

Outlanders' Side of the Transvaal Question

Much has been said on the side of the Boers regarding the present difficulties in the Transvaal and the desire is therefore the greater to have some authentic statement on the part of the Outlanders.

This is given in an account by E. J. Kaerstroom, a Swede, who has lately arrived in Germany after an eighteen years' sojourn in South Africa. His experiences while there and the conditions which he studied face to face are detailed below:

His account of the unreasonable regulations passed by the Boer Parliament will account for much of the trouble which has arisen.

"The Parliament," he says, "was con-

it will be seen that we were taxed almost ten pounds sterling for each month besides one-third of all the products of the mine. Here is the license:

License for No. 161.

"The Swedish subject, E. J. Kaerstroom, in the district of the Sheha Gold Washing Stock company, block No. 1,014, stretching along the Winterfalls river 500 meters long and ten meters broad from point A-12 on the north to the south, to be worked; which discovery, which produces gold quartz and is known as 'Hudson's Claim,' is to be divided into ten claims, for which the owners are to pay a tax of one-third of the entire yield and £9 10s sterling per month

understands their language and customs, but an Englishman is seldom welcome on their 'platz' or farm. The English know this and therefore call themselves Welshmen, for the ignorant Boers do not know that Wales belongs to Great Britain. The Boers hold to ancient methods and customs with the greatest conservatism. They want no industries but farming and cattle raising, and miners and mining are regarded mistrustfully, as indeed is any one who does not support himself as the forefathers of the Boers did, by raising cattle. All other productive employment lies in the hands of the Outlander, and this causes no little unrest among the conservative Boers.

"On the farm where I had found employment after the excessive taxation had driven me out of the mining business, great meetings were held in a barn which served as a 'meeting house.' I have counted as many as fifty ox-wagons and as many 'Cape carts' laden with Boer families. My employer did a good business then, selling them his produce. Although I proclaimed myself a Swede I could not gain their confidence for they had never heard of Sweden and believed that I was English.

"While here I saw how the Boers come courting. The girl was the daughter of my employer. The young man dashed up to the house on horseback, wearing new clothes with an ostrich feather in his hat. He made his fine horse prance and caper before the house ere he descended. Then he gave the lines to one of the Hottentots standing near, and walked up and down in front of the windows of the house, well knowing that the eyes of his sweetheart were peeping through the blinds at him. Then he strutted into the house and first shook hands with 'tante,' the mother, and said 'Guten tag' (Good day). The same he did with 'oom,' the father, and then at last spoke to the girl and her sisters and brothers.

A Boer Courtship.

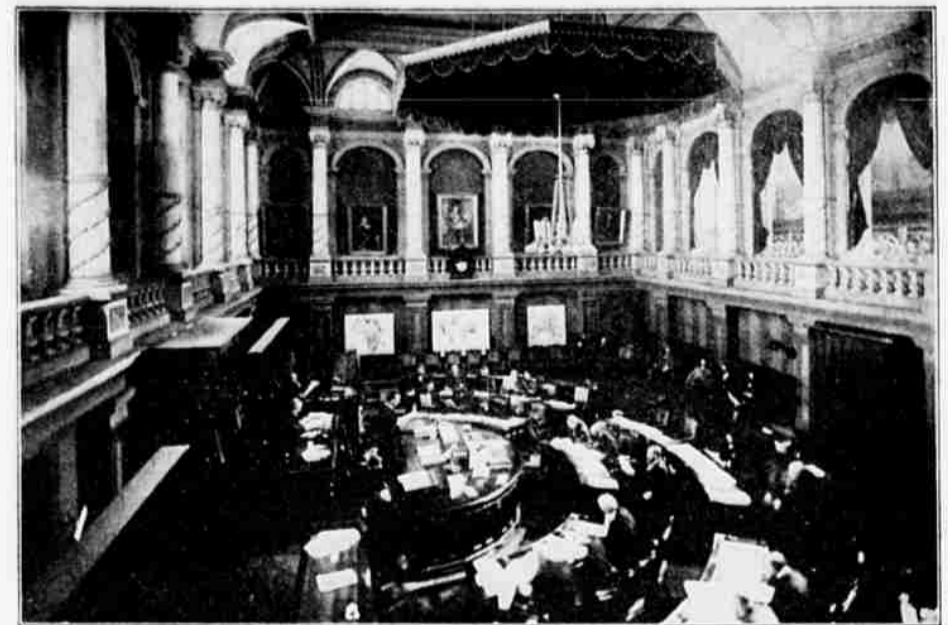
"Oom said only 'Sitze' (take a seat), and then there was complete silence, which lasted until the bowl of coffee was brought in. Then each in turn spoke a few words. Oom asked how everything was at the 'huis' (home), and then we heard all about the health of each one in the family, how the cattle and the crops were doing, etc. All the time we were drinking coffee. At last the suitor rose and handed his chosen bride the 'lacheroot' (confectionery), which she, blushing and laughing, accepted.

