LIFE IN JOHANNESBURG.

MORE ABOUT THE METROPOLIS OF THE TRANSVAAL.

A Cosmopolitan Town of Strange and Startling Contrasts—High Living Regardless of Expense—Meat Cheap, Bread Dear—Fascinations Which Obtain a Strong Hold.

The Transvaal and its wonderful cosmopolitan centre, Johannesburg, are just now of greater interest than ever. Emigration there from all enterprising civilized nations is still on the increase. Let us see what the country with its capital is like—its people, life, commerce and advantages for settlers.

First, to get there. The railway journey from Cape Town to Johannesburg of about three days is through a seemingly endless, sandy country, with range succeeding range of distant mountains, all alike, and strikes a greater sense of vastness and desolation than an expanse of naked ocean itself. First and second class have sleeping accommodation, the third being kept for blacks and the lowest class Dutch. Well, we reach Johannesburg, which has not even yet, with all its wealth, a covered-in railway station; while, by way of contrast in the progress of the place, just across the road is a huge club, with tennis, cricket, football, and cycling grounds, gymnasium, military band, halls for dancing, operas, oratorios, &c., which will bear comparison with any you please. Its members are millionaires and clerks, lodgers and their lodging house keepers, all equal there; for we have left behind cast, cliques, and cathedral cities, and are cosmopolitan, or, in a word, colonial. An institution like this gives us the state of society there in a nut shell, for, as wages are very high, any one in anything like lucrative employment can belong to it; and the grades in society are determined by money, and money only.

JOHANNESBURG,

the London of South Africa, which was nine years ago barren veldt, eight years ago, a miner's camp, is now the centre of some one hundred thousand inhabitants, and increasing about as fast as bricks and mortar can be obtained. It is situated directly on top of the gold, and, on looking down from the high ground above, it looks to an English eye like a huge, long-drawn-out mass of tin sheds, with its painted iron mine chimneys running in a straight line all along the quartz gold reef as far as you can see in either direction. The largest or main reef runs for thirty miles uninterruptedly, gold-bearing and honeycombed with mines throughout. This, even were it alone, could speak for the stability and continued prosperity of the Transvaal gold trade. On a mail steamer arriving only a few days ago from the Cape was said to be between £300,000 and £400,000 worth of gold, and the newspapers show that usually about £100,000 worth is consigned by each mail boat.

As we enter the town we find fine and well-planned streets, crossed at places with deep gutters—gullies rather—to carry off the water, which is often, in the heavy summer rains, deeper than your knees. Crossing these at a fast trot, the driver never drawing rein, the novice is shot about in his white-covered two-wheeled cab, with its large springs, like a pea in a bladder. Indeed, one marvels at the daintily-dressed habitue of the place being swung through similarly, quite unconcerned, and without rumpling a frill. We pass fine public buildings, very high houses and shops—somewhat jerry-built, it is true, and goodness help them in the event of a large street fire—but now being added to or replaced by larger and more solid buildings. Indeed, bricks cannot be made fast enough for the demand, both there and in some of the outlying Transvaal towns, where the "gold boom" is on. There are lofty and handsome shops, with most costly contents, which can vie with London or Paris.

Let us watch from the high raised stoop outside the Post Office, looking down over the huge

MARKET SQUARE.

What strikes us first are the two-wheeled two-horse cabs, with white hoods, recklessly driven by Malays in the inseparable red fez; these, with the fast-trotting mule or horse wagons, show the pace at which business or pleasure is followed. As a contrast comes the lumbering ox wagon, with ten or twelve span of oxen, a little Kaffir boy dragging and directing the leading couple by a thong round the horns, and the unamiable Dutch farmer revolving around, swearing and using his fifteen-foot whip to keep the concern in motion. Then passes a body of some 200 prisoners, Kaffirs and a few whites leading, marched in fours by some dozen white-helmeted police and four or five mounted men, all paraded through the main streets, innocent and guilty alike, to the Court House, and many escaping en route as occasion offers.

