

front of the Pretoria railway station in 1925. **It was whispered that Church Square was reserved for a statue of Lord Roberts . . .**

After much bickering and heartbreaking arguments, permission was at last granted for the removal of the Kruger statue to Church Square. On the 29th of June, the statue was slowly but firmly placed on its pedestal in the centre of Church Square. The unveiling ceremony will take place on the 11th of October on which occasion the Hon. Dr. D. F. Malan, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, will be the principle speaker.

President Kruger has at last come home to his people . . .

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## THE EXILE

**O**N the 14th of July, 1904, one of the greatest sons of South Africa, a man who made an imperishable impression on the minds of all South Africans, died in Clarens, Switzerland, as a voluntary exile.

*"On the morning of the 14th, at four minutes past three, His Hon. the President, passed away peacefully. He suffered no pain,"* wrote Mr. H. C. Bredell, his private secretary, seven days later.

With his tragic death came to an end four heartbreaking years that he had spent in Europe whilst in the meantime his fair country was occupied by British troops and the independence of the Transvaal had consequently been irrevocably lost. During the first period of his stay in Europe the old President became the symbol of independence and freedom to the minds of the people of Europe. At the time of his death however, after the independence of his country had been destroyed, he retired into obscurity without thereby causing the memory of his tragic greatness to disappear from the European mind.

President Kruger, in his last moments, was assisted by his son-in-law, and his daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Frikkie Eloff, and by Mr. Bredell and Dr. A. Heymans, his personal physician.

Bredell, relating these last sad days, stated that the President carried his terrible burden with a super human stoical calm and uncomplaining physical indifference. While his strength was slowly failing him and the last moments drew inexorably near, his thoughts were continuously with his defeated people. *"No complaint, however, or sign of dissatisfaction was heard or noticed,"* wrote Bredell. God's decision was to him final and was to be accepted without question.

When the British troops occupied Pretoria on the 5th of June, 1900,



CHURCH SQUARE ± 1904

Photo: R. O. Basson

the seventy five year old President and members of the Transvaal Government had already established themselves at Machadadorp, in the Eastern Transvaal near the Portuguese boundary. In September of that year the British troops also overran the Eastern parts of Transvaal whereupon the Executive Council decided to grant the President the necessary leave to go to Europe where he would be enabled to state the case of the Transvaal in the courtrooms of Europe.

On the 11th of September he left for Lourenco Marques where he boarded the Dutch warship "**Gelderland**" which was sent to the harbour by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands in order to convey him to Europe. On the 22nd of November he landed at Marseilles in the South of France. Ninety seven years previously the French had occasion to welcome back from exile their own Napoleon —. This time they welcomed a foreigner, a stranger, who had come to state his country's case. One hundred and fifty thousand Frenchmen gave him a tumultuous ovation as he drove through the streets to his hotel Noailles. Their hearts went out to him. The roar of welcome re-echoed throughout Europe. Everywhere he went the **people** received him with open arms, because the people of Europe saw in him a long lost but cherished symbol.

The President's entrance into Paris was described as a "triumphal procession". Poor and rich, nobles and servants, joined in this great welcome.

**But while the people of Europe welcomed him, the political leaders of Europe had other ideas and his call on them to see that justice be done, was fruitless. The Kaiser of Germany went so far as to refuse to receive him. The Kaiser explained that a visit by President Kruger to his court would be tantamount to a declaration of war by Germany on England. — Fourteen years later the Kaiser too was an exile . . .**

While the war lasted President Kruger stayed within the boundaries of the Netherlands.

After the peace treaty of Vereeniging was signed, President Kruger refused to return to his country because though he was born under the British flag, he was determined not to die under it. Though everything was lost for which he had worked and struggled throughout his life, he did not despair for the future of his country, because he knew and understood the resurgent, noble and inherent qualities of his people.

Of his belief in the future of his nation, he continuously reminded those around him in their moments of despondency. He believed that his people would go forward ennobled by their suffering and in his last message to them he called upon them to seek in the past all that is noble and good and to build thereon their future.

After his death his remains were brought to Cape Town in a Dutch boat. He was buried in Pretoria on the 16th of December, 1904, next to his beloved wife.



*(Museum, Alb. D No. 103)*

**THE BURIAL OF PRESIDENT KRUGER: OLD ARTILLERYMEN WHO ACTED AS GUARD OF HONOUR**