

# AMERICANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY ALLEN SANGREE.\*

THE GREAT AND GROWING IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE REGION WHERE THE BRITON AND THE BOER ARE NOW WARRING FOR SUPREMACY, AND THE ENERGETIC AND PICTURESQUE ELEMENT THAT OUR COUNTRYMEN FORM IN ITS POPULATION.

IN South Africa the term "Yankee" is applied to all who claim protection of the Stars and Stripes. The Polish emigrant of six months' citizenship and the scion of an old Virginia family are classed together. Boston, San Francisco, and New Orleans might as well be ten miles apart.

Speaking of them in this general way, Yankees are—or were before the present war—scattered over the Dark Continent south of the Zambesi River to the number, possibly, of fifteen thousand. They form a bustling, restless, energetic, and ubiquitous element of the population; one that dips into every feature of the country's life, adapts itself readily to environments, steps to the front in an emergency, is seldom overcome with modesty, and at all times may be heard sounding the praises of Uncle Sam.

The best scouts of the mounted police speak with a nasal twang and say "I guess." They are from Montana. The keenest experts on whom the mine owners of Johannesburg and Kimberley depend for accurate information once lived in San Francisco or Los Angeles. The thriftiest merchants of Cape Town, Durban, and the Rand have emigrated from the Eastern and Middle States.

Everywhere one meets the Yankee. His vocations are various; his reputation oftentimes equivocal. The intrepid missionary from Ohio and the gambler from Denver work side by side. Both are a source of wonder to the black man—no less the book agent from Boston, who sells pictures of the fall of man and the Brooklyn Bridge to natives in Zululand.

Remarkable it is to note a line of individuality running through this *figaro* of humanity that cannot be mistaken. The brand of Yankeeism is stamped indelibly on every one of our countrymen. For-

swear it one may; disprove it he cannot. From a national characteristic or trifling peculiarity the Yankee in South Africa is picked out with bewildering accuracy.

Dropping into a restaurant on the Rand on one occasion, this was graphically illustrated to the writer.

"How much is this meal?" asked a neatly dressed, clean shaven patron, whose nationality seemed difficult to determine.

"Sixty cents," replied the cockney proprietor.

"Whatever are you saying?" demanded the other with some feeling. "I asked you how much. Can't you speak English? Is it two shillings or half a crown?"

"Sixty cents," with an unperturbed smile.

"Don't be a blooming fool! How much am I indebted to you for this meal in English money?"

"Oh, I say, stranger, don't come it. You know how much sixty cents is, for that's your money."

The "stranger" first bridled up hotly, then simmered down and finally chuckled. "Well," he said, gulping an oath, "the drinks are on me, but before we wet just say how you knew that?"

"Why," laughed the Englishman, "I sized you up for a Yankee the moment you sat down. You cocked up one foot on either side of the chair. That's a Yankee trick."

Though in numbers our countrymen do not compare with either the English or the Dutch population in South Africa, so completely have they leavened society there with a picturesque activity that Johannesburg has all the elements of an American town. The conservative Englishman in the bank, the medieval Boer in the market place, the semi civilized Kaffir and the alert Malay have all been infected with the contagion of Yankee

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enterprise, and the American feels at home in Johannesburg as soon as he gets there.

#### THE YANKEE ADVENTURER.

Sad to relate, this enterprise in past years has been kept in the foreground most conspicuously by a legion of Yankee adventurers chiefly notable for their cheerful disregard for the sixth and other commandments. One of the interesting figures in Johannesburg, pointed out to strangers, is a large framed man with tropical mustache and impressive diamond stud, who fervently insists that he killed Dr. Cronin in Chicago at the beginning of this decade. Safe from extradition, he has flourished as the proprietor of a saloon on Commissioner Street, regaling spellbound customers with stories of his murderous exploits in the States. Part of this man's time has been spent in close communion with himself and one keeper; but most of the Transvaal prison officials have such a weakness for gambling that if the prisoner be nimble with cards incarceration is usually profitable to him.

The most accomplished scamp that ever gulled the Transvaal, probably, was a New Yorker, who may be called Johnson. For three months he lived like a prince in one of the prettiest villas in Dornfontein, Johannesburg's fashionable suburb, driving a fine team of grays and entertaining the masculine portion of the Golden City's "four hundred." They were attracted partly by the excellence of Johnson's cuisine and partly by the surpassing charms of his wife, who, in the words of a miner, "sluiced the village to its deep levels."

