

MAX O'RELL ON KRUEGER.

How the French Humorist Sized Up the Boers.

Thinks That Oom Paul Is Very Much of a Diplomat—18,000 Boers Ready to Die Any Time.

Max O'Rell, the famous French author, visited Kruger's country in 1894, and upon his return wrote his book entitled "John Bull & Co." In the work he has the following interesting sketch of and interview with President Kruger:

Mr. Paul Kruger, president of the Transvaal, is a man whose personality is one of the most striking in South Africa. One may say that on the figures of President Kruger and Mr. Cecil Rhodes all the political interest of the country is centered. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, the pioneer of British civilization, alert and enterprising; President Kruger, the old Boer, cautious, slow-going, patriotic, the last defender of Dutch interests, a wily diplomat, who the head of a little republic composed of about 20,000 men able to bear arms, holds his own against the British, has foiled them more than once by diplomacy, and once beaten them in battle on Majuba hill. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who drives the wheels of the South African chariot; "Oom" Paul, who acts as a drag on these wheels.

His honor, the president of the South African Republic, or of the Transvaal, surnamed by his people "Oom Paul" (Uncle Paul), is a thickset man, rather below the middle height, who carries his seventy odd years lightly. His forehead is narrow, his nose and mouth large and wide, his eyes small and blinking, like those of a forest animal; his voice so gruff and sonorous that his ya is almost a roar. From his left hand the thumb is wanting. It was he himself, when a child, who, having one day hurt this thumb badly, took it clean off with a blow from a hatchet. He barely knows how to write, and he speaks in that primitive language, the Dutch patois spoken by the South African farmers: I is, thou is, he is; we is, you is, they is. Uncle Paul's eyes are half veiled, but always on the lookout; it is the eye that he is obliged to keep on the English. The wily one says he does not speak nor understand a word of English. I am willing to believe it, although the joke is hard to assimilate. I had the pleasure of being introduced to "Oom" Paul by Monsieur Aubert, French consul in the Transvaal. It was in the parliament, or raad, during the few minutes' interval allowed to the president and members for a smoke between the debates. I begged him to give me a few moments' interview in his own house, and he willingly made an appointment for 5 o'clock that evening. The editor of the Pretoria Press very kindly accompanied me, and acted as interpreter.

I do not know if President Kruger took me for some spy in the pay of the English, but I seemed to inspire him with little confidence, and during the 20 minutes that the interview lasted he never looked me once in the face. Whenever I asked him a question he took some time to think over his answer; and then it would come out in a weighty manner, the words uttered slowly, having been turned over at least seven times in his mouth. Here, in a few words, is the gist of the conversation: "I suppose, Mr. President, that since the victory that your brave little nation gained over the English on Majuba Hill, the Boers bear no animosity to England?"

"Tomorrow is the 24th of May, and, in honor of Queen Victoria's birthday, I have adjourned the parliament."

Here, to begin with, was a response which, for caution, I thought worthy of a Scot.

"They fear in England," I went on, "that the victory may have made you arrogant."

"That is absurd; the English might easily have repaired their defeat and crushed us. They recoiled at the idea of annihilating a people who had shown that they were ready to shed the last drop of their blood to save their independence."

"Johannesburg is, I see, completely given over to the English. Before ten years have passed the gold mines will have attracted to the Transvaal a British population greatly outnumbering the Boers. And Johannesburg is hardly 40 miles from your capital."

"The English are welcome in Johannesburg. They help to develop the resources of the Transvaal, and in nowise

threaten the independence of the country."

"That is true, Mr. President; but the Transvaal seems to be now surrounded on all sides. I hear of troubles in Matabeland, and it the English take possession of that vast territory (they have taken possession of it since this interview) you will be completely encircled."

"That is why I claim Swaziland, which will allow us to extend our country toward the sea."

"Toward the sea, yes; but to the sea, no."

