"Landdrost," said he, "does Mr. van Diggelen mean that you stole the calf?"

For a moment the Landdrost was thoughtful, but his great vanity would not let him see beyond the compliment to his strength to which he had been used.

"Nay," said he; "Mr. van Diggelen means that I am the only man who could do it."

"Very well," answered the Public Prosecutor, "if you are satisfied so am I; but strength does not always go with a great, fine body like yours. Even this small thing may have strong arms, for is he not an Englander, and all *Rooineks* are taught to use their arms that they may knock down policemen and other respectable people? This man is a *Rooinek* and has very strong arms."

"It may be," said Nick; "but he is short and could not reach up to the wall."

"*Vrachter*, Landdrost, you are right," said Van Diggelen; "he is short, like the Public Prosecutor."

This was a very cunning hit, for the Prosecutor was a small man and was always angry when people said so. His *vrouw* was very big and was his master, and people made fun of him for it. He replied very shortly:

"I am taller than you, anyhow."

"I am sure you are not," said Van Diggelen; "what say you, Landdrost?"

"Ja, you are not so big as my Public Prosecutor," answered Nick.

This Van Diggelen would not agree to, for he had a sharp tongue, and was not afraid of anybody. So a long wrangle began.

"It is time to adjourn; let us go to the Police Office next door and be measured," said he; "and the Landdrost shall be judge."

The Public Prosecutor was afraid of the test, and objected because it was not usual.

"I knew he would be afraid," said Van Diggelen, very sneeringly, which made the Public Prosecutor very angry. He replied he was not afraid of Van Diggelen or anyone else, and moved out of court, saying:

"Come on, Goliath," and all the court went into the Police Office.

When the measuring was over, the Landdrost gave the verdict for his Prosecutor, although Van Diggelen was quite half-an-inch the bigger. A great quarrel began, which Nick stopped by ordering them back into court.

"Where is the prisoner?" asked Nick, when he had taken his seat. And all saw that the man had slipped away unseen during the discussion.

"Ja; where is your man, Van Diggelen?" asked the Prosecutor.

"He is not my man, but yours," answered Van Diggelen; "I did not bring him here, but you. I expect he has gone out to be measured."

All in court laughed very loud, especially the policeman, whom the Prosecutor angrily asked should be committed for contempt of court for letting the prisoner go.

This was done, but they had to let him out to search for the runaway, who never came back to learn which was the taller.

Nick Grobler was always pleased to sneer at the ignorance of Piet Prinsloo in the matter of writing, yet, though he could write much better than Piet, he was several times made to look very foolish over the very thing that made him vain and malicious.

There was once a case in which he had given his usual foolish judgment with a wink, as we say, and the man who lost carried it to appeal in Pretoria. When the judges came to read the evidence taken down by Nick, they could not make anything of it, for the writing that Nick was so proud of was not so plain as if written by a *slim* Kaffir. The judges were very angry, and said things about Nick that made the country laugh when they got into the papers, though

the Chief Justice did also sensibly say that it would be better if the Government would appoint a writing-master to instruct Landdrosts. The sting, however, was in the judgment. Said the Chief Justice:

"This is an appeal from a judgment of the Landdrost of Schoonspruit. In the ordinary course we should dismiss the appeal on the ground that the evidence is not before us, but in view of the fact that we have never had a case from that court which we have not found necessary to reverse, our inability to read the notes of the Landdrost is of no importance, and we have no hesitation in upholding this appeal."

This made Nick look very foolish, for he hated to be laughed at. But he was even more ridiculed over the case of Jan Meyer.

The story told is this:

Nick had been promised £50 by Jan if he gave judgment in his favour. To make sure that the judgment should be a sound one, and not reversed on appeal, Jan's attorney wrote it out beforehand, telling Nick that he must copy it out in his own handwriting to make it look real. Nick sat up very late the night before the trial and copied out the judgment he was to give. Next day he heard the case and made as if he were taking large notes of what was said, but he was all

the time thinking that he ought to have had more than £50, for the judgment was a very large one.

The moment the attorney for the defendant sat down, Nick opened his desk and took out the judgment in the sight of all the court, and began to read it. Everybody looked very surprised, and Jan's attorney turned red and swore, but said nothing else. Neither did the other attorney till he heard judgment given against him, when he lost his temper, and said: "Landdrost, I protest. That judgment is not your own," meaning that it had been written for him.

On this Nick got red in the face. "You are a great liar, Beyers," said he, "and you have no respect for the court."

Beyers was bold and cared nothing for the dignity of the court of justice, like Nick did.

"Landdrost," said he, "you could not write that judgment, you have been too busy," meaning that Nick had been taking down the evidence all the time.

This made Nick very wrathful, for in his blind vanity he thought Beyers meant that he could not write.

"Look for yourself," said he, throwing the judgment at Beyers, "and never tell me again I cannot write. That took me till four this morning, while you were playing cards."

"I thought so," said Beyers, and gave notice of appeal, which he, of course, won.

The laughter of the world made Nick very sore, but what hurt him most was that Jan refused to pay him the £50 he had promised, which was why Nick never again gave judgment to oblige his friends without being paid in advance.

There was another case whereby Nick Grobler showed his malicious enmity against my father-in-law. I have told how Piet Prinsloo, all through his life was embittered against paper money, for he could never forget how his father was robbed by Treasury Bills. On the top of this came the very serious matter that he could never read writing well, and was so often made to suffer by those who could, that he was afraid of strange paper, though he lived to see that writing, when properly used, may be made very convenient. For this reason he had all his children taught to write, even the girls. I myself quite agree that much harm has been done to the Boers by reading and writing, and Piet Prinsloo and many others of the *voortrekkers* have good reason for opposing it as a dangerous thing. Still, I have not the objection against it they have, for I have received a very superior education, otherwise I could never have risen to the position of Public Prosecutor and been complimented on the

fewness of my errors in spelling, as I was by the State Attorney.

