

CRONJE, BOER GENERAL, LATTER DAY EXILE OF ST. HELENA

Brave South African Warrior, After Succumbing to Fate, Will Soon Pace the Lonely Rock Made Historic by the Footprints of the "Little Corporal."

CRONJE and a large number of Boers have sailed prisoners for St. Helena, and President Kruger and the lonely island are staring each other in the face over twenty-three hundred miles of intervening land and ocean. The world is wondering when they will meet.

Nearly eighty-five years have gone since another leader of men gazed across the sea toward the same fateful spot, and in all that stretch of time it has changed but little. Empires have been raised up and have fallen down, civilization had advanced with giant strides, the face of society and of the world has been changed, but the people of the lonely island have gone on digging their potatoes and feeding their goats as though there were nothing in the world besides.

The house in which Napoleon wrote out the last years of his life still stands, much as it was in the May days of 1821, when the man who was once master of Europe lay dying behind the drawn blinds, says the New York Herald. The little capital itself has not greatly altered. During the later years, when the way to India still lay around the Cape of Good Hope, the colony prospered and grew in numbers, but with the opening of the Suez canal Jamestown lost its value as a port of call, and has since dwindled. The population is somewhat smaller than in Napoleon's day, and a vast preponderance of the people are of negro blood. Including all races it numbers but 4,115 souls, and in 1894 there were but twenty-one marriages.

In the South Atlantic Ocean there are few islands inhabited by white people which are so desolate and none which is so lonely. The nearest land is seven hundred miles away to the northwest, in the island of Ascension. Britain has four thousand miles distant, and the Boer prisoners must cross two thousand miles of salt sea before reaching its shores.