"This was the critical moment, for if she had refused the gift that would have ended the courtship. Now there was gayer talk, until all but the two left the room, for it was the right of the suitor to remain in the front room alone with her of his choice. But so that he should not stay too long 'tante,' according to custom, stepped up to the wax candle and made a mark on it with a needle, saying that the visit might last until the candle burnt thus far. This was a command that the most lovesick swain dare not disregard.

"The Boer with whom I lived had two farmhouses, one of stone on the 'hochveldt,' that is on the table land, where he lived with his herds in summer. The other, smaller but well built, on the low land was inhabited from May to September, the winter in this country. The furniture was simple, of yellow wood, without any carvings or ornamentation. The sofas and chairs had seats of leather thongs and goatskins, the hair side up, served as carpets.

"There were no outbuildings for the cattle, only stalls for the horses, the cattle yard, or 'kraal,' was merely surrounded by a stone wall.

"I was now again seized with the gold fever, and in company with two brothers



INTERIOR OF THE FIRST CHAMBER OF THE TRANSVAAL VOLKSRAAD.

by the name of Hudson, started for the gold fields of the Transvaal, the news of the great finds there inflaming the whole country, all but the Boers.

"One-fourth of the entire territory of the Transvaal contains gold. The first discovery of the precious metal here only dates back to 1880, when Karl Mauch, a German traveler, found a rich vein in the northern part. Many were disappointed on following this announcement, but in 1887 a new discovery in that richest of all fields, Witwatersrand, was announced and the fever raged high. An Australian gold hunter had found a brook with golden sands and later had traced veins in the white quartz. One

produce about two pounds of gold at an expense of one and one-quarter pounds, leaving a profit of three-quarters of a pound per ton of ore.

"Occasionally the veins are purer and sometimes nuggets, 'nuff,' of pure gold are found. The private individual sets his hopes on this kind of finds, but they are few and far between in the Transvaal. Still if he does find one it may make him a millionaire in a minute.

The Transvaal Gold Fields.

"On our journey we rode right over the place in which the Englishman George found a rich vein of gold a year or so later. Arrived at the fields we found that we



A BOER OUTPOST—Showing character of faces and method of handling the great Boer carts when they pause for rest.

annually passing still more oppressive laws against the Outlanders, to whom, although they own the largest gold fields, all political rights were denied.

"Only after an uninterrupted residence of fifteen years in the Transvaal can a man claim citizenship, but the taxes and duties are more, rather than less, on that account. In 1894 were discovered the new goldfields now owned by the British Chartered company, with Cecil Rhodes as president. The Boers who had lived in this section before the gold period, sold their land to the company at what were really enormous prices, turning it over to what they call the 'Godless' settlers. While political questions in which we had no voice did not bother us much, we could not but feel indignant at the heavy taxes and unreasonable regulations passed by the Parliament. There is no doubt that these harsh measures against the Outlanders are intended to make outcasts of them, and Dr. Jameson's raid had no small warrant, though the Boers have not been one jot fairer to the Outlanders since it took place. The development of this part of the country is almost entirely due to the chartered company.

Still Greater Taxes.

"In 1894 the twenty-four Boer lawmakers threw a bomb into the gold field by increasing the taxes there. The gold diggers were incensed, not merely at the increase in the tax, but because these peasants who had never put their foot into a mine, should sit in Pretoria and tell us how we should wash and weigh our ore, how our props and pits should be constructed and how the factories be erected. All of this aroused angry feelings and called down many a curse on the gray heads of the lawmakers. Many a claim was given up at the 'Kaap' and when the agent of the Parliament came on a trip of inspection through the goldfields he traveled with an escort of twenty 'trusties' and was glad to escape with a whole skin. Bad as it was to know the millions we paid every year for the privilege of working so hard went where our oppressors wished and that we had no voice in the distribution, it was still worse to have these Boers who used the wealth that we despised Outlanders earned for them tell us how we were to do what they did not understand.

