

well by grace - as to external life - as to the inner life, there is much to be desired - that you can well imagine.

Now I must close with the pen but not with the heart. I am continually with you in my thoughts and frequently talk to you in the study.

Now, brother Koedijk, write back sometime when you can - about everything - and receive our greetings once more - and in particular from me - to your Trui - and Gerrit - and the dear Jenken and Marieja - and you yourself. Farewell.

Your brother,

J.W. Kreijkes

The following letter is addressed to Hanna Smalbrugge (as far as we know this is the widow Mensink) and to his grandchildren Jan and Janna Scharphof.

Hospers, May, 1890

Dear Friend and dear children Jan and Janna:

Peace and mercy be granted unto you by Him who alone is able to give you peace, is my sincere wish. Well, friends Hanna and children, we can inform you that we are all happy - all is well with us in America - by God's grace - and we were privileged to hear this from you also. We were pleased to hear that the Lord had made all things well thus far. It might have been quite different, isn't that true? Oh, yes, the Lord does not deal with us as we deserve nor according to our sins, but according to the greatness of His mercy, and He comes to do all things well, and we lack in nothing. There are places in America where they say more than a hundred and fifty die of the grippe every day. Yes, because of sin sickness has come in to the

world and death. It comes to all men - who is the person who will not face death, who is alive but will not sleep the sleep of death, the poet says - yes, everyone sooner or later. Experience has taught you and us in the case of your husband, and our children also - my emotions gain control over me when I think about it - my brother-in-law Jan Alberd wrote to me that Jan had died - I stood surprized when I heard that - I had not heard about his illness - I thought, oh, if he had found mercy then all would still be well - about his illness - I thought, oh, if he had found mercy then all would still be well - and still, I was concerned about your friend and about the children - I was moved to call upon God to protect them - save them. The Lord promises to be a husband to the widow and a father for the orphans - in the hope that the Lord may fulfill this promises - that is my hearty wish and which I was pleased to hear again - from Hanna and her children - now God has saved all of our souls - I would be happy and you would be blessed together if the Lord would apply it to your heart, that is my wish for you and us both - oh, Hanna, ask the Lord continually for grace with the children - my the Lord grant it now and in the future - I will not forget you at the throne of God's mercy as long as I live.

How beautifully those dear children can write. I pray to God that they may learn well. Solomon says, "Teach them in the way of wisdom while they are young and when they are old they will not depart from it - may the Lord spare you together - and you, my friend, equip you to lead the children in the way of the Lord - I would like to see them once more, but that is impossible - at least not for the time being - the distance is too great and

also the expenses involved, around 250 gulden for a round trip - I think about the children every day and I know that they are well taken care of.

Beside the Ter Horst Family, there were other personnel living at the Pelmolen at the time. One of them, Mensink, received the following letter:

Hospers, April 21, 1891

Dear Brother Mensink in the Lord:

This will serve to inform you that we received your letter in good health - We were all happy to receive your letter, especially to learn you were still doing well - also Hanna and the dear children of our Janna - my heart often melts when I think about how far away they are. I must repeatedly shake their hands with the thought in my heart, "God be merciful to them," that is the desire of my heart, that they may be a seed which the Lord has blessed. I also wish that for Hanna with all of my heart - that the Lord may there also fulfill His promises - to be a husband for the widow and a father for the orphans - that we may hear the good news from all of them, as from our Janna, "The Lord has saved our souls" - we would rejoice with all the people of the Lord - I am glad, brother Mensink, that you visit them occasionally - a comfort and encouragement for her. Give her my warm greetings.

You wrote about the high price of cattle during the past year - Here they are cheap up to this time - little higher priced than last year - but cheap compared to Holland - everything is cheap, too cheap for the farmers to make money. Everything changes - everything has its time - but where the Lord plants his footstep it will prove to be a blessing whether it be in the natural or spiritual realm - but if the Lord withholds it, nothing will

succeed - the children of the Lord find this to be true especially by experience - isn't that true, brother? - Oh, yes, when Asaf was near to his God all was well but when He withdrew he was afraid - my we be near unto God - that would cause us to live more carefully as we travel on - isn't that true? - may the Lord teach us to allow Him to lead, direct, and rule, and occupy the highest place in our hearts - then we would be more heaven-minded and less bound to the things here below as we are by nature inclined to be - isn't that true brother? - may the Lord grant us much light and grace on our journey to eternity - I wish that for you and for ourselves - amen.