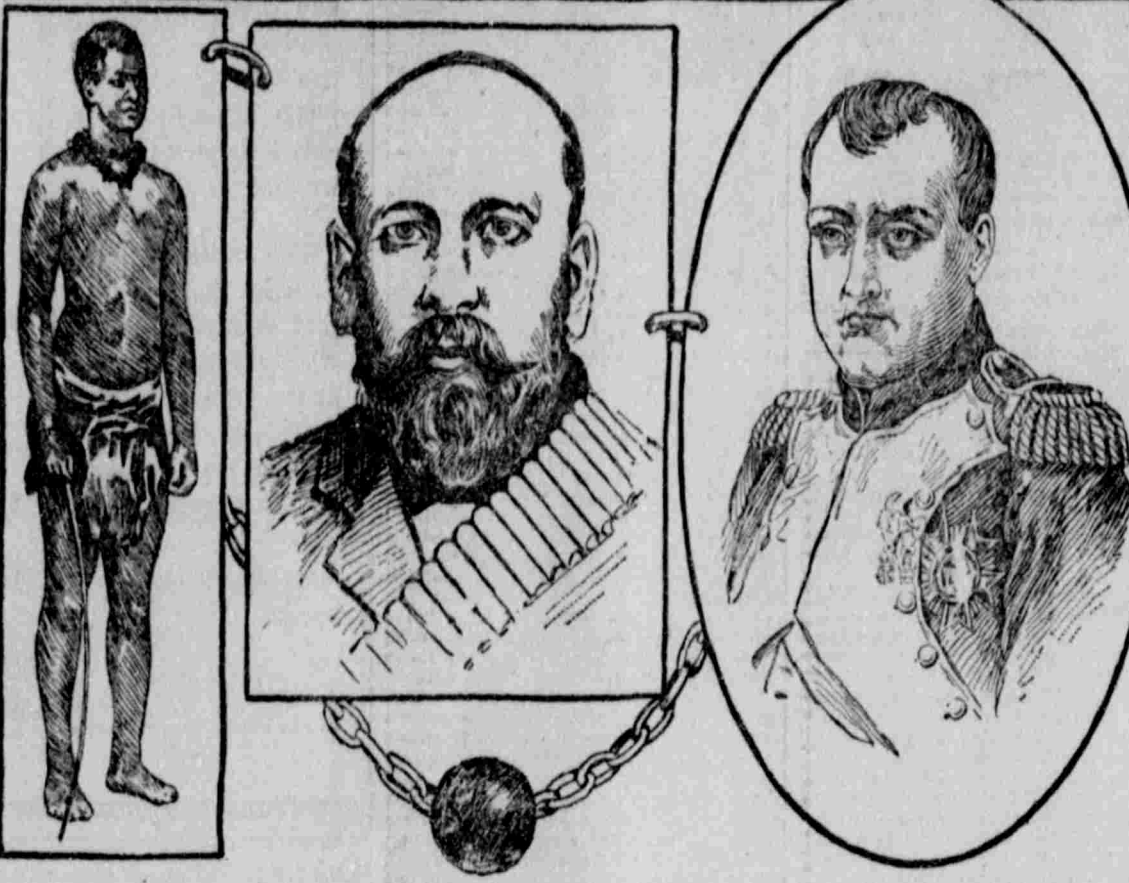
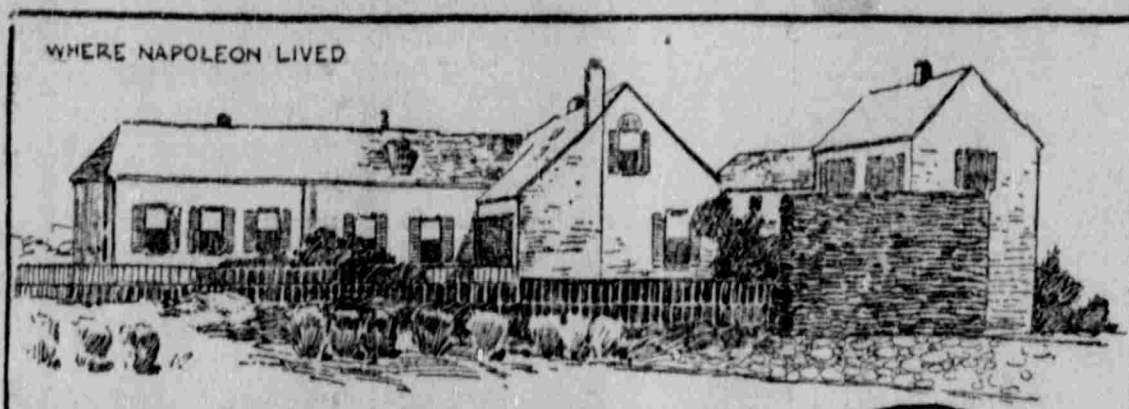
The mass of the prisoners will, of course, not remain in the island after the war has been concluded, but Cronje's stay may be a protracted one, and if Kruger should be exiled he would be likely to end his days there, as Napoleon did.

The French emperor was sent to St. Helena because the British regarded it as the most remote spot in the habitable world, and therefore as the place from which escape would be most difficult. Napoleon had menaced the world's peace by exiling from Elba. His captors wished to be certain that there should be no recurrence of such a danger. But in Kruger's case the same fear will not exist. The British government kept an entire regiment of soldiers encamped within a mile of the emperor's house. The building was surrounded nightly with a cordon of troops. Every goat path leading to the sea was occupied by a sentinel. When the emperor walked abroad a red coat was near by. The sea was patrolled by ships of war, and every incoming vessel was watched lest she might prove a means of escape for the illustrious prisoner. Even the fishing boats were numbered and kept under inspection.

It is not probable, however, that the imprisonment of Kruger would be so rigorous. The danger of escape would not be so great, for fewer and less powerful people would be interested in his freedom, and in case he were able to compass his own flight his power for offense would not be great. It will, in fact, be rather as a matter of convenience than safety that Kruger may be sent to the island made so famous by the life and death there of the "enemy of Europe."

That the emperor's house will ever be given over to the old lion of the Transvaal is scarcely probable. For many years it has been kept vacant in consideration of the sentiment of the French nation. When England and France were more friendly, in the days of the Third Napoleon, the house was given over to the French government, and most of the furniture and ornaments were carried over seas and distributed as relics in many cities. The building itself has ever since remained in charge of a French official, who preserves it in perfect repair. The draperies upon the walls are the same which Napoleon saw there, and in his bedroom is a bust of the emperor crowned with laurel.