Not being a great penman himself, Piet pretended to set small store on writing, and when cases of forgery and other writing frauds came before him he would say rather unwise things, such as—"It is not the prisoner who should be here, but the man who taught him to write," remarks that got Piet laughed at in the papers. Yet, for all this, he secretly knew that the man who could write well had most chances of making money, particularly if he were an official. If, as was the case before Piet could trust me, a Landdrost has to carry his letters to be read by others, he often lets out secrets which would be best kept. Often, after giving a judgment in a case, Piet would receive a letter something like this:

"DEAR LANDDROST,—I thank you very much for giving judgment in favour of me, but I think your price is too high, and I want to know if you will return £10 of the £20 I gave you."

Now, when a Landdrost receives letters like this, which he has to get the Predikant to read, it makes him look foolish, for it is hard to convince Predikants that members of their church are honest. These letters used to be written by Nick Grobler, I am certain, for the stamp was always put on carelessly, after his manner of doing all his

business, except what was bad. These letters cost my father-in-law a lot of money, for he was obliged to give those who read them for him a good sum to hold their tongues. Even then the *Critic* learned all about them; but I advised Piet to take no notice, which advice he wisely acted upon.

But the thing that made Piet most anxious to learn to read writing, and which had that effect, was a misfortune that happened before he had been Landdrost two months. He had to try a case wherein one Uitlander sued another for money lent on a promissory note, which was a kind of writing that Piet did not then well understand. While the evidence was being given, Piet paid very little attention (as he often did when only Uitlanders were concerned), and was tearing up paper into very small pieces, which was his habit, being much like a woman and setting no value on papers.

Presently the advocate asked for the note to show to a witness. Piet never thought of the tearing up, but made the Kaffir Jim and the attorney hunt for the lost paper, till one of them found a piece of it torn small.

"What matters it," said Piet, "it was but a dirty piece of paper."

"But it was my case," answered one attorney.

"Then a dirty case you had," said Piet.

"I cannot go on without it," continued the attorney.

"So much the better," was Piet's reply, "for such pieces of paper are the root of all evil," and he gave judgment for the other side because that attorney had made no trouble about the destruction of the note.

There was the usual appeal, but before it could be heard Nick got hold of the man who had lost the case and told him to sue my father-in-law for the note he had destroyed. Although it was unjust, I could see that if it came before the judges Piet would perhaps lose his place, so I showed him it would be better to pay £100, which he did, and the appeal was withdrawn.

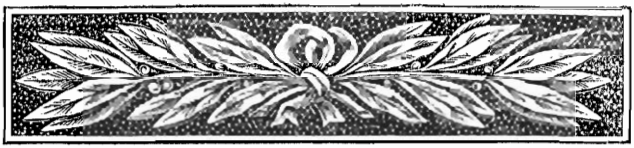
People who do evil often forget that they will certainly be punished, and quickly, as was the case with Nick Grobler. He made Piet lose £100 and get laughed at, but my father-in-law brought judgment upon his head very shortly. It came about that a fine Government residence at Schoonspruit was to be sold. Piet learned that Nick had made a plan to buy it for himself very cheaply, after the manner of those who know how to do these things. The sale was advertised in the *Staats Courant*, which mattered little, as few see the Government paper, but most people see

the notice that the law says must be pasted on the place to be sold for eight days. Therefore Nick had this pulled down as soon as put up, and all would have gone well for Nick, who could have bought the place for next to nothing in the absence of bidders.

But Piet Prinsloo would not allow this great wrong. He put advertisements in all the Rand papers in English and Dutch, praising the property very much. When the day of the sale came there was a crowd of buyers, and Nick was far outbid. But the sting of the punishment lay in this: Piet had sent the advertisements on Government letter paper, and when it was found that the Government had not authorised the advertisements, Nick had to pay for them, as he dared not quarrel with the newspaper people, who knew even more about him than did my father-in-law.

But the greatest visitation received by Nick at the hands of Piet was in the matter of his son, young Klaas Grobler, who was in the telegraph office at Schoonspruit. Though he could hardly send messages properly, he always knew when any business was going on that his pa could snatch away from the rightful people. Piet laid a very clever trap to catch both the wicked son and his yet more wicked father. He telegraphed

in the name of a mine manager at Johannesburg to a labour agent at Schoonspruit, giving him an order to take 500 Kaffirs to the mine at £2 premium apiece. Piet rightly thought that Nick would not resist the chance to make £1,000 so easily, which came true. Young Klaas somehow stopped the telegram, and took it to his father, who made a long journey into the Magaliesburg, and, with trouble and expense, collected the 500 boys, and sent them into the mine, only to learn that they were not wanted, and that no wire had been sent. Piet was almost satisfied with this vengeance, and Nick lay quiet for a long time, and did no harm to my father-in-law, who, however, sent an anonymous complaint to the Chief of Telegraphs, which ended in young Klaas being sent away to an office where he had small chance of making money, although he was raised from junior clerk to second in command.



CHAPTER V.

For Principle and Patriotism.

Although my father-in-law always triumphed over the imaginations of the wicked, yet he began to grow very sick of the many cruel attacks upon him in the Uitlander Press. There was hardly a month that he was not wickedly held up to ridicule, so that, when he went to Pretoria, the President himself would laugh and say: "You are a nice *kerel*, Piet; you make all my Landdrosts jealous. You get all the notice."

