

By J. A. Winter

1900

THE LAST RISING IN SEKUKUNI'S LAND.Cause and effect by one who knows.

The following is an accurate account of the events in Sekukuni's land from the 11th June 1900 to the present date, by one who has resided in the Country from 1st Jan. 1880, and who is thoroughly acquainted with the native language, history and customs, who was always on intimate terms of friendship with old Sekukuni and his followers. The intention of the writer is to remain sincerely impartial and to allow the facts to make their own impressions on the reader. He earnestly hopes that what he has written down here may assist to everlasting peace amongst the poor deceived nation whose prosperity and welfare has always been to him his heart's desire during the last twenty years. To be able to understand the affairs in Sekukuniland people should bear in mind that only a few kraals of a Posiak of different tribes (the Mashabele , the old rulers of the land, the ^{Bahoni} Bacons, the ^{? Bamfha} Bossoaki, the ^{Borra} Barra, the Swazi &c&c).

When the late Sekukuni came back from Pretoria, where he was imprisoned by the English, he told the congregated nation in my presence, that he had been released by the Boers and that none of his people must ever again raise their assegies against this benefactors. The Boers gave him a large location on the flat open country to the west of the Lulu Mountains, where he intended to live in peace and obedient to the laws of civilised government : he told me however once when he was on a long visit at my station with all the other Chiefs of his country, that the laws of the white men deprived him of one of his greatest privaleges as a Chief, viz :- of the power of inflicting

capital

capital punishment, entreating me to let him have some poison from my medicines, so that he might be able to do in secret what he could no more do in public. Poor man, he did not long enjoy his release from prison his old enemy Mampoer, whom the English had appointed Chief of Sekukuni's tribe, though not paramount Chief of Sekukuni's land; made an unexpected attack on Sekukuni's kraal and murdered him.

He was succeeded by his brother "Kgoloke" Sekukuni having no son of his own alive. Kgoloke regarded himself only as acting Chief during the minority of little Sekukuni who was then with his mother, a daughter of Mutl at Papachlele's kraal: This little Sekukuni, the author of the present rising, has in reality not a drop of Sekukuni's blood in him.

The eldest sister of his mother had been engaged to Sekukuni's eldest son, Morvamotshe, who was killed in action at Fighting Hill by the English. This girl died and ^{Thoromatjane} Toermatjane, Sekukuni's mother was promised to Morvamotshe, but being still very young, had never even seen her promised husband. When the late Sekukuni was in Pretoria prison, this girl misbehaved herself with one of the many relations of Sekukuni, her child young Sekukuni was however acknowledged by Kgoloke and most of the nation. Kgoloke was a pattern of a good loyal Kaffir Chief, the nation liked him very much, as did also the Boers. He assisted them greatly to catch Mampuru in the Kapoeh war. One instance will suffice to shew what kind of man he was. One day he asked me Where is Tsogoane? (Major Clark, later Sir Marshall Clark) I told him he was Resident Magistrate of Basutoland. He asked me to write in his name a letter to tell him that he still loved him, and should never forget him. When asked he told me that Major Clark took him prisoner, but even then treated him as a Chief and more than that trusted his word as a Chief.

Chief, When he once asked leave to visit a kraal near the Camp. He so loved the man that when Major Clark one day approached rather daringly a cave full of warriors, he Kgolokoe, himself some few days ago his enemy, pulled him back, saying "our men in the cave will shoot you ". Shortly before his death I asked him once " Do you think that your nation will ever again make war on the white Government ?" He answered " Yes, as soon as I close my eyes ." Those many relations of Sekukuni are already giving me trouble, they say I am far too loyal. I ought only to allow the Government to take a certain amount of taxes, In all other regards we ought to stick to our old independence ".

Some few months after and what he foretold really happened. When he died, the Native Commissioner sent his clerk to tell the natives, that the Government would later agree with them who should be appointed acting Chief, Meantime Ramarock should look after the Location. This made the first split amongst them.

