

VALIANT BATTLE FOR LIBERTY

Struggles of the South African Republic for Independence.

PERSISTENT AGGRESSIONS OF THE BRITISH

Story of the Courage and Fortitude of the Dutch Pioneers of the Transvaal—Persistent Controversy with the British.

The southern end of the Dark Continent is reported to be in that feverish condition which usually precedes actual war. Dispatches furnish fuel for the advocates of war, as well as for the promoters of peace, but as yet affairs have not reached the exploding point. Great Britain is pressing its claims on the Transvaal republic with all the arts of diplomacy and the pressure of superior power. The little land-locked republic, bold, if not defiant, resists the demands, and yet yields a little at a time. Perhaps the sturdy burghers will yield some more—enough to avert the dread alternative of war. The proposed conference, which both parties appear to have agreed to, may be a play for time; it may prove a sincere effort to effect a settlement satisfactory to both parties. Time alone will determine.

Questions at Stake. The vital question involved is the right of the British government to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. Ever since the farcical Jameson raid, British citizens in the Transvaal have appealed again and again to the home government for relief from what they termed a tyranny and exactions of the burghers. They have by far the largest financial interest in the Transvaal, and yet had no voice in its government. They could not become electors without losing their franchise. Modifications of the franchise were enacted about a year ago, but they were not satisfactory to the outsiders. Recently President Kruger agreed that his government would grant a five-year franchise to the British. That was the minimum of the British demands. But in return for this grant President Kruger insisted that Great Britain should agree not to interfere in the internal affairs of the republic in the future. The request was promptly denied. Thus the issue was brought again to the question whether the South African republic has a right to independent existence. The Boers believe that they are a nation. In the London convention of 1854 the British government conceded that the Boer state should be called a republic—its official name being the South African Republic. The only limitation upon its absolute independence to be found in that convention was the stipulation that the republic "will conclude no treaty or agreement with any state or nation, other than the Orange Free State, nor with any native tribe to the eastward or westward of the republic, until the same has been approved by her majesty, the queen." That meant that the republic was to be a vassal state, dependent upon the British crown for its foreign relations. In all other matters its independence was clearly acknowledged by treaty.

Struggle for Liberty. The situation may be likened to that preceding the outbreak of the revolutionary war in America. It is clear that the Boers are much better prepared than the Americans were at that time. The British government in 1776 was directly responsible for the war, but the chartered companies, the Rhode Islanders and the adventurers in collusion with Joe Chamberlain, are responsible for the conditions prevalent in South Africa. The republic stands in the way of the plans of Great Britain in South Africa. It is an obstruction to the expansion of the British empire. Right and justice have no part in the game.

A more determined people than the Boers has never lived. They are fully prepared for war—better than they ever will be again and the conditions are more favorable to success. They can place 30,000 troops in the field within thirty-eight hours, and 30,000 more in less than a month, to say nothing of their kinsmen from all over South Africa who will rally to their aid. They are, moreover, the best marksmen in the world. In hunting game they show a never-failing which carries their bullets with accuracy to about accurately at long distances. It is nothing unusual for one of them to bring down a springbok at 500 or a buffalo at 1,000 yards, and they showed in their battles with the British that their aim was not affected by the circumstance that the game was shooting back. An Englishman who has lived long in the Transvaal says of the sturdy burghers: "They may not be such dead shots as their fathers were, but, in the tactics as of old, a large proportion of them will kill or wound their man. I have no doubt of the issue, but it might cost us more than a Waterloo. The Boers would, in the open and always on the defensive. They will show nothing if they can help it but the muzzle of the rifle, and the chance of hitting them is about equal to that of, of course, we shall commit the usual folly of presenting our men in comparatively close order and attempting to rush these positions."

Military Organization of the Boers. An exhaustive article in the Militaristische Wochenblatt, a Berlin weekly devoted to military affairs, contains a summary of the military organization of the Boers. It gives interesting facts concerning military affairs in the two great Boer republics—the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