"I can count upon 18,000 thousand men, sir, who will die to the last man to defend the independence of their country."

And the only reply that I could obtain to one or two more questions on the dangerous position of the republic which he governs may be summed up in these words: "We are ready to die, every one of us."

But they will not need to die; for if ever the English invaded the Transvaal in their search for gold, and succeeded in getting the government of it into their own hands, they would keep it an independent republic; that is to say, they would take into their own hands the reins now held by "Oom" Paul, and the change would only be a change of coachmen.

The Stroller is like the general public in that he is interested in all forms of excellence, whether it be in a thoroughbred malamute or a superior pugilist. Dawson now has an excellent rink at West Dawson, and all sorts of plans are being talked of to put it to good use. Dawson has some phenomenal skaters—as of course would be expected in this land of ice, which has drawn much of its population from Scandinavia, lower Canada, Finland and Iceland. It is being whispered about that little George Martin has nothing to fear from any of them, so the Stroller has been "rubber necking." Martin is neither big nor athletic, but nevertheless was a skater years ago. He doesn't think he has forgotten the mysteries of the "outside edge," and since "straight away" skating is impracticable, is not averse to cover anything worth competing for that he can score more points in a contest than some of the fellows who think they can skate. George is tending bar in the Board of Trade and from inactivity is grown heavy and possibly soft. It may be a snap for some of our athletic skaters—and then again it may not. The Stroller confesses a hankering desire to see someone put up about \$500.

Jack Thenley, working on Sulphur, was badly hoaxed last week. Jack, like

low-cut and knee high. Then the audacious dealer sold the timid miner certain dainty articles of lingerie with which the Stroller is unfamiliar, all 100-fine with certificate of assay attached.

The bill was paid and the goods ordered delivered to an address to be furnished presently. In passing the post-office Jack called in. A letter was given him from the recently arrived mail. It was from his sweetheart. She wrote from her home in Taney county, Missouri, and mentioned nothing of coming in. Indeed from the letter Thenley discovered he had been hoaxed by his friend. That night there was a man making the rounds of the dance halls with wrath in his eye and a "jag" tearing at his insides. Some of the girls he approached laughed at his offer of a "job lot of lady's wear dirt cheap," and as far as the Stroller's information goes the stuff is still unsold and laid carefully away in a miner's cabin on Sulphur.

The local and editorial force employed upon our genial contemporary, the Daily News, comprises an aggregation of as good fellows as ever got together in a newspaper office. Like all newspaper men they enjoy a good joke even if it happens to be turned in the end on themselves. This being the case the Stroller cannot forbear relating a little circumstance, which doubtless will prove of interest to the general public as well as to the individuals concerned.

It happened the other night that "copy," particularly telegraphic copy, was rather shy in the News office. The telegraph editor had done his best to supply the deficiency by means of the shears, paste pot and sundry other devices well known in the News office, but still there was a yawning vacuum in the columns and time for closing the forms was close at hand. In this extremity Brother Wishaar, well known for his resourcefulness, conceived the idea of inventing a telegram which would not only serve the purpose of supplying copy for the News, but might also, in the end result in turning a good josh on The Nugget.

With this end in view the following "telegram" under a staggering double column caption, surmounted by the head line, "by telegraph," was placed in the News.

(Special to the Daily News.) London, Nov. 18.—"A dispatch to the Chronicle from Capetown says that a party of Boers numbering about 250 attacked a small detachment of Cape mounted rifles near TEGGUN, but after a short engagement were forced to retire, leaving 27 dead and wounded on the field. Lieut. DEKAF, who was in command of the rifles, was badly wounded. A sub-officer of the Boers, Cornet SWEN, was captured and is now a prisoner at Kimberly."

