

LIFE IN A BOER HOME.

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE TRANS-VAAL PEOPLE.

A Young Englishman's Description of One Family, Which, It Is to Be Hoped, Is Not True of All—Contempt for Appearances and Cleanliness.

A young Englishman gives an interesting description of his experiences in a Boer home in South Africa. He had just recovered from a fever which had confined him for a time to a hospital, and being acquainted with a young Boer in Pretoria, he obtained letters of introduction to the family and went out to the homestead to get built up. He says:

Jacobus Grundling and his family received me at the entrance of their home. The deadly apathy which pervades a Boer household is not easily disturbed. I was stared at for a few moments, asked a few questions, and the only member of the family who spoke a little English told me in a shamefaced sort of way, as if he were saying something discreditable, that his brother had once told him that he liked me, but the rest of the family contented themselves with shaking hands.

This over I was invited inside. The homestead, like Boer farm houses, is stuck in the open veldt, and built close to a stream, bounded on one side by a garden, in which grew orange, lemon, citron, peach, apple, and pear trees. The houses are built of red bricks, baked in the sun, the spaces between the bricks being filled with mud, which to keep from drying to dust has to be continually moistened with water.

That of Mr. Grundling would not have looked so repulsive had the roof been thatched. As the Boer, however, has no eye for the picturesque, he finds galvanized corrugated iron an admirable substitute. But if the outside was not prepossessing, the inside was absolutely forbidding. Wood is scarce in the Transvaal, so the houses are never more than one story high, which does away with staircases.

Another feature of home life for which these people entertain a most lofty contempt is furniture and domestic crockery. All the furniture belonging to mine host was unmistakably of home origin; the stool on which I was invited to seat myself while partaking of Boer national beverage, coffee, having only two short legs. Cups and saucers, as well as knives and forks, being unknown among these primitive people, I was handed my coffee in a basin. I should have liked a little milk, but milk, although the Boers are a pastoral race, is practically unknown in the Transvaal, and sugar they despise.

To describe one Boer family is to describe all Boer families. There are, I believe, about 20,000 adult men in the Transvaal, and from what I have seen of them they so resemble each other as to convey the impression that they all belong to one family.

There are several young men in the household of Jacobus Grundling, all tall, and powerfully made, with long matted beards and unkempt hair, and all inconceivably dirty. They all wear dirty corduroy trousers, very short jackets, which make them look like gigantic boys, no collars, dirty ragged flannel shirts, billycock hats, and veldshoes, which are shoes made of untanned leather, and, like the furniture, of home manufacture.

The average weight of a Boer young lady is 160 pounds, increasing to 200 and upward as they get older. Every man forms his own ideal of beauty, and the Boers signify his in one expressive word—bulk.

A Boer lady seeking to win the affections of an American would probably endeavor to keep her face and hands clean, but, as all a Boer lover cares about is the weight avoirdupois, she can afford to be as untidy as the most slovenly of her European sisters.

There was only one bedstead in the house, and this I occupied. I had no compunction in doing this, as I soon found that the Boers do not undress on retiring for the night. A few skins are sufficient for their wants.

I experienced so many novel sensations during my stay, that even when I discovered a couple of coffins under my bed one night when endeavoring to eject one of the wretched Transvaal dogs which had taken shelter there, I was not surprised. It seems that wood being scarce in the Transvaal most families keep a few coffins in stock for emergencies.

THE OLDEST OF RELIGIONS.

The Sabbateans of Salonica and Their Peculiar Belief.

Surely one of the oldest religions in the world is that of the Sabbateans of Salonica, of whom M. Danon has lately made a special study, says Pall Mall Gazette. The sect takes its name from one Sabbatai Cevi, a Smyrniote Jew, who flourished in the middle of the seventeenth century, and so muddled himself by constant study of the Cabala that he gave himself out for the Messiah. Thanks to some miracles, thousands of Jews flocked to his standard and a serious revolt was on the point of breaking out when the pasha of the district captured him and offered

him the choice between accepting Islam and being incontinentally shot. The story is that he chose the former alternative and that his followers, disgusted with his apostasy, abandoned their belief in his Messiahship and returned to their former faith.

