

28-9-1920

Friend - Bloomfont

The Bushmen

Their Language And Their Art.

Miss Bleek's Lecture.

On Thursday and Friday last a remarkable collection of copies of Bushmen paintings was on exhibition in the Bloemfontein Museum. These copies were made by Stow, author of "Native Races of South Africa," 50 years ago and have not been on exhibition before.

A large number of the public took the opportunity to view these paintings and on Friday the number of visitors to the Museum was a record one.

On Friday night Miss Doris Bleek delivered a lecture in the Museum Hall on "Bushman, their Language and Art." Mr. R. van Reenen presided over a large attendance.

Miss Bleek read her lecture, the first portion of which was as follows—

THE BUSHMAN NATURE.

When I was a little girl living down near Capetown, a Bushman or two formed a regular part of our household. My father had come to this country to study all the native languages of South Africa and to compare them with each other and with the languages spoken in other parts of the world. For the languages of the larger and more settled races, Hottentots, Kaffirs, Zulus, Basutos, etc., he could get vocabularies and grammars, or at any rate some books printed by the missionaries; but of Bushman nothing had been written down or printed, save one or two small lists of words in the works of early travellers. And day by day the Bushmen were dying out, passing utterly away; if their speech was to be preserved for the future, it had to be done then—another thirty years would have been too late.

So, hearing that a number of Bushmen prisoners had been sent down from up-country to the breakwater, my father got leave to take a couple into his home as garden boys. This was done with some anxiety, as the men were convicts and were of a race supposed to be wild and unmanageable. But very soon all fears passed away; the Bushmen—well-fed and kindly treated—proved very harmless fellows, though not workers. Still, as the object in having them there was to record their language and folklore, in which they were very pleased to help, all parties were suited.

First one man and then another would be with us for some months, some as prisoners, but many others after their release; for they were only too glad to earn clothes and food for the journey home. Indeed, if we could have got their families down, many would have stayed for years.

HIS "PET MURDERER."

Now, these men were in prison for sheep-stealing, and one for manslaughter, yet we found them

one expects natives to have boundary stones and title deeds, still the land they actually occupy or cultivate is considered theirs. A traveller in the old days would recognise a Hottentot's flocks of sheep and herds of cattle as his property; he would not trude uninvited in a Kaffir-kraal nor onto the silled land belonging to it. If any white man did so, he would expect to be attacked in turn and have his property seized in retaliation. But a Bushman has no settled village, no flocks, nor fields of mealies. Why then should he attack the man merely trekking through his country, who has perhaps not even seen him? A Bushman's property consists of water. This spring belongs to this family or group of families, that vlei is owned by that man and his children. All the beasts drinking here are the lawful spoil of the former, all those over there are the destined food of the latter and are respected as such by other Bushmen. And as they depend for their food supplies upon game, they take good care not to live too near the water, lest they scare the animals away.

MODE OF LIFE.

Perhaps an hour's walk away, or more, two or three little huts or screens of bushes are hidden behind some trees—that is the women's home. Thence in the heat of the day, when the game is not stirring, the young women walk all the way to the water with a kaross or a "riempie" net full of ostrich eggshells. These they fill with water, stopping up the opening of the shell with grass, and leisurely wend their way home again. This supply lasts till next day; they do not waste water on washing. On some evening or early morning the men go out with their bows and arrows and, if successful bring home a buck or an ostrich. Some of the meat is cooked at once and the rest dried on the bushes, when it will last quite a while.

Into this peaceful life comes the white man with his wagon, and, of course, makes straight for the spring, where he camps on apparently unoccupied land. Of course, he shoots the buck, doing with his gun more damage in a week than the little people would in a month. His oxen tramping about scare the game away to a great extent. The Bushman sees himself deprived of food and water by one who appears to him as a robber. If he protests, he speaks to deaf ears, no one understands a word he says; nor even if he did, would the ordinary hunter or explorer admit that he was wronging the native by camping on uninhabited, uncultivated land. Yet, in the Bushman's eyes he is a robber, and what wonder if he tries to kill the intruder and, matching his poisoned arrow against the white man's gun, shoots without warning? To him there is no treachery in attacking the man, who is attacking his property rights, in retaliating by the destruction of sheep and cattle, for the shooting and driving away of his bucks and birds.

