

CANADIAN AMONG BOERS.

MAJOR BRENNAN OF JOHANNESBURG RETURNS.

Many Canadians in the Big Mining Centre all Doing Well—The Canadian Association—Boer Army Equipment.

Major F. H. Brennan, M. D., of Peterboro, has just returned from South Africa, where he has lived for the last five years, having established a medical practice and drug business at Johannesburg. There were in addition to himself, between 200 and 300 Canadians resident in that city, besides a considerable number of Americans who had been born in Canada, numbering in all about nine hundred. A Canadian Association was formed, of which Dr. Brennan was made president.

When the Canadian Government endorsed Great Britain's action regarding the Transvaal, the association, true to its native instinct, met and declared themselves in sympathy with Great Britain. This, not unnaturally, invited the enmity of the Boer officials, and Dr. Brennan, who had been chairman of the meeting, came in for very severe treatment at the hands of the Johannesburg press. This was the only exciting incident in the history of the club.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

Although about one-half of the 102,000 population of Johannesburg consisted of Europeans, these Uitlanders had nothing to do with the government of the State. Municipal government made its first appearance in Johannesburg last year. Pretoria having previously directed all the affairs of the city. The Uitlanders found diversion in football, lacrosse, baseball, and other games.

The real cause of the war, says Dr. Brennan, was the belief of the Boers that they had become strong enough to turn out the British and set up a united Dutch South Africa.

Notwithstanding the size of the city, Dr. Brennan was the only practicing physician in Johannesburg, while another Canadian was the only dentist. The majority of the Canadians there were engaged in mining, and were all doing well.

The school system of Johannesburg was exclusively Dutch, and there was no chance for the Britisher to give his children an English education.

MILITARY OUTFIT.

The construction of the Boer army and the condition of affairs before the war, are described by Dr. Brennan as follows:

"Preparations for war had been going on all the time I lived in the country. Arms were constantly being imported and immense supplies of ammunition purchased. The recognized rifle at one time had been the Martini, but ever on the alert for supposed improvement, the Mauser had been substituted by the Government. The only regular militia was what was known as the Staats Artillery, stationed at Pretoria, and it was a military body in every sense of the term. Enlistment was for three years, and the corps was officered from the training schools of Holland.

"For military purposes the country was divided into electoral districts, each being presided over by a commandant. These districts were subdivided into wards, in charge of field cornets.

ALL HAD TO FIGHT.

"Every man in the country between the ages of 16 and 60 was liable for military service, and subject to the summons of the field cornet of his ward. Being summoned, he had to present himself equipped with rifle, 50 rounds of ammunition, a horse, and a food supply for a number of days. The commandant assumed control of all the men in his district, while the whole force of the country was under the Commandant-General, who was the only official, besides the President, elected by a full vote of the country.

"To stimulate military proficiency, large supplies of ammunition were bought, and every encouragement was given to what would be known in Canada as target practice; and yet the Boers, contrary to imagination, did not prove to be exceptionally fine shots, at least, during the war. True it is, that a volunteer corps had been formed in Johannesburg, composed of men of all nationalities, but this had been disbanded about a year previous to the war.

BOERS WERE PREPARED.

"For weeks before the commencement of hostilities (Oct. 11th) the commandoes had been preparing to cross the border immediately upon the declaration of war," said Dr. Brennan. All the British residents in Johann-

burg had thought it the best policy to leave the town, the doctor himself receiving a hint to get out or run the risk of being tried for treason, on account of the attitude of the Canadian Association. He proceeded to Durban, and cabled to Canada, applying for enlistment in the first contingent. He received no immediate reply, and so accepted a vacancy as ship surgeon on a transport going to India. On the first of February he was appointed medical superintendent of hospital ship No. 29, in which capacity he served until July, when he was transferred to one of 51 transports which were conveying Germans and Hollanders home to their native lands.

Dr. Brennan reached London on the 22nd of August, and arrived in New York in the middle of September.

PICTURE OF A BOER.

The doctor's description of the Boer farmer is not very inviting. The latter is simple in his tastes, and hospitable to every one who is not a Britisher. He is lazy, understands very little about work, has little regard for the truth, and abhors cleanliness. His greatest fault, however, was implicit belief in his leaders. It was the influence of the heeblers and political clique in and around Pretoria which induced him to take up arms. These schemers told the farmer that if Great Britain won the war it would mean the loss of his farm.

