of the question, I thought I had mastered it. Then I went to Kimberley, and met with a totally different view. Up in Bulawayo there was quite another story, and in Johannesburg a different opinion was heard, while in Pretoria I might as well have been in another country. When I reached Bloemfontein——" "Yes?" said the eminent Africander, "what conclusion did you come to?" "Well," said Mark Twain, "the only conclusion I could arrive at was that the South African question was a very good subject for a fool to let alone."

* * *

A shooting story told by Mr. Carl Jeppe in "The Keleidoscopic Transvaal." Mr. D. S. Mare, magistrate of Zoutpansberg, was out lion shooting with the late Barend Vorster, a mighty hunter before the Lord. A lioness had been wounded, driven out of cover, and stood at bay. The landdrost jumped off his horse, fired, and missed. It was now Vorster's turn, since there was not time for his friend to reload. In dismounting, Vorster dropped his watch and stopped to pick it up. The lioness seemed about to charge, and Mare urged his friend to shoot. Vorster replied grumblingly that the glass of his watch had been broken. "Never mind that now; the lioness is ready

to spring," Mare replied. "Do you know," said Vorster, "I shall have to send the watch to Pretoria, and that it will cost me five shillings to get it repaired?" "Good heavens," cried the magistrate, "don't you see you have not a moment to loose?" "It's all very well for you to talk," Vorster replied; "it's not your watch that is broken!" At last, however, he fired, and with unerring aim gave the lioness the *coup de grace*.

* * *

The following is an exact copy of a letter written by a half-educated Kaffir in the De Beers Diamond Mine Compound to his sweetheart outside:—

Dear Miss Judea Moses,—My dear, I am take this lettle time of write you this few lines hoping that it will find you in a good state of health, as it leaves me here in the Compound My dear Girl I am very sorry that you did not write my ansert back My dear Judea Moses be so kind and let me know how it is with you my dear girl I mean to say you must cry out and shout thou in the habitant of Zion, for great is the holy one of israel My dear Miss Judea i glided by lawns and grassy plots My dear friend please andswer me as soon as you get this letter My dear oft in sadness or in illness I have watched thy current glide till the beauty of its stillness overflowed me like a tide I steal my lawns and grassy plots I slide by hazel covers i move the sweet forget-me-nots that

grow for happy lovers My dear darling miss J.
Moses Here I shall drup writing with Best
loves good By 2222 kisses to youe.

* * *

Two middies, many years ago, returning to Simonstown from Cape Town, where they had been on a jaunt, arrived one dark night at Muizenburg. It was too late and too dark to continue their journey, so they put up at an inn known as "Father Peck's." When the bill was presented to them the following morning they discovered they had no money. "We'll paint you a signboard," they said to the landlord. This they did, adding the following lines:—

Multum in parvo, pro bono publico,
Entertainment for man and beast all of a
row.

Lekker kost as much as you please,
Excellent beds without any fleas.
Nos patriam fugimus now we are here,
Vivamus, let us live by selling beer.
On donne a boire et a manger ici,
Come in and try, whatsoever you be.

* * *

"Piet, my vrouw" is the name of a well-known South African bird, which owes its name to the following incident:—Le Vaillant, the French traveller, and a Hottentot named Piet, were out shooting, and Le Vaillant shot and killed a female bird. Piet brought up the bird. "Go back," said the Frenchman, "to the

spot where you found this bird, for surely there you will find its mate." Piet weepingly asked to be excused. "Please, Baas, I cannot fire at the male bird." "Go—I insist!" said Le Vaillant. "No, no, Baas!" pleaded Piet. "And why not?" demanded Le Vaillant. "Well, Baas," explained Piet, "no sooner did I shoot the female when the male bird began to pursue me with great fury, continually repeating, 'Piet, mij vrouw! Piet, mij vrouw!'"

* * *

In 1883 Judge Burgers was presiding over the Circuit Court at Lydenburg, when the proceedings were interrupted by the persistent crowing of a cock in the neighbourhood of the Court. The judge was visibly annoyed, but took no action for some time. The crowing, however, becoming more persistent, he stopped the proceedings and ordered the Sheriff to bring the offending bird before the Bench. This was done, and the learned judge, with due solemnity, sentenced the bird to death for contempt of court. The sentence was immediately carried into effect by the Sheriff wringing the creature's neck.

* * *

There was once a landdrost whose knowledge of law was very small. On one occasion an attorney practising in his Court quoted Van der Linden.

"Who was he?" asked the landdrost.

"A great authority on Roman-Dutch Law," was the reply.

“That law may do for his Court,” replied the landdrost solemnly, “but I wish you to understand that I am landdrost here.