Then, again, the office did not make Katrina so great a *vrouw* as she had hoped, for Vrededorp was in a proclaimed goldfield where the Mining Commissioner is the chief man and makes most money. Piet had made very little, for he had so often been suspected of taking bribes that people in whose favour he had given judgment were afraid to make him even the smallest present,

for somehow the papers always got hold of it, or, at least, enough of the story to make Piet angry. So for a long time he wished that he were no longer Landdrost, and his desire went back to be Field Cornet, but not in a place like Vrededorp, where there was a newspaper like the *Patriot*, but a long way up North, where no one would trouble him if he made a mistake, for he was so kind-hearted and ready to help people who asked him, that he often got himself into the papers from this cause alone. If ever he could help anyone who was not a Hollander, a *Rooinek*, or a Jew, he would always show the charitable side of his nature, even if he got no payment for his great kindness. And this, in the end, caused him to lose his Landdrostship at Vrededorp. It was over Dr. Coetzee and the floggings at the Vrededorp Jail. It happened like this:

When the young doctor was appointed as District Surgeon he was not married, so that his income was sufficient. But, being very foolish, he married a *Rooinek* girl, who, being born in England, had wasteful tastes, and was a very bad wife, making her husband take her to Johannesburg to the theatre and other gay, disturbing places. When in England, Dr. Coetzee had learned to play at cards and billiards, and to drink whisky, so that he neglected his patients

till he had none, and all his income was from sickness at the jail, and post-mortems, which were not numerous. One day the doctor was arrested for debt, and his wife came crying to Piet to help him. She wished Piet to pay the money, and talk to her husband, making him promise to leave billiards and whisky.

"Nay," said Piet, "he will not do that, for he is young, and has been poisoned by *Rooineks* with love of these things. He must earn more money."

"But how?" asked Mrs. Coetzee. "The Government has twice refused to make his pay bigger."

"It is very easy," said Piet. "You know that he gets a guinea every time he examines a Kaffir who is to be lashed. I shall in future flog all Kaffirs who cannot pay fines, instead of sending them to *tronk*, and your husband will, perhaps, earn £100 a month, for we flogged over that number last month. But he must give me something out of that fee."

Mrs. Coetzee was very thankful, and told Piet he was a man with a soft heart, which pleased him, so that he lent her the money to pay the debt, taking an I.O.U.—very much against his will, through his distrust of paper money. It would have been well if he had never overcome his prejudice in this matter, for that I.O.U. led to great trouble and misunderstanding.

When Mrs. Coetzee got home she found that a friend had paid the debt. Being a *Rooinek* and greedy, she said nothing about the money she had got from the Landdrost, but spent it on herself, which did not come out till many months afterwards, when Piet quarrelled with the Doctor for not paying his share of the flogging fees, and demanded payment of the I.O.U. The *Critic* got hold of the story and threw out wicked hints that made Piet unhappy with Katrina and caused Dr. Coetzee to send his wife away. But this did not happen for a long time after Piet had been kind to Mrs. Coetzee. He kept his promise, and sentenced so many Kaffirs to the lash that the papers said Piet was "brutal and inhuman," when all the time it was only out of pure kindness for Mrs. Coetzee. One day the Doctor came and said:

"Landdrost, I have been thinking that the Government will kick when I send in my bill for the lashings. I have bethought a plan which will make us both right. I will send in a complaint to you that the prison is too small and unhealthy, and advise you to flog Kaffirs rather than imprison them, as the cost of feeding and doctoring them will be greater than the fee for flogging."

"That is good," said Piet, and it was done, so

that when the Government, as was expected, wanted to know why the District Surgeon's bill had suddenly jumped up so high, Piet sent in a copy of the Doctor's letter with one of his own, advising that a new jail be built, and fixing the cost at a sum so large that he knew the Government would do nothing. And it all came as Dr. Coetzee said it would; and all would have gone happily, but the Doctor grew greedy and would not give the Landdrost a share of his fees, so trouble came, as I have told.

The end of this story shows how foolish it is for men who live in glass houses to throw stones. Dr. Coetzee went to the *Patriot* and told them that Landdrost Prinsloo wanted a share of the fees of the District Surgeon, and the editor put in a small paragraph that anybody could see was meant for Piet, who foolishly retorted by sending to *De Burger* a letter asking how much the District Surgeon of Vrededorp made by taking bribes from Kaffir women to certify that their husbands were not fit for the lash, which charge was true, except that Dr. Coetzee did not let them off all the lashes, or he would have got no fee for the examination. All this got into the papers, and for once the Government wanted to know what truth there was in it, which made Piet very angry, particularly that the Government

should listen to what an English editor had said. This made him let his loose tongue slip, and when next he had a case for lashing a Kaffir he said that as the Government was so foolish, he would send the Kaffir to jail for three months, so that, being very sick, he would have to be doctored at Government expense, and give nothing back in return. Then Piet went on to say:

"I have seen in an English paper a scandalous thing about myself, a thing so wicked and untrue that only an Englander or Hollander could say it. I shall not deny it, for it is not worth a moment's notice from an honest man. This shows the great mistake the President makes in letting these Uitlanders print papers, for they tell nothing but lies about us. I shall go to Pretoria and see the President, and ask him to allow no more papers, for they are enemies of the State, and have brought us only trouble and wickedness. They are the scabby sheep in the *kraal*, and will give the disease to us who are clean and honest. They will make our children like to themselves, for through calling us ignorant, and unfit to govern, our children begin to believe it true, for they are poisoned with the ways of the Uitlander and despise us who fought and bled for the country and shot down the *Rooibaatjes* at Majuba and at Bronkhorst Spruit

The *Rooineks* buy our farms and make great riches, but give us no share of the wealth they make. They are a useless, foolish nation these Uitlanders, who can only travel in a railway carriage or an American spider, and drink whisky all the time. Their *vrouws* are very feeble things that cannot do anything for their men but spend money, and make our young men wish to marry them, which they have not courage to do, knowing the silly way the Uitlander women have to be sought and have money wasted upon them before they are married, so that their husbands may leave them very much alone after they have made wives of them. And when they have got wives, these Uitlanders do not know how to use them any more than they know how to treat a Kaffir. He never consults her in his business, and having made himself no man to her before marriage he is no man afterwards, for he lets her be his master all the time. None of these Uitlanders read the Bible, because they have these scandal sheets in which they pay men to write foul and wicked things against one another and against *oprecht* burghers. Why does not Oom Paul *commandeer* them to fight Kaffirs, which they cannot do, and would all be killed as a just punishment for their many wickednesses? They cannot fight; but they lie, telling us of the

thousands of soldiers they have in England, which is only a small state, where they have farms of fifty morgen, instead of three thousand, as we have. The land is not big enough to hold one quarter of the soldiers they say they have. But all *Rooineks* are liars. Do they not lie when they come into court, so that I never believe an Uitlander, and always give judgment against him? I once read in an English book that there were 30,000 Englanders in prison. We have not five hundred in all the *tronks* in South Africa. They have to keep hundreds of judges to punish criminals, but we have but five in all the State."