The record of the Canadian troops in South Africa, said the doctor, is a splendid one, and favorable comments are heard wherever one goes.

Major Brennan expects to return to Johannesburg, but he does not know whether or not his premises have been left intact. In the event of his house having been looted, he hopes for reimbursement at the hands of the British Government.

PERSONAL ITEMS.

For the first time in many years Uncle Paul Kruger lately celebrated his birthday out of his own country. He was born at Rastenburg, Cape Colony, on October 10th, 1825, and when only fourteen emigrated across the Vaal River and began his varied career. He has been twice married, the first Mrs. Kruger dying young and childless, and his family numbers ten sons and daughters. It is said that the ex-President has as many grandchildren as the Queen. He belongs to the Doppers, a sect of Dutch Protestants resembling the Quakers.

Though only the ruler of 227,000 people, Prince Nicholas of Montenegro is an interesting sovereign. He is one of the most literary of European Royalties, having written several historical dramas, which have been produced on the stage in his own country and in St. Petersburg. The Prince has also composed poetry, chiefly of a warlike and patriotic type. He succeeded his uncle, who was assassinated, when nineteen, married the same year, and has three sons and six daughters, one being the present Queen of Italy.

One of the most extraordinary blind men in the world is Dr. F. G. Campbell, Principal of the Royal Normal College for the Blind. He was born and lived all his early life in America, and lost his sight by an accident. When a little boy, he had one eye injured by an acacia thorn, inflammation ensued, and soon the sight was gone forever. Dr. Campbell, however, who came to England in 1871, is an Alpine climber, a cyclist, a sculler, and a horseman, and, in business, can give points and a beating to most men.

It has just been reported that Dr. Nansen, who celebrated his thirtieth birthday on October 10th, is to undertake a joint expedition to the North Pole with the young Duke of Abruzzi, who has recently broken Nansen's record. In 1895, Nansen got to within 260 miles of the Pole, while the Duke was 233 miles off when he turned back. In recognition of the eminent services he has rendered to the cause of scientific exploration, the British Government presented Nansen with a fifty-volume set of the Challenger Reports. He is the first single individual to receive them, their cost running to several hundred pounds.

FORTY MILES FOR A PENNY.

The Russian Government, says Dagblad, Stockholm, has decided upon the introduction of specially cheap fares upon the Trans-Siberian Railway, in order to encourage emigration to the country. A ticket from Russia to Tobolsk only cost 4s. 6d., and from Tobolsk to any station whatever in Siberia the fare is only nine shillings. Thus the tripper can cover about 6000 miles for a matter of thirteen shillings.

GLEAMS OF HUMOR.

"I hear Jackson's doing well since his marriage." "Yes. Sports a carriage and pair now." "Is that so?" "Yes, I saw him pushing it in the park yesterday."

"We're going to live in a better neighborhood hereafter," said Mrs. Uppish, the objectionable next-door woman. "Ah! So are we," replied Mrs. Peppery. "O! are you going to move, too?" "No. We're going to stay right here."

"How awfully greedy you are!" said one little girl to another. "You took the biggest apple from the basket just as I was going to take it myself."

This is a baby. It is a girl baby, How sloppy its chin is! How red its eyes. What horrid contortions it makes with its face. See how savagely it kicks. How like a demon it yells! Yet in a few short years some man will be half crazed with wild suspense, worshipping the very air this being breathes, devoutly kneeling at her feet, and frantically begging for one word, one pressure of the hand, even a look, which will give him hope.

"Do you consider him much of an actor?" "Well, rather too much. It wouldn't hurt him to lose 60 or 70 pounds."

Typewriter Girl—"Will you kindly hand me the mucilage? Gushing Book-keeper—"Certainly; with all my heart." Typewriter Girl—"No thanks; only the mucilage, please."

Barber, absently—Shampoo, sir? Customer, with shining bald pate, No;—shine!

"I tell you what, there's a dark outlook for that young man." "Why?" "He has a night job in a signal tower."

She—"Oh, my tooth aches dreadfully! I don't see why we can't be born without teeth." He—"I think, my dear, that if you will look up some authority on that point, you will find that most of us are."

Guide, showing places of historic interest—"It was in this room that Wellington received his first commission." Mr. Einstein—"His first commission! Ish dot so?" Guide—"Yes, sir; it is a fact." Mr. Einstein—"Vot percentage of commission did he get?"