* * *

Sir Christopher Brand, Speaker of the Cape Parliament, and father of Sir John Brand, President of the Free State, was noted for his parsimoniousness. Early one morning Sir Christopher came to the telegraph office at Paarl Station to send a wire ordering the arrest of a man who was subsequently hanged for an atrocious wife murder. The clerk in charge was Mr. David MacKay Wilson, who afterwards became a prominent official in the service of the South African Republic, and the author of “Behind the Scenes in the Transvaal.” Mr. Wilson counted the words and announced that the cost of the message would be four shillings and six pence. Sir Christopher replied that he had no money on him, but would pay later. The office regulation as to pre-payment was inflexible, and was not to be relaxed. “I told him so,” says Mr. Wilson, “whereupon he used his persuasive eloquence upon me to such effect that I weakly consented to pay for the message out of my own slender salary.” And although Mr. Wilson made several attempts to obtain payment of the sum advanced by him, he was not successful in doing so. Four years afterwards, Mr. Wilson was stationmaster at Durban Road, and one day he was called upon by a gentleman to open the door of one of the carriages. He immediately

recognised Sir Christopher, and in a spirit half-jocular, half-serious, reminded him of his debt. Sir Christopher ignored the reminder and demanded to be released, as it was imperative that he should see some one on the station. Mr. Wilson replied that he would not open the door until he received his four and sixpence. At this moment the train was moved on for shunting purposes, and the old Knight remained gesticulating and threatening at the window. On returning to the platform, Mr. Wilson approached the carriage and repeated his demand, when his peppery debtor consigned him to perdition, adding that he did not now require to get out, as it was too late. "I never got my four and six," says Mr. Wilson, "but I forgive him the debt, feeling satisfied that I had got even with him."

* * *

Curious to relate, a member of the Brand family was once the cause of a catastrophe to Mr. Wilson. Sir John Brand and his suite were passing in a special train to Cape Town on his memorable visit to England. The regulations required that on such occasions the stationmaster should himself hold the lever controlling the points. Mr. Wilson had just taken his position, when, looking in the direction of the fast approaching train, he saw to his horror his eighteen months old child sitting on the line playing with a piece of paper. Mr. Wilson left his position and went to the rescue. The train passed the points safely, and few but

himself knew the horror that had been so narrowly escaped. The traffic manager, however, who accompanied the train, noticed that the points were unattended, and a few hours later Mr. Wilson was formally suspended by a telegraph message. An enquiry was held, at which Mr. Wilson pleaded guilty, and asked the chairman what he would have done under the circumstances. "I should have done as you did," was the frank reply, and Mr. Wilson was acquitted and reinstated.

* * *

When the scheme of supplying water to Johannesburg from the farm Wonderfontein was first mooted, the surrounding farmers protested against the scheme, urging that if the water were diverted from the river which runs on the farm they would suffer. It may be stated that there is a river which disappears into the earth on that farm. President Kruger was very desirous that the Wonderfontein scheme should go through, and, in order to prove to the farmers that they were mistaken in the assumption that Wonderfontein was the source whence they derived their water supply, he ordered a sackful of corks to be emptied into the well-like cave down which "Wonderfontein" disappears. "If this stream does come out on your farms," said he, "the corks must come with it." Of course, not a single cork was ever seen again, and the farmers were convinced and withdrew their opposition to the scheme. It is suggested that President Kruger

well knew when he proposed the test that as the outlet of the stream was far below its surface, the corks would never pass through, but remain floating in the well.

* * *

A young Hollander was, many years ago, appointed to a landdrostship in the country. He had no qualifications for the post, and was unacquainted with even the most rudimentary principles of Court procedure. Some wag pointed out to him that a great blunder had been perpetrated by his predecessor, inasmuch as there was no box for the prisoner in the Court, and it was pointed out to him that as the prisoner was always referred to as the "prisoner in the box," if he was not in a box the conviction must fall to the ground through informality. The legal luminary on the Bench was not going to take any risks; he caused a gin case to be placed in the centre of the Court, and in that all prisoners or civil defendants had to stand before the business was proceeded with.

* * *

The following story illustrates how very distrustful some Beers are of modern customs. A widow named Erasmus sold some farms to a financial firm for £110,000 cash. It was agreed that she should receive the money at the Pretoria branch of the National Bank. In due course she presented herself at the Bank, bringing with her a hand-bag to hold the

money. When a cheque for the amount was handed to her, she returned it, saying that she had not travelled all the way to Pretoria for a piece of paper, and insisted on all the money being paid to her in gold. As all arguments proved unavailing, the manager agreed to let her have her own way. A bagful of sovereigns was emptied on the counter, and the old lady began to count them. She continued to do so for several hours, when she was informed she could not remain on the premises as the bank doors were to be closed; but she was obdurate, and refused to leave as she had only counted one thousand sovereigns, and feared that she would not see the balance of her money if she waited till the following day. At last the manager sent for Mr. T. W. Beckett, the well-known Pretoria merchant, thinking that the latter, being well acquainted with the farmers and their ways, would be able to convince her of her folly. Mr. Beckett was, however, not more successful than the manager. Mr. Beckett then offered his personal guarantee to pay her the money next day. This she accepted, preferring it to the security of the National Bank.