Mrs. Johnson was a very handsome woman and eminently proper. After coffee and cigars the fair hostess charmed her guests with a flow of song, usually breaking off to say: "Oh, you horrid men! I know you are just waiting for me to leave, so you can play poker."

With that she vanished and the cards appeared as if by magic. Johnson accepted checks freely, but to make sure of them he started a banking firm in town, thereby gaining the acquaintance of big financial men. His friends played and lost systematically, though no tyros, and Johnson continually won. When guests arrived one night only to find the house dark and empty, and the owner lamenting the loss

of his tenants and of all his Parisian made furniture, this phenomenal success in cards was accredited to the cleverness of an accomplice, who had been introduced as a retired clergyman and Mrs. Johnson's uncle. A meek, retiring man he was with close cropped gray beard, who rarely went out and seldom opened his mouth except to say "Three cards" in a soft voice.

While this class of Yankees has made itself much too widely known in South Africa it no longer predominates. The adventurer's place is being preëmpted by the American of real worth, who identifies himself with the serious development of the country. So quickly is our country forging to the front as a commercial factor, that our increase in trade since 1897 has been twice as rapid as Great Britain's.

#### AMERICAN COMMERCE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

In the machinery, drills, headgear, boilers, piping, electrical apparatus, and general equipment of the South African mines, America has almost a monopoly. The steel rails used at Kimberley are of American make, and now the Cape Government Railway is trying the American locomotive. A great crowd turned out at Cape Town to watch six machines being unloaded from a British liner, and Sir Alfred Milner was greatly interested to see the well dressed representatives of the manufacturers slip into overalls and put an engine together while the Manchester workmen were studying its mechanism.

There was formerly a cry, "The Yankees are all bluffers. Their goods are pretty, but will not wear. They have had their run;" but you hear it no longer, for the colonial Englishman is less stiff necked than the insular, and does not permit racial prejudice to sway his mercantile judgment. When he sees an American article better and cheaper than the English, he takes it; and as a result our goods are being rapidly introduced. American agricultural implements, carpenters' tools, screws, door trimmings, wire fencing, corrugated sheet iron, office furniture, safes, canned meats, fruits, and even eggs are in great demand. Indeed, with the exception of jewelry and clothing, almost any American product may be sold profitably in South Africa.

The Yankee telephone was found to be so much more satisfactory at Kimberley that all the towns are now clamoring for it. The same is true of our ice manufacturing apparatus, now in use at Durban. Ice there costs half a cent a pound. In English Cape Town it costs four cents.

The field for American manufactured products will continue to widen in South Africa, for that country will never be a competitor in this line of industry, being practically devoid of rivers, forests, and coal lands. The one objection that merchants in South Africa find with American firms is that they decline to give three or six months' credit. English houses are willing to make that concession.

Contrary to what one might suppose, the climate of South Africa is stimulating to industrial energy, and Americans seem to thrive there. The dry air is a certain restorative to consumptives. A brisk young blade hurried into the consulate office at Cape Town one day without the formality of knocking, and announced that he had just arrived from Atlanta, Georgia.

"My name is Kincaid," he said, "and I have but one lung. The doctor has given me just four months to live, so I'm going to have my grand finale down here. Come out and have a drink!"

The consul frowned and suggested to the cheerful candidate for the grave that he should go to the sanitarium at Kimberley. That night he and another prodigal woke up the town with their wild whoops and so thoroughly frightened a squad of local police by flourishing a large horse pistol that some of them took to a tree. We were surprised to meet him a few months later, red cheeked and healthy, in Johannesburg, where he introduced the novelty of sandwich advertising.

In mentioning the pioneers of South Africa the American book agent must be remembered, for he has corralled the whole field and is a well known character. In Johannesburg the American consul pointed out to me a man who was making twenty pounds a day selling American atlases. It was his custom to take an order for a ten shilling volume, and inadvertently to display a more costly one.

"You don't want that," said he with decision, when the buyer's curiosity was aroused. "It is too expensive."

If the ruse was successful, he came

back to collect the money with a still more elaborate article, and, as a rule, disposed of that. He is probably selling panoramas by this time.