There was a great deal more which was not taken down, which was perhaps as well, for the speech made a great stir in the country, being printed in nearly all the papers, the patriotic editors putting it in because they were pleased, the enemies of the State printing it only to do Piet an injury. The part they made the worst of was that wherein Piet said that he never believed Uitlanders who came to his court. It was not wise for him to speak out so truthfully, for it made him a marked man, and when the litigants appealed from even his just judgments, the judges gave it against Piet, for they said he was, on his own admission, prejudiced against Uitlanders—which was true. The worst of it all was that whenever a foolish thing was said

by a Boer Landdrost, the English papers always put it on to Piet, whether it was true or not. Piet wanted to deny that he had made the speech, but he could not well do that, because he had read over the copy made by the young man who took it in shorthand, and had signed it. Besides, he let such a long time go before he took notice, that it was not easy to disprove it, as we could not find the young man, whom Piet might have talked to, and shown how harmful it was for a Landdrost to be so criticised.

When Piet went to Pretoria the President called him a great fool, and said he was his stupidest Landdrost, for he was always getting the State into the papers.

Piet replied with anger, and soon afterwards he resigned his position as Landdrost of Vrededorp, for he was not the man to be treated like a child; besides, he was tired of the office, and saw that he might make more money as a Field Cornet and go into trade.

There are those who maliciously say that the true reason for the outgoing of Piet Prinsloo was that he had taken bribes. This is a great and wicked untruth, for though he was asked about it by the Executive, he denied it. The true reason was that he refused to marry a Boer girl to an Uitlander. Piet had very

strong thoughts on this subject, and never would encourage the daughters of the soil to take husbands from among the strange peoples who overrun the Transvaal. If a Boer wished to marry a *Rooinek* girl it was not so bad, for she became half a Boer by so doing; but it was not so when the *Rooinek* wanted a wife from among us. Piet always warned such couples of the great wrong they were doing to their country. But young *kerels* and girls who want to marry do not think of patriotism, and this made Piet very angry. He talked to them so sternly that he grew unpopular as a marrying Landdrost, and in one case the judges ordered him to marry a Boer girl to a *Rooinek*, which he did, but he said he would never do so again, and his resolve came true, for Piet cared nothing for the paltry fees when patriotism was involved. There is, however, yet greater reason for Piet's action, for the Bible tells us that we must not take wives from among strangers, and not even the President can set aside that law.

There is one great and good thing to the favour of the Transvaal Government: it never deserts its friends or allows them to be hunted to the death by their enemies if they are true sons of the soil. When a public servant is unjustly attacked, as was my father-in-law, the Government refuses

to pay any heed to the wishes of those who would ruin him, and if there are reasons why he should give up the post in which he has gained unpopularity, the Government will always give him another equally as good, so that his enemies shall not triumph over him nor he be tempted to turn round and show ingratitude to the State as has been done by greedy and unpatriotic officials. In the case of Piet Prinsloo the Government stood his friend, although the papers abused him with wicked charges that were untrue or, at least, could be explained away; but Piet was too proud to reply to his accusers. He waited some months till the outcry had quieted down and then went to Pretoria to arrange for a Field Cornetcy.

Katrina was at first much against him, for she said a Landdrost was higher than a Field Cornet. But Piet soon brought her to his way of thinking when he showed her that a Field Cornet could make even more money than a Landdrost, without having the papers watching all he did and printing it. But it was agreed between them that Piet should take no office unless it were on a proclaimed goldfield, for it was useless to go where people were poor, and the Uitlanders, no doubt, are richer and better able to pay than Boers. It was a long time before a vacancy came that Piet cared to fill—nearly two years; but at

the end of that time he was made Field Cornet and Collector of Customs for the Kaalkop District, which, though not a proclaimed goldfield, was a place after his own heart, for there the Field Cornet was an even greater and more-to-be-considered man, because he had also the Customs, which all men try to evade.

CHAPTER VI.

FIELD CORNET AND STOREKEEPER.

IN the time that Piet was waiting for his appointment there was little money coming in, so he resolved to go into a wayside store, though not in his own name, for he might any day be made an official, and if, as he hoped, he was made Customs Collector as well as Field Cornet, the law would not allow him to be a storekeeper also. The way he contrived it was this:

Ever since the first days when he came to the Transvaal Piet had seen that all traders who made money and kept stores were Jews, and whenever he had been *verneuked* it was mostly by such people. So he fixed it in his mind that if ever he traded or had a store, he would have a Jew for a partner, for, said he:

"It is not right that a man who stands well in the *Kerk* should do so much villainy as must be performed by those who would make money in a store."

It happened that one day, before Piet had been made Field Cornet, a young Jewish *smoucher* broke his leg by falling down a shaft on Piet's place, and had to lie up at the farm for many weeks till the limb was well. Before this happened Piet one day opened, by mistake, a letter belonging to the Jew, which had come from a lawyer in Pretoria. When Piet got it read for him he learned that the young *kerel* was planning to bring a law action to make Piet pay for the accident. He said nothing, but laid a great plan. First he made out a great bill against the Jew for the lodging and food, also for the forage eaten by the two horses belonging to the Jew, and gave it to him. Isaac, which was the Jew's name, made a great noise, and there was a quarrelling for all that day, for the amount of Piet's bill was more than Isaac had purposed to sue Piet for. When the storm was over, Piet made an offer to Isaac that they should go into partnership with a store and canteen, which was a good plan, since it gave Piet a manager who understood trade. Isaac was not long in saying "yea," and to it they went.