Though in regard to organization, arms and tactics great similarity exists between the military of the two states, separate statements are necessary to give a comprehensive idea of strength, formation, and capacity of the military (it is scarcely correct to say army) of each, because in times of peace they are absolutely independent of each other. Common to both states is the most perfect and relentless execution of compulsory service in case of war. This is more so the case than in Germany. In the Transvaal this duty exists from the sixteenth to the sixtieth year of age, and in the Orange Free State from the eighteenth to the sixtieth. On account of the early physical development of the Boers, even what, according to American ideas, would be considered youth, furnishes a useful material for soldiers. Similar to this the older men are good soldiers, because their life is less nomadic life as hunters, and cattle raisers assures them a degree of "reasoning" upon what is known as "state artillery." According to the law of national defense of 1895 this corps is to be the nucleus of the war strength of the republic and it has to be in a state of perpetual mobilization. Military discipline and instruction in this branch of the service must be such that the men, at the end of their captivation, are able to serve as non-commissioned officers if necessary. The corps also has such technical instruction that its members may be fit to occupy subaltern offices in the civil service. It has thirty-two officers, eighty non-commissioned officers and 250 men, and is intended as a sort of school battalion in the artillery, field telegraphy, engineer, and hospital service. The corps is commanded by a general, who draws the respectable salary of \$10,000 a year. Officers are paid equally well in proportion of

their command. Thearrison of this corps is in a fortified camp at Pretoria, where the guns are also stationed—three field batteries and a number of heavy guns, mostly of the Krupp pattern. There are also two batteries of rapid-fire guns. Since 1894 a law is in existence which permits an organization of volunteer corps consisting of citizens entitled to vote. This is done to keep up interest in military matters. These corps are furnished arms and ammunition and each volunteer receives annually from \$10 to \$100 for periodical service, which includes police service in case of riots or other disturbances. Nearly every large city or village has such a corps, the strongest being Johannesburg, which consists of 600 infantry and 200 cavalry.

The military strength of Transvaal, however, rests in its militia. Statistics concerning its numbers vary between 25,000 and 26,000 burghers, subject to military service, of whom from 15,000 to 16,000 are in their best years. The white population of the Transvaal in 1898 was a little over 320,000, among them, however, numerous "uitlanders," who, not being entitled to vote, cannot be compelled to serve. Of the Kafirs, numbering about 450,000, probably 60,000 are subject to military duty.

The military division of the state is strictly carried out, and makes an incredibly quick mobilization possible, because each citizen is compelled, upon notification, to repair at once, with horse, arms, accoutrements and rations, to the place of rendezvous.

District Organization. For this purpose the Transvaal is divided into districts and each district again into commandos. Each district has a commander, who, as well as the cornets, has much authority in peace as well as in war. Even in times of peace, for instance, each important town or village has a military commander in his field cornet and his commando.

Encampments and field maneuvers upon a large scale do not take place. In view of the fighting methods of the Boers there is no need of encampments for such extensive formations. The Boers are a sort of mounted infantry. From early youth they are active in the saddle and in the "bush," are indefatigable riders and excellent marksmen, because the Boer is born with a rifle, so to speak. His horse is a nature of his own. They go into camp without a baggage train. Each man carries rations for two weeks in his saddle bags. The fighting methods of the Boers, which caused the English such great loss in 1851, are still the same. The Boers are a sort of intelligent skirmishers. They are never massed, and hence field artillery is powerless against them. Moreover, the guns of the enemy's artillery are rapidly picked off by the excellent marksmanship of the natives. The latter know to a dot how to utilize the topography of the field to advantage. In the attack as well as in the defense. At all events, they are, in this respect, far superior to the English infantry. This is proved, among other things, by official reports of the war of 1881. At Thabane Nek, January 18 of the year named, 180 Boers fought 1,000 infantry, 200 cavalry and nine guns to precipitate retreat. In the decisive battle of Mount Majuba, where the English led General Collyer, 120 Boers stormed the peak, which was held by 400 Scotch and 500 English, and inflicted very large losses on the English in that war. They had 1,159 dead and wounded, while the Boers had only 113 horsed combat. This is a disproportion shown by no other war of modern times. Since that time, 1881, tactical conditions have scarcely changed. Small arms have become more perfect, but the Boers have not improved in that respect. Their tactics are still the same. They are a sort of skirmishers, and their tactics are still the same. They are a sort of skirmishers, and their tactics are still the same.

The Sister Republic. It has already been mentioned that the military arrangements of the Orange Free State are similar to those of the Transvaal. In the former the number of white subject to military service is estimated at 20,000. There, as well as in the sister republic, is every kind of field artillery, with thirty-six modern guns, stationed in a fort near Bloemfontein. The artillerymen enter the reserve after three years' service. They number now about 600 men, technically well drilled and numerically ample to man every gun twice in case of war. The Orange Free State also has its corps of volunteers, for whose equipment and camp service the state pays. During the last few years these appropriations have amounted to \$300,000 annually. If it is taken into consideration that the Orange Free State has a white population of only about 80,000, it will be seen that these Boers pay more per capita for military purposes than even Germany, the most soldier-ridden country in the world.