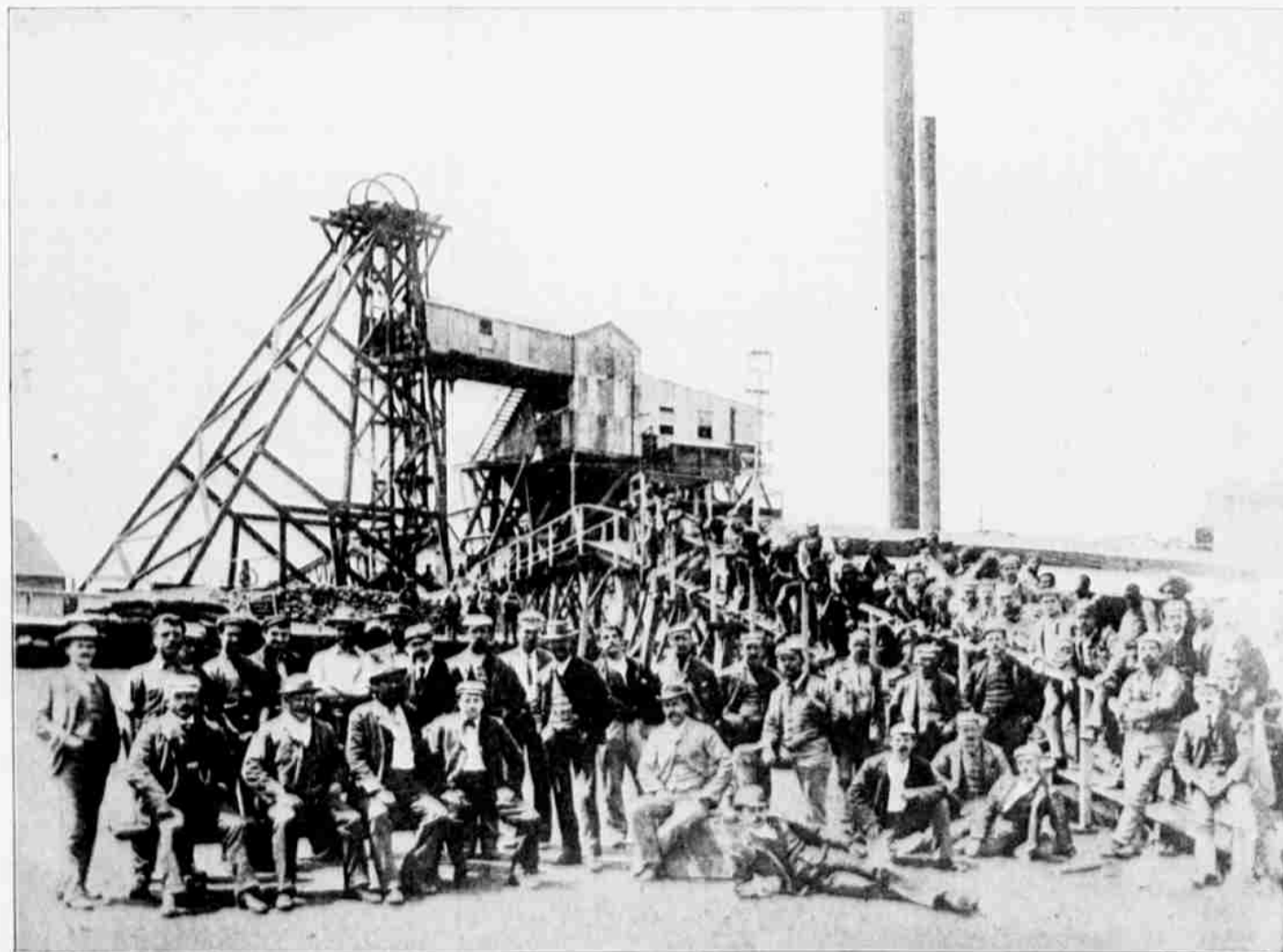
"Here is a copy of the license issued to us later by the Boer authorities when we were at work in the Transvaal. From it

into the treasury of the company from and after this date.