* * *

When Mr. B. I. Barnato was a member of the Cape Parliament, he took part in a discussion on the Cape Liquor Law, which prohibits the sale of liquor on Sunday, unless the customer at the same time has a bona fide meal. In the course of his remarks he said:—"A few

Sundays ago I walked some distance from Cape Town, for, being busily engaged in mentally reviewing the course of business of this Honourable House, I went on much further than I had intended without noticing the time. I at length retraced my steps, and being then both hot and thirsty, went into a decent and most respectable hotel for refreshment. I only wanted to quench my thirst, but, according to law, a drink could only be supplied as the accompaniment to a bona fide substantial meal. Mine host set before me a bottle of beer and a leg of roast pork. He had no other eatables. What was I to do? If I ate the pork, I broke the law of Moses, if I drank the beer without eating, I broke the law of the land. Between the Chief Rabbi and the Chief Justice I stood in a very awkward position."

* * *

Sir Starr Jameson's power of inspiring affection amongst those with whom he has been brought into contact is exemplified in the following anecdote. His biographer (Mr. G. Seymour Fort), three days after the Raid, was buying fruit from a stall in Pretoria, and selected a particular bunch of grapes. "No, sir," the woman replied, "you can't have that; I am keeping the best I have for Dr. Jim," and she went on to explain that he had cured her daughter in Kimberley, and that no sacrifice was too great for his sake.

Mr. Edmund Garrett tells a similar story of a groom who asked him for news of Dr.

Jameson. Mr. Garrett said to him: "You seem to be greatly interested in Dr. Jameson." "Interested!" said the groom. "Whatsoever 'quod' he gets, I'd gladly do half of it for him—that I would." "This groom," says Mr. Garrett, "had once broken his leg in a race at Kimberley, and the doctor had attended him in hospital. That was all."

* * *

Times have changed, but there was a time when the average Boer was unable to realise the magnitude of large figures. The representative of a Johannesburg syndicate was negotiating for the purchase of a farm in the Ventersdorp district. The owner asked for a preposterous sum. The financier then suggested that the amount of the purchase price should be as much gold as would cover a certain table in the room. To this proposal the farmer gladly agreed, and the financier covered the table with £12,000 in gold. This the farmer accepted, although the amount was about a quarter of the amount originally asked for.

* * *

When the Dutch East India Company ruled at the Cape only the Dutch Reformed religion was allowed. Nevertheless, a wealthy Prussian farmer, Martin Melk—a friend of the Governor, Ryk Tulbagh—built a Lutheran church and parsonage. Whilst the buildings were in course of erection Melk was visited by Governor Tulbagh. "Mr. Melk," said the Governor, "when I pass by that church which

is building I shall shut the eye nearest it." "Sir," was the reply, "God Himself will close the eyes of the man who may not look at His building."

* * *

The late Mr. "Barney" Barnato was an excellent actor. On one occasion he was playing the part of the auctioneer in "The Octoroon" in the old Theatre Royal, Kimberley, and in the auction scene was holding the whole attention of the house, all silent, spell-bound. The bidding for the octoroon progressed until the 25,000 dollars call was reached, when the impressive silence which followed this fateful bid was broken by the eager, excited voice of a miner in the pit who could not repress his agitation or stay to remember that he was in a theatre: "I'll bid 26,000 dollars." Mr. Raymond says that the man instantly slunk back, ashamed of his enthusiasm, and the whole house roared, but the effect of the scene was utterly spoiled.

* * *

On another occasion Barnato was playing Othello, and during the jealousy scene with Iago, a well-known broker and rival amateur named Benjamin Hart, seated in front, guyed him. The Othello coolly broke off in his speech, and, coming to the footlights, looked significantly at Hart, saying, "Benny Hart! Benny Hart! you just wait till I get through with this; I'll make you laugh on the other side of the mouth." He then colly resumed

his speech. Barnato had at that time the reputation of being the best amateur boxer in Kimberley, and Hart did not wait. He said he was in the habit of laughing on the right side of the mouth, and wasn't keen about trying the left.

* * *

The following story is an illustration of the ignorance which at one time prevailed in England regarding South Africa. A gentleman was preparing to start for the Cape when a friend came to him and said: "As you are going to Cape Town, you will meet my brother and perhaps you will kindly take him a small parcel from me." "With pleasure; where does he reside?" "Oh! he is at Graaff Reinet, and mind you tell him that he's to write and let us know how he is getting on!" Now, Graaff Reinet is nearly five hundred miles from Cape Town. It reminds one of the Irishman who enlisted in the 93rd Regiment because he had a brother in the 94th, and he wished to be near him!

* * *

When Mr. Barnato first met Sir Henry Irving, he informed him that he had seen him in his first performance of Matthias in "The Bells."

"I remember I played four characters that night," said Irving.

"No," said Barnato, in his usual quick, impetuous manner, "you played three."

“Excuse me,” said Irving, “but surely you will admit that I ought to know.”

“I don’t care whether you ought to know or not, but you played three characters only; and I will give you, if you like, every entrance and exit you made that night.” Barnato then proceeded to give the details of the performance, and Irving admitted that he was right.

* * *

Barnato himself gained a high reputation in Kimberley as Matthias. A very well-known South African was making a first visit to England and his friends, wishing to show him all the sights, booked seats for the Lyceum on a night when Irving was producing “The Bells.” “Oh, let’s go somewhere else,” said the colonist; “I have seen Barney Barnato as Matthias, and I do not want to see anyone else.” Barnato told this story to Irving, and the great actor replied: “Such is fame.”