Now, Jews are always successful, and Isaac was like all his nation, and brought great profit, and money came in fast. But Piet's foolishness came upon him, and he was near to spoiling all, through his religiousness, just as his patriotism caused him to lose the Landdrostship through the affair of the marriages.

Just when they were doing better even than Piet had hoped he was taken up with a foolish notion to make a Christian of Isaac. Knowing that if Jews eat pork they nearly cease to be Hebrews, he made Katrina put pork secretly into the food, when Isaac thought he was eating some kind of buck. But he was always particular of what Katrina cooked, and found the pork, although he was short-sighted, and he made almost as much noise as when Piet gave him his bill when he had broken his leg.

Finding he could not convert Isaac in secret, Piet tried to do it openly, telling Isaac he ought to be ashamed of himself. Isaac had great gift of the tongue, and would talk so well that had it been possible he would have converted Piet to be a Jew, but before that came Piet would grow angry and strike Isaac, who ran away and hid in the stable till Piet's anger was over, which made Piet very sad, for he could not understand why Isaac would not be a Christian, but was content

to come to a bad end rather than say that he liked pork, which, in secret, he no doubt did. Still Piet would not cease to try, and many were the quarrels they had together, which always ended in Piet getting the worst of the argument and Isaac the *sjambok*, until one day something happened by which Piet himself was nearly converted. He and Isaac were crossing the river by the drift. The rain had come very heavy and suddenly and the stream was strong. Isaac's pony lost his foothold and was carried away. He got hold of the rocks in the middle of the stream and clung tight, calling out loudly for Piet to save him, for he was very greatly frightened, the more so as he hated to get wet. Piet rode fast to the farm and got a rope and the Kaffirs to help him. On the way back a thought struck him. As Isaac was so much afraid, why not make him be a Christian? So Piet stood on the bank opposite where Isaac clung and shouted nearly dead with fear.

"Isaac," said Piet, "before I throw the rope, will you be a Christian?"

"Nay," said he, "I cannot."

"Then must you drown."

But Isaac was very obstinate, and would not give way. Piet threw him the rope.

"If I hold tight, will you be a Christian?"

asked Piet. Still Isaac would not, so Piet talked kindly to him over the bank, and for once Isaac did not try to answer his arguments, for he was weak with fear.

At last he said:

"Piet, I shall let go and drown, then what will you do at the store?"

"I shall get another Jew and convert him," answered Piet.

"You talk foolishness," said Isaac. "Did you not make me your partner to bring you Jewish *mozzle?* If you make a Jew into a Christian his luck goes, and where are you?"

"Hold tight," said Piet, and he pulled Isaac out as fast as he could.

But while he was helping him up the bank Piet himself fell in, but whether it was that Isaac pulled him he never knew. It is sufficient that Piet was carried over the boulders and broke his arm, while Isaac had no hurt at all.

For a long time they used to argue about this, Isaac saying it was a judgment on Piet for trying to convert a Jew, while Piet said it was a judgment on him for not completing the conversion. They could never agree who was right, but Katrina had another explanation. It happened that the pony, which was worth fifteen pounds, was drowned at the time, and, as the loss had to be shared by

both, it proved that Piet was wrong in trying to convert Isaac, and Isaac was wrong in needing conversion, so they left it that way.

Later on Piet had good cause for sorrow that he had not let Isaac drown, for he found that his partner used his great *slimness* rather for himself than for him. He had a brother in the Kaffir labour business, and these two planned to make money out of Piet. Isaac came in from Johannesburg one day and said he had met a man from a mine who would give £3 a head for five hundred boys, and Piet found the money to send into Swaziland to get them. But Isaac's brother waylaid them on the road and took them on to the Rand, thus making over a thousand pounds at no cost to himself. Isaac made as if he were very angry, and persuaded Piet to send for five hundred more. This the foolish man did, and again they were stolen by Isaac's brother, and the wicked pair prospered.

But although this only showed the foolishness of doing good to Uitlanders and Hollanders, there were times when he profited greatly by the *slimness* of Isaac. It always happened during *nachtmaal* that the *vrouws* who came to the store would steal many small things; but Isaac, having no religion himself, always suspected those who had, even the Predikant, and kept an extra sharp

look-out at such times. His great smartness was of much advantage to Piet on these occasions, for he had judgment in dealing with women who stole. As soon as *nachtmaal* time came he would put in the store stocks of such ornaments as women cannot see without wishing to possess. When they took the things, as they always did, Isaac had a nice way, especially when the *vrouws* had rich husbands like the *vrouw* Kok. Isaac had put on the counter some pretty imitation silver snuff-boxes that cost only sixpence each wholesale in Pretoria. *Vrouw* Kok came to buy things one *nachtmaal* and Isaac saw her slip one of the snuff-boxes into her pocket. Now, Piet had no cunning, and if he had seen it he would have, perhaps, been rough with her; but Isaac did nothing until he made out the bill. When *vrouw* Kok read it she saw an item for "one silver snuff-box, £2 10s."

"What is this?" said she; "I have had no snuff-box."

"Pardon me, madam," said Isaac, as smoothly as if he were a *Rooinek* clerk in a Johannesburg store, "Do you not remember my showing it to you, and you said you would give it as a present to the Predikant?"

"Nay, but you are mistaken," she answered.

"Nay, but it is here," and Isaac touched her pocket. "The Predikant will be very pleased,

and it is very kind of you to think of him," Isaac went on.

Vrouw Kok would have liked not to take it, but when Isaac mentioned the Predikant she grew fearful, and paid the £2 10s.