M. Danon's researches, however, show that the sect is not extinct, as has been thought. He had much difficulty in getting the information, and it was only the lucky accident of one of the faithful sending his waistcoat to be mended, without remembering that a sort of prayer book was stitched in the back, that threw any real light in his way. As it was, the tailor had just time to show the document to a friend, who took a copy now in M. Danon's possession. From this, it seems that the Deunneh (or converted) as they are called by the Turks, still worship the God of Abraham under his cabalistic name of infinite and acknowledge as their "lord and king" Sabbatai Cevi, whom they call "the true Messiah" and their redeemer. They are not to take false oaths in the name of God or his Messiah, are not to murder, "even though they hate any one," to bear false witness, nor to covet other people's goods. But they are to keep their faith a profound secret, and to live like Mussulmans, keeping the Moslem fasts and observing all their ceremonies without any scruple until the day when they are to "take vengeance for Israel," after which they will become angels.

The mixture of gross and life-long hypocrisy with the practice of real virtues—it is especially said that there are no poor among them, every member of the community being willing to help at any time any of the others—is very typical of these apocalyptic sects. And in this faith more than a thousand families in Salonica believe.

Earliest Strike.

The earliest strikes occurred about 1450 B. C., or upward of thirty-three centuries ago. Pharaoh was building a new Temple of Thebes. The masons received very little cash, but a quantity of provisions, which the contractor thought sufficient was handed to them on the first of each month. Sufficient or not, they mostly ate it before the time had elapsed. On one occasion many of them had nothing left quite early in the month, so they marched to the contractor's house, before which they squatted and refused to budge until justice was done. The contractor persuaded them to lay their distress before Pharaoh, who was about to visit the works, and he gave them a handsome supply of corn, and so all went on well for that month. But the same state of things occurred by the middle of the next, and for some days the men struck work. Various conferences took place, but the men declined to do a stroke until they were given another supply of food. They declared the clerks cheated them, used false weights, and so forth, familiar enough complaints in this country under the truck system. The contractor not complying with their demands, they marched to the governor of the city to lay their grievances before him, and he tried to get them to return to work by smooth words, but that was no use, and they insisted on having food. At last, to get rid of them, he drew up an order for corn on the public granary, and the strike was at an end.

Always the Way.

A woman, with a freshly blackened eye and traces of recent tears on her face, came hurriedly into a police magistrate's office one morning, and asked for the arrest of her husband on a charge of beating her.

The brutal husband was arrested and brought before the magistrate. He was a hard-looking citizen, large of frame, repulsive in appearance, and about three-fourths drunk. The wife, on the contrary, was slight and delicate, and her hands were wrinkled and knotted with hard work.

The trial was short. "Bill," as she called him, made no defense. He was apparently too lazy to take the trouble. The wife had cooled down considerably, and gave her testimony with extreme reluctance, as is the custom in such cases; but the guilt of the prisoner was clearly established, and the magistrate, after lecturing him sharply and indignantly on his brutality, was about to prescribe the necessary punishment, when the pale-faced victim spoke up.

"Make the fine as light as you can, your honor," she said, anxiously. "I'll have to pay it."

His Cement Was Too Good

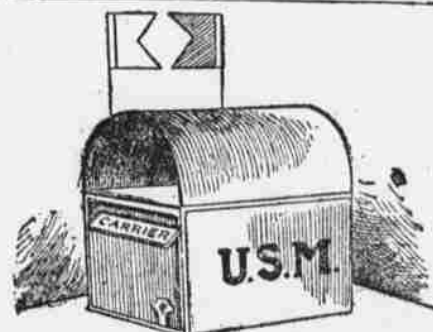
When the Third Avenue Railroad in New York City laid its cable conduit a considerable quantity of cement concrete was used on the underground structure—then regarded as a permanent and time-defying work. Now it is being transformed into an electric-conduit railway, and the needs of the work require much of the old concrete to be removed. It is painfully chipped out with cold chisels, for it is the hardest concrete ever seen in New York. The singular part of the matter is that no more cement of the kind originally used can be found, the contractor who supplied it having gone out of business after, for once, furnishing material that was good.—Electrical Review.

PRIVATE MAIL BOXES.

A New and Convenient Idea of the Postoffice Department.

The Postoffice Department has ordered that in all cities and towns having free delivery the postal system shall be extended to include house-to-house collections, and the system is also extended to all rural free delivery routes. One of the requirements, says the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, which the citizen must observe is to supply his own mail box. Postmasters are instructed to give information about the boxes and encourage householders to put them up.

The Government has made special recommendation of a certain kind of mail box represented in the accompanying cut. This box is a unique contrivance fitted with automatic signal flags so that the passing carrier can see



RECOMMENDED BY UNCLE SAM.

at a glance if there is any mail deposited in it for him to collect. It is also a receptacle for delivered mail, and a different colored flag apprises the householder when the carrier leaves any mail in the box. One of the flags is white and the other red. The box is to be affixed to a post near the street convenient for the carrier.