* * *

The military instinct is very strong amongst the Zulus. Bishop Colenso was once telling a Zulu chief named Pakade that he was busy translating the Lord’s Prayer into Zulu, and was laboriously endeavouring to awaken the chief’s interest in the project when the latter impatiently replied: “Yes! Yes! That is all very good, but how do you make gunpowder?”

Mr. Barnato's biographer, Mr. Harry Raymond, says that one evening after dinner at a well-known club an attempt was made to engage Barnato in a game of billiards with a good player with the intention of extracting some money from him in bets. Nothing loath—for he was fond of the game and played well, circumstances which were not known to the people there—an adjournment was made to the billiard-room. There every seat was rapidly filled up to watch the expected game, and his opponent said: "Shall we play for a fiver, Mr. Barnato?" "Yes, I don't mind." Several of those present then offered each to bet him a fiver he did not win. He gave a quick glance round, saw the eagerness for the fivers and a share in the spoil, and, turning to a friend who was with him, said: "Have you got any paper, Tom? Take everything they offer; I am going to make some money to-night. Put a fiver on for yourself—I shall win." To the intense chagrin and disgust of the majority present, he did win, playing a very good game, and just running out with a little bit in hand.

* * *

In the year 1825, when Mr. Nathaniel Isaacs, the famous traveller, was in South Africa, he visited the great Zulu King Chaka. The latter enquired about the state of the political affairs in Europe and other parts of the world. Having been told something of the extent of the British Dominion and the overthrow of the French Empire of Napoleon at

Waterloo, ten years before, this half-naked barbarian complacently remarked: "Yes, I see now, there are only two great chiefs in all the world: my brother, King George—he is King of all the Whites; and I, Chaka—I am King of all the Blacks."

* * *

In the year 1851, Sir Harry Smith, then Governor of the Cape Colony, visited Kaffraria, the natives there being then in an unsettled condition. There was an old chief there named Macomo, who had always been a friend of the British. In the presence of a large assemblage of natives, Sir Harry placed his foot on the chief's neck, in order to symbolise to the natives the power of the White Man. The old chief submitted to the humiliation, but when he raised his recumbent body from the earth, he said to the Governor: "Until now I thought you were a man!"

* * *

Mr. Rhodes was not a church-goer, but strongly believed in religion as an influence for good. He was much impressed by the good work done by the Salvation Army. On one occasion, after a long interview with Mr. Bramwell Booth, the son of General Booth, he said to him: "Ah! you and the General are right; you have the best of me after all. I am trying to make new countries; you are making new men."

In 1896, whilst Dr. Jameson was in England and in failing health, Lord Grey, then Administrator of Rhodesia, received a telegram to the effect that Groote Schuur, Rhodes's beautiful home in Cape Town, had been burnt down with most of its contents. Mr. Rhodes was then in Rhodesia; but Lord Grey, knowing how intensely Mr. Rhodes was attached to his home, shrank from breaking the news to him. At last, however, whilst they were out riding together, Lord Grey said gently: "Well, Mr. Rhodes, I am very sorry, but I am afraid I must give you a rather ugly knock." Mr. Rhodes reined up his horse, and, turning to his companion, he exclaimed, his face livid, white and drawn with an agony of dread: "Good heavens! out with it, man! What has happened?" "Well," said Lord Grey, "I am sorry to tell you that Groote Schuur was burnt down last night." The tense look of anguish disappeared from Rhodes's face. He heaved a great sigh, and exclaimed, with an inexpressible relief: "Oh, thank God, thank God! I thought you were going to tell me Dr. Jim was dead. The house is burnt down—well, what does that matter? We can always rebuild the house, but if Dr. Jim had died I should never have got over it."

* * *

Umbandine, the Swazi King, was very fond of game shooting, but growing too stout to indulge in active exercise, he would order his Kaffirs to drive the buck to the royal enclosure, where, from his customary seat, he would empty his rifle amongst them. On one of these occasions the King accidentally killed a Kaffir who had got into the line of fire, and

afterwards he fined the widow twelve oxen because her husband had spoiled the royal sport!

* * *

Before the court of a certain magistrate a Dutch-speaking witness was giving evidence. He was of the cock-sure type of witness often to be met with in the law courts. He had made some particularly emphatic statement, when the magistrate said: "Don't be so dogmatic." The interpreter translated the remark to the witness by telling him in Dutch: "The magistrate says you must not be so 'hondachtig.'" Hondachtig is Dutch for "dog-like."

* * *

During the late war there was a Sister in the Pinetown military hospital called Baker. On one occasion, as she was going to have a day off, she left certain instruction with Sister H. about the patients under her charge. These instructions were overheard by one of the patients, who thereupon composed the following lines:—

SISTER'S DAY OFF.

There once was a Sister called Baker,
Of beds she's an excellent maker;
She knows temperatures, too,
And, between me and you,
Is of medicines an excellent shaker.

She knows each man's vice—how to treat it,
And warns Sister H. how to meet it:
"Number Two you can trust,
But show T. a crust,
Well, it's a thousand to one he'll eat it."