That any less exalted captive should ever live there would seem almost a desecration, and should Kruger go to St. Helena it is likely that he will be housed in other quarters. It is not im-



THE PRISON HOME OF THREE FAMOUS EXILES. The news that General Cronje is to be imprisoned on the island of St. Helena, in the south Atlantic, recalls the exile there of Napoleon, the "Little Corporal," and of Dinizulu, the king of the Zulus and son of Cetewayo.

President Kruger May Shortly Follow Cronje, and His Gallant Band of Fighters—How Approach to the Island Was Carefully Guarded During Napoleon's Exile.

possible that Roseberry may be utilized for the purpose. Roseberry is a low, white rambling spot, situated upon the top of a high hill, and surrounded by a grove of the most beautiful trees, and is the most picturesque spot on the island. Until quite recently its tenant was Prince Din, a great black general, who led a Zulu army against the British only to find, as Kruger and Cronje have discovered, that the march of England is difficult and dangerous to obstruct. Din's overthrow was followed by his deportation and that of all his wives to St. Helena, and there he lived in peace and plenty until he died. No fate for such a man could have been more terrible than exile to the quiet, the loneliness, the eternal boredom of such a place as St. Helena.

But with Kruger the conditions will be different. His manner of life has always been simple. He gives up no life of luxury. He has no brilliant court, no intellectual pursuits, no vast power to regret. There will be nothing to make him unhappy but a sense of defeat and a change of home, and even those should not trouble him greatly, for his Dutch phlegm will help him to bear the first, while loneliness is part of the Boer life. Existence on a South African farm, such as has been Kruger's lot during most of his life, could scarcely be a less isolated one than exile in St. Helena. He will have his wife, his family, his servants and horses, his Bible and his trust in God, and between them all he will doubtless pass his declining years in happiness and peace.

Napoleon had none of these, except his servants and horses, and he would not ride the latter because an English

officer always insisted on riding near him. Napoleon, therefore, was unhappy. He abused Longwood because it was very much less comfortable than Malmaison, although any ordinary American citizen would have regarded it as a mansion. He was dissatisfied because he had no more than eleven servants. Having refused to stay on Elba, where he was actually a sovereign in a small way, he was indignant because he was closely enough watched to make an escape impossible. If Kruger goes there he will probably be more phlegmatic.

The island of St. Helena, on which Napoleon lived for five years, and on which Kruger and perhaps Cronje may soon take up their residence, was once a vast cliff, reaching for two thousand feet up into the air, and these are left by precipitous gulfs and narrow, desolate valleys. The island is a jumble of towering mountains and deep abysses, covered with scrubby verdure, which gives a smiling aspect to the country, but little comfort to those who live there.

ISLAND BEAUTIES.

The flowering plants are luxuriant and beautiful, but there is none of the big game which the Afrikaners love. Rabbits, rats and mice are the only mammals. Potatoes form the principal crop, and goats outnumber all other domestic animals.

The island is ten miles long and eight miles wide. The climate is damp. In the prosperous days of the East India trade nearly one thousand ships called there annually, and now less than two hundred go there in the year. In twenty years the population has decreased by about one thousand persons and about two hundred people are leaving every year for the United States and the Cape. There are four Anglican, one Catholic and three Baptist churches.

The schools of St. Helena number twelve, with 750 pupils. The island's wealth is estimated at \$100,000, all told, and the savings bank deposits in 1896 were \$80,000.

It is probable that the prisoners will be encamped about a mile from Napoleon's old home, at the spot occupied by the Fifty-third regiment, which kept ward over the imprisoned emperor.

HOW I MET PAUL KRUGER.

Poultney Bigelow's Recollections and Impressions of the Transvaal President.