In the article previously published and that which follows Kreijkes answers Mensink. Spiritual and material matters are dealt with in turn. Although the first article was more edifying we do not wish to withhold information regarding market-prices from the reader, and information about the former resident of Bouwstraat, Chicken-john. In this connection it also becomes apparant that Jan Willem is not occupied only with matters on the horizontal level but keeps his eye continually on the vertical.

He continues his letter as follows: fat beef 5 cents a pound and fat hogs 5 1/2 cents dressed - the thick animal fat 3 cents a pound - the best white wheat flour 3 cents, 6 spind of corn \$1 - 6 spind is equivalent to a bushel - coffee-beans 25 cents, sugar 10 cents, butter 15 cents, 12 eggs 11 cents. All in terms of American cents. Salt 1 cent a pound. Enough of that.

You wrote about the war in America - that is over - they were Indians - blacks came from the south and north by the thousands (Indians and negroes)

fighting with the whites - the whites were volunteers serving for money - many of them were killed - they say that the negroes never mis-fire - many people left Dakota for fear of the blacks - they came to Iowa - and Chicken-Jan was not among them - those are lies - he is farther from there than we are, although we are also far from that area. Last year Chicken-Jan left Sioux Center for Roseland - I think at least 200 hours from here. Enough of that.

I hope that the Lord may protect this country and give it rest and peace. But I am afraid when I read in God's word that in the latter days men will hear of wars and rumors of wars, and of famines and earthquakes - all of which we have already heard - dark days are ahead, as I see it - and when I consider church affairs the situation is sad - one cries out "this is the church" and another "there" - then those days are at hand - and that is still not the end - there are places in America where no less than 160 people die every day - a thousand in a week according to the newspaper - they say the grippe is widespread in Chicago - fortunate are they who are prepared for eternity - oh, yes, you wrote about the family of Jenkes Arendiena - they are doing well and are making a good living - one child is sick at present - but is improving. They visit us every week to drink coffee when they go to the store in Hospers - we are on friendly terms with them - we were asked to send you their greetings - give our greetings to her mother and family - also from me and my wife.

Brother Mensink, extend greetings to everyone at the mill - also to Uncle Grades - how is he getting along on his journey? - can he still go on with joy? Give greetings to your people and to all your and our friends -

also to B.J. Van De Maat and family and Jan Van De Maat and family - and to the village policemen and family - Geriet and family.

Well, brother, write concerning anything you wish to know which I have not written about.

The financial situation was not very favorable formerly. Hendrik Mensink asked Kreijkes for a 25 gulden loan, but at the time the request could not be granted. This is plain from the letter which has been preserved only in part. The date is missing but from the contents we conclude that it must have been written in the spring of 1890, shortly after the death of his daughter Janna.

"Yes, brother Mensink, you wrote about the 25 gulden - I would have been happy to do so - but at this moment it is not convenient - our grown sons J.H. and Jannes have purchased a threshing-machine for 750 gulden - and a work-horse for 350 gulden - they must pay all of that - now they have a problem - they had enough horses for their work, - yes, seven, but four of them have colts, and they have not made much money this year - the crops are very cheap - and the grain is low in price - plenty raised - so, brother, my wife and I would gladly do it but we have purchased a little land upon which we can raise enough food - and we have built a house upon it - we are going to live by ourselves - I can work that land myself - our Johan and Arend Jan and Jenken are paying for that land from their earnings - now they say we have our own home, and my wife and I are happy to have it - there is nothing better than having one's own hearth - isn't that true? - you told me that yourself when we planned to leave. We did have a good life with our Jan Hendrik, but there were ten people - too busy to suit me - and my wife is

very happy - it cost us about 700 gulden - that our two sons and Jenken must pay out of their wages - and they can do it very well - but now we are without money, but out of debt.

If the Lord may be with us in the future we will see later what we can do. Yes, brother, I am writing you the truth. Hoping that all may be well and that this letter may reach you in good health, and thanking you all at the mill very kindly - also Ter Hors for all the kindness you have shown to my daughter Janna - in as much as ye done it unto one of God's children ye have also done it unto God.