She dilates on the treatment we need,
All our habits, our drinks, our feed :

“ I repeat, Mr. T. . .

Doesn't realise all, but
He cannot be trusted for greed.”

“ Mr. N., however is wise,
At the sight of eggs hard boiled he sighs,
But eschew them I must,
And that beautiful crust,
For on me Sister Baker relies.”

You may ask how we know what was said.
The culprit there lying in bed,
Overheard in the dark,
The whispered remark,
And tears of hot anger he shed.

The moral is not far to seek,
A crust perforates you when weak,
While eavesdropping at night
Is really not right,
For its apt to raise anger and pique.

* * *

During the siege of Kimberley, a certain colonel said one night at mess : “ Gentlemen, I am sorry to say we were only able to draw half our ration in beef to-day ; this joint I am carving is beef, at the other end of the table the joint is horse ; if anyone would prefer to try it, perhaps he will carve for himself.” No one got up, so the colonel had to carve small helpings of beef for all the mess. After they had finished an orderly came and whispered to him, after which the colonel said : “ Oh, gentlemen,

I am sorry to find I have made a mistake; I find this was the horse, and the cow is still at the other end of the table!"

* * *

Shortly after his arrival at the Diamond Fields, the late Mr. B. I. Barnato went into partnership with Mr. Louis Cohen. They shared a hut together, and, as both were poor, they experienced many hardships. Many years after, when Mr. Barnato was at the height of his fame, he said to Mr. Cohen: "Lou, I will forgive you everything we have ever differed upon, except one."

"What is that?"

"Why, when we slept in that hut, you used to pull our only blanket off me every night, and I was too much afraid of you to even tell you of it."

* * *

A certain town was, during the war, placed under martial law, and no one could do anything without getting a permit from the military authorities. One day in December the Provost was surprised by a little girl coming into his office and saying: "Please, sir, may I have a permit for Santa Claus to come to our house?"

* * *

It is well known that during the war feeling amongst the Boer women was even more intense than amongst the men. One Boer woman was heard to urge her husband to go and fight, saying: "I can get another husband, but I can't get another Free State."

During the late war, a certain "Tommy" was desirous of possessing a bullet-riddled helmet to show to his friends at home, so he started firing from behind a big boulder on which he placed his helmet. Of course, the helmet at once became the target for Boer bullets. Unfortunately, not one touched the helmet, but one bullet hit the owner of the helmet on the shoulder. "Tommy" thereupon removed the helmet from its exposed position, and, with a look at his injured shoulder, remarked: "That comes of cursed pride and nothing else."

* * *

A Free Stater, captured during the war, tried to impress his captor by declaring that he was a Field Cornet. "I don't care if you are a field big drum," was the reply.

* * *

A certain Canadian trooper who came out here during the war was not favourably impressed with South Africa. "If I owned Satandom and South Africa," said he, "I would rent out South Africa and live in Satandom."

* * *

Shortly after the occupation of Bloemfontein by Lord Roberts's army, Mr. Kipling visited the Free State capital. One morning at his hotel a stranger came up to him and said: "Is it possible that I have the honour to meet the author of 'The Absent-Minded Beggar'?" "Yes," replied Mr. Kipling, "I have heard that piece played on a barrel-organ, and I would shoot the man who wrote it if it would not be suicide."

In one of the cavalry fights in the late war, a lancer was about to attack an old Boer, when the latter cried out: "Moe nie! moe nie!" (Don't, don't). The lancer, however, not being conversant with the taal, replied: "I don't want your money, I want your life."

* * *

The Officer Commanding the troops at Modder River issue an order prohibiting men from bathing in the river, and a flying sentry was stationed there to see that the order was not disobeyed. Noticing someone in the river, the sentry unceremoniously asked him to "clear out," whereupon the bather, who happened to be an officer in the Guards, approached the bank in all his nakedness, and indignantly asked the man: "Can't you see I am an officer?"

* * *

Mr. Barnato was one of the first on the Diamond Fields to realise that the blue ground was far richer than the yellow surface ground, although an opinion to the contrary was held by the majority of the diggers. In connection with this matter (says his biographer, Mr. Harry Raymond), Mr. Barnato used to tell the following story:—

"There was one man who, from the time I first began to know anything of the mines, I envied. He had some of the best placed claims in Kimberley and did splendidly until he got through the yellow ground and struck the blue ground, the bedrock as most people believed it to be. He was a clever man and sharp—perhaps some people would call him 'sharper'—so he obliged a friend by finding

a dumping ground in his claims for some worthless yellow. He then sold his claims for whatever he could get—four hundred pounds, I think it was—and cleared before the expected storm could burst on his head. But these claims were among the first to prove that the blue was the true diamond ground, and he could not have bought them back for forty thousand pounds. The man is still living, and very poor, after a life's hard work; but, Oh! he was so clever and so sharp! What? You suppose that I bought those claims for the four hundred pounds? No, I am sorry to say I never had the chance. I knew that the blue had been reached there, that the yellow ground had been dumped in to cover up, and I wondered what was coming next. The acts of an able man can be foreseen when his surroundings are known, but who can fathom the folly of a fool? I would have given eight thousand pounds for those claims, and they went to a new comer for four hundred pounds!"