British Forces. Of British regular troops there are at this time in all South Africa, according to the New York Sun, only about 10,000 effective all told. They are divided as follows: Two regiments of cavalry, three field batteries, one mountain battery, three companies of karrion artillery, four companies of engineers, six and one-half batteries of infantry, two army service detachments, two of the army ordnance corps and two of the army medical corps, two battalions of infantry are on their way out from the Cape Colony.

In Cape Colony there are about 4,000 British regulars, comprising two and one-half battalions of infantry, two companies of karrion artillery and one company of engineers, all the other regular troops being in Natal. There are besides, the Cape Mounted Rifles, 1,000 strong, and the Cape Police, 1,200; forty-four volunteer and mounted rifle companies, about 7,000 men, with batteries of eleven field guns. In addition special corps are being organized for frontier service under the officers recently sent out from England. These are to be employed in the protection of the railway line between the Orange river and the Transvaal. There will also be a post at Fort Tull on the river from Rhodesia, crossing the Crocodile river, into the Transvaal.

Persistent Aggression. The record of English aggression upon the Boers goes back to the founding of Cape Colony, when the Boers, yielding to the superior strength and to the policy of annoyance of the English, abandoned their homes and went back into the wilderness. They founded the Republic of Natalia, which was invaded and conquered by British troops. The Boers a second time retreated and founded the independent South African republic. In 1843 Great Britain annexed the land between the Vaal, Orange and the Upper Caledonia rivers. This time the Boers took arms, and as a result were driven across the Vaal into an unknown territory which they called the Transvaal. In 1852 a convention was signed guaranteeing the Boers the right to govern themselves according to their own laws. Matters then rested quietly until 1877, when the British annexed the Transvaal on the pretext that the Boers did not know how to govern themselves.

For the next three years the troubles in South Africa went on, first the Zulus and then the Basutos being attacked by the English; and in 1880, after exhausting every other means of remonstrance against the officials set over them by the English, the Boers revolted. It is a fact that has been waiting while the English broke the power of their enemies, the Zulus; but the conditions under which they were forced to become a part of the British empire were unendurable. The Boers opened proceedings and acted with decision and dispatch. The first English attempt at putting down the revolt met with disaster at Laing's Nek. Reinforcements were brought, but the Boers, numbering in all from 10,000 to 12,000 men, surrounded every British force in Africa.

On February 27, 1881, was fought the battle of Majuba Hill, in which the Boers actually secured a height occupied by British regulars and took it. English soldiers, men of the Natal Mounted Rifles, the eighth regiment of the Sixtieth Rifles, had left before the whirlwind of the storm. Englishmen whose name and fame had been made in India, China, the Canadian provinces—wherever the flag of the empire had advanced—were all huddled together in an agony of fear, terror-stricken by the assault of the Dutchmen of the South African Republic.

The war lasted barely three months, beginning in December and closing in February. It cost the British 18,000 men for British arms. Early in December the Ninety-fourth regiment, forming part of the garrison of the Transvaal, was ordered to concentrate at Pretoria. Actual hostilities had not begun, so the officers of the regiment were not notified. The Boers had, however, held a mass meeting and proclaimed a republic. At Bronkspuit they laid a carefully prepared ambush. When the head of the British column arrived at a certain spot it was met by a Boer patrol. A shot ensued. The colonel was warned to turn back and he refused. Nobody seems to have noticed the ambushed riflemen or to have observed the little heaps of stone with which these skilled hunters of wild game, old hands at shooting over the bare veldt, had thrown up a line of defense beforehand. 100, 150 and 200 yards their exact distance from their intended targets. The Boer rifles cracked, and in twenty minutes all the officers and half the British troops were shot down and the rest were made prisoners of war. The disaster roused the country. Sir George Pomeroy Colley, general in command in Natal, determined to cut his way into the Transvaal and relieve beleaguered British garrisons. With 1,100 men and six guns he marched on Laing's Nek. Here the Boers, numbering 1,437 men, were entrenched. They had no artillery. Accordingly they dug dummy trenches which the British shelled vigorously. Meanwhile the Boers distributed themselves as conventional positions, and when the British advanced toward the trenches they were met by a deadly fire from two sides and one-third of them killed. The Boer loss was two.