Now, friends hearty greetings to all of you - in the name of our children, H.J. Agteresch, wife and children. Greetings to Gr. Mensink and those in the Mensink home - also to A. Scherphof - and to Hendrik Jan's family and to Ten Brink and family, and to the village policeman. Give my greetings to all the people in Rijssen. Also to the consistory and their families, the church teachers and theirs.

Now I must close. If you can write back sometime. I remain,
respectfully, Your friend and brother,

Jan Willem Kreijkes.

Farewell

We have placed the family letters, and now there are four remaining letters to his bosom friend Abram Koedijk. The first of this four was written in 1891 and the last one in 1905. Probably many more were received during those fourteen years, but they were not preserved. First a letter from which the ending is lacking.

Hospers, June 13, 1891

Dear brother Koedijk and children and other friends: Happiness and peace by yours. We have received your letter and we were all in good health - and are well at present. We have also read that in your letter - we were very happy about that - you can imagine that because blood creeps where it can not walk, you know that.

I would like to talk with you again but that is impossible, the distance is too great. I think of you every day. I sometimes feel as attached to you as David did to Jonathan - that is true - I was able to talk things over with you in a way I could with few others - but that is the way things are - around Hospers there are only about five families with whom I can associate - there are two ministers in Hospers - they claim to be Reformed but I will have nothing to with them - they preach good works - but good works are strange fire and will not do - and I say that freely to the consistory - then they do not answer and the ministers avoid me - one consistory member said, "We must go to talk to Kreijkes sometime" - the minister said, "I will not go along, that man is much too strict." Enough of that.

We plan to go to Orange City Sundays - we plan to plow grass-land with Jowa with three horses - our Johan has grown up and is very healthy - he dares to go anywhere in the world. Johan and Arend Jan earn equal wages - \$160 a year - Arend Jan lives near us with good Dutch people - our Jenken also is near us with a farmer formerly from Deventer. His name is Draaiom. They are also good people. Jenken comes home twice a week - is well satisfied.

If my wife and I were to go back to Holland for a visit, and Jenken and the boys remained in America, I am afraid that when I was in Rijssen I would worry about my children in America, as you can well understand, because the children are dear to my heart. Jenken and Arend Jan would not mind going back, but would rather stay here, but our Johan prefers America - He says, "There is no dry-cleaning (?) for us in Rijssen" and then I must agree that is true - let us wait and see what the Lord's will is - a man plans his future but God determines his ways - Abraham told Isaac on the mountain of the Lord that provision would be made. Is it not true, brother Koedijk "Who can fathom the wise leadership of God?" God will make all things well - may we feel more free from the things here below which will fall away any who at death - and be more heavenly-minded - pilgrims here on our journey to Zion - that would simplify life for us - may the Lord grant us that grace, that is my heart's desire - for you and us both.

We have neighbors who have been here for forty years already - formerly from Rijssen. Their name is Nieuwenhuis - when I talked with them they mention going back.

Thus far this letter.

Kreijkes longed to go back to Rijssen but it did not materialize. In these times it might have been possible without too much danger. What he and his children were not privileged to enjoy became possible for his grandchildren. Recently, in early June, his grandson Willem Wanders from Grand Rapids visited his Rijssen cousin Willem Dannesberg. Wanders is a son of Jan Willem Kreijkes's daughter, Jenneken, born and raised in Hospers in

the home where Jan Willem also spent his America years. The name Kreijkes is still quite common in America.

An attentive reader will have noticed that there was something lacking from the above letter. Alas, one page of the copy was lost at the printery, and as a result the impression was given that Kreijkes planned to mow hay on Sunday with three horses. For that reason the following missing portion is added:

"We are planning to go to Orange City with the buggy on Sunday - there is a minister there who has been there for 28 years - one of the seceders - they say it is a pleasure to hear him - he speaks with authority concerning grace and especially for those whose faith is weak - some people from Hospers have gone there two Sundays - about ten people and they said that this is Kreijkes' minister and most of them can understand him very well - and there are some good converted people among them. I could not go with them - the first Sunday I had a toothache and a headache - the second Sunday they came here - then I had a stomach-ache and the diarrhea - so I did not dare - but if I live and am well I hope to go there - our Jannes has been there and also said "that is father's dominie."