It is fitted with perfect locks, and when the carrier drops mail into the box the white flag immediately comes up, which indicates that there is mail for the people at the house. Dropping a letter to be mailed into the box raises the red flag, which is the signal to the passing carrier. It is large enough for the largest-sized letters and has separate spaces for papers and packages. It is the intention of the Postoffice Department to introduce the house-to-house collection system as soon as possible.

SEEKS HER FATHER'S PARDON.

This motherless little girl only learned a few weeks ago that her father, Thos. McLaren, convicted of having killed his wife, the child's mother, was serving a term of twenty years' imprisonment in the Trenton penitentiary. The girl, Jennie McLaren, also learned that her father was dying of consumption. She set to work to gain a pardon for



JENNIE McLAREN.

him, and has secured many signers to a petition for his release. She called on Governor Voorhees, and so moved him that he has promised to aid her.

Dewey a Dainty Dresser.

Admiral Dewey's exceeding care in matters of dress gained for him at one time the reputation of being something of a fop among those who did not know his rare and sterling qualities. Apropos of this is the description given by a Washington correspondent of Dewey's arrangement of his wardrobe. Everything had its place, and he knew exactly, it is said, where to find a handkerchief, shirt or collar. In fact, he might be called a fop on this subject, having invented a odd custom for keeping his shirts, so that one could not be worn oftener than another. They are all numbered, ranging from one to twenty-one. He had a chiffonier containing an equal number of drawers, just wide enough to receive a shirt. He begins at the top and wears the shirt in drawer No. 1, then the next in No. 2, and so on down the line. He is just as particular about other parts of his wardrobe.—Leslie's Weekly.

Salt Water Breeding of Toads.

J. Marsden, the agricultural commissioner of Hawaii, will develop a sea toad, for the use of certain island districts where standing fresh water is scarce. Mr. Marsden is a firm believer in evolution and will follow lines suggested by Darwin. Already toads have been produced in brackish waters. This tells the commissioner that he cannot fail. For the next culture he will make the water still more salty, and at about the fourth or fifth breeding will try pure sea water. He is confident that the plan will work out correctly. In the undertaking Mr. Marsden has received much encouragement from Prof. Koebel, the government entomologist, and from other friends.



Sir Robert Ball makes the statement that of 30,000,000 suns the existence can be proved scientifically. Around each sun its planets revolve. The electric flash which girdles the earth seven times in less than a second might travel straight ahead for eighteen hundred years and not reach the farthest of these known suns.

The earth's orbit, like those of such other celestial bodies as can be closely studied, is elliptical, but not to such an extent that the variation from a circle could be detected by the eye were the orbit reduced to proportions that the eye could grasp. Its long and short diameters differ only in the ratio of fifty-nine to sixty. The moon's greatest distance from the earth's center is 252,600 miles, its least distance 221,700 miles.

In the Batignolles tunnel, near Paris, incandescent electric lamps, arranged in rows along the tunnel walls, are to be automatically illuminated and extinguished by passing trains, the rims of the car wheels operating the electric switches. The lamps, being each of ten-candle power, and placed at the height of the car windows, will serve to illuminate the interior of the passing coaches, thus superseding the use of lights in the train.

A French scientific journal, L'Electicien, describes an electric substitute for the barber's scissors. It consists of a comb, carrying along one side of its row of teeth a platinum wire through which flows an electric current. As the comb passes through the locks to be shorn, the heated wire instantaneously severs the hairs, leaving them of even length, and sealing the cut ends as in the ordinary process of singeing with a taper. A similar device is a curling iron, kept at an even temperature by an electric wire in the interior.

Prof. E. C. Pickering of the Harvard Observatory suggested a few months ago the desirability of constructing an extremely long telescope for the purpose of photographing stars and planets. He now announces that the money needed has been given by anonymous friends of science, and that a telescope of the desired kind, having an aperture of twelve inches and a length of at least 100 feet, will probably be ready within a few weeks for trial at Cambridge. The instrument is to be placed in a horizontal position, and a movable mirror will reflect the light of the stars into the object glass.