* * *

An actor who visited the Rand in the early days relates the following anecdote:—

“As we came to Johannesburg from Kimberley by coach, we met the returning coach at some miserable stopping place with an unpronounceable name, and found it crowded with Lionel Brough and his company. We fraternised, of course, at once, and amongst the questions asked and answered as to prospects of business, theatre accommodation, etc.,

we learnt that Brough had with him a quantity of scenery and props which he did not want, but had been unable to sell at Johannesburg. At that moment Mr. "Barney" Barnato drove up on his way back to Kimberley, and at once joined us. He was always a good friend to the profession, and out there with the heavy travelling expenses between the mining camps, the hard work, and the other uncertainties, we often wanted such a friend then. When he heard of the scenery, he said: 'Come on, Brough, I'll put it up to auction.' We all adjourned to the open veld, all the cloths and props were spread out to view, and the sale commenced. It was one of the most amusing things I ever saw. Barnato made of it a monologue, in the style of Charles Mathews, even to that 'now let me get a word in edgeways' in 'My Awful Dad,' and bought in everything himself. We all enjoyed the joke tremendously, but, to our great surprise, he paid Brough the really good prices at which he had knocked the lots down, and made them a present to us in the most kind manner at the very last moment as he drove away. Many a professional has been indebted to Barnato for personal kindness that the world will never know of."

* * *

South Africans will no doubt be highly amused at the following incident, related by Madame Albani in her book, "Forty Years of Song":—

“ I visited the famous diamond mines at Kimberley, and here I had an interesting experience. The Zulu miners gave me a very cordial reception, and after they had indulged in some native dances for my entertainment, one of them came up and said: ‘ Lady, please sing.’ A chair was brought, and there, in the middle of the compound, with the Zulus squatting all round me, I sang “ Home, Sweet Home.” At the end the Zulus applauded uproariously, and accompanied me to the gate, dancing and shouting like madmen. It was a most curious scene, and very impressive.”

* * *

The following message was received by the Officer Commanding Caesar’s Camp from the Chief of Staff:—“ The General Officer Commanding has left to visit you via Wagon Hill. He intend to resume former position as soon as *dead* and *wounded* are buried, but will strengthen Caesar’s Camp by Rifle Brigade.”

* * *

Until the last Mr. Rhodes held the opinion that there would be no war. It was on account of this that his brother, Colonel Frank Rhodes, sent the following message to him on Christmas Day, 1899, when Mr. Rhodes was amongst the besieged in Kimberley:—“ Happy Christmas! How thoroughly you misunderstood the situation!”

* * *

During the military operations in connection with the siege of Ladysmith, a letter was

found on a captured Boer prisoner—apparently from a daughter in Ladysmith—which contained the following:—

PROGRAMME.

SIEGE THEATRE OF VARIETIES,
LADYSMITH.

SECOND GRAND PROMENADE CONCERT.

Under the auspices of the Naval Volunteers,
Tuesday, December 25th, 1899.

Under the Booming Patronage and in the
presence of

“SILENT SUE.”

“BULWAN BILL.”

“POM POM.”

“WEARY WILLIE.”

And others who, since last concert—
through circumstances over which they
had no control—are unable to take an
active part.

Concert to commence at 7.45 p.m.

Bunny Holes at 9.45.

One morning, when going along to a race meeting, the late Mr. Barnato struck up an acquaintance with a man at the starting station, had a drink with him, and then in the crush for the train they were separated. He got into a carriage with three of the "sharp" fraternity, who marked him for their own. Arrived at their destination, his first acquaintance saw the party get out of the carriage, and, coming hastily up to one of them, said:— "Here, you leave him alone; he is my bird."

"Oh! he is, is he?" was the rejoinder. "Well, you are welcome to him, for he got all our money." Before reaching the course, Barnato returned the sharps their money, saying: "Here, it is bad enough for you chaps to have lost your railway fare. I don't want your money, but don't mark Barney Barnato down for a mug again."

* * *

In the early days of the Diamond Fields, when the evils resulting from an uncontrolled supply of liquor to natives were rampant, the following lines appeared in a Kimberley paper:

The best of all methods, so others maintain,
 To free them from ignorance' yoke,
 And enable them civilised freedom to gain,
 Is simply to give them Cape Smoke;
 When mixed with tobacco, red pepper and
 lime,
 With dagga and vitriol, too,
 The draught is delicious, enchanting, sub-
 lime,
 Why, it even would civilise *you* :

In order to evade the I.D.B. Laws, it was the custom among the buyers in Kimberley to give a "reward" of 25 per cent. to their native servants for each diamond they brought as a reputed find while working, "which," as Dr. J. W. Matthews says in his book, "Incwadi Yami," "was, of course, merely another mode of buying from natives without fear of detection." This custom gave rise to the following lines, which appeared in a Kimberley paper some forty years ago:—

I would not be a digger. No,
 Nor yet an I.D.B.
 In digging oft your moneys go,
 The other's felony.
 But then, upon the other hand,
 I should be quite content
 If I only was a nigger, and
 Got 25 per cent.

