

patched to the Lydenburg district to recruit more men to assist in stemming the advance of the British. He enlisted every available burgher and then, contrary to the custom of Boer Generals up to that time, forced the natives to take up arms against the British. From the Lydenburg district alone he pressed two thousand natives into service, an order which few dared to disobey, although they looked upon the British as their coming emancipators from a state worse than slavery. He later became the leading commissariat officer of the Boer army.

The line of railway running through the northern Transvaal and Portuguese territory to the sea-coast town of Lorenzo Marques, was yet in possession of the Boers and by it supplies of arms, ammunition and provisions were brought in in large quantities for the use of the fighting burghers. As the British drew near Pretoria, the gold of the Transvaal treasury was also shipped out by this route and forwarded to Europe for safe keeping. All this work Erasmus superintended. The mountain caves of the Lydenburg district were made the storehouse of Boer army supplies. If driven from every other portion of their country the Boers thought it would be impossible for a British army to penetrate the mountain fastnesses around Lydenburg, and felt that there they were secure. When the burghers in August, 1900, made their courageous stand at Machadodorp on the border of these mountains, and were routed by General Buller's forces, after an all-day fight, Erasmus was the man who endeavoured to check their precipitous flight. He in some measure succeeded, but never since has as large a force of burghers faced a British column as at that engagement, which cleared the way to the British for a march on to Lydenburg.

Erasmus has been looked upon as the most irreconcilable of Boers. Knowing that the annexation of the Transvaal to the British Empire marked the downfall of his power and influence and the loss of a position which was to him the stepping-stone to wealth, his

determination to fight to the bitter end is not a matter of wonder.

Twenty miles north of Lydenburg is Krugersdorp, the home of Erasmus, where he for so many years wielded such power and amassed his wealth. Krugersdorp is located in the centre of the Origstol Valley—a stretch of low-lying country, seventy miles in length and varying in width from two to five miles, fenced in by mountains on all sides. This valley is noted for the fertility of its soil and for its extensive cattle raising. Krugersdorp itself is named after the ex-President, who often honoured the place with a visit, and frequently accompanied Erasmus on his annual lion and zebra hunts down by the border of Portuguese territory. The home of Erasmus is a commodious stone building with spacious rooms, each room with its fireplace and heavy articles of wooden furniture. Up to the destruction of the place by war, relics of the chase adorned the walls, the heads of leopards, lions and tigers looking down defiantly upon the visitor. Upon the uncarpeted floors of the rooms were spread the skins of these species of animals. In one room larger than the others, was a museum of modest dimensions where, in addition to animals preserved by the taxidermist's art, were many bright-plumed birds. Among the lordly animals of the African forest here found was a species of leopard, the gift to Erasmus of Selous, the well-known African hunter, who more than once has been the former's guest. In the centre of the house is a hallway of unusual width, through which a whole squadron of horse could march in section formation.

Surrounding this palatial home is a grove of orange, lemon and pear trees, through which two driveways wind, leading towards the main road to Lydenburg which passes close by. Beyond the grove tall eucalyptus trees form on all sides a border of foliage, reaching skyward. Here it is the "King of the Origstol Valley," as he is called, lived in luxury and contentment. It is pleasant to know that the Nero of the Transvaal can no longer follow his furious practices.