Long before daylight the square is full of ox wagons, some from distances occupying days to traverse; and the buyers of forage, oats, corn, malie-meal, firewood, poultry, eggs, &c., are busy as soon as they can see. Here the middleman makes a good profit, often riding far out on the roads to get at the illiterate Dutch farmer before the latter reaches the market. Here is an amusing instance of a bargain recently overheard on the square. An English trader purchases a wagon load of stuff from a Boer, and, by means of a few figures and calculations easily tossed off, and with many flourishes, makes out that the amount he has to pay the Dutchman is about half of what it ought to be, if correctly reckoned up at the price agreed. "Oom Paul" cannot reckon much, but has a ready reckoner, and points to and wants the larger amount. "What's that?" says the other. "Let's look at it." Then "Why, that's last year's ready reckoner! Look here, man, it's marked 1894. It's no good now." "Allamachta!" says the Boer. "I did not notice that," and plods off home, wagon and all, content with the lesser sum.

No expense is spared in high living. A special fruit train is run daily from Natal, and fish is brought enormous distances. All South Africa fish, however, are either tasteless or of a milk-and-water or insipid flavor. The vegetable market opens each morning at dawn; at 8 the lots are sold by auction, and Malays pile up their carts and pannier baskets to sell their stuff from house to house before the midday heat. In England meat is dear and bread and vegetables cheap; in the Transvaal bread and vegetables are dear (a small roll, not large enough to be dignified with the name of loaf, costing sixpence) and meat is cheap.

Now let us see what advantages the country has to offer to

INTENDING EMIGRANTS.

To young fellows going out with a few hundreds to try their luck, the old Australian's advice, I think, holds good for Africa, namely, to put your money into safety for a year, and not go into business or speculating until you know your country. Johannesburg business morality is certainly not London business morality; and leading business men at the former place will tell you themselves that honesty is not expected there. For those who go to earn their livelihood, or to make money, I would say, do not go out without a fixed trade or handicraft, or money to start upon, or a good introduction to some friend already there. But remember that the Transvaal is a veritable paradise for the workingman who knows his business. All the heavy part of the labor is put out; the Kaffirs do it, directed by him in a few Kaffir words and generally many English expletives. Wages are paid monthly. Miners make their twenty-five or thirty pounds a month, if first-rate, and the blacks drill their holes for blasting where and as they order them. Carpenters, blacksmiths, masons can get about the same; and, whenever a billet is lost or cannot be obtained, a short tramp along the mines generally brings success. Vacancies are constantly occurring, for miners, especially when full of money, are inclined to "go on the burst," and their places are ruthlessly filled up (on Monday mornings is the best time to apply) by new-comers, in order to keep the work going at fever heat and the output up to the mark. When in cash, these miners often spend six or eight pounds at a sitting, and twenty or thirty pounds in a day or two. A freemasonry exists among them, and when one gets into trouble with the authorities half a dozen turn up to bail him out or to pay the iniquitously heavy fine imposed by the cunning Dutch officials, who know they will be paid, as the alternative time is too valuable to the delinquent.

THE MINERS,

except when close to Johannesburg or a town, live in white men's quarters, built of wood and corrugated iron, and the mines succeed one another some few miles apart along the open veldt or plain, without a tree to break its barrenness; so the surroundings are grim and uninviting enough. Many miners have horses, many bicycles, the latter just the thing for the long, dry, sandy road. They feed at a common boarding house for five or six pounds a month and sleep two, often four or more, in a small room. No class ever cared less for personal comforts. They pay highly, as money comes in so easily, and without grumbling. Their relaxation, as is natural in places so monotonous and unlovely, is dissipation, and so a steady man can save a small fortune in an incredibly short space of time. Most of those inclined to save have their banking accounts, and very large sums of money are sent monthly to wives and families at home.

Ten shillings for shoeing a horse should tempt a blacksmith. Go out by all means, any one who has a trade and good health, and you have what is, in serious language, the best chance in the world of making money there. The utterly free life of South Africa has such a charm also that, as all the colonists tell you, if once you put on the veldt schoons (untanned leather shoes), and drink "Cape Smoke" (local attempt at brandy), you will never leave the country; and it has a fascination which is believed invariably to attract back to it all who have been there.