I'd not be a shareholder, or
 Hold Atlas's or Frere's;
 I am not even pining for
 The scrip of great De Beer's.
 In Kimberley the debts expand,
 The loan, it isn't lent;
 So I'd rather be a nigger, and
 Get 25 per cent.

I would not be a Chairman, or
 Director of a Board,
 For then I could not buy nice pipes,
 Nor good Cape Smoke afford;
 I might get nasty writs perhaps
 When all my coin was spent:
 I'd rather be a nigger, and
 Get 25 per cent.

I wouldn't be a Searcher, and
 I wouldn't be the Chief;
 I wouldn't hold the contract for
 Removal of the reef;
 I wouldn't be Izdebski, and
 I wouldn't crime prevent;
 I'd rather be a nigger, and
 Get 25 per cent.

I wouldn't be a Secreta-
 ry nor a Manager,
 To be a toiling Overseer
 I'd very much demur;
 I wouldn't build a crusher,
 Nor such paltry things prevent;
 I'd rather be a nigger, and
 Get 25 per cent.

I wouldn't be proprietor
 Of far-famed Kamfer's Dam,
 Nor even Chairman of the French,
 For all's not real jam.
 I'd scarcely purchase Centrals,
 But I never would repent
 If only I was a nigger, and
 Got 25 per cent.

I would not be an Hemporor,
 I wouldn't be a King,
 I wouldn't be a Hadmiral,
 Or hany sich a thing;
 I wouldn't be in Lowe's Police
 And live inside a tent;
 I'd rather be a nigger, and
 Get 25 per cent.

In 1882, on account of the proximity of the Free State border to the Diamond Fields, a very stringent law was passed in that State to suppress illicit diamond buying. The judges, however, interpreted the law not to extend beyond six miles from proclaimed diamond diggings. This inspired a local poet to write as follows:—

Over the Free State line
 Whatever is yours is mine.
 If I've a stone,
 It's all my own,
 No John Fry shall make me groan
 Over the Free State line,
 I'll never have cause to pine,
 The I.D.B. is happy and free
 Over the Free State line

* * *

In the early days of the Diamond Fields when many made fortunes by illicit diamond buying, the following song was most popular in the Kimberley music-halls:—

I'm shortly about to retire,
 Then to Flo, of course, I'll be wed,
 I shall do the thing fine, buy shares in a
 mine,
 Or else float a company instead.
 I'll, of course, have a carriage and pair,
 And later I shall not despair,
 In the council I'll get, and if *you* wait a
 bit,
 No doubt you will see me made mayor.

The feeling of indignation which the retrocession of the Transvaal, after the defeat at Majuba, gave rise amongst the British colonists found expression in the following notice, posted up outside a hotel in Ladysmith:—

Sacred to the Memory of

HONOUR,

The beloved wife of John Bull.

She died in the Transvaal, and was buried at Candahar, March, 1881.

Her end was PEACE.

* * *

A farmer called at a certain magistrate's office to ask for a permit to move cattle. Whilst the permit was being written out the farmer sat down in the office and began to expectorate upon the floor. "Dirty beast!" muttered the official. "Nie, nie," interposed the farmer, "nie, dertig beeste nie, maar twentig." (No, no, not thirty cattle, only twenty.)

* * *

When Cecil Rhodes died there were some friends of Sir Abe Bailey who declared that the mantle of Rhodes had descended to Abe Bailey. About this time, Mr. Samuel Marks met Sir Abe Bailey and said to him: "What's this I hear about you having taken over Rhodes's mantle?" "Well," replied Sir Abe, "they are good enough to say so." "Take my advice, then," replied Mr. Marks, "and leave it alone. I've dealt in old clothes myself, and know they don't always fit."

At Stellenbosch everybody sleeps in the afternoon. Many years ago a Stellenbosch burgher consulted his physician for insomnia. "At what hour of the night do you suffer most?" asked the doctor. "Oh, it is not in the night that I suffer," was the reply. "I sleep well at night; but I sometimes find it difficult to get my full afternoon's sleep."

* * *

An amusing incident is related by Sir Henry Juta, K.C., arising out of the similarity of the Dutch word "keuken," meaning kitchen, and the Afrikaans word "kuiken," meaning chicken. Sir Henry and some other barristers were on circuit, and were dining at a Dutch farm house. The hostess apologised for the dinner not being all that it should have been owing to something having gone wrong with the culinary department. Sir Henry said to her:—"Het spijt mij, mevrouw, te hooren dat daar iets met de keuken makeert." ("I am sorry to hear, madam, that there is something wrong with the 'keuken' (kitchen).") The lady folded her arms and drew herself up, and said, coldly:—"Nie, meneer Juta, met die kuikens makeer daar nix nie." ("No, Mr. Juta, there is nothing wrong with the chickens.") Apparently chickens formed part of the *menu*.