The manner of my getting access to President Kruger was of itself an epitome of Krugerism. In that year, 1896, the Transvaal spent about £200,000 in secret service, and part of it went to pay the man who stole my dispatch case. I had, says Poultney Bigelow in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, come from Cape Town armed with the strongest possible letters of introduction to the political leaders in Pretoria, and had no other object than recording truthfully my impressions. At Bloemfontein this dispatch case was stolen from me, under circumstances which left no doubt in the minds of the chiefs of police in the Free State and Natal that the theft had been made for strictly political reasons. It was rather awkward for me, because in the same bag were all my manuscript, my letters of introduction, and my letter of credit. Advertising in every paper of South Africa did no good. After my visit to Pretoria, and while I was living at Pietermaritzburg, as guest of Col. Dartnell, the chief of the mounted police, this identical dispatch case was one night deposited at police headquarters by a messenger who could give no account of himself, and did not even wait for a reward. I looked carefully through my treasures; not a thing was missing. And yet there are people who insist that the Boers are corrupt!

When I reached Pretoria, therefore, I was without letters, and I should have been without money had not a good friend kindly lent me some. I had written ahead, however, to Dr. Leyds, detailing my purpose in visiting the Transvaal, and invoking his assistance. With this letter I inclosed one of introduction.

But the state secretary was evidently suspicious. On the morning after my arrival in Pretoria there came to my hotel a young Hollander, whose card was decorated with a coronet, and who told me that he was a secretary of Dr. Leyds' came to express that gentleman's regrets that he would not be able to receive me—that he was not in good health—that he was too busy—there were lots of other good reasons, but I have forgotten them. So I was inclined to be discouraged—for not only was I minus my precious dispatch case, but, apparently, the state secretary had determined that I should not see President Kruger, nor anything else worth mentioning at the Boer capital. I began to feel as I did on a certain day in St. Petersburg when the police informed me that it would not be well for my health if I undertook a canoe cruise through the Caspian.

But just then along came a splendid Boer friend, Mr. Jooste, of the Volksraad. We had been fellow-passengers to the Cape, for he is one of the Transvaalers who have traveled and studied politics at first hand. He took me without further ceremony to the house of President Kruger.

By the way, I notice that most of the learned editors insist upon placing two dots over the "u" in Kruger. That is not right—at least, if the president is an authority on the subject. He wrote his name for me—with some difficulty, I admit—and it had no dots over the "u." This signature I subsequently compared with several at the Government House at Natal, and there were no dots over the "u" there. Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson, the governor, was distinctly of the opinion that Kruger did not use the dots. Consequently it is correct to pronounce the "u" as in "true." When we reached his residence I was struck by the evidences of military protection at hand. He had a trooper pacing at his gate, and across the road, in a vacant lot, was an encampment for the relief of this guard. There was nothing of the sort at Bloemfontein, and many Pretoria Boers disapproved of this feature, saying that it was only a dodge of Dr. Leyds to make the coun-

try Boers believe that Oom Paul's life was in danger from the Johannesburg conspirators. Mr. Jooste had fought under Cronje against Jameson at Krugersdorp. He was a broad-minded burgher, who sympathized, to some extent, with the attitude of the Johannesburgers in their desire for more liberal government, and personally did his share in the popular assembly to bring about a better state of things. He was not a blind partisan of Kruger, though, of course, he resented both the presumption of those who thought Afrikaners should be governed from London only.

After passing the sentry we knocked at the front door of the Kruger mansion—which mansion, by the way, was of about the size and appearance of a farm outbuilding. No answer! We knocked a second time, and louder. There was no answer! My friend pushed the door open, and we stood in a hall which traversed the whole house, and led to a big yard beyond. We knocked again. No answer!

We went out into the yard and shouted—no answer! A negro girl poked her head out of a side building, but withdrew it suddenly on seeing us. Evidently Mrs. Kruger disliked bells and parlor maids.