PETS OF HONDURAS.

That Country Is a Veritable Paradise For Them.

Honduras seems a paradise for pets. Parrots of every size, from that of a sparrow to the great green macaw, three feet long or more, can clamber all over and about the house and never know a cage. Chachalacas trot through the patios or courts of the houses in the towns, and bitterns stalk disconsolate about. Fawns and children play together in many a yard, and coons and sometimes an armadillo are playmates for the little ones, who have few dolls. In the Sambo hamlet of Ulun, a tame ant-eater was offered to me, and while we talked of it a woman came in leading a gibeonite, which took occasion to nibble at its owner's bare heels while she bargained.

As I lay in a hammock in a Waikna hut one day a peccary came within my reach. With a convenient stick I ventured to scratch his brown and bristly back. Down he flopped on his side and grunted as long as the tickling went on. From that moment he was my ardent, friend and faithful follower. I could not go ten steps without finding him at my heels, and his jealousy was as instant as it was fierce. Woe to the dog that dared come near me. A sudden rush, a quick upward thrust of those gleaming tusks and there was a bleeding gash in that dog's quarters, if he was not agile beyond the average of dogs. And the snapping of those tusks was a sound that was most suggestive, particularly to a white man groping in the dark for the olla that holds the drink. Peccaries are not really the nicest of pets for people whose visitors are nervous.

The Lprgest Gold Nugget.

The largest piece of gold ever mined was taken from Byer and Haltmon's gold mining claim, Hill End, New South Wales, May 10, 1872. Its weight was 640 pounds; height 4ft. 9in.; value nearly $150,000. It was found imbedded in a thick wall of blue slate, at a depth of 250 feet from the surface. The owners of the mine were living on charity when they found this immense nugget.

SOME FAMOUS PEOPLE.

LATEST ABOUT THE BEST KNOWN PEOPLE OF THE DAY.

The Late Robert Louis Stevenson and His Portraits—Czarina and the State Jewels—The Late Prince Henry—Sardou's Method—The Duke of York's Double, &c., &c.

The best paid official in the British service is the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, who receives $100,000 a year.

Once a year the Emperor of China ploughs a furrow in order to dignify agriculture in the eyes of his people. The ceremony is invested with great pomp.

The late Lord Leighton's magnificent house in London is now the property of the Royal Academy of Arts, to be used as an official residence for future presidents.

During the recent war amenities between England and Germany the London Shipping Exchange sent the following telegram to the German Emperor: "No need to send 5,000 Germans from your country; we can most readily spare them from here."

The Czarina is one of the few royalties who still make a practice of wearing state jewels. At her coronation in May she will wear a crown worth $7,500,000, and the Czar's crown is still more valuable. It reads like a fairy story by Hans Christian Anderson, but it is stated on excellent authority that there is a vault in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg containing drawers full of diamonds, pearls and other precious stones, from which the Czarina may borrow at pleasure.

The late Robert Louis Stevenson did not like the portraits of himself that were given to the world. "The pictures they publish of me," he complained, "vary considerably. They represent every type, from the most God-like creatures to the criminal classes; and their descriptions of me vary in proportion—from a man with a 'noble bearing' to 'a blighted boy.' I don't mind what they say, as a general rule, but this description written by a man in Ohio was trying; 'A tall, willowy column supported his classic head, from which proceeded a hacking cough.' I could not forgive that."

Barney Barnato endures unmoved the many newspaper attacks on himself and his schemes. He says that on only one occasion have the newspapers succeeded in causing him real pain. He was playing in private theatricals at a big country house. He played, as he believed extremely well, and was immensely proud of himself in consequence. To his chagrin the local papers did not even mention his name. Next day Barney went to the nearest town, bought some oranges, and proceeded to juggle them in the market place. But the local papers remained silent, and in disgust Mr. Barnato went back to London.