If the reader will note carefully the prominent words in the "telegram" he will quickly secure the key to this beautiful piece of strategy, which cost Brother Wishaar the expenditure of a very considerable amount of mental effort. All he need do is spell the words in capital letters backwards and the whole plan is before him. Instead of "Teggau," which does not appear on any of the maps of Africa, he will have "Nugget." In the place of "DeKaf," who is not enrolled on the roster of the English army, he will have the plain, common every-day word "faked," and in the place of "Swen," the unfortunate Boer prisoner he will have "News."

The point to the plot lay in the assumption on the part of Brother Wishaar that The Nugget might get caught in a predicament similar to that in which the News had been placed, and would copy the bogus telegram, thus giving the News the opportunity to give The Nugget the "grand ha! ha!"

Brother Wishaar's work, however, lacked its accustomed fineness in this particular instance and failed of realization, for the reason that The Nugget pays for its own telegraphic service and does not as does our contemporary, rely upon its scissors, paste pot and inventive faculties for telegraphic news. The joke, however, was altogether too good to pass unnoticed, so the following "telegram" appeared in the last Nugget, for the special benefit of our contemporary.

"A dispatch from Capetown says 250 Boers attacked a detachment of Cape mounted rifles at DARHGIB, a small place near SWEN, but were compelled to retire to EKORBSI."

The reader will easily translate the message without further explanation.

So the Stroller will pass it. It is said around that when The Nugget's "telegram" was read in the News office, several new words of a more or less emphatic character were added to the language, but of the accuracy of this statement, deponent sayeth not.

Eagle milk, Highland cream, 99 cream, St. Charles cream, corn, tomatoes, peas, string beans, 3 cans for \$1, at Mohr & Wilkens.



MAX O'RELL.

THE STROLLER'S COLUMN.

Ed Brown, the painter, takes a "jolly" like a philosopher. The latest emanation of his brush are some Arctic scenes showing Nugget Express dog teams in service. The pictures are in silhouette. The amusing feature which occasions the present "jolly" is the fact that while the scene is good, the sleds are drawn by just two dogs and a half. The pictures are conscientious reproductions, showing the two dogs and the government fraction in the attitude rampant of actual service.

The Stroller, like his fellows, can only judge by comparisons. When he arrived in Dawson he found a city of dilapidated tents and tumbledown shanties. By comparison the police buildings of the rectangle were palatial. Dawson is now a city of two and three story buildings: hotels of finished lumber; houses of sawn logs; plate glass windows and painted fronts. By comparison, the same buildings of the rectangle appear squat; depressingly antediluvian, cheerless, diminutive, ramshackle, uncouth, cheap, primitive, dark, forbidding, rough, uneven and fallen from the perpendicular, sunken into the ground, low roofed, ports for windows—indeed have apparently retrograded because of the vast progress which has been made in other public buildings and the town of Dawson in general.

many another Klondiker, left a dear little girl behind him when he started for Dawson two years ago. He never reads the papers and knew nothing of the wreck of the Stratton until a few days ago, when an acquaintance from Dawson called on him on the creek. The friend (?) found Jack so deliciously ignorant of current events that he indulged in a fiction at his expense. Knowing the name of the girl from whom Jack gets occasional letters, he informed the hard working young miner that she had been wrecked on the Stratton, had lost all her clothes and money, was in Dawson in destitute circumstances and didn't know his creek address.

In less than 15 minutes Thenley was on his way to Dawson with a well filled "poke" and a heart beating high with a combination of pity and happy anticipation. He traveled all night by post dog team, reaching Dawson about 10 a. m. the Tuesday of last week. He stopped for naught until the suburbs were reached—and then he paused. Alas he didn't know her address any more than she knew his. Never mind; there were not over two score hotels and he would inquire at them all. Going from one hostelry to the other he passed one of the big stores.

"Why not buy a feminine outfit and present it to the girl when he found her as part compensation for the ills she had endured?"

No sooner thought than done. Inside he went. With a blush he bought all the materials for a dress, a sacque, a pretty hat and—yes the smiling clerk had the audacity to sell him a sleeveless thing of white and lace without form,