The Last Stand. On the night of February 25 General Colley, having secured reinforcements, marched and occupied the top of Majuba mountain, 7,000 feet high, from which he expected to command the pass and turn the Boer position. Majuba is a flat-topped, rather a saucer-topped height with a belt of perpendicular cliff running round it a little below the summit, broken here and there by few gullies, through which access to the summit might be gained from the lower slopes. These lower slopes were steep, and the upper parts of them were screened from view from the summit by being below the belt of cliff which looked so formidable to the eye. As soon as daylight revealed to the Boers holding Laing's Nek that their flank was threatened they began to prepare to send their wagons to the rear, but they determined, also, before retreating, to try the effect of a direct assault upon Majuba. Part of the Boer assailants took cover at one with their usual skill, and opened a long-range fire on the summit of Majuba. This fire did but little execution.

Nevertheless, the Boers were not throwing every gun twice in case of war. They succeeded in their object of compelling the defenders of the hill to keep closely under shelter, and prevented them from observing what happened on the slopes below by circling gullies of the cliff. From the fire of their companions, small parties of Boers were creeping as stealthily as deerstalkers over the wide spaces of the mountain side where the cliff wall above screened them both from the sight and from the fire of the defenders. The Boers, who were standing in an exposed position, unconscious of the near neighborhood of their foe, the Boer leader ordered a number of his men to step back out of cover, and fire a rapid volley. The maneuver was skillfully executed; the whole picket was clean swept away, and in a few minutes more the Boers had got to the key to the position in their hands. By this success they had turned the left of the British troops, who were holding the northern face of the rim, and took them in the flank. The troops thus suddenly surprised fell back from the rim, and immediately thereafter a party of Boers rushed up by another gap and seized the abandoned positions. Once established on the summit, the rapid and accurate fire of the Boers swept away the defenders. General Colley, endeavoring to rally his broken lines, despairingly fronted the hailstorm of bullets with his face to the foe. Nearly half the British force were killed, wounded or made prisoners. The Boer losses were six.

Soon after the battle Great Britain agreed to a conference which ultimately resulted in the recognition of the independence of the Transvaal Republic, Great Britain retaining only a veto power with respect to treaties with foreign nations.

TOLD OUT OF COURT. "It is not necessary for a woman during courtship," says the judge in a recent case, "to inform her intended husband of any device or attachment to improve the work of nature in the construction of her face; for 'figure.' This was apropos of a charge of deception by wearing glasses to conceal a glass eye.

In a suit for infringement of the whiskey trademark, "Knickerbocker," an action was set up by defendants, named Roosevelt and Schuyler, that, as they belonged to old Dutch families, they were entitled to use the word "Knickerbocker" as their own name. But this contention was disposed of by Judge Bookers as having "more of ingenuity and humor than of persuasiveness."

C. S. Batterman, one of the best known mining men in the Rocky Mountain states, was one of the stand-up experts in an important mining case in Nevada and was under cross-examination by a rather young and "smart" attorney. The questions related to the form that the ore was found in, generally described as "kidney lumps." "Now, Mr. Batterman," said the attorney, "how large are they as long as you are?" "Yes," replied Mr. Batterman, "but not as thick." The attorney subsided and even the judge could not help smiling.

"Beat on the market for coughs and colds and all bronchial troubles; for croup it has no equal," writes Henry R. Whitford, South Canaan, Conn., of One Minute Cough Cure.

IN THE WHEELING WORLD.

The American Bicycle company, better known as the bicycle trust, has completed its organization and settled down to business. The size of its capital stock is \$40,000,000—one-half in common stock, one-fourth in preferred stock and the balance in bonds. Forty-four manufacturing plants are combined in the trust and all the stock was taken by members of the company. It is asserted that the trust has secured control of more than 1,000 patents, protecting its monopoly safeguards the bicycle industry, not only the wheels but the handlebars, but saddles, night, tires and all accessories and sundries. The company also controls many foreign patents.

To what extent the company's patent rights will enable it to control the product remains to be developed. The action of independent factories, of which there are many, goes to show that the trust cannot control product or prices for some time to come. One of the strongest of the independents is one with a significant reduction of from \$10 to \$15 on different grades of wheels. Even the price of the chainless, which was held rigidly at \$75 since the first of the year, was brought down to \$60. Certainly the independents can put up a lively fight for the combine about the latter show a disposition to hog the market.

Designs for next year's cycles are now being completed by the makers, and in not a few cases the 1900 models have been passed in the direction of modification and standardization. One thing that seems assured is a general recognition that the weight limit has been reached. A slight reaction is likely in this respect. It is on long rides that additional weight in a machine makes the rider feel the weight. As the weight increases, and as tiring has increased, the objections to heavy wheels have grown stronger until the complaint has been heard by the makers. Lightening the excessively big sprockets will be one of the targets, but this does not mean that the makers will reduce the size of the gear. It is thought by some that the year will also mark the beginning of a reaction in the matter of large tubing, although no decided and immediate jump to the smaller tubing is anticipated. One maker has already begun to turn out several machines bicycles with a twenty-six-inch steering wheel, and it is not unlikely that he will have quite a little company. The small front wheel is a feature that was first introduced by pace followers, notably James Michael. It is urged in its favor that the twenty-six-inch wheel in front not only enables makers to reduce the weight, but permits the retention of the dropped handlebars, together with longer and stronger handlebars. There seems to have been a tendency toward wider handle bars all this season, the leisurely riders who make long trips finding that they do not get enough expansion of the chest with the sizes now popular. There will be more chainless wheels on the market this season, several makers who do not produce them having decided to add them to their lines. A number of manufacturers will make the chainless type probably show more marked improvements than any of the chain cycles. The first important change will be in the matter of weight. It will be reduced for the first time, and racing models will be made. The two years of probation that the chainless has passed through are considered to have proved its stability and efficiency enough to warrant this lightening. The present ruling wheels make a heavy machine in order that their future might not be spoiled by breakdowns. The refinement of bearings and construction will continue and some developments of interest in bearings are promised.

Denver claims to have more bicycle riders in proportion to population than any other city in the country. There are said to be 40,000 wheels in use in the city, or about one for every 100 people. They are used in every line of business, and the street companies claim they lose traffic valued at \$1,000,000 a year since the general application of wheels to business. In fact, one company went into the hands of a receiver two years ago, alleging that the universal wheel had impaired its earnings to such an extent that it could not meet its interest demands. The open weather and fine natural roads are largely responsible for the popularity of the wheel, as it is conceded that ordinary riders can use their wheels for miles without any annoyance from mud or snow. Denver wheelmen are not required to carry lamps at night.

The bicycle is making trouble among plumbers. It is agreed by some houses that the journeyman of their rival who has bicycles place their own men at a disadvantage, because of their ability to travel to and from work more quickly. A plumbers' union in California has prohibited its members from using bicycles in connection with their work. In the east a different view seems to be taken. One master plumber here keeps five wheels which he rents out when they are not in use by his men, and it frequently happens that he has no wheels for rent because his men are going about from one job to another on them. Much time is saved in suburban districts where train service is poor.

Among the League of American Wheelmen met at Boston and the relations between the league and the National Cycling association, a correspondent reports: "There is a lot of gossip going the rounds, and all of it tends to indicate that the matter of race control will be settled at the national meeting of the league in January. One of the latest reports, which comes from a good authority, is to the effect that there is already a tacit understanding between the officials of the two bodies that the league will turn the racing game over to the National Cycling association at the meeting. According to the correspondent, the league was reached about the time the National Cycling association was making such a stubborn fight for recognition at the world's championship meet, and was to the effect that if the former organization would let the matter drop and also agree to give an opposition meet at or in the neighborhood of Boston during the League of American Wheelmen dates, an agreement would be reached at the January meeting to turn the racing game over to the Cycling association. What concessions the latter were to make in return are not stated. While this story is a bit too strongly in favor of the National Cycling association, everything would indicate that there is at least some meeting of the minds between the two bodies. The League of American Wheelmen meet was a success as far as attendance is concerned, it being the second best attended of any in the history of the league, but the racing did not call out the enthusiasm it has in past years and a large number of those who were at Boston took a trip out of that city to see the National Cycling association races at Waltham. The officers of both organizations have been getting on more friendly terms of late and while it would hardly do to make any move now, it is safe to say that as soon

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Strong Drink is Death The German bicycle makers and dealers are making a bitter fight against the invasion of American machines, and have sought to have a prohibitive tariff enacted. An advertisement of a dealer appeared recently in a German paper. It furnishes an idea of how intense is the opposition. It concludes with these words: "We have also for intending suicides some American trash at \$30."

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