There was another time when he punished Dirk Hertz for being dishonest. Dirk used to bring in oranges to sell, but he could not count high numbers, so Isaac caught him in this way: When one hundred oranges had been counted, Isaac put a florin into his hat, and another for each hundred. When the lot was so counted, Dirk would reckon the florins and know how many hundreds he had to be paid for. While the last hundred was being reckoned, Isaac pretended that he was wanted in the store and went away, leaving the hat full of money. Dirk, being foolish and greedy, would steal a handful of the florins, not seeing he was robbing himself, for one hundred oranges were worth six or eight shillings.

Old Hans Botha was caught and punished in the same way, though he was not foolish or wicked enough to steal money. He was very fond of peppermints, like all Boers, so Isaac used them as counters instead of coins to check the bundles of forage. Half-a-dozen times Isaac would go into the store and keep Hans waiting till the old man grew tired and sucked the

peppermints, and often Isaac made twenty bundles of forage for threepenny worth of sweets. And thus was greed and theft properly chastised!

But in the end Isaac did not profit Piet. There came a time when the *Patriot* printed a piece about Field Cornets who ran private businesses contrary to the law. Piet grew frightened, though his name was not painted on the store with Isaac's, and in a foolish fit he listened to Isaac who advised him, and, by lighting the fire of his great vanity, made him pay dearly.

"Piet," said he, next day, after the *Patriot* came out, "I have written a letter to that paper. Listen!" And he read it:

"Sir,—My attention has been called to a paragraph in your last issue wherein you insinuate that Mr. Piet Prinsloo, Field Cornet of Kaalkop, is a partner with me in the business I carry on at that place. I beg to inform you that Mr. Prinsloo has nothing to do with the business, except that when I met with the accident on his farm he generously gave me £500, with which I started the business."

This was signed by Isaac.

Piet's vanity was roused by being referred to in such flattering terms as a generous man; besides, he had all along been fearful lest Isaac should

claim money for the damage to his leg, so that he jumped at the chance to prove that he had compensated Isaac, and wrote beneath the letter: "This is true. Piet Prinsloo."

The letter was sent to the *Patriot* and printed. Two months afterwards Isaac drew the money out of the bank and coolly told Piet that he could get away, as, according to his own letter, he was no partner. And this he had to do, for he dare not fight the case in the courts.

Somehow Piet was doomed to be worsted by Uitlanders, even in matters in which he had great experience, as, for example, the election of Jacob Smit.

It is well-known how in the days when the Uitlanders grew bold with prosperity and discontented even to revolution, they tried hard to rob the country of its beloved independence by putting into the Raad men who had been bribed to do as they told them. They spent large sums in trying to corrupt loyal burghers, who, however, only took the money, promising to vote as they were told, yet voting as their own conscience told them. At last the Uitlanders grew cunning and would not say which was their man, so that Field Cornets found it a hard matter to know what to do. It was also the means of Piet making a great mistake, for which he has been blamed.

When Jacobus Smit and Paul de Wet were candidates for the first Raad at Kaalkop District, Piet could not find out which was the Uitlanders' man, for both swore solemnly that they knew nothing of anything save their loyalty to the State. So when the burghers came and asked Piet for whom they should vote, he did not know what to answer them, but to make certain he told half to vote for one, and half for the other, which would have kept matters equal. But one day, just before the poll, Sam Levy, the great Johannesburg Uitlander, who was *slim* enough to keep out of the Reform business, *outspanned* at Piet's place, saying he was looking out for claims, and among other things they fell to talking about the election.

"I suppose you will work and vote for Paul de Wet?" said Sam.

"I don't know," answered Piet; "I am Field Cornet, and have to look after the election. It matters nothing to me who wins. But," said he, by way of feeling where Sam Levy's interest lay, "I think Jacobus Smit will get in."

At that Sam grew very angry, and abused Jacobus in bitter language, calling him a scoundrel, and ending by laying Piet £100 to a sovereign that Smit would not be elected.

Now Piet did not stop to think. He could only see that De Wet must be the Uitlander man, and

that he could win £100 by working to get Smit in, so he jumped at the bait and began to work hard for Jacobus Smit. He told the burghers that he had had a letter from the President, telling him that De Wet was an Uitlander's man, which made most of them do their best to defeat him. When burghers who could not write came to vote, Piet filled in their cards with Smit's name, and if a De Wet man did not feel sure whether he was on the register or not, Piet got out the book he kept in duplicate for that purpose, and showed him his name was not there, and that he could not vote. This is one of the great safeguards that a Field Cornet has to keep unsuitable men out of the Raad. But for this we should have the burghers voting for all sorts of dangerous characters, who would vote even against the President when once they were in the Raad.

When the voting was over it was found that Jacobus Smit was elected by 146 votes to 65, and Piet and all the loyal burghers were very glad.

Three days later Sam Levy came to pay the £100 he had lost.

"Piet," said he, "you deserve this money, for you have made it very easy for our man."

"Nay," said Piet, "but I have made it as hard as I could, and we knocked him out."

"We are quite satisfied," said Sam. "Go on

knocking them out like that, and we will always book you £100 to £1.

It was not until Piet talked it over with Katrina that night that he saw that Jacobus Smit was the Uitlander man, and that in winning that hundred pounds he had been fighting for Sam Levy. Then he grew so angry at having been defrauded so meanly that he tied up three of his Kaffirs and gave them twenty-five each before he could read the Psalms or say a prayer as usual that night.

Such base tricks are the common weapons of the Uitlanders, who will spend money freely to bring about their dishonourable objects, which no Afrikander would ever do unless sorely tempted by the want of money or the example of men like Levy.

CHAPTER VII.

The Founding of Prinsloosdorp.

It is often that good comes out of evil, and if those rascally Englanders had never vaccinated Magato and his people with condensed milk Piet would, perhaps, never have owned Prinsloosdorp!