While tramping through Zululand on another occasion, far from any white habitation, we were surprised on the banks of the Umvolosi River by a voice from the foliage calling out, with the unmistakable New England drawl:

"Hello, Yanks, where are you from?"

He proved to be a real Yankee who was selling illustrated texts of the Corbett-Sullivan fight, the "Pilgrim's Progress," and other subjects.

"I am waiting for an *induna* [chief] to bring me some cattle," he explained, "in exchange for one of these volumes. Perhaps you would like to look it over yourself."

#### CECIL RHODES AND AMERICANS.

A distinct advantage to Americans in South Africa has been the high regard in which they are held by Cecil Rhodes. In all his undertakings the empire builder has given the Yankee opportunities, and oftentimes preference over the Englishman. His first warm friendship at Kimberley was with Dr. J. Perrott Prince, now the best known physician in South Africa, and for a long time American consular agent at Durban, Natal. Dr. Prince is a veteran of the Civil War, in which he served as surgeon on General Miles' staff. He went out to Kimberley in the early days when Cecil Rhodes was a delicate young man with his fortune to make. It was while in the American physician's company one evening that Rhodes first met Barney Barnato, with whom he was afterwards to corner the diamond market of the world. Barney was then famed for his fistic ability, and had thrashed all his rivals at the mines, until a powerful fellow from Australia turned up and issued a challenge. Through a hole in the corrugated iron wall Barney looked his man over, and then hastened to Dr. Prince for a certificate of ill health. The document probably saved him from a severe drubbing, and soon after that he abandoned mountebank entertaining and became a kopje walloper [diamond dealer].

Dr. Prince also brought Dr. Jameson out from England and gave him his start in South Africa. Another American who

has for years been the intimate friend of Mr. Rhodes, and prominently identified with the industrial progress of Cape Colony, is Gardner F. Williams, manager of the great De Beers mines at Kimberley. Mr. Williams is a Californian by birth, and has a wider practical knowledge of diamond mining than any other man living. In such high esteem is he held by the owners of the Kimberley mines that though he has several times been anxious to resign and return to San Francisco they have always prevailed upon him to stay at his post. He is American consular agent at Kimberley, and is responsible, in great part, for the preference shown there for American machinery and skilled labor. He assumed the management of the mines when the town consisted of iron shanties built around a great hole, and from that developed the splendid system of mining now in vogue there. Whole souled, brilliant, and far seeing, he is the most popular and the ablest American in Cape Colony.

In extending the frontiers of civilization below the Zambesi, Yankees are notably active. Cowboys from the Western plains always find favor with Mr. Rhodes. I was in Portuguese East Africa when he authorized the Beira Bank to give Roland Creech unlimited credit. Creech was formerly sheriff of Butte, Montana, where he made a reputation for hunting down half breed desperadoes. In South Africa he is called "King of the Niggers" and has served efficiently in building the Cape to Cairo telegraph line. He is a striking example of the "rough and ready type not given to marriage" that is said to be most to Cecil Rhodes' liking.

One American, Major Maurice Heaney, even preceded the Colossus in the development of Rhodesia, having secured from the native chiefs, Khama and Lobengula, the mineral rights of their respective countries in 1886, before Rhodes had struck north. Major Heaney afterwards became one of Rhodes' trusted lieutenants, fighting through the Matabele war and taking part in the Jameson Raid. He is now one of the prominent men of Rhodesia.

President Krüger has also been most friendly disposed toward Americans, and it has been his aim to secure our good will. In his house I noticed that nearly all the furniture bore American trade-

marks, and that he seemed ready to receive suggestions from Americans. On one occasion, during a period of great drought at Pretoria, a rain maker from Ashtabula, Ohio, fairly hypnotized Oom Paul and a group of burghers with his eloquence. He had persuaded Mr. Krüger to assent to an exhibition of his meteorological powers when an ancient member of the Raad protested that it would be a sacrilege to "poke one's fingers in God's eyes to make him cry." The president was much impressed by this argument, and decided that the Transvaal was no place for a Yankee to attempt miracles.

Missionaries alone seem distasteful to Oom Paul, who, though extremely religious himself, clings to the early traditions of the Boers that they are the chosen race, and that the African native is the Canaanite, and no subject for conversion.