Figures are sometimes impressive simply by being so stupendous that the human mind grasps them with difficulty. An English physicist in a recent lecture, in order to bring to the comprehension of his hearers the idea of ultimate particles of water, said that if he were to empty a tumbler containing half a pint of water, letting out each second a number equal to one thousand times the population of the earth, it would require somewhere between 7,000,000 and 47,000,000 years to empty the tumbler. Lord Kelvin says that if a drop of water were magnified to the size of the earth the particles would be between the size of cricket balls and that of footballs. If that statement is correct, the drops of water in all the oceans are not many times as numerous as the particles, or molecules, in a single drop.

Gild Leather Wall Hangings.

Two young American women, of Boston, have lately made new again the old-world and old-time art of gilding leather hanging for the walls of homes and buildings.

The revival of this old art is due entirely to the perseverance of two sisters, the Misses Mary and Clara Ware, who are graduates of the courses in decoration of the school connected with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. While continuing their studies in Venice they were much impressed by the beauty of the gilded leather in some of the old palaces and gradually they were led to investigate the methods that had produced it. They found that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gilded leather was one of the chief industries of Spain, where it had been introduced at least 300 years before by the Moors. It is therefore undoubtedly of African origin. From Spain the art spread to France and Italy, while the making of "Cordovan leather," as it was called, is said to have been one of the chief sources of wealth in the Netherlands. This art, like other old arts, degenerated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the present century practically no leather of this kind has been produced and it has remained for these two young American women to show its possibilities in modern schemes of decoration.

German Bicycle Trains.

A new sign has been added to the German railway time tables—a picture of a bicycle indicating which express trains carry wheels.

A woman who is a good bluffer can scare a man to death.

MORMONISM IN CHICAGO.

Where the Second Largest Mormon Missionary Society Has Its Seat.

Chicago is the headquarters for the second largest Mormon missionary society in the world. As a proselyting center for the Mormon Church it ranks next to Salt Lake City. From Chicago the disciples of polygamy direct more extensive and thorough missionary operations than those carried on by any orthodox church society in the city. Two hundred and thirty Mormon elders of "The Northern States' Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-



MORMON LITERARY BUREAU.

ter Day Saints" receive their orders from an office at No. 143 Le Moyne street. Thirty of these elders are stationed in Chicago, and are distributing over a thousand tracts a day among the poorer classes and the foreign element of the city. They have three regularly organized churches, in which their doctrines are preached twice every Sunday. Forty thousand dollars a year is about the sum which the Mormon Church is paying out to extend its prestige in Chicago, and over a quarter of a million dollars to convert the people of the surrounding country. The eleven States in which Chicago's Mormon missionaries work are Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Indiana, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota and Kentucky.

The Mormon Church in Chicago was founded by Brigham H. Roberts. He saw that Chicago, with its heterogeneous elements, its foreign slum pop-



ELDER CURING THE SICK.

ulation of nearly 200,000, its liberal attitude toward apostles of all strange sects, and its central position, was by long odds the most available center from which the Mormon Church might carry on its proselyting operations. The story of his first visit to Chicago gives a curious insight into the workings of the church of the Latter Day Saints.

When Roberts first decided to enter national politics he did so without consulting the chief council of Mormon elders. He ran for Congress and was defeated by the votes of his own people. This was not from any dislike of Mr. Roberts himself or of his practices. The Mormon Council at Salt Lake City requires its elders to obtain permission of the church before taking an active part in politics. Roberts ignored the rule of the church, and all the ecclesiastical machinery of that body was set in motion against him. He was beaten by his own party, and after that was compelled to make an abject apology to the president and the council. They fixed his penance at a year's missionary work in the interest of Mormonism. He went to Chicago in the winter of '94 and '95 and preached for six months and founded the main Mormon Church.

Etiquette of Golf.

Here are some things which you will do well to remember when you go on to the golf links, either as a player or as an onlooker: Standing so that a shadow falls upon your partner's ball is not only impolite, but detrimental to the success of his "drive." Standing on the putting green after you have "holed out," whether it is to gaze at the scenery or write down your score, will exasperate your best friend on earth if he or she happens to be playing behind you. To play first and to shout "Fore!" afterward is apt to add insult to actual injury. "Fore" is called as a warning that a "drive" is about to be made. It is not an expression of consolation after one has been hit. If you choose as a partner a woman who keeps you back by slow play, don't quarrel with her on this account. Abide by your choice and do what you can to help her to enjoy the game.

Awful Depth.

The depth of the Atlantic between the Canary Islands and the West Indies is something awful. A pretty level bottom runs right away from the African islands to the American ones, gradually deepening to nearly 19,000 feet.

The up-to-date man has no time for ancient history.