One party, (Ramarock died in 1895) Ramarock and Kgolokoe's friends and family keeping loyal : the other party resolving not to wait for any division of the Government, but to act independently. When the Native Commissioner came with a missive from the Executive, he called the head of the Sekukuni faction (Bokgobelo, whom Toermatgane had chosen for her husband, together with Toermatgane and ^{Kgolokoe} Kgolokoe, the widow of Sekukuni). He examined them as to where they got the right to act independently from the Government; taking taxes, not only in the Location, but from the private farms even as far as Mapulanaland. The answer was that although the farms belonged to their owners, the natives belonged to them, according to their old native laws, which so they distinctly told him were still ruling laws. This before witnesses and taken down in shorthand, broke their case.

They

They were sent to prison, young Sekukuni to be educated by the Government.

Many and heavy were the fines against the opposition party, it would for the present purpose lead too far to describe how this quarrelling went on, and recommenced after the release of the prisoners and the coming home of young Sekukuni. Enough that the Government at last decided to divide the big Location (28 farms) in two parts : one to be under Kgolane (eldest son of Kgolokoe) as head Chief, the other to be under Toermatgane, both Chiefs receiving a Transvaal flag from the hands of the Superintendent of Native Affairs (Gen. P. Joubert.)

Let us now come to the present war and the last rising. As the Native Commissioner was too far away, the Government had appointed his former clerk, Van de Wal, as Special Onder Commissioner for Sekukuni's land, to reside in the Location.

When the war broke out (11th October 1899) strong parties of Boers were posted in different parts of the Location as guards. Besides these many native police were engaged, and armed with Government Martini Rifles and posted in and outside the Location. To provide these Boers with provisions, clothing forage a tax of 2½ shillings from each Kaffir was twice collected later one ox from each kraal. Many of the young men were sent out to look after the farms. About Xmas the Landrost of Lydenburg sent Manock a trusty native constable, to hear from me, what the feeling amongst the natives was, if they were going to rise or not. I warned him that they only waited their chance that as soon as the Boer case was hopeless, they would rise. This was wired to Pretoria from there to the Tugela. The Native Commissioner got a good snubbing and I was called up to the Commandant of Sekukuniland, Klaas Prinsloo, to substantiate or to withdraw. They induced me to make a declaration under

oath, that at present there was no rising near, which I could do safely, as up to this date only Boer victories were published.

But as soon as Pretoria was taken the storm broke loose. Some may say the cause was the new tax of £1 per head, going to be taken instead of the yearly tax of £2 besides the hut tax; but I am sure from all that I had been told, that they would have risen all the same, without any tax troubles.

Young Sekukuni fresh from circumcision, according to old native ways, had to prove his Chieftainship by fighting, and that had to become a fight between the two parties the loyal and disaffected ones. Strange Boer Administration.

When the danger was far off till Cronje's surrender, they had strong parties in the Location, and when they ought to have reinforced rather than reduce, they took the last Boer from the Location, at least from Sekukuni's Location where the only danger lay and sent them to the front, so that there was no white man near them or between them and the rival Chief Kgolane. In the early dawn of the 11th June (1900) there crept under young Sekukuni's own personal command, a big impi, like snakes into the kraal of the sleeping Kgolane. They had spied out that Tsoalidi, son of Sekukuni's old general, who was busy building a new kraal, was sleeping in the open near his fire he being the most dangerous and brave of all Kgolane's men. They crept close up to him and stabbed him in his blankets :- A shot was then fired which was a signal for the whole herd to commence their butchering, the kraal was fired from all sides at once and the flying men stabbed or shot. Only a few women were killed, most of them were captured. As if by a miracle Kgolane, with the greater part of his men escaped, breaking through the lines of the enemy or creeping through the bushes.