#### A WANDERER FROM YORK, PENNSYLVANIA.

While American missionaries in South Africa are, as a rule, men of great earnestness and ability, there occasionally become identified with the work eccentric characters whose sanctioning by the clergy at home it is difficult to understand. One instance I have in mind is that of a very grotesque negro who wandered into the American consulate, announcing that he had come to Africa "with staff and scrip" to save the heathen savage. The old man was tall and stately, and with a Chesterfieldian wave of the hand bowed low toward the consular emblem that hung above the mantel.

"I salutes the great American eagle, sah," he said, "and you, the keeper thereof."

The consul swung around on his revolving chair and asked of the stranger's identity.

"The Rev. Dr. Tate of York, Pennsylvania," said the tall figure, smiling benevolently. "Doctor of divinity and doctor of medicine."

A sadly worn frock coat, fastened alternately with round, square, and three cornered buttons, attracted the consul's attention and he suggested a change for a better coat that hung in the closet. This was gladly accepted.

"You are all right for a staff," remarked the consul, taking in the gold headed cane that was the one sign of prosperity about the stranger. "How about scrip?"



For answer the doctor displayed seventy five cents in American money. His passage had been paid, he explained, by lecturing to the ship's passengers.

"On what subject?" we asked.

"The mythological action of the brain upon the body," was the grave and prompt reply.

The skeleton of this lecture, as printed on a pamphlet, was certainly a marvel of eloquence, being a confused mixture of chemical, psychological, and theological phrases. The doctor was vastly proud of an illuminated document purporting to be a diploma from Oberlin College, which at first sight appeared genuine. The consul noticed, however, that the seal bore no stamp.

"Now, doctor," he asked kindly, "don't you think that this was a joke of the students?"

"I suspect so, sah," was the reply in a somewhat broken voice.

The doctor, however, had extremely laudatory and genuine letters from well known ecclesiastics and mission societies

in America, commending him to the support of all Christians in South Africa, and armed with these he started out on his work. Before he left the consul gave him a passport.

"This you are to keep," he said, "on the one condition that wherever and whenever you preach the Gospel in Africa, you are to remember in your prayer that great and glorious country across the seas that gave you birth, where this old bird screams liberty for all. I mean America."

Some weeks later, in traveling through Cape Colony, we came to a native kraal and found a great throng listening to an American missionary. In the center stood the Rev. Dr. Tate of York, Pennsylvania, discoursing eloquently on the subject of generosity. Catching sight of our party, he abruptly broke off with: "And oh, Lord, don't forget that great and glorious country across the sea where I was born, and where that powerful bird screams for liberty all the time. I mean America!"

## HIS HOUR OF FREEDOM.

BY JULIET WILBOR TOMPKINS.

THE STORY OF A MAN WHO RAN AWAY FROM HIS LITTLE ROUND LIFE IN A LITTLE ROUND TOWN, AND FOR ONE DAY SAW BEYOND THE HORIZON.

BARTHLOW sat in his deep leather chair and bit his pencil, just as he had done nearly every morning for the past six years, but with a new blackness on his spirit. There was nothing on earth to write. Romance was dead. Human effort was as futile as the scurry of a squirrel in a revolving cage. Worst of all, the whole feminine world seemed to have suddenly lost all glamour and slipped down into dreary insignificance. Writers like Bartholow think that their works come from their brains, but half the time it is the knowledge that there is a girl with just the right hair and eyes around the next corner that puts the glow into their conceptions and sets these sparkling with turns and phrases that their makers could never have wrought out with pure intellect.

But now he had nothing but scorn for past romances; an utter dearth of present

ones; and, worse yet, cynical disbelief in any to come. For no conceivable reason, the glamour had died in the night and left him old, bored, and inspirationless.

After a dogged hour or two, he threw down his mangled pencil, jerked himself into his storm coat and cap and left the house.

"It's all up with me. My career's done," he reflected bitterly as he banged the front door behind him. "I shall never write again—I feel it."

The wind switched his coat about him as he strode down the street. Once a window curtain was pushed hurriedly aside, so that he might have had a smile had he wished. But he hurried on, longing fiercely to get away from the little town and his little books and the little girls that had hitherto sufficed.

"Women are a silly lot, anyway," he commented, scowling back at the dark sky. "Nothing is worth while."