Then I said to Jooste that I presumed the family were not at home; but Jooste scouted the idea. Just then I heard, in one of the neighboring apartments, a sound which suggested the lion's cage at the menagerie about the time when food is expected. There was a heavy growling, as of surf beating up into caves on the seashore. We approached the door, and knocked—no answer as well have knocked at a pilot house in the teeth of a hurricane. The rumbling within rose and fell, but obviously our presence was not noted; so Mr. Jooste pushed open that door, as I had the previous one, and we entered into a cloud of smoke so thick that it reminded me of an engine room when the steam has been leaking. For a while I saw nothing, though the quality of the vapor assured me that I was in the midst of a club of smokers. There was no doubt about that. Jooste took me by the hand, and steered me around the corners of the apartment until we stopped by the side of an armchair, in which there sat, with a pipe between his teeth, a grand old boar-faced fellow—a sort of apostle cowboy—that was Paul Kruger. We sat in state as the master of this roomful of long-haired burghers, belching forth guttural phrases which sounded blasphemous to my ears—but to those of the others it was simply every-day Low Dutch. I was reminded of that famous Potsdam Tobacco Club, in which the Corporal "King" of Prussia made life odious to Frederick the Great. I had seen scenes roughly analogous among the red-shirted miners of California, and to a certain extent among the priests in Russian monasteries. But nothing in my fancy exceeded the reality of this scene—the primitive simplicity, the early Christian earnestness of it, the rude yet venerable aspect of this cattle-herding congregation. The grand old Boer seemed like some latter-day Moses just down from the mountain with the law in his hands, and in a mood to smash the Ten Commandments over the head of any one who failed to agree with him. It was worth 10,000 miles of travel to have lived these moments in the company of Paul Kruger and his household.

When Paul Kruger caught sight of us, and Jooste whispered something in his ear, he looked at me with bovine politeness, while the fifty apostles did the same. Then he grunted, and fifty echoes made one more grunt. I learned afterward that these fifty burghers were not here as an official council of state; or the contrary, they were Oom Paul's friends who had merely dropped in for a chat over a pipe and a bowl of coffee.

It is but fair to Mr. Kruger to admit that he succeeded in making me feel thoroughly uncomfortable. His fixed, stolid, inscrutable and ambiguously benevolent gaze rested upon me with suffocating force. His fifty apostles backed this gaze with equally oppressive eyes, all turned upon the intruder from far away, who tried meanwhile to make believe that this sort of reception was quite customary in his part of the world. There was, however, nothing in the least malevolent in these

fifty-one stares; it was morbid fancy only which made it seem that blank staring fell short of the real thing in this case. I was globose as well as the customs of the place demanded. I was at the Boer court, and was experiencing etiquette à la Kruger.

Yet now I recall that ordeal with something of a shudder. I have met a great many kings in my day—black kings, white kings and yellow ones. Monarchs of many kinds have I bowed to—millionaires, political bosses, war lords and other mighty mortals. But I confess cheerfully that no king, kaiser or congressman ever made me feel so completely the nothingness of my worthless self as did old Paul Kruger over his pipe and bowl, amidst his fifty cowboy cronies. He commanded my dread and admiration; he almost made me respect the cause he represented.

The venerable cattle king gazed at me for so long that the silence became painful. I heard nothing but the sucking at pipe stems and the occasional thud of a heavy moist globe on the floor. When the president perceived that I had entered the room with the determination not to say the first word he opened conversation by a grunt as of a bull in distress, and a few words that might have been intended to place me at my ease, or might have been meant as a curse. The badinage of the fore-castle is not that of the salon, and I have heard men in the far West embrace in the most affectionate manner while poisoning each other with blasphemous expletives. The point of view has much to do with the relative force of greetings. Thus Paul Kruger can overwhelm a visitor with what we should regard as rudeness, yet on the day following show by his actions that his heart was only good will. Perhaps it was only experience with men before the mast and on cattle ranges that made me feel my way into the inner lining of Paul Kruger's feelings; where many an average traveler would have been repelled by the rougher outer skin. The rudeness of the president I parried with an equally clumsy joke, which raised a laugh among the fifty patri-archs, and from that time on I found my way in Pretoria a one of comparative social delight.

When Dr. Leyds learnt that I had seen the president he promptly recovered from his severe illness, and for the rest of my visit showed every sign of being a man of many an interesting anecdote about Kruger, and Kruger, in turn, spun many a yarn about his early days.