JUST RETALIATION.

On the other hand the white man feels in his rights in camping and hunting there, and then suddenly there comes a Bushman

grown-up men quite peaceable and trustworthy. A very old lady still living at the Cape has told me laughingly that when she used to walk over from Rondebosch to Mowbray, to visit my parents in the old days, my father would offer her his "pet murderer" to see her home, and certainly she had a trusty escort.

In their spare time the men made bows and arrows, or fashioned a "goin goin," an instrument similar to the Australian bull-roarer. One old man made quite a number of musical instruments in imitation of violins he had seen and heard. One was made of a shoe box, one of an old dustpan, and one of a bit of leather given him for the purpose.

All these elder Bushmen were very particular in their manners. To cough in the presence of a superior was not allowed. If they had colds they asked to be excused from coming in. A gift must never be taken with one hand. Both hands together must be held out, the meaning being, they explained, to show the recipient is as grateful as if both hands full were given. They were respectful too. But once on a later occasion a young Bushman girl behaved in a rather forward manner during a day's visit to our house and my mother commented on it to some older Bushmen. They said: "Missis must please excuse her, she was brought up by white people."

Later on four Bushman boys came to us from Lake Ngami and spent a couple of years with us. All our former men had come from south of the Orange River, and all had spoken in much the same way, though one came from as far east as Colesberg, and other as far west as the Katkop hills in Calvinia. One of these old Bushmen was still with us when the "boys" from Lake Ngami arrived. He recognised them as Bushmen at once, but could not understand their language, nor they his, so different were the dialects. Yet when written down, one could trace a resemblance between them, could see that both are of the same family of speech.

THE WHITE MAN'S FAULT.

These boys were a handful; they ranged from about 6 years old to about 16. They fought each other in rough play all over the garden, shooting off their arrows everywhere. One day the coloured lads of the village attacked them while they were out on an errand, and hit them with sticks. In a fury the Bushmen came home to fetch their bows and arrows, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that they were stopped from shooting their aggressors. Only a promise to have the latter up before the Magistrate, and get them punished, pacified the lads. Yet these wild boys were perfectly honest, and generally respectful.

Now how come it that this race has got such a bad name? Why do the early explorers and farmers speak of their cruelty, their treachery, their ferocity and thievishness? We found them loyal and honest and well-behaved. I think it has arisen in the first place from the white man's not understanding what a Bushman considers his property and consequently acting in what seemed to the Bushmen a hostile manner without intending to do so. No

putting this down to treachery; and when next day an ox is missing and its bones are traced to the nearest Bushman hut, he calls that theft. He retaliates by killing some Bushmen and seizing the children as servants, and the Bushman, infuriated, resorts to general destruction of the white man's possession and the war of extermination is on. And just as a Bushman is loyal and never forgets a friend, so he is revengeful and never forgives an enemy. The fight once started must go on. If this is to be a white man's country the Bushman had to go, but there is no need to give him a bad name; to call his efforts to preserve his free life and support his family anything but what they were—proofs of courage and love of liberty.

The Bushman of the Cape Colony has fought his fight and lost, has gone his way and is no more. A few scattered individuals, old and forlorn, are dependent on the white man's bounty. Any young ones, even if they chance to be of pure Bushman descent, have lost the individual characteristics of the race; they are no different from the mixed population of the locations.

(To be continued).

Pretoria Silver Lead Company.

The registration of the Pretoria Silver Lead Company, Ltd., was completed on the 20th inst., and the documents were handed to the company yesterday. The allotment of shares took place immediately, and it is expected that all allotments and cheques will be posted on Thursday next or Friday at the latest.

There are nearly 11,000 separate applications to be dealt with.

Eat Grape=Nuts

No other cereal food equals this blend of wheat and malted barley for nourishment and flavour.

Grape=Nuts

is ready cooked, and every bit is eatable. Its handy form and attractive flavour commend it to all.

Grape-Nuts Needs No Sugar

Sold at stores and grocers'

Meyer, Bridgens & Co., Ltd.,
Exclusive Distributors,
CAPE TOWN & JOHANNESBURG.

Rugby Rules

The English Union's Alterations.

South African Suggestions.