The Duke of York has a double, William Reginald Roberts by name. At first William was disconcerted by the continual hat-doffing that marked his appearance everywhere. Then he began to fancy it, and live up to the situation, as it were. He travelled all over England in first-class carriages, and the guards never thought of asking him for a ticket. One day William was travelling down to Windsor in his customary princely style. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain happened to be aboard the same train, and hearing from one of the guards that the Duke of York was in the next compartment he decided to go in at the next station and pay his respect to the Duke. Tableau! "His Grace" is now doing a term in Bow street.

The Prince of Wales has a most accurate knowledge of the signs, colors and membership of all orders of merit. And it is a matter in which he permits no trifling. At a state function which occurred last season a beautiful English girl wore a glittering jewelled decoration on her breast. The Prince took the first opportunity when the young lady was alone of saying: "That is a pretty ornament. May I ask to whom it belongs?" "To Lord ——," said the frightened girl; "he is my fiance; he allows me to wear it." "Can you unfasten it easily?" "Yes, sir." "Then, may I ask you to take it off and to tell Lord —— that it means something more than a bit of gold and a few diamonds to be worn merely as an ornament, even by a charming woman?"

Princess Beatrice will continue to draw her income of $30,000 a year, as it was made a life grant at the time of her marriage. By the death of the Duke of Clarence his brother and sisters gained in income, as the $180,000 a year voted for the Prince of Wales's children continued all the same. This provision must serve them during the present reign, whether their state be married or single, with children or without. The Duke of York had no extra allowance on his marriage, in spite of his important position in the direct line. The deaths which lost money to the royal family were that of the late Prince Consort, whose yearly $150,000 ceased; that of the Princess Alice, whose $30,000 a year, as Queen's daughter, was not continued to her German children, and that of the Duke of Albany, whose $125,000 a year, as Queen's son, dropped immediately, and was but partly replaced by a $30,000 a year from the nation to his widow.

Sardou has a method. He rises at 6 and writes till noon. As soon as he enters his study he locks the door and is disturbed by nobody except the barber, who comes every day to shave him. He breakfasts at 12 with his wife and children, and eats like a cormorant. After breakfast a stroll, a cigar and the daily papers. At 3 a reception—actors, actresses, managers, directors—everybody by turns and no one long. They come from all points of the compass, chiefly London and New York. Then he writes his letters, dines at 6.30, smokes another cigar, and goes to bed at 10. Sardou is king in his own world. He "produces" his own pieces and won't alter anything he has written. "Not a line—not a word—not a syllable!" said Sardou when it was suggested to change "Thermidor." He even decides on the colors of the actresses' dresses. "If I did not," he says, "they would all wear red to attract attention to themselves, and this actually happened once at the Odeon."

Since the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg the idea prevails generally that he was surfeited with the life of luxurious ease secured to him by his marriage. He was exalted to the standing of Royal Highness, and the Queen lavished attentions on him to such an extent as to arouse the jealousy of her sons. Yet his position was inexpressibly bitter to himself. The prolific penny-a-liner never ceased to call attention to the fact that he was "found" handsomely in everything by the English people, and that he led the life of a lap-dog in consequence of their generosity. The Ashantee expedition presented possibilities of proving that he was not the carpet knight of popular humor. It was poor Heinrich's first chance since his marriage to redeem his equivocal position and he did not let it pass. A few days before leaving London for the African coast he jestingly said to a friend: "If I die out there, what will Grub street do for a target?"

Sir Henry Irving, when studying his role of Corporal Brewster, in the "Story of Waterloo," visited Thanet workhouse to get his realistic touches from the study of an old soldier, William Sutton, who was an inmate of that institution. In a similar way he prepared for the part of King Lear by visits to the Broadmoor Asylum. Eleonora Duse is said to have made extensive study of the unfortunate girls in a convent kept by the Sisters of Mercy before undertaking the part of Santuzza. Mary Anderson, before her retirement from the stage, frequented Paddington Church yard, and, seated on the tomb of Mrs. Siddons, diligently studied her part. Mrs. Keeley, the celebrated English actress of half a century ago, was equally careful about the details of her characters. She continually visited Newgate to watch the ways of criminals when studying for "Jack Sheppard." And when preparing for the part of Nydia in "The Last Days of Pompeii," she made frequent visits to an asylum for the blind.