The work horse and the carriage horse stood side by side on the street. "I see you take your meals a la cart," sniffed the latter, looking disdainfully at the other's canvas feed bag. "Yes," replied the equine toiler. "Don't you?" "Neigh, neigh, Pauline," and the proud aristocratic mare rattled the silver chains upon her harness. "I prefer mine stable d'eat."

Ethel—"Pa, is it love that makes the world go round?" Pa, lured to a bachelors' supper overnight, sadly—"No, dear, not always."

"But isn't there a penalty if you bribe a custom house officer?" asked his friend. "I'm not sure," said the returned traveler, who, of course, was speaking of his experience in Europe; "but I know there's a penalty if you don't."

ABOUT DUTIES.

On board Her Majesty's ships, as is well known, tobacco is duty free, and Jack is, of course, permitted to carry his stocks from one ship to another, even when that other is a depot ship. But depot ships are somewhat out of date, and in their place naval barracks have been erected at various ports. This re-arrangement recently gave the Custom officials at Devonport the chance to pounce upon an unfortunate "handyman" proceeding, by order, from his ship to the barracks. He was arrested by the police and charged with "having illegally unshipped 2lb. 14oz. of tobacco, the duty on which had not been paid." Fortunately, the magistrate recognized the absurdity of punishing a man for proceeding from his ship to what—by the Service regulations—was, in effect, another ship in commission; and refused to convict, but the police took possession of the tobacco.

But peculiar as are the ways of the British Custom House, they are surpassed by many other similar institutions abroad. Thus the French, being desirous of shutting out German toys, imposed a very heavy duty on them, and, for a long time, could not understand how, notwithstanding, the Teutons appeared to be able still to undersell the home article. Ultimately it was discovered that the Germans had hit upon the device of bringing the goods in in that they described as the raw state—that is to say, certain portions would pass the Customs from Holland, others from Italy and Switzerland, and others again from England. The "raw

material" thus passed by the unsuspecting French Customs Department was then put together, and the trick was done.

A funny story came from the Transvaal in the days when Mr. Kruger's officials collected the Customs duties there. An English actor in Pretoria applied for a parcel sent him by post from this country, and containing typewritten manuscript, but was met by a demand for duty on it as feathers. He expostulated, and was shown the back of the address-label, on which was written "The Eiderdown Quilt," and he had to open the package in order to convince the sceptical officials that the words referred to the title of a play, and were not liable to contribute to Mr. Kruger's exchequer.

It may be noted that the Turkish Customs will not admit goods stamped with a crescent, or bearing the imprint "Makers to Her Majesty," also that to consign pork to any Moslem country is to court capital punishment.

RAILROADS IN CHINA.

People who know the Chinese as well as any outsider can—which is probably very superficially indeed—tell us that much of the anti-foreign sentiment in China is provoked by the doings of railroad-builders. Ancestor-worship is a part of the Chinese religion. When an engineer desecrates the sacred graves in order to lay out a route, he rouses the populace to fury.

The first railway constructed in China was eleven miles long and connected Shanghai with Wusung. An English company built it in 1876. The Chinese government tore it up in 1877.

Railroads seem to flourish best in northern China. Here they had their origin in the needs of the coal-mines at Kaiping, east of Peking, which have been operated since 1885. The English manager of the mines began with a little tramway to carry the coal eleven miles to the coast, thence to be conveyed by water to Tientsin. The trouble with this arrangement was that in winter, when business would have been most active, the river was frozen up.

Finally, by cautious management, the engineer put through a railway from the mines to Tientsin and Taiku, and it was afterwards extended to the northeast of Kaiping, to reach new collieries. The Chinese themselves provided the capital.

In 1892 Li Hung Chang built an extension of this road. In 1895 the government carried it farther still. Now, as the Imperial Chinese Railway, it reaches from Peking to Kin-chou, and including two branches, measures about four hundred miles. When the anti-foreign movement arose, another extension, running northeast from Kin-chou a hundred miles, was under construction; and it was agreed that from Kin-chou—which is at the head of the Gulf of Liaotung—the system should be connected with the Russian line which is to run from Port Arthur to the Siberian railway, six hundred and fifty miles.

At the southwest of the capital, most of the railroads are at the "projected" stage. There is a line from Peking to Pao-ting, eighty-eight miles long. Chinese capitalists have planned to extend this to Hankau on the Yangtze River. An American company has a concession to build a railroad from Hankau to Canton. Thus the distance between Peking and Canton, twelve hundred miles, may ultimately be bridged.