Our Jannes is making his home with us with his three horses. He plows a hundred acres of land and mows 40 acres of hay - he is busy, he does it by himself. He is catching caterpillars in the flax every day - they eat all of the flax - also the potatoes in some places - in the hope that it will stop - so far we are free - there are areas where the caterpillars eat everything - oh, these are punishments for sins - would that there were more warning voices to call people to God - then the plagues would cease - but

there are more cursers in America than prayers - here even the minister's sons swear like soldiers - what will this lead to? I sometimes think America is a Sodom - may the Lord bring about a change.

When I talk about going back to Holland _ Johan and Arend Jan do not approve. They are well satisfied here - our Johan is far to the north - he has gone to Minnesota to plow the grass-land for a farmer from Iowa, using three horses - our Johan has grown up and looks healthy - He dares to go anywhere - even to the pagan world."

The people in Hospers knew very well what kind of man Kreijkes was. The local ministers avoided him and did not wish to talk to him. His children and those with whom he associated knew what kind of preaching he wished to hear. The minister of Orange City pleased him especially because he could edify those of weak faith by his preaching. He considered himself to be one of those of little faith, at least his writing gives that impression. At least one does not receive from any of his letters that he was a man of great stature. As I read I thought, "Farmer-Jan and Koks-bram would be able to get along with Jan Willem very well.

He probably never made long trips while in Rijssen. The journeys on foot to "Wierdns-suntermatn", and to "Deeinder-sunt-andres" were undoubtedly the longest trips. For that reason he was surprized and proud of his Johan who had gone as far as Minnesota. Johan would even dare to go to the pagan world. What respect Kreijkes would have had for the young women who are being sent to the mission-field as nurses!

This time we have a long letter in which Kreijkes recalls with nostalgia the conversations he had formerly with his friend. He also

informs Koedijk about church affairs in Hospers and tells about the happiness which has become the portion of his son Jan Hendrik and his wife. I will allow him to tell it himself:

Hospers, April 22, 1892

Dear Brother and those with you:

We have received your letter and read that you were all well. We were happy about that: happy to hear from you again from the far northwestern America. I think about you a great deal. Oh, how I wish I could talk to you sometime, but the distance is too great. If it was from you to Amsterdam I would consider it - but it is too far. I would like to come across some time but my wife and Jenneken will not permit it - they are afraid something would happen to me - well that is no wonder - I am dear to their heart - persons would agree - they are not so afraid - they would dare to travel hundreds of miles even more than I.

Well, brother Koedijk, I am glad to hear that the scepter of that King is still at work here and there and is still seeking to bring lost sheep into His fold, since He has drawn Derk Baan and his wife into His wonderful light out of free grace. I was glad to hear that - give them my warm greetings: I make bold to believe that I am still a friend of all those who humbly fear God's name.

Even though I am not as active as I have been, I still believe that He will be with me to the end. And to my joy I can inform you that I have waited for our Jan Hendrik's conversion for 34 years since the Lord had told me that He would be his God and that of my descendants, since I believe three of those by my first wife are in heaven, and now our J.H. is showing

good signs - and his wife also - I have long expected the best in her case - it is weeping of Maria - she is seeking for Jesus - I believe she will surely find Him - that has become evident especially recently - I go there everyday to talk to her - oh, she is such a dear child - she is from the Friesian peat-area - she attended school in Weesseloo with Abram Klumpers' (Aorme-Graads-Bram) wife.

Give Klumpers' wife my greetings, and may they all find mercy, that is my hearty wish - then we would feel rich - then the Apostle says that no eye has seen nor has an ear heard what God has prepared for those who fear him. Thank God for undeserved blessings whereas we had made ourselves worthy of hell and damnation because of our inherited and immediate sins - every child of the Lord must confess this."

The remainder of the letter of April 22, 1892 follows: It is a letter held together with cellotape and in this condition has reached the age of 78 years, although mice have nibbled at it here and there. However regardless of its age I can read the following: "We have a good dominie at present who preaches a good Rijssener truth. He comes to our home almost every day to talk: it is a pleasure: He comes from Sioux Center, Iowa - coming from Holland formerly as a carpenter - his name is Mouw: with you the church is still vacant - oh, yes, what shall we say - the Lord knows all things - He knows what is best.