When Magato no longer allowed Piet to have boys for the mines, and the criticisms of the Press made him afraid to take money as presents for fear of traps, his income fell away, and Katrina began to talk to him in strong language. His need of money had grown greatly, for his habits had become expensive through much acquaintance with Hollanders and Englanders in Pretoria and Johannesburg, who have been the curse of our country, teaching our sons and daughters habits of luxury and expense that their fathers and mothers knew not. Piet

himself, though Afrikander born, and otherwise of much good sense, took up many foolish and unmanly habits. He slept no more in his clothes, as his father and grandfather had before him, but wore thin things that he called "pyjamas," both winter and summer, which would have proved serious if he had been called suddenly to defend his farm against Kaffirs, as his grandfather had often been. He also drank French brandy instead of *dop*, smoked cigars and made no *biltong*, but bought fresh meat from the butcher. All these wasteful customs caused great expense, and Katrina never ceased to righteously complain, which made Piet go into town, where he learned to play billiards, and always lost money to Uitlanders, who are taught to play and gamble at their schools.

For many months Piet had been thinking out a plan to get rich, for not alone the serious talking of Katrina made him thoughtful, but the envy he felt when he saw men like Grey, Wolhuter, and Caledon selling for large fortunes farms which had cost them only a span of oxen. Piet's farm was a long way off the line of reef that had made the fortunes of the farmers on the Rand, so that prospectors would not come to look for gold there, and Piet had made up his mind that there was no reef on his farm, for he no longer had

faith, through knowing so many Hollanders who have no religion. But a great change was coming, though he knew it not.

One day he was at Pretoria to see the Government. His son Hans was now nearly seventeen, and was wanting to marry. So Piet thought it would be good if he could get the young *kerel* made Postmaster of Schoonspruit.

At Pretoria he met Hans Breda, who was Mining Commissioner of Vrededorp, and was making so much money that Piet was very envious, for only three years before Hans was so poor that Piet had to lend him oxen to plough with. It was the time when Piet Joubert was running for the Presidency against Oom Paul.

"For whom shall you vote in Kaalkop?" asked Hans, who was a great Kruger man.

Says Piet: "I shall not vote for the man who refuses to consider the son of a burgher who has bled for his country."

"But you never bled," says Hans; "you were too *slim*. You bled it."

This made Piet very angry, for he hated to have such things said; yet he was ever talking of having bled for his country, although everybody knew he had not fought except with his tongue to get back the money he had lent the Government.

"If my boy is not made Postmaster of Schoon-

spruit, I shall vote for *slim* Piet, and make all my burghers do so," answered Piet.

"But," said Hans, "the young *kerel* cannot read, and you know the President has come to set great store on reading and writing in Government officials."

This made Piet yet more angry, for it was not true that young Hans could not read; he could read many words, if they were not too hard, though he could not read writing well.

"It is not that my *kerel* cannot read," said Piet, "but because the President gives all the posts to Hollanders, and forgets those who bled for their country. Can Farnie Kok, the Pass Inspector, write, or a dozen others who have fat billets? Then why not give my son a chance?"

But Hans was not to be moved.

"Nay, Piet," said he, "a Landdrost need not read or write, for he has a clerk who can do both for him, and a Field Cornet need not be able to read, though I am in favour of their being able to do so. But a Postmaster, who has to do so much with letters, must know how to read writing, or how can he tell when treason is going on, or how shall he know that claims are to be pegged and business done? No, Piet, if your *kerel* cannot read he will miss many chances for making money in the Post Office."

"But cannot he have an assistant?"

"Certainly he can, but the assistant will know more than the master, and young Hans will have to share with him what he makes."

Then Piet thought that he could sit in the Post Office a great deal and see what was going on.

"But what would the papers say?" asked Hans; and Piet saw that this would not do, for he had begun to be afraid of these meddling editors.

These two talked and talked over the plan for a long time, but Hans would not hear of the post business.

"If you want money so badly why not have your farm proclaimed a goldfield?" asked Hans at last.

Piet's heart gave a great jump, just as it did the day he found the diamonds. It was the thing nearest his heart to have his farm proclaimed, but he could only dream of it.

"How can this be done if there is no gold there?" asked Piet, in great wonder.

"Then must we put some there," said Hans. And Piet marvelled still more, for he, being honest, was very slow to see an advantage.

"If I show you how to get the President to proclaim your farm a goldfield you must promise

to vote for him, and make all your burghers do the same."

Piet promised gladly, and, after a long *indaba*, he went back to his farm very happy, yet withal very perplexed, for he could not see how Hans Breda could do what he had promised by finding gold where it was not, which showed that my father-in-law had not yet learned all the wickedness that the Uitlanders have brought into the country.

His first work was to tell the burghers what his opinions were about the Presidentship. This was easy with those who always came to him to ask how they should vote, but there were a few obstinate men in the district who read *Land en Volk* and other papers which were disrespectful to Oom Paul, and said that he was only a friend to the Hollander.

The worst of these was Jan du Toit, who had a quick tongue, and made thereby much discontent, for he could read both print and writing, and subscribed to several papers, especially *Land en Volk*, which he would read to the burghers, and told them that all it said was true.

Piet called the burghers together and told them they should all vote for Oom Paul, otherwise there would be another Kaffir war, and he would have to *commandeer* all who had brought it about by voting for General Joubert.

Although Piet had tried to keep Jan du Toit away from the *indaba* by holding it when he thought Jan was in Krugersdorp, his plans fell through. Jan came, and made great trouble by asking Piet why he had so suddenly changed his mind about Piet Joubert.

Piet answered that he had learned many strange things in Pretoria which had made him resolve that Oom Paul was the proper man.

Jan told the burghers that they were all sheep, and ran just as Piet cracked his *sjambok*. Then he read from a paper that Oom Paul had said there would be no Kaffir war, as the chiefs had paid hut tax; so there would be no need of a *commando*, which had been brought about entirely by General Joubert, who loved his *volk*, and hated fighting. "So," said Jan, "it is Piet Joubert who has saved you from *commando*, and not Oom Paul, so you should vote for him."

This speech had great effect, and Piet saw that all were going with Jan du Toit, so he made a master stroke.