LONDON, Sept. 25.—At a meeting of the Rugby Union last night, several proposed alterations in the rules were approved on. These were: (1) That the game shall be started by a kick-off after a goal or unsuccessful try by the side losing such goal or try. (The rule previously mentioned a goal only.) (2) That the player making a fair catch shall take the kick. (3) That a penalty kick shall be given for not immediately placing the ball in the scrum. (4) That it shall be illegal for a player to charge an opponent at the line-out, on the ball being thrown in from touch. (5) In all cases when a scrum is ordered between the 25 yards lines for a breach occurring within 10 yards of the touch lines, such scrum shall take place at a spot opposite to the place where the breach occurred and 10 yards from the touch-line parallel with the goal line. (This is a new law as regards scrummage.)

The Chairman pointed out that the original proposals suggested by Australasia had been considered by the International Board, some of which had proved desirable and others undesirable. The Board had consulted South Africa, which had accepted three of the proposals, and had suggested others, which were unacceptable in their entirety, but which had been considered by the Board. As a result of this position, the Board made the present proposals.

The Chairman mentioned that there was a strong feeling against the South African suggestion that the charge should be entirely abolished.

Rules in Dominions.

Mr. Rowland Hill made a strong appeal that everything possible should be done to keep the Dominions playing under the same rules as here. Replying to the suggestions that the Dominions should be represented on the International Board, Mr. Hill said that if such an application was received it would be brought before the Board.

The New Zealand representative, who refrained from voting, read a cable from the New Zealand Union to the effect that they were disappointed at the alterations, but would be loyal to England.—Reuter.

The Coal Crisis.

Miners and Triple Alliance.

LONDON, Sept. 25.—As foreshadowed in previous cables, the unwillingness of the transport workers and the railwaymen to

Transvaal Disputes

Wet Weather Losses In Building Trade.

Colliers' Demands.

JOHANNESBURG, Monday.—Some time ago the Witwatersrand building trades Joint Board recommended that the Department of Building and Industry of the South African Industrial Federation should withdraw the threat of a strike on the question of payment for lost time through wet weather, and that the Johannesburg Master Builders' Association and the D.B.I. should consider the payment for lost time through wet weather, such time not to exceed eight hours in any one week, conditional upon workmen not being paid unless work was started for the day and that a man remained on the job and resumed work directly the weather permitted.

The strike threat was withdrawn, but now the Master Builders' Association has written to the Joint Board that it cannot agree to such a demand as that the hourly wages should cover all disabilities.

It is said the D.B.I. are now contemplating a demand for one shilling an hour extra, and other concessions.

Municipal Employees.

Despite the notice issued by the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, stating that no municipal servant must accept the proposed increase of 10 per cent. in wages granted by the Council until the same has been consented to by the joint shop steward or aggregate meetings, it is understood that the municipal employees intend to accept the increase from this month.

It is stated that the tramwaymen are at the bottom of the endeavour to dissuade the employees from accepting, on the ground that they, too, ought to participate.

Withbank Demands.

In public meeting the Witbank colliery employees have rejected, by a majority of two to one, the offer of the Chamber of Mines, in reply to their demands of September 1.

This is the third offer since the agitation began some months ago.

The men demanded: (1) A consolidated pay of £9 10s. 6d. per 48 hours week for all miners, mechanics, and drivers receiving £1 per shift or over; (2) an increase of £2 8s. weekly to all other employees; (3) a minimum rate of 12s. 6d. per shift for unskilled workers; and (4) time and half for overtime.

In its latest reply the Chamber reaffirmed the offer of £9 per week, except to stationary drivers, pointing out that £9 represented a 50 per cent. increase on pre-War rates, without taking into account the reduction in working hours to 48 and an advance of 80 per cent. when the reduced hours were considered. Regarding the

give active support to the coal strike was the deciding factor, according to information about it.

The recent discussions between the miners and their allies have been shrouded in secrecy, but enough is known to show that the miners again sought a conference with the Premier with the knowledge that the railwaymen and transport workers would only give grudging moral support.

Messages from all the coalfields indicate great relief, both among the workmen and in commercial circles.

It is now confidently hoped that the strike notices will be withdrawn next week, because a crisis postponed is generally a crisis averted, and it would be a difficult matter for the miners to get up full steam again in face of public opinion, although reports from South Wales foreshadow trouble from the extremists next week.