In May Spoel from Kampen plans to make a visit - that is what he wrote to me: he says everything is going well also but he had had some unpleasant experiences in recent times which had brought him to the feet of Jesus: and

what kind of difficulty it was I do not know: you can find that out - but don't tell anyone.

Now I must stop writing but never with the heart: may the mercy from the oil-jug flow once again into our empty vessels, that is my wish.

Well, Koekijk give my greetings to all of the people in Rijssen; also to your Jan and his family and all those who ask about us and are interested - just tell them that we are doing well, by God's grace. Greet Saffieget for us: it has been a year since I have received a letter from him - I do not know why that is.

How are things going in the consistory? - is there still love and harmony? How did church affairs turn out? And what about the seceders? - nobody writes to me about that. How is the church of the French doing - are they still in the home of Spanjer? I have heard that several congregations have united: or seceders and dissenters: I suppose the churches of the cross are few in number - oh, yes - how will things turn out? - the Lord knows.

We attend the Presbyterian Church quite regularly. It is mostly English: it branched out from the Scottish church - that is what people say - I do not know: the other one is called Dutch Reformed Church. But I do like it there. Among the Dutch Reformed everyone is converted and pious but the proper fruit is not there - it is missing: I can not talk with these people, they avoid me. Even the ministers say, "Kreijkes is too stubborn - yes, yes, there is much to be desired - who will make things right? - the almighty hand of God must do it - May we realize and feel this more, may God grant us that grace, that is the desire of my heart.

I hope you receive this letter in good health, and that all may be well. Receive the warm greetings from all of us, and especially from me who calls himself with all respect your brother in the Lord.

J.W. Kreijkes

Hello, Trui, Hello Gerriet, hello little Jenken. That God may be gracious to all of you is my hearty wish. Give our greetings to everyone."

Kreijkes is quite well pleased with the new minister. Three years later, however, he is of another opinion. You will be able to read this in the following letter. Things can change!

Rev. L. Spoel has served in Rijssen for three years (1885-1888). This minister was shepherd and minister of an independent "Church of the Cross", but he accepted a call to the dissenter church in Kampen (later the Reformed Church). He returned a couple of times to serve in Rijssen, not in the Walkerek, but in the congregation of Hazevoet in the Kraoijnschure. He did visit some of his former friends and expressed his regret in regard to his change-over. It seems Kreijkes kept up correspondence with him nevertheless. Church life there did not appeal to him. The situation in the "small church" and in the "French congregation" did interest him to a certain extent.

He was eager to know about church affairs, namely, in connection with a few "congregations of the cross" with the ministers Abram Verheij, A. Makkenze, P. Van Der Heyden, etc. I do not know exactly how that turned out. A. Koedijk and another consistory member did attend a meeting for a discussion. Before joining could become a reality it would be necessary to sever relations with the seceders, or at that time the Christian Reformed

Church. Rev. Verhey wrote the concept for this separation, and it is still in my possession. Throughout the years the points of difference between the French and our congregation have become less pronounced.

"There is much left to be desired in church life, in the preaching of the truth in Hospers. There is a Presbyterian church. They have a Dutch minister. His name is Mouw. I will have nothing to do with him. He is too dumb to be a minister. And in the other church, called the Dutch Reformed, the minister's name is Van De kam - He is still worse. I did not like to listen to him at all. He did not dare to talk to me. Behind my back he said, "Kreijkes is too orthodox." So I could not find satisfaction in Hospers: and there were more like me - then a seceder or Christian congregation was organized in Hospers, promoted by a minister from Orange City and one from Michigan, called the brain - the name of the latter is Van Der Werp - well, they organized a congregation but I was against it because there were only about twelve in favor - I could not see the reason for it but those ministers forced the matter through - I thought that was playing church - I was the last to join with my wife - services were conducted on Sunday in the school-house - when there was a minister there was a good audience, but when there was not there were not many in attendance - four consistory members were elected, two eleders and two deacons - I was elected elder. I could not avoid it. I had to accept and give the leadership - well I did not object although there were only about four with whom I could agree. The other elder and I got along pretty well, he could go along with what I proposed - he was a Friesian by birth."