The statisticians agree that there are four thousand miles of telegraph in China, but none of them dares to say how many miles of railroad are in existence, nor does any one attempt to keep track of the concessions that have been granted in the last few years and that may or may not be utilized. Many Chinese statesmen have sided with the masses in objecting to these concessions.

With the statesmen religious prejudice is not so intense as with the common people. But they say that China's true policy is to build railroads slowly, with Chinese capital, thus avoiding the incubus of a foreign debt. And they look forward with dread to the economic problems that will arise when—in a densely populated land, where every morsel of food has to be fought for—railroads throw millions of coolies, carriers and junkmen out of work.

THE FELINE CREW.

Every large ocean liner carrying passengers has on board from six to ten cats, these being apportioned to And even, beyond this, on most of various parts of the ship, as well as appearing on the vessel's books for rations.

LITTLE-KNOWN SIBERIA.

An Interesting Excerpt From a Recent Work by Baron de Batz.

Usually when speaking of Siberia visions of snow-covered plains, ice-cold mountains and vast expanses of dreary waste arise in the mind's eye. However true these visions may be of Siberia in general, there are vast fertile plains within the empire of the North, and a recently published book of Baron de Batz gives some information about them that may interest.

There is no doubt the climate of Siberia is more rigorous than that of any other country in the same latitude. The northern shore is washed by the Arctic Ocean, whence the polar winds sweep unimpeded over the country, while the great central Asiatic range shuts out the warm southerly and southeasterly breezes. Hence, the regions of Siberia enjoy a more inclement and less equable climate than places of corresponding latitude in Europe or America, except the northern places in the interior of Canada, which however, profit in summer by certain warm-air currents from Mexico and the Antilles.

Siberia may be divided from north to south into three great zones.

First. The polar zone, or the zone of the "Toondea," stretching from the polar seas to the polar circle, with outlines somewhat irregular. Vegetation in this region is reduced to grasses, mosses and lichens. The soil is perpetually frost-bound.

Second. The forest zone, extending from the polar circle to the fiftieth or the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, characterized by thick forests intersected by swamps.

Third. The cultivable zone, stretching south to the Chinese frontier. In this zone the summers are warm and genial. Wheat, rye and oats can be grown, and stock raising may be carried on. Almost all of the efforts of our colonists have been concentrated here.

This comprises at present the four governments of Tobolsk, Tomsk, Yenisei and Irkutsk, leaving out of consideration their most northerly districts and the mountainous portions of the government of Tomsk, Yenisei and Irkutsk lying near the Chinese frontier. It also includes the regions watered by the Amur and the Ussuri, sparsely populated at present, but rapidly being settled by immigration under the reduced rates on the Great Siberian Railroad, now completed to Stretinsk, east of Lake Baikal.

This zone contains approximately 54,000,000 acres, with only 5,380,000 acres under cultivation. The system of cultivation is still primitive. The land is first cleared, the trees are felled, stumps are removed, or on the steppes the soil is merely plowed. The ground is next sown with wheat for two or three years consecutively. It is then allowed to lie fallow, and subsequently is again sown with wheat. This rotation is continued until the ground shows signs of exhaustion. The land is then left completely uncultivated, and other fields are tilled.

Ordinary soil, before being left to lie fallow for a long period, can be plowed and sown for three or four years in succession; the best black earth can be cultivated from twenty-five to thirty years. South of the Tobolsk province there are fields which are known to have been cultivated uninterruptedly for one hundred years.

The gradual impoverishment of the soil, however, has compelled the farmers to make use of manure, and on the northern borders of the cultivable zone of the Tobolsk provinces the following rotation of crops has been adopted; 1, rye; 2, oats, barley or corn; 3 fallow.

The abundance of the crop varies according to the system of cultivation adopted, and it is to be noted that the stories told by early travelers of the prodigiously fertile soil of Siberia relate only to exceptional years. At the present time, the annual harvest of cereal crops in Siberia yields 160,000,000 pecks, or 2,880,960 tons. The harvest consists approximately of; Corn and oats, 60 per cent; rye, 20 per cent; other cereals, 20 per cent.

I am here, gentlemen, explained the pickpocket to his fellow-prisoners, as a result of a moment of abstraction.

And I, said the incendiary, because of an unfortunate habit of making light of things.

And I, chimed in the forger, on account of a simple desire to make a name for myself.

And I, added the burglar, through nothing but taking advantage of an opening which offered in a large mercantile establishment in town.