

FLYING WEDGE THAT PAID

An American Puts His Foot Ball Knowledge to Good Account.

WON \$300,000 IN KRUGER'S COUNTRY

A Transvaal Court Awards Him the Rich Prize—Story of a Thrilling South African Gold Rush.

JOHANNESBURG, Dec. 1.—"Barbarian" Brown, otherwise R. E. Brown, an American, has just been awarded damages amounting to nearly \$300,000 by the Transvaal government.

It is the sequel of the wildest gold-farm rush of South Africa, in which Brown pursued the tactics of the foot ball field and had himself driven through an immense mob of lawless robbers by a flying wedge of 300 armed men.

"Barbarian" Brown came to South Africa with a reputation for consummate nerve, gained in the famous Cœur de Leon strikes, where he took the part of the mine owners and never receded from his stand, though daily threatened with death.

Brown and his henchmen, in the meantime, held their position on the outskirts. It was not until half an hour before the time appointed to open the window that he began to form his wedge.

At the first impact with the human wall there was a terrific howl of pain followed by the most surpassing imprecations, and a man staggered out of the crowd with the blood spurting from his leg.

Maloney had run his knife into him several inches. In a few moments these cries were on all sides and the attention of the mob became divided, some turning to face the wedge, which hung together without a break and seemed to gain in velocity as it neared the goal.

Maloney and Love, with heads down, darted into every opening, and where there was none, made it with the aid of a knife. Brown was hustled along, breathless and bleeding, until within a dozen rods of the window.

Here several hundred Cornishmen, great hulking fellows, with plenty of strength and grit, made a stand that bade fair to spoil the rush.

They smashed the apex and were mowing down the pugilists when the rest of the wedge broke through and cleared the way. Brown, though badly bruised, continued to shout out promises of reward to his men if they push him up on time.

There were but a few minutes left then, and the office was rocking to and fro with the tide of humanity.

Brown Reached the Window. Pounded and beaten on every side, the great flying wedge made one last effort and with a zigzag movement and many knife thrusts finally broke through and fairly hurled Brown against the office.

With a good right hand he gave a pugilist smashed in the window and Brown clutched the frail partition with a death grip. At the same moment a gun was fired, announcing 9 o'clock, and the whole mass, as one man, heaved up against the little galvanized iron booth, crushing Brown almost flat.

Surrounded by a remnant of his flying wedge, however, he continued to hang to the window and was just getting at his wad of \$5 notes when the government commissioner threw open the door and announced President Kruger's order suspending the opening.

It nearly cost him his life, for bullets rained in the shanty from all sides and the mob pushed forward, clamoring and Brown was on the point of giving up his position when one of those happy inspirations which occur to men of quick thought and action urged him to demand a license.

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

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

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

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

ALLEN SANGREE. Australia reports 1,722 Christian Endeavor societies, with 52,340 members. The Baptists are making greater headway in Cuba than any other denomination. Paris possesses no less than 125 religious congregations for women, with 500 houses of various kinds.

The Pacific states that the Hiberman bank of San Francisco has recently distributed \$50,000 among the charitable institutions of that city. The American board, owing to the shrinkage in receipts from the churches, has appealed for increased subscriptions for foreign missionary work.

Rev. Dr. Cuyler says some people keep their religion as a matter of course, and when they are in a stormy weather, and hope to have it within easy reach if a dangerous sickness overtakes them. The late Robert R. McFarney of New York was known as "Father of the Young Men's Christian Association" from the active part he took in building it up as a national and international organization.

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line was Mountain Springs, now one of the foremost summer resorts in the mountains, and even twenty years ago much frequented by eastern health seekers. I explain all this so that you will readily understand what happened.

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"The management of the road was always afraid of an accident on the hill through a train becoming unmanageable, and in my cab, directly over the steam gauge, hung this warning in big black type.

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"While knowing that an order of this kind is for something and that its disobedience may mean disaster, a railroad man will in time come to look upon it as something to be obeyed if convenient and to be slighted if he feels like it. And so it came that when we were in a hurry we cut off the engine from the train, even if it had been brought to a stop. On this particular day in June of '76 I am speaking we were in a hurry. We had run No. 17 up the hill and were ordered onto the sidetrack at Acton to get out of the way of No. 11, the through train from the south that was coming north as a doubleheader and with a third engine pushing it. No. 11 was a regular, but was making this trip as an excursion train and was made up of eight coaches crowded with

people from the east who had been at Mountain Springs attending some big convention. "As the freight we were shoving came to a standstill my man leaped to the ground and uncoupled the engine from the last car, and I backed down over the switch, and then ran ahead on the sidetrack. While it was being done a brakeman had cut the train in front of the last two cars and the regular engine in front had started ahead with the other cars toward the north switch to back the four cars in on the spur.