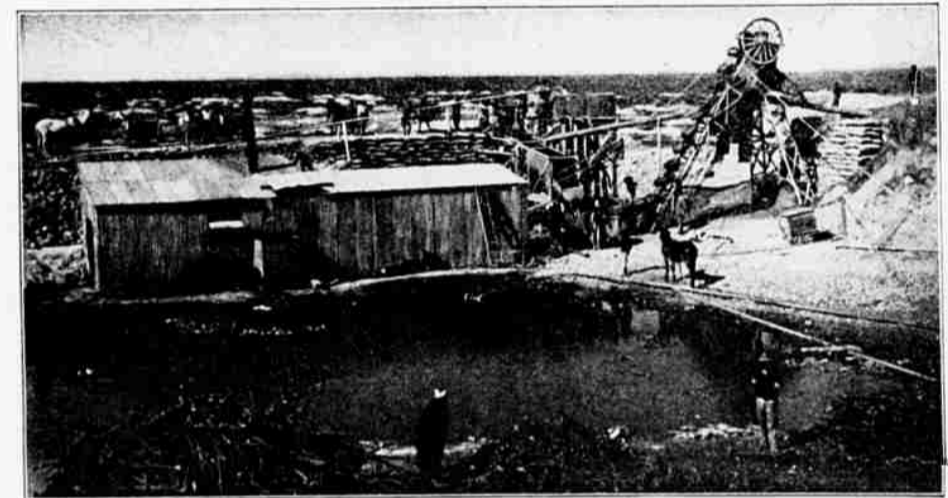
"Barberton, April.
"For the Sheha Stock Co.,
"D. BOEVE,
"C. CRUSTON."

They Hate the English.

"So soon as I had an opportunity to make the acquaintance of the Boers I found that they were hospitable to a stranger who



OUTLANDERS AND DIAMOND MINE OWNERS WHO HAVE BEEN INSISTING ON A RIGHT TO VOTE.



IN THE GOLD MINES WHICH THE BOERS THREATEN TO BLOW UP.

company after the other was formed for exploring, and all failed. The crash came and millions were lost. Expert engineers at last came and the fever fell, new fields being found from day to day. The amount of gold produced by the 'Rand' is at least 20,000 pounds (weight) of gold a year. Little of the gold of Africa is washed out as in California, Australia and the Klondike, but is chiefly taken from quartz, which must be crushed. The large companies have called science to their aid, bore the stone with diamond drills and extract the gold chemically. In the best fields a ton of ore will

could either work for 15 shillings a day for one of the companies or sell them our ore —if we found any. We had as equipments one mule to carry the pack, one negro as helper, a small tent, a bottle of nitric acid, a wooden mortar with an iron bottom, two spades, one chisel, one drill with its mallet, one metal water bowl and a revolver. This was the requirement for each man. We had gone to the 'Kap' as most promising, a table land of several (fifty) square miles. We blew off what seemed some promising bits of quartz, pulverized them in the mortar, and then washed away the dirt to see if the gold lay there. In vain was our prospecting for many days. All that we found was the nest of an catbird from which we secured two fresh eggs, which served for breakfast for our party for two days. Here were gold mine clubs without number where the lucky men might gamble away their hard earned 'dust,' but the revolver did not play so large a part in the proceedings on account of the excellent order preserved by the English authorities. Disgusted, we were easily fooled by a man known as 'Mac,' who promised for a sovereign each to show us good diggings. He spent the money on whisky and always 'forgot.'

"We had been wandering about making 'tests' for several days under his guardianship, but in vain. One night he slipped away, and when we went to our heartbreaking work of breaking and digging it was on ground where the quartz was rather dark with shining specks in it. The usual process of pulverizing was gone through with, and I was about to throw out the dirt as worthless when I saw something shining in the bright sunlight. Yes, there in the bottom of the pan lay some grains of gold! The grains were hardly as large as a pin head, but it was gold at last. I hurried to the camp to report to my partners. I called Hudson aside and showed him the grains of gold that I had found, and with true English phlegm he drawled out 'Better make a thorough investigation before the niggers get it all around.' We sent the niggers off on an errand, and then tested the grains with the nitric acid finding that they were 99 per cent pure, and worth £4 an ounce. Upon further investigation it was seen that the vein of gold must run near the brook, so we decided to secure a license for an entire block of ten claims along the bank of the brook. The tax on the claim would be £10 a month, but we decided to pay it, taking out the license in the name of the Hudsons and myself and calling the place 'Hudson's Claim.' The claim was entered on the great chart of the company and ten days later we received the license copied before."