Emperor Franz Josef of Austria is much attached to his Premier, Cassimer Felix Badeni, who began life as the son of a cook. His extraordinary luck began two years before he was born, when his father, who was a chef to one of the last Kings of Poland, was created a Count, more in jest than in earnest, as he had not the money to support the dignity. For a time it looked as if the Count's sons would have to return to the pots and skillets. But a relative of their mother, Anna Wieren, the celebrated German actress, became so attached to the two Badeni boys that when death rang the curtain down upon the last act of her life's drama she bequeathed them her entire fortune, amounting to over a million of dollars. Young Badeni procured an excellent education, was graduated as a doctor of philosophy, and entered the Austrian Civil Service. He was exceedingly handsome, had delightful manners and spent money liberally. It was not long before he became the most popular Pole at the Court of Vienna. He is one of the Emperor's most intimate friends.

THE LOADED CIGAR.

A Dangerous Novelty Which Should Be Suppressed.

This is an age of novelties, but it would appear that one novelty at least is not appreciated in every quarter. The loaded cigar may be classed as a novelty although it has not the merit of being new another demerit is that it is a nuisance and decidedly dangerous.

Mr. V. H. Widmore, of Montreal, evidently regards it with the utmost disfavor as he was recently made a victim of its practical popularity in an extremely unpleasant manner.

On Tuesday last he went into a cigar store kept by a woman on St. Catherine street and purchased what he thought was an ordinary cigar of commerce. Some time subsequently, it was after dinner on the same day, he was in the company of a lady acquaintance, and, it is presumed the lady did not object, proceeded to enjoy what was evidently a choice Havana. He did not consume much of the weed, however, when he was startled by a loud explosion and a miniature pyrotechnical display with a flame about two feet long, at the lighted end of his cigar. Some of the sparks found their way to his fair companion's face, who was slightly burnt and who was at the same time considerably frightened.

Mr. Widmore laid a complaint at the Police Court against the shopkeeper. In reply to Judge Dugas she explained that the cigar was given to the young man merely as a joke and that they were not dangerous. Moreover, they were loaded and she knew it. The cigars were purchased at a place on St. Catherine street. Mr. Widmore was told that there was no law to reach these vendors of torpedo cigars, but Judge Dugas assured him that he would enquire into the matter further.

On Thursday Mr. Widmore purchased five more of these eccentric weeds, and submitting them to expert examination at the Hamilton Powder Company was informed that they were undoubtedly dangerous articles.

The problem with which Mr. Widmore is now wrestling is what legal satisfaction could one get if one lost one's eyesight through this pernicious, explosive cigar?

Mr. Widmore will not let the matter drop as it is, but is steadfast in his determination to prosecute both the manufacturers and sellers of this nuisance.

Nice Man.

Wiggles—Do you know old Walker?

Waggles—Yes.

Wiggles—What sort of a man is he, anyway?

Waggles—Well, if he wanted to marry my mother-in-law I shouldn't have the least objection.

A VERY DARING AERONAUT

MR. ANDREE TO CROSS THE NORTH POLE IN A BALLOON.

Will He Be Able to Succeed?—Details of the Great Air Ship That Is Now Being Made in Paris for Him—Backed by Royalty.

S. A. Andree, a Swede, has resolved to cross the North Pole in a balloon. The expedition is an audacious one, and in the opinion of certain savants some magnificent results may be expected from it. Great interest is manifested in the proposed journey, and as the balloon in which M. Andree is to travel is now being constructed in Paris, Frenchmen are especially anxious about the result.

M. Andree is in Sweden at the present time, and declines to be interviewed. In Paris his representatives are the Societe Nordenfeld, in the Rue Auber. The managers of this company have received strict orders from M. Andree not to allow members of the press to get possession of any details concerning either his project or the construction of his balloon.