We are apt to think pious people necessarily hypocrites, and I found that English at the Cape speak contemptuously of Oom Paul as a theological humbug. He did not make that impression on me at all. On the contrary, I believe that his great influence among those who know him lies not merely in that he belongs to a particular branch of the Protestant church, but that he is thoroughly honest in his practices. Of course, rumors are rife that he is corrupt, that he has put away vast sums, that his religion is merely a cloak for wickedness. That may all be true; but I, for one, have no evidence to support that view, and I find that such stories emanate usually from a class of people whose only aim is to rely mainly upon money for their influence. I do not believe Kruger is corrupt—I prefer to be an optimist.

On Sunday morning I saw the president, quite alone, walking toward a very shabby church near his home. He wore a black cylinder on his head. It was that kind of hat which appears with us mainly on the negro minstrel stage. His frock coat had the hinder buttons near the middle of his back, and the bottom of his trousers were considerably above his ankles. The whole outfit suggested a caricature of the "stage" farmer paying his first visit to the metropolis. But that, after all, was a mere detail. Lincoln also was that kind of fellow, and I, myself, whom we love dearly for his very eccentricities of dress and feature. The Transvaal President, on this occasion, carried a hymn book of portentous size in one hand, and in the other a red bandana handkerchief. Out-

of curiosity I entered the same church, anticipating, of course, that I should find it crowded, from the mere fact that the president was there. I was judged by what one would have looked for in Washington—or London. The little Pretoria church could not have held more than 100 or so, yet I counted but twenty-four in the congregation, and of these the majority were mothers with babes in their arms. The president took his seat in an arm-chair which had been specially provided for him beneath the pulpit—this was the only distinction he enjoyed over the rest of his fellow-worshippers. To be sure, it was a good distinction, but no American President, not even Washington, has played so peculiar a part as Kruger.

The service was very simple—about the sort of thing I should have found in most Methodist or Congregational meeting houses in an American village. There was a long prayer, a long sermon, a hymn or two, a chapter from the Book of Books, and a benediction. The babies did what babies are apt to do when they tire of one position, or think it is meal time; but baby voices ruffled neither Paul Kruger, the parson, nor any one else. There appeared nothing unnatural in babies receiving nourishment in church as well as anywhere else. The president sang the good old hymns in a voice like distant thunder, and paid close attention to the sermon. The surroundings of this poor little church were pathetically meager or tawdry, yet I can recall no more impressive service in Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's.

The president told me a story to illustrate his wisdom as a youngster. Of course, we know that his childhood and youth were spent mainly in cattle wagons, and that he did not get an opportunity for being baptized until he was 16. But, in spite of all these educational handicaps, the Boers who led this exy life for so many years managed to hold fast to the Bible, and give the youngsters a wholesome dose of good, old-fashioned Calvinistic doctrine. But Kruger was rated as a very big man, a big man, of course, by the standards of the "Dapper Church." He told me that he was not merely the best wrestler, the best rider and the best shot of his time, but was also noted for playing all sorts of pranks, and for shaking the good people of his community. I suppose he was a bit of a "Tom Sawyer" in his way.

The first church for the new town was about ready to be forgotten the name—perhaps it was Rietburg. At any rate, young Kruger, along with the rest of the people of that community, had worked upon the sacred edifice, and the time came for some solemn function connected with the dedication. On that particular day, when all the people, in solemn garb and mien, had assembled to do honor to the occasion, there was a psychological moment when all gazed up to the roof and saw a youngster standing on his head, clacking his heels together. That youngster was Paul Kruger.

What happened after that has not yet become accessible to the historian. I heard that influences were subsequently brought to bear upon him which produced a change of heart, to say nothing of a new skin. His father appealed to him in various ways—first at one end, then at the other. Which prevailed I know not.

Some years after this young Kruger became subject to melancholia, and retired to the wilderness without letting any one, not even his wife, know of his whereabouts. He was several days absent, and then his neighbors went in search. They were guided to him by hearing the chanting of hymns in the distance—and from my experience of that voice they must have heard him a day's journey off. Poor Kruger had been fasting, and was so emaciated that he had to be held on horseback as they brought him home.

That was in 1857, when 32 years of age. From that time on Kruger was a changed man—a devout Christian according to his lights.

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