"As I shut off steam and centered the reverse lever my eyes fell on the order hanging over the steam gauge and for some reason the warning gave me a shock, a feeling that I had never experienced in the many times that I had never learned. Even then I was not alarmed, but I saw that the two cars were moving slowly down the hill, and I watched them only long enough to see the rear brakeman clamber up the side ladder and seize the brake wheel. Then I injected, and again glanced at the order. Evidently the brake on the first car was out of order, as the cars were moving more rapidly and the brakeman was hastening toward the brake on the second car. He grasped it and swung around and nearly fell to the ground. The brake chain was broken, and there was nothing to hold the cars.

"In an instant the picture of an awful horror flashed before my eyes. No. 11, crowded with passengers, was coming, and those cars, running at terrific speed, would crash into the train, carrying death and destruction to scores, if not hundreds. The scene at the moment the realization of the impending disaster came over me is before me now as plainly as on that day nearly twenty-five years ago. The engine, the brakeman stumbling toward the side ladder to descend, the long line of sliding rails leading down the divide, the freeman standing near the switch staff and gazing toward the cars with eyes that reflected the horror in my own, and the engine below, on the line of the twisted, winding track, a fair bit of smoke that told me No. 11 had left Mountain Springs.

"Before the moving cars crossed the switch we all knew what must be done. The brakeman, James Hurd, he is a passenger engineer on the Denver & Rio Grande road now, had thrown the switch and swung himself onto the footboard back of the tank, and the old 105 was in pursuit of the runaway. The brakeman remained to close the switch and Hurd was bracing himself to couple the engine to the swift-moving cars when we should approach them.

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"We were running now at a speed of sixty or seventy miles an hour, and when you consider that the track on the hill is the crookedest every one surveyed by an engineer, and up deep ravines and canyons, you can appreciate the danger of the run. Down the hill we thundered, swinging through deep cuts and around sharp curves, the engine swaying and plunging on its springs as if struggling in an effort to dash itself into one of the gorges lining the track. The engine was surrounded by rolling clouds of dust through which at times I caught glimpses of the cars, pitching and tossing like an unbalanced vessel in a storm at sea. I knew the cars might jump the track at any moment—and there was a right good chance for their doing so—and ditch the locomotive, sending the freeman and myself to quick death; but we must take the chances so long as there was a possibility of stopping the runaway.

"Again and again we tried to make the coupling, but failed each time. I did not know until all was over the difficulties the freeman was experiencing. The drawhead in the car was the old-fashioned single link bumper—a man killer, we call it now—and was so loose in its socket that it had to be raised six or eight inches and held in position while the link was being put in place. This required two hands, and as the engine could not maintain its position on the swaying footboard without using one hand to cling to the handrail, he could not get the link in place and drop the pin through it.

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"As we dashed past the telegraph office the long arm of the signal board pointed down, and I thanked God that the next block was still open and that we had another chance for life. We had eight miles of clear track and might yet prevent a disaster. The only hope, however, was in catching the runaway cars, as there was no telegraph office at Campton and No. 11 had left Mountain Springs and was booming toward us as fast as three big engines could send her and without a stop ahead.

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"That's the story, and now I have finished my running. I am going up to my ranch near Greeley that the company gave me for chasing those cars down the hill that day. The girl that threw the switch? She'll be here, too, she has been a half owner in that ranch since two months after she saved the train."

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"In an instant the picture of an awful horror flashed before my eyes. No. 11, crowded with passengers, was coming, and those cars, running at terrific speed, would crash into the train, carrying death and destruction to scores, if not hundreds. The scene at the moment the realization of the impending disaster came over me is before me now as plainly as on that day nearly twenty-five years ago. The engine, the brakeman stumbling toward the side ladder to descend, the long line of sliding rails leading down the divide, the freeman standing near the switch staff and gazing toward the cars with eyes that reflected the horror in my own, and the engine below, on the line of the twisted, winding track, a fair bit of smoke that told me No. 11 had left Mountain Springs.

"Before the moving cars crossed the switch we all knew what must be done. The brakeman, James Hurd, he is a passenger engineer on the Denver & Rio Grande road now, had thrown the switch and swung himself onto the footboard back of the tank, and the old 105 was in pursuit of the runaway. The brakeman remained to close the switch and Hurd was bracing himself to couple the engine to the swift-moving cars when we should approach them.

A Wild Chase. "No steam is ever used in going down that hill; at the top of the incline the throttle valve is closed and the speed of the train is controlled by the airbrake. But as Jim Hurd took his stand on the footboard I opened the throttle valve to give her a start and then put on the air until I had her under control, and then away we went. The runaway cars were fully 100 yards ahead as we crossed the switch and were moving apparently at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour with rapidly increasing momentum. In sixty seconds old 105 was running fifty miles an hour, and in thirty seconds more we were close to the cars. I heard Jim's voice faintly above the rattle and roar as he shouted something, and knowing that it was to slow down in order to approach the cars without a crash, I applied the air. A slight jolt told me the engine and car had come together, and after waiting an instant to give Hurd time to drop the pin in place I pulled the air valve to lessen the speed. As the engine slowed under the pressure of the brake I saw the cars glide away from Hurd and missed the coupling. Again the engine and car came together and again I applied the air, with the same result.

"We were running now at a speed of sixty or seventy miles an hour, and when you consider that the track on the hill is the crookedest every one surveyed by an engineer, and up deep ravines and canyons, you can appreciate the danger of the run. Down the hill we thundered, swinging through deep cuts and around sharp curves, the engine swaying and plunging on its springs as if struggling in an effort to dash itself into one of the gorges lining the track. The engine was surrounded by rolling clouds of dust through which at times I caught glimpses of the cars, pitching and tossing like an unbalanced vessel in a storm at sea. I knew the cars might jump the track at any moment—and there was a right good chance for their doing so—and ditch the locomotive, sending the freeman and myself to quick death; but we must take the chances so long as there was a possibility of stopping the runaway.

"Again and again we tried to make the coupling, but failed each time. I did not know until all was over the difficulties the freeman was experiencing. The drawhead in the car was the old-fashioned single link bumper—a man killer, we call it now—and was so loose in its socket that it had to be raised six or eight inches and held in position while the link was being put in place. This required two hands, and as the engine could not maintain its position on the swaying footboard without using one hand to cling to the handrail, he could not get the link in place and drop the pin through it.

Flying Past Stations. "By this time we were within three miles of Buckley. As the locomotive and fleeting cars dashed across a trestle 100 feet high I caught a glimpse of the little telegraph shanty in the valley surrounded by a network of rails. I opened the whistle and kept it shrieking until we were within 200 yards of Buckley, but no one appeared on the station platform, and as we flashed past the telegraph office the white face of the operator, his eyes wide open with alarm and horror, appeared at the window for the fraction of an instant.

"As we dashed past the telegraph office the long arm of the signal board pointed down, and I thanked God that the next block was still open and that we had another chance for life. We had eight miles of clear track and might yet prevent a disaster. The only hope, however, was in catching the runaway cars, as there was no telegraph office at Campton and No. 11 had left Mountain Springs and was booming toward us as fast as three big engines could send her and without a stop ahead.

"We crossed the half-mile of sidetracks at Buckley so fast that there was an unbroken rattle of clanking rails, and swung around the point of the mountain and down the winding track toward Campton. Over a swaying bridge, through a cut, the old 105 joined us along at the rate of seventy or eighty miles an hour. In two minutes after crossing the yards at Buckley we were within eight of Campton, nesting below us in the valley. Hurd had been silent seemingly for hours—and whether he was still at his post or had fallen on the rails and been ground to pieces I do not know. I realized that there was no longer a possibility of stopping the cars by coupling to them, and what my hope was, if I had any at all, I do not know; there was only a mad determination to follow that runaway engine of destruction to the end and die with the rest. No, it was not heroic; it was pure recklessness, and the thought that if four or five score of human beings were to perish through my carelessness I would die with them.

Switched and Elevated. "As the roofs of Campton came into view the whistle began to sound again. Three miles below lay the half-deserted mining camp; now I could see the rough board station, the red and white switch targets and the dark spots on the mountainside that mark the abandoned telegraph shanty. Then I distinguished a form on the station platform, a slender form in dark calico and wearing a sunbonnet. Even at that distance I could see the grace of the slow step. The woman's back was toward me, but I knew her to be Nettie Bascom, the daughter of the one-legged farmer. It was ten seconds, perhaps, before the girl heard the whistle; then she turned slowly, looked an instant toward us and with a quick