

# A Lesson in Manners.

## A TALE OF THE TRANSVAAL WAR.

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*Illustrated by the Author.*

**R**ESTRAINT on human passions can hardly be regulated by law. Tact, education, custom, precedent will, in great emergencies, fly to the winds. Caution, which has saved, and yet which, when carried to extremes, has ruined thousands, hardly enters into the question when a sense of the terrible injustice of circumstances flashes unexpectedly on an excitable temperament.

The feelings of thousands of Britishers in the Transvaal called, for want of a better term, "Uitlanders," were being ruthlessly outraged, chiefly by a few adventurers, who, having nothing to lose themselves, cared but little for consequences, so long as they could allow their undisciplined brutality to find a vent.

It was a struggle between passion and reason. Reason always wins.

Our departure from the farm at Lindenberg Pass amounted almost to flight. I had only been married six months, and had amassed a considerable sum during the "boom." Fate had been kind to me; with a good woman to share my fortune, with the flush of success in my heart, and with the feeling that the Kaleidoscope of Fortune was turning the right way, guiding my steps, I had the courage to face what to many of my neighbours was absolute ruin.

My only thought was the safety of my wife, so hurriedly making my arrangements, and taking with me all I possibly could, I determined to go with her to Capetown, and leave her there, if necessary, with her relations. For me there was always the possibility of fighting sooner or later, and history had already shown that the climax was not far off.

It was a long and tedious journey to the station, with a much longer and more tedious journey in the train before we were even clear of the country where no British subject was free from insult. We had passed one or two stations without any signs of trouble. At every stoppage, crowds of people jumped in, and fresh carriages were added to the train. It was a stampede for safety. Most of the carriages were filled with women and children of all classes. Some of them were Boers, but most of them were English. As we got further from civilization I was prepared for trouble. Disturbing rumours had reached us of the insults offered to unoffending Uitlanders, especially to ladies, and we naturally kept a sharp eye on the strangers who entered the carriage. At first there was no cause for anxiety. The Boers who entered the train from curiosity were often the worse for liquor, but in an amiable and half-jocular condition. Some of them exchanged light banter with the passengers, but there were no signs of ill feeling.

At one station, not far from Jacobsdaal, the train was delayed. We had waited some ten minutes or so, five more and we were to start.

Suddenly, a rough, fierce-eyed young farmer pushed his way in, evidently spoiling for a quarrel. Inflated with bad liquor, denouncing in alcoholic language the whole British race and transporting them unconditionally to a sulphurous climate, this dangerous fool, who had swallowed with his drink any little tact or decency he might ever have possessed, was evidently not only bent on mischief and assault, but had already, as such fools will, acquired an influence with his countrymen.