The same morning Pasone Chief of Mamelobo's kraal, a leader of the disloyal party on Kgolane's part of the Location, also crept up stealthily to the little rival kraal of Mangang and killed him and all his people, only an hour distant from the house of the Native Commissioner who still had some few soers as a guard with him.

Like wildfire the rising now spread, not only over the Location, but over all the private farms between the Oliphant River and the Steelpoort River, a rule of blood shed and fire. I thought it to be my duty to send a letter to Sekukuni warning him not to harm the people of the Lulu farms of the Consolidated land and Exploration Coy for which I am an agent, he answered me in very uncivil and harsh letter, saying that he would not allow my interfering in his doings, He said "Has the Englishman who bought the farms also bought the people, the people are mine". (N.B. Just the same reasoning as in the first rebellion). " If you prevent any of the Lulu people joining me, I shall kill them, and hold you answerable " So the killing out went on.

Knowing that the Vice President (Joubert) at two different occasions distinctly told the whole nation that people living outside the Location on farms have their own owners as their Chiefs, and that every Location Chief who meddled with them would be put in prison.

On the very day I wrote to him, an impi of about 300 killed another little kraal of 8 men and burned it, some two days later they attacked another large kraal with an overwhelming majority in numbers, commandoes from Zoutpansberg having joined them. After a stubborn resistance (thrice the enemy were driven down the hill), the men at last saw the futility of further fighting, broke through the lines and escaped to the Middelburg District, to the son of Mampoer, Malakuti, by name, near Fort Weber.

After this victory the hue and cry went round, all

who

who had ever been loyal with the Government, (this they called being of Kgolane's party, although Kgolane had no party in reality outside the Location) must either be killed or send immediately cattle or a girl, in some cases both, to acknowledge the paramountcy of young Sekukuni throughout the country, especially all Government police must now be killed out. This they did to prevent the English Government getting any trusty police from amongst them, except those Sekukuni might chose to give them, and who would not work against his instructions. The bulk of the people firmly believed that this meant that the whole country (of which by far the greatest part is outside the Location, chiefly belonging to English Companies actually again was Sekukuni's. No wonder the natives came to this conclusion (although Sekukuni in public neither contradicted or confirmed it) as never in the last 20 years, since the English subjugated them, had a Chief arrogated to himself the right of killing and murdering. No white man was allowed to use his cattle farms, no company had any authority left over their farms, not even to remove from their property any native who trespassed or refused his duties to the owners. In one case they made this distinction, that the owners could use the fruit trees planted by him, but had no right to plant any more. When complaints were made to Sekukuni in private and confidence he sometimes would say that he claimed no private ground, he only claimed the people, that the people would even then have to pay farm rents, but he never published an order to the nation, to tell them this, in fact he let them do what they liked. This can be easily prove by facts.

Late one evening the (19th June) a fully armed band of 25 men under Sekukuni's chief Indunas and generals came to my station. They were already close to my house before we saw them. They gave me a letter from Sekukuni

written

written by his "State Secretary " as he styled himself the writer personally bringing it. This letter asked me immediately surrender to him any Government ammunition I had received, as also all the cattle I had been given by the Native Commissioner. I told the men that I never had any cattle or guns or ammunition received from the Native Commissioner, what I had in cattle or rifles I had bought with my own money, the rifles had never been in Government service, their only use being to kill the tigers, with which my hills swarmed and to kill game to provide my family with food. Amongst my cattle there were indeed 5 head belonging to the Native Commissioner, which he had lent to me for the use of their milk. The only Government goods with me were some few pounds and goats, received as taxes, which to take my sons had been commandeered, to prove which I shewed them the commandeering order and the tax diito. Although I explained this to them, adding that this station farm was a grant from Sir Garnet Wolseley, they insisted on taking from me my only means to defend myself and family against these murderous thieving bands, of which the country was full. Fully armed they went into my house and took my 5 rifles with all my ammunition, took the Government money and goats; commandeered a slaughter ox for their boys, as also two of my salted horses; for the rifles &c the Secretary gave me a receipt. