

OMAHA MAN IN SOUTH AFRICA

William J. Reeves' Observations in the Transvaal.

SCENES AND INCIDENTS IN JOHANNESBURG

Wonderful Gold Production—American Machinery in Demand—Lively Mining Stock Exchange—Customs of the Kafirs.

Among the half-civilized countries undergoing the process of civilization and development, into which the wealth offered by natural resources has led men, some travelers are inclined to rank the Transvaal of South Africa as the first. One of these is William J. Reeves of Chicago, formerly of Omaha, who has just returned to this country from Johannesburg and who has been in town the past week.

"More gold will come out of that country this year," said Mr. Reeves, "than out of California and the Klondike put together. In January of last year they took out of the Sluiter and Jack, the largest mine there, 45,000 tons of crushed gold ore, which yielded 24,600 ounces of metallic gold. This mine employs 4,500 Kafirs and 2,000 white men. F. L. Webster, an old Omaha man, who built the water works at Johannesburg, is the mechanical engineer for this mine.

"The Chicago wheat pit is a tame place for excitement compared to the Johannesburg stock exchange when the Kafirs stocks, the gold mine stocks, are going up. The place where all their dealings in stocks are carried on is a section of the street that runs along in front of the exchange building, cut off from through traffic at either end by chains. 'Between the chains' is the common name of the place. At certain times you can see scenes of the wildest excitement here. Millions of pounds sterling were lost and won here in January and February of this year, when they had that famous boom in Kafir stocks. They have their own system of conducting business, entirely unlike that used in Chicago or New York, and it is hard for a stranger to learn. A man who does not know it thoroughly is likely to get the worst of the dealing, too, and had better keep out of 'between the chains'.

"The mines prefer American machinery to that made in any other country, on account of the fact that it is turned out faster to order and is better finished, more attractive and has fewer defects than the European. The large machine manufacturing houses of this country are represented there. And there is another department of American industry which has already gained a foothold, or more than a foothold, in Johannesburg. There it lots of American beer sold there, besides the German and English brands.

Johannesburg and Vicinity.

"The country, although politically a republic and nominally in the hands of the Dutch colonists, the Boers, is almost run by the English. There are also a great many Americans and Germans in Johannesburg. The Kafirs, the original inhabitants of the country, were conquered by the Boers and have no rights at all. They are not even allowed to walk on the sidewalks in Johannesburg, but must take the middle of the street. They are not allowed to live in the town at all.

"The city has about 40,000 or 45,000 inhabitants. The different nationalities—that is, the Germans, English and Americans—do not divide up, but mingle together. They have two clubs there and a considerable society of the better class. The English are the mine owners, principally. The poor man has no show there, except in the extra fine mechanic, in which case he can command wages of 21 shillings, or \$5.25, per day. They will have nothing to do in the mines with any but the best mechanics. But living costs there about three times as much as in American cities.

"The 'Reef,' as it is called, is the place where all the mines are located. Here is where most of the Kafirs are. The different mines have 'compounds,' a hollow square made of four lines of huts, in which the Kafirs live. It is amusing to see a Kafir on a Sunday afternoon parading up and down here with a war club and an umbrella in his hands, nothing but a breech cloth on and his body made shiny with oil. The Kafirs and the Zulus, who are also commonly called Kafirs, though there is a difference, are very fine physical specimens.

"These Kafirs live on 'mealie' and 'mealie' mush, which is simply our cornmeal. A Kafir when he travels carries with him a sack of corn, some salt and a Dutch oven, which he calls a 'mealie' pot, and he is ready to go to housekeeping anywhere he happens to be. Those who live on the 'veldt,' or plain, and own some cattle travel in a wagon that has a house on the front end of it. With this he comes to town with what he raises. The Kafir comes to the mines, works about six months and then goes back to where his people are and buys a wife. He first puts the money he has saved into cattle.

In a Kafir's estimation cattle are the real wealth of the world. With cattle he can get a wife; six or seven oxen are paid for a wife. If he wants another wife he goes back to the mines and works again. When he has five or six wives, he quits working, goes back to the country and begins to accumulate cattle. Girls are welcomed into the family much more heartily than boys, for the boys bring nothing, while the girls are each worth so many cattle.

"Dutch is the language of Johannesburg, but the Kafirs have a language of their own which they reinforce with clicks made with the tongue. There is the tongue click, the roof click and the throat click. A man not a Kafir does not understand what they mean except that they are used instead of modulations of the voice. A Kafir never raises his voice. Instead, when he is angry or in a hurry he adds some clicks to what he says.

MEET TO EXCHANGE VIEWS

References in Bankruptcy Want Uniform System for Conduct of Business.

The Nebraska commissioners in bankruptcy held a session at the government building yesterday for the purpose of exchanging views and agreeing upon a uniform system of transacting business. Those who were in attendance were: Charles E. Clapp, W. H. Herdman, Omaha; Ernest C. Ames, E. E. Spencer, Lincoln; John A. Davis, Plattsmouth; J. A. Habegger, Chadron; Frank P. Ireland, Nebraska City; Lyman R. Ratham, Columbus; F. W. Vaughn, Fremont; E. P. Weatherly, Norfolk; Charles F. Stroman, York; Walter V. Hoagland, North Platte; R. R. Horth, Grand Island; Thomas Benton Carr, Kearney; Arthur W. Scattered, Answorth; Fulton Jack, Beatrice; James Britton, Wayne; H. M. Utley, O'Neill; J. L. White, Curtis; J. A. Gardiner, Hastings; G. Norberg, Holdrege.

Judge Munger of the United States court delivered a short address in which he gave the commissioners some points on the methods to be pursued in the conduct of cases.

Horse Thief Under Arrest.

On March 26 E. L. Robertson, a Leavenworth street liverman, rented a horse and buggy to a man to take a short drive into the country. When he did not return at the appointed time Mr. Robertson notified the police and offered a reward of \$75 for the fellow's apprehension. He was traced to Kansas City, where he is now under arrest on a similar charge, as he seems to have picked up the habit of a Missouri horse and the Missourians took exception to his freedom in handling their property. After his arrest he confessed that he had driven Mr. Robertson's horse south until about sixty miles west of Leavenworth, he thinks somewhere near Nortonville, Kan., where he sold the outfit to an old soldier. He gave his name as Cyrus Hunter and his business as a fancy decorator. The police are endeavoring to secure his return for trial, but as the Missourians have a good case against him they may not be successful.

Humphreys' Medicine Co., Cor. William and John Sts., New York.

SOOTHING A TROUBLED BOY

Experiences of a Foreign Painter with an Omaha Lad in Chicago.

DIFFICULT DUTY OF KEEPING QUIET

Notable Speech Fined at the Youngster While the Painter Painted On—Recollections of Felix Moscheles.

A distinguished portrait painter being a visit to the United States several years ago and was so impressed with what he saw that he opened studios in New York and Chicago. His experiences in this country were sufficiently novel to be preserved in book form under the title, "Fragments of an Autobiography," which was issued recently.

One chapter of the book is devoted to his experience with a bright Omaha boy, the then 4-year-old Robert Morse, son of W. V. Morse. Mr. Moscheles gives a description of the boy, his mother and the difficulties they both experienced in getting the youngster to sit and out for his portrait. He writes thus of the incident:

"I had got very busy in the studio I had taken in Chicago, where I was spending the winter of 1887, when a very pleasantly worded letter reached me, inviting me to transfer my studio to Omaha, two days' journey farther west could we accept the invitation and so it was arranged that at least one of my intending models should be brought to me to be dealt with according to the severe laws of the portrait painter's art. Robert Morse was 4 years of age and had a distinct objection to be thus dealt with and his shoulders could not arise a series of difficulties. But, oh, how beautiful he was. I see him now as he was handed out of the carriage on his arrival at the Hotel Richelieu, his golden curls escaping from beneath the Phrygian cap of liberty and cascading over his shoulders. No one in the depth of winter and his sturdy little figure was warmly clad in the ample folds of the toboggan costume—a sort of ulster made of deep-toned red flannel, collar and cuffs of the same material, but dark blue, and the cap to match. His mother led him upstairs—or I should more correctly say, speaking of this typical American child, was led upstairs by him. After forty-eight hours' traveling that little stepped out of the train much as if it were one of those boxes marked 'Worth, Paris.' She was a lovely woman, as I said before, and she not only in outward appearance, but in that moral and intellectual sense which the American language connects with the word."

A Determined Little Sitter.