The Prime Minister's proposal, which the owners and the miners will examine, mainly concerns the fixing of a certain output figure, called in the Premier's letter the "datum line." It will be taken as a jumping-off point, so that tonnage raised in excess of that figure shall earn correspondingly increased pay.—Reuter.

Continuation Classes.

Proposed Compulsion On Rand.

JOHANNESBURG, Monday.—The Rand Central School Board, at a meeting to-night, passed a motion that continuation classes should be made compulsory up to the age of eighteen years, and that a child should remain at school until he or she had passed the seventh standard, or reached the age of sixteen, the matter of exemption in this respect to be considered by the full Board.—Reuter.

Merchant Convicted.

MARITZBURG, Monday.—The case was concluded at the Criminal Court this afternoon, after several days' hearing, in which Harold Cough, hardware merchant of Church Street, was charged with receiving stolen goods, the property of Topham Bros.

The Magistrate found the accused guilty and sentenced him to pay a fine of £50 or suffer six months' imprisonment with hard labour.—Reuter.

100 Hours' Swing.

Club Performance At Grahamstown.

GRAHAMSTOWN, Monday.—John Robertson on Saturday night successfully concluded his task of swinging Indian clubs for a period of 100 hours at the rate of 100 revolutions per minute.—Reuter.

Degree For Sir F. de Waal

CAPETOWN, Monday.—The Council of the University of South Africa has conferred upon Sir Frederic de Waal, the Cape Administrator, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.—Reuter.

second demand, the Chamber of Mines a 40 per cent. increase on existing minimum rates, to be added to the actual rates of pay, the cost of living allowance being abolished. The third demand was conceded. On the question of overtime, the Chamber, while not advocating systematic overtime, thought that the unions should, like the Natal unions, waive the objection to overtime to make up for truck shortages, and in cases of emergencies.

Mr. Crawford, General Secretary of the Industrial Federation, recommended that £9 per week should be accepted, and saw no objections if overtime were in the interests of other industries, and were to make the best use of the limited rolling stock, and if there were adequate safeguards. He also made suggestions to get an improvement on the offer to lower paid men. Provided these suggestions were given effect to by the Chamber, he would recommend the acceptance of the offer.

The meeting, by a majority, adopted Mr. Crawford's suggestions and they will be placed before the Chamber, but there was a strong minority for the full demands.—Reuter.

Currency Question.

Mr. Buckle Predicts Demand For Silver.

JOHANNESBURG, Monday.—Speaking at the ordinary meeting of the Chamber of Mines to-day Mr. H. O. Buckle said that while it was difficult to prophesy upon such a subject as the gold premium, there seemed to be a general feeling that the downward tendency was likely to continue.

He noticed the other day in the press a proposal to impose a tax on the profits derived from the gold premium. Such a suggestion showed how little the true position was understood. There were no profits derived from the premium. All that it had done was to reduce, somewhat, losses caused by increased costs, which were the direct result of the depreciation of the currency.

Since last quarterly meeting (Mr. Buckle went on to say) the Select Committee on Currency had reported on line familiar from Mr. Strakosch's pamphlet on the subject, and Parliament had passed an Act based upon that report. They might, therefore, expect that gold coins would soon disappear from circulation for a time. In view of the natives' well-known and—in a race not educated up to the use of banking facilities—quite reasonable dislike to paper money, based on its liability to destruction by fire, water and other causes, it was probable that this would give rise to a serious additional demand for silver. It was to be hoped that before the new Act took effect the Government and the banks would make provision to meet this demand.—Reuter.

"Vacation" Strike Off.

WILKESBARRE (Pennsylvania), Sept. 24.—The so-called "vacation" strike in the anthracite coal region has been called off. The miners will resume work on September 26.—Reuter.

They
feking,
wilder-
Delagoa
arques.
return
Septem-
ing at

four others who had volunteered
should be accepted as guarantors.
It was suggested that as no show
was held in 1920 an appeal
made to all subscribers to pay
double subscription this year.

In electing the officials for
ensuing year, the meeting decided
to ask Prince Arthur of

a
t
a

who did not work. Such a race
was bound to go as soon as the
workers arrived. In most parts
of the world they disappeared
before the historic era began. We
are witnesses of the passing away
of the last of the race.

1.

ily see
Jooste
o South
here on
ourenco
en left
rtaking
s with-