"All law-abiding burghers are supporting Oom Paul," said he.

"And am I not a law-abiding burgher?" asked Jan.

"I don't know whether it is obeying the law to keep eight families of Kaffirs on a farm to do

your farm work, when the law says you shall not have more than five."

This was a very sharp cut, for it was well-known that Jan had more Kaffirs on his farm than the law allowed, and it was the duty of the Field Cornet to move them away and prosecute the farmer.

Jan was quite conquered, for if he lost his Kaffirs now he would not be able to get in his mealie crop; so for a little while he was very quiet. At last he said:

"You are right one way, Piet. It is right that our President should make good laws. We have seen what Oom Paul can do, but *slim* Piet has not yet made any laws, so, perhaps, it is better to trust the man we know best."

This speech turned a great many who would have voted against Oom Paul, and all went well for Piet's man, and he waited with great impatience for the carrying out of the promise of Hans Breda.

One day a man they call a "prospector" came to Piet's place, bearing a letter from Hans, saying he had come to find the gold.

Instead of going right away into the *veld*, he asked for whisky, as all prospectors do, and sat down on the *stoep* and began to drink and smoke and talk to Piet in very bad Dutch. He drank all

that day and the next day till Piet began to grow anxious about the reef, and said so, but all the prospector would say was: "That's all right; trot out another bottle."

For four days did the man do nothing but drink whisky and sleep; but on the fifth he was quite sober, all the whisky being finished. Then he asked Piet for a shot gun, a few cartridges, and some *dop* brandy. This, he said, was not to drink, but to wet the reef.

Before he left he took all the shot out of the cartridges, a thing that puzzled Piet very much. Then he went out into the *veld* to look for gold, and would have no one with him. At sundown he came back carrying pieces of rock tied up in his handkerchief. They were bright and sparkling with gold specks.

"What do you think of that?" asked the prospector.

Piet said they were very fine specimens.

"Specimens be blowed," said the prospector; "I've got the whole blessed reef in that handkerchief, but I can find some more; but that's no business of yours, you've got to hold your tongue. *Verstaan ye?*"

Piet answered that he understood, although he did not; and particularly he did not understand what the prospector should want with a shot gun.

But he did not dare to ask questions, for the prospector said so much that was not clear about the need of silence that Piet could only say *nix* and wonder.

The prospector went back to Johannesburg next day, and soon after Hans Breda sent for Piet.

"Piet," said he, "that *verdomde Rooinek* found too much gold. He must go back and find better stuff."

Piet was astounded beyond words. How could a man find too much gold?

"*Ach*, man, the *Rooineks* in Johannesburg are not fools," said he. "Would you buy a cow if the seller told you she gave a hundred bottles of milk every morning? Would you not know that he lied?"

Still Piet was in the dark, and could not understand anything except that they had to go to Johannesburg and find that prospector.

With very great trouble, they found him at a dirty hotel, where he had been drinking ever since he left Piet's farm. Hans talked long to him in private. When he came out he said:

"He wants £200 before he will go again, and we must pay all that he owes here."

Piet grew very angry, and said he would not pay a *tickie*. "Let us get another prospector," said he; but Hans laughed, and said it was impossible.

"But in a big place like Johannesburg there must be many."

"Nay, there may be many, but there are prospectors and prospectors," answered Hans, a saying that puzzled Piet amazingly. Hans explained that they must employ this same prospector, otherwise he would say there was no gold on the farm.

"But what matters it what he may say; have we not seen the gold with our own eyes?"

Hans laughed again.

"You do not understand these Uitlanders," said he. "They go much on names, and they will buy your farm if this man tells them it is good; otherwise it will never sell."

When Piet learned that he had to find £200 he came near to drawing out of the enterprise, for £200 was the price of four spans of oxen, and took a lot of collecting together in the form of presents from people who wanted favours. But Hans at last overtalked him, and he paid the money, together with £16 which the prospector owed to the hotel for whisky. Then they set out for the farm.

It was again nearly a week before the prospector would quit whisky and start out to find gold, but at last he went, and again he took the gun with him, and brought back specimens of rock; but

Piet noticed that they were not so rich as the first ones.

Piet remarked on this to the prospector, who explained it:

"You see," said he, "the stuff I got before was twenty-two carat; this is only eighteen carat. It doesn't do to show your best stuff at first, because you keep that for yourself."

This satisfied Piet at the time, because it explained much that was before mysterious. He asked the prospector to show him where he had found the gold, and he took him to a cutting that had been made in the early days of the gold discoveries on the Rand. Piet had often been there, but he never saw before the wonderful shining specks in the rock. They were there in thousands. He asked the prospector why they had never been noticed before.

"If I told you that," said he, "I should give away my business. It is all science, and this is the branch of it they call 'salting'; but whatever you do don't show this to anybody who understands science, or you will never sell the farm. The price of gold would go down to nothing, as this property of yours will glut the market."

Piet believed all this because he was honest, and he gave the prospector so much whisky that it took him four days to get well again.

The long waiting and the worry of journeying to Pretoria that now set in sometimes made Piet sorry that he had resolved to have his farm proclaimed, for he was not quite sure about the gold being there. But Hans Breda told him he was on no account to talk of this matter to anyone.

Never before did Piet know how many and how greedy were the officials in Pretoria who had to do with proclaiming a farm. No sooner had he agreed to let one man have so many claims than another came and proved that he was much more influential and necessary than the last. Then would come another official, who would make Piet promise to give his son an appointment, or a commission or something that had profit sticking to it. Piet did not so much complain of the long delay and the many promises made by the Government that were broken, for he knew that Oom Paul was not favourable to more goldfields, because they brought in Uitlanders. But he did think that Oom Paul ought not to let his officials bleed an honest man like himself by threatening to do things that would put a *skid* on his waggon; and sometimes he thought that these long delays and frequent breakdowns of all arrangements were designed to give the officials time and excuse for making money by pretending that they were able to hurry matters on. All this