* * *

Sir Theophilus Shepstone related the following story. In 1835, Colonel—afterwards Sir Harry—Smith, when commanding the troops in Grahamstown, always read part of the service on Sunday morning, and was so particular that all should come that he imposed a fine of half-a-crown on every absentee. He read

extremely well, and was very proud of it. One Sunday a dog came into the room where the service was going on and began to create a disturbance. Colonel Smith stood it for a little while; then, in the middle of a prayer, said suddenly: "Take that d——d dog away," after which he continued his prayer in the same tone as before.

* * *

In the early fifties, when Lord Grey was Secretary of State for the Colonies, the unpopularity of his policy amongst all sections in South Africa gave rise to the following epigram:—

This point was long disputed at the Cape,
 What was the devil's colour and his shape.
 The Hottentots, of course, declared him
 white;
 The Englishman pronounced him black as
 night.
 But now they split the difference, and say,
 Beyond all question that Old Nick is Grey.

* * *

Once President Kruger was one of a party amongst whom a competition arose as to who could tell the tallest yarn. This is the yarn the President related:—"I was outspanned with my wife and family by the banks of a river, when some elephants came down in the cool of the evening to drink. One of them, while engaged in quenching his thirst, had his trunk seized by a crocodile. The sagacious animal immediately withdrew from the water,

the crocodile maintaining its hold. Two other elephants belonging to the troop formed up, the one on the right, the other on the left of the attacked animal, and proceeded until they came to a spot where two trees had grown close together. The one elephant then pulled the nearest tree towards him, and his fellow, the parallel one, while the wounded animal deposited the crocodile between the trunks. The trees swung together, causing the crocodile to release its hold, and it was left to do the best it could for itself."

When the President had told his tale, another of the party gave the following shooting yarn:—The family were on trek and had been very unfortunate in the pursuit of game, which was scarce. They were without meat, and the father decided to have a look round for himself. The shades of evening were falling when he secured a fat buck, and promptly returned home. Amid the murmurs of congratulation from the others were naturally many enquiries as to how he had shot it. He explained that the buck was just going over a rise into a dip, when he fired and bowled it over. To his surprise, he found that the bullet had entered the hoof, passed right through the leg, then through the back and head, and emerged at the right eye. The President had to admit that his tale had been fairly capped.

* * *

In the early days of the Rand Gold Fields the Transvaal Government generously granted four stands to each of the various Christian denominations for the erection of places of worship. The Jewish community, however, received only two stands. At this the Jews felt

aggrieved, and a deputation was sent to Pretoria to interview President Kruger with a view to getting the grievance removed. The President listened attentively to the deputation, then shook his head and said:—"No, I don't think you have a legitimate grievance. You see, you only believe in half the Bible, so it is only right you should have half the number of stands. When you accept the other half of the Bible, I shall be glad to let you have two more stands."

* * *

When Sir Thomas Upington was practising at the Bar, he came into Court one day during the progress of a cattle-stealing case. The skins of the stolen cattle had all been produced in Court, and as they were several weeks old it made the atmosphere of the Court rather stuffy. Sir Thomas sniffed a bit and then said, *sotto voce*: "I suppose its all those rotten judgments."

* * *

Sir Henry Juta ("Reminiscences of the Western Circuit") says that the following incident actually happened. A girl married a rich farmer, who died some six months after, and as the couple had been married in community of property, she was left a wealthy widow. According to the usual practice, she was present at his funeral, and as they were returning from the graveside a former admirer approached her and proposed that they should make one flock of their sheep and goats, *i.e.*, marry. The fair widow replied with much feeling:—"Dit spijt, mij Jan, maar toe ons naar de begrafenis gegaan het ik het ver Piet Potgieter mij jaa-

woord gegee.” (“I am sorry, John, but as we went to the funeral I gave my promise (literally, yes-word) to Piet Potgieter.”) Sir Henry Juta adds that this story, like so many others, has been subjected to emendation. It now runs that the executor of her husband’s estate proposed to her when returning from the funeral, and the widow replied that going to it she had become engaged to the undertaker.

* * *

Many years ago a certain farmer in the Cape Colony engaged an overseer. The latter was an excellent worker, but was more intimate with the farmer’s wife than the farmer thought proper, having often found them sitting together on the sofa. The farmer then went to the magistrate for advice. “You should give your wife a good talking to,” advised the magistrate. The farmer only too well knew the futility of acting on this advice, and said so. “Well, then,” said the magistrate, “get rid of the overseer.” “That I can’t do,” objected the farmer, “because he is such a good worker.” A few weeks later the magistrate met the farmer again, and, noticing the happy expression on his countenance, remarked: “Ah, so you’ve got rid of the overseer.” “Nie,” replied the farmer, with a look of expressive contempt for the magistrate’s brains, “ik het de sofa verkoopt.” (“No, I have sold the sofa.”)

* * *

Two sons jointly inherited a farm from their father. They worked it together for some time, then a disagreement arose between them and they decided to divide the farm. They could not, however, agree as to the manner of

division, and, after much argument, they decided to submit their case to the arbitration of President Kruger. The President listened attentively to all the points raised by each of the brothers, and then gave the following decision:—"You, Jan, the elder, shall divide the farm in two portions; and you, Piet, the younger, shall have the first choice as to which portion you will take."



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