Then follows a description of the mother, the determination to paint the boy in full length and a head portrait of the mother. Then he begins his story of the difficulties made by the boy, who declined to sit or leave the studio when his mother was sitting. He tells of the devices used to circumvent the powers of resistance, all of which failed miserably. At length the painter succumbed to the boy and his determination not to do what was wanted of him. Mr. Moscheles illustrates this feature thus:

"At all hours of the day Robert was delightfully bright, but his temper seemed sharpened as bedtime approached. Not that he objected, as most children do, to going to bed, but however sleepy he was his spirit of resistance seemed somehow to revive when the moment came to recite his little prayer. On one occasion he was as long as he prayed for his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, but when it came to his uncle and aunt and to their numerous offspring he made a decided stand, putting it plainly to his mother, 'I say, mamma, why can't you pray for me and my friends?'"

Finally Mr. Morse came on to assist, as the time was growing short. The painter says the father stood the boy's doings for a time and then, in a decided manner, took him away to another room. Mr. Moscheles continues:

"But if I expected howling and gnashing of teeth I was to be disappointed. Nothing broke the silence until after some time the door opened and father and son reappeared. Robert took his seat on the sofa, his feet attached to the toboggan and listened with great attention to his father's words. These were spoken slowly and impressively, giving me time to apply whatever faculty of correct drawing I possessed.

The Father Explains It.

"Sir," he began solemnly, "Robert wishes me to communicate to you what he has passed on during our absence from the room. It did not take me long to elicit from him the fact that he has no desire to see his portrait finished. He has even assured me that as far as he was concerned it need never have been painted at all. He further stated that he had no time for a desire to visit Chicago, and that he much preferred Omaha to that city. Also, he said—and I think with some show of reason—that having no playmates here he would like to return to those he left behind, more especially his brothers and sisters. Now, sir, you are aware that I, on the other hand, wished him to make it possible for you to finish that portrait and I could see no cause why I should recede from that position, so I politely but firmly requested him to do as I desire. There are, no doubt, some boys who, when they are thus opposed, would not have hesitated to strike their fathers, but Robert is not a boy of that description. He would at all times respect his father's independence. Still, you see, we were at what you might call a deadlock. He had gotten sickle in a dark place behind me, the windows left out and a stone wall in front. Under these circumstances I cast about in my mind, and it occurred to me we should do well to make straight for arbitration. Now Robert said he did not know the precise meaning of arbitration, so I explained to him that when two parties could not agree it was usual to call in a third to decide which way things were to be settled. I wanted to nominate you, sir, but Robert put in his opinion that you might not be the right person for our purpose. He said I myself should do it. As you have decided the matter careful consideration I decided that Robert should come in and take friendly to that toboggan and cord and that he should generally make himself portable. I further decided that as long as it lasted I should sit here patiently and wait, but that as soon as he had done what I might do and procure a horse to have a ride on the road to Omaha, and that I should also procure a pony so that Robert might accompany me on that ride."

Robert listened intently. I painted ditto. They say in Omaha, where the portrait hangs, that it is good. So I'll be that and yours well. Of that I am glad and as I recall the incident I am once more lost in admiration of the American child that from his earliest days is ever ready to elicit the noblest qualities of patience and forbearance in the parent it is training."

Thomas Thurman, deputy sheriff of Troy, Mo., says if everyone in the United States had Salvo for plies, neural troubles and skin diseases, the demand could not be supplied.

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A beautiful large solid oak Morris Reclining Chair, with cushion seat and back—worth \$15.00—this week..... 5.25

Solid oak Dresser, quarter sawed top, finely polished—worth \$20.00—this week..... 9.50

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A Mahogany Combination Book Case, with French patent mirror, bevel edge, height 61 inches, worth \$12.00—this week..... 9.75

35 solid oak Easels, with fancy grill top—patent adjustable supports—worth \$12.00—this week..... 49c

Solid Oak Pile Screens—worth \$1.25—this week..... 49c

Solid Oak Sofa—5 feet high, 49 inches wide, handsomely upholstered in green, regular price \$1.79—this week..... 1.79

28 oak or mahogany India Stools—size 18x18 top—convex seat—worth \$2.00—this week..... 98c

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Adjustable Screens for windows—worth 75c—this week..... 39c

Ice Picks, worth 25c—this week..... 12c

Adjustable Reclining Lawn Chairs, with canvas back and seat, worth \$3.00—this week..... 98c

Large Reed Porch Arm Chairs, with hand made reed top seat, green or red—worth \$1.50—this week..... 4.25

Beautiful large Porch Settees, with arms and high back, extra well upholstered in green or red—worth \$1.50—this week..... 98c

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