This letter, without an ending, furnishes us information about Hospers. In addition to the Dutch Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church, a seceder or Christian Reformed Church has been added. Kreijkes was an elder in the latter. Most of his descendents still belong to this church. On the whole this church organization is in agreement with the Reformed churches of this country, however there is still an element which is more conservative.

Kreijkes has turned around like a leaf on a tree. In the former letter he expressed the opinion that "the Presbyterian minister Mouw" preached the real Rijssener truth. Then, after 3 1/2 years his conclusion is that he is "too dumb to be a minister." The preacher should realize that it is not a good idea to visit the same people every day. The Preacher (Proverbs 25:17) has not said in vain, "Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house lest he be weary of thee and so hate thee." On the other hand Kreijkes forgot Paul's warning (I Tim. 5:22) "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

Then matters were in reverse. First regarded as an angel and later despised! It is possible that the minister "placed the most beautiful eggs at the top" and later was exposed and that he then left. Be that as it may, if a person is careful in what he says he does not have to retract.

Hospers, November 6, 1895

Dear Brother Koedijk and family,

I can not refrain from writing you a letter, since we have not heard from you for a long time, and have received no answer to our last letter - how this comes about I do not know - the Lord knows. Brother, I often think of you because we have many things in common which we do not dare to reveal to others - oh, yes, that is the truth - and since we can not talk to one

another face to face - although I would very much like to, but the distance is too great.

Oh, yes, friends, we can inform you that we are all well - very well by God's grace and mercy. Materially the Lord does not cause us to lack in anything, so that we must cover our faces with shame when we behold the privileges we are permitted enjoy above so many others. Surely they are forfeited blessings of which we have made ourselves unworthy by our inherited and daily sins, is that not true, brother? Oh, yes, the Lord could well have subjected us to disasters and calamities - because of sin which we must confess if we are to turn to the right way in repentance - oh, then the Lord must occupy first place if everything is to be well, if they are to arise as the sacrifice of Abel: that is the experience of all of God's children, that the Lord must be the beginning, the continuation and the ending if all is to be well.

We not come to the last letter. Then years have past since the last letter. Kreijkes has become an old man, and it appears that he still received occassional letters from Rijssen at least from his friend Koedijk. He frequently referred to individuals from the Bible in whom he recognizes similarities to his own situation. We see this now again. From his last letter, which is only partially existent, we find not only a hearty but also a simple tone. It is as if, just as Jacob did, he reviews his life and makes an accounting. Just read it.

Hospers, April 13, 1905

Dear friend Koedijk:

Mercy and peace be granted unto you from him who is and who was an who is to come - that is my hearty wish for all of you - we tell you that we had long and impatiently looked for a letter from you - until we finally received one: I was very happy - I recognized it from the address - I know your handwriting very well - I could hardly read it - I broke down - it was a surprize for me just as it was for Jacob when I unexpectedly heard that Joseph was still alive - I was so happy - I also said, "It is enough" - my brother Abraham still lives. I though that now I can go and see him before I die. But, oh, that will probably not be possible on this side of death and the grave: the distance is too great, and I am old of days: more than 76 years of age. Moses said that it might be seventy years or if by reason of strength eighty years, and I am not very strong - but by the grace of God in good health, and in good physical condition - I have never been as heavy as I am at present: thanks be to God for what does a person have that he has not received from God in nature and in grace? Oh, I often say to your friend Goei "all that I have I woe to my King, all good things in nature and in grace - which I can still enjoy with my family." So we can inform you that we are at present by God's grace all well from the youngest to the oldest - a total of 32 souls small and large: 7 deceased."

Alas, the rest is missing, and we must take leave from our emigrant, Since June 27, 1969 we have been able to read about him in 28 number of the "kerkbode". As far as I know, he died at the age of 80, and was buried in Hospers near Sioux Center.

A few people (then children) can still remember his departure from Rijssen. I heard from Laejde, from Diek-Jan, that they had said farewell

with their parents to the Kreijkes family. Her father, Toojn-Graads stared after him and said to his family, "A prayer less in Rijssen." We have been able to gather from the letters how true that was. We may believe that he has arrived in a better Fatherland.

A.O.