The writer has nevertheless seen the balloon, or rather those portions of it that are already constructed. The builder is M. Lachambre, who resides in the Passage des Favorites, at Vaugirard. Although there is a strict standing order to admit no one into the aero-nautical ateliers, nor allow any one to have a peep in, the writer was fortunate enough to get a good view of all M. Lachambre's plans, to view the silk as the women were fastening it together, and also to have a glimpse of all that was taking place in the constructor's workshops.

THE "POLE NORD."

M. Surcouf, who is a member of one of the largest firms of balloon-makers in France, said in a recent interview on the subject that when M. Andree came to Paris about a year ago "he tried to place his order for the 'Pole Nord' with the firm of Surcouf, Godard & Co., who ran the captive balloon during the 1889 Exposition in Paris and also during the 1878 Exposition, and who are well known all over the world as the best constructors in France."

"When M. Andree," continued M. Surcouf, "laid his plans and projects before me, I immediately told him that to attempt to cross the North Pole in a balloon with the capacity of 4,500 cubic metres, was, in my opinion, pure folly. I am afraid that he will not succeed. He has only made a few unimportant ascents, and is really not an aeronaut of any mark. I would willingly have built him an airship with a capacity of six thousand metres, but I am of opinion that he will discover nothing and will fail in his attempt with a balloon of 4,500 metres capacity."

M. Surcouf has made probably more journeys through the air than any other Frenchman, and talks knowingly on aeronautic subjects.

The "Pole Nord," as it has already been baptized, will have a total capacity of 4,500 metres. It will carry three persons, Messrs. Andree, Ekholm and Strindberg. M. Andree will manage the balloon. He is a savant of undoubted repute and, in some quarters, has even the reputation of an experienced aeronaut. His greatest feat is the aerial journey from Goltenbourg to the island of Gothard, a distance of 300 kilometres. He performed it in five hours, an average of about forty miles an hour. M. Strindberg is a physician. He will be in charge of the photographic department. M. Nils Ekholm is a well-known doctor.

These three gentlemen, with their scientific apparatus and their photographic appliances, expect to snatch from the North Pole the secrets that it seems determined to retain.

The starting point has been fixed in the Norskoearna Islands, but the particular spot has not yet been settled. The explorers expect after a few hours' ride to reach northerly latitudes, into which human beings have not yet penetrated, at least during the past three centuries. Of course, they do not know where they will descend, but they hope to remain a couple of weeks in the air, to cover a distance of over three thousand miles and to take 20,000 photographic views.

THE CONSTRUCTION.

"The "Pole Nord" balloon is being made of silk, and large pieces of this material are stretched on plain wooden tables in M. Lachambre's ateliers. Half a dozen women are engaged in sewing and sticking the silk together. The silk is from Lyons, and has been specially manufactured for the construction of the balloon. It has been varnished very carefully so that it will be impossible for any gas to escape. It is expected that all will be in readiness on May 11, this year, and for each day's delay the constructor is liable to a big fine.

The diameter of the "Pole Nord" will measure exactly twenty and a half metres, and the capacity will be exactly 4,500 metres. The envelope will be formed of three silk coats, stuck firmly together and rendered airtight by a special kind of varnish.

There will be three guide-ropes of cocoanut fibre, weighing 100 kilogrammes. These ropes will graze the earth or the sea and maintain the balloon at a height not to exceed 590 feet. At this elevation the explorers say that they will be able to distinguish all the details of the region over which they are travelling. The roof of the car will be arranged as a platform for the photographic apparatus. One picture will be taken every minute during the two weeks they expect to remain on their journey across the pole. One of the two views thus taken will be developed immediately. The other will be developed after the expedition is over.

The contributors towards the expenses of the expedition are as follows: The King of Sweden, $8,000; Mr. Alfred Nobel, $18,000, and Baron Alfred Dickson, $8,000. The remainder has been given by a contributor whose name is known only to M. Andree.

M. Andree is a tall and robust man, measuring a little over six feet in height and weighing 185 pounds. He was born at Grenna on Oct. 18, 1854. His father was a druggist at Grenna, on the borders of Lake Wettern, Sweden. His mother is still living and is seventy-two years of age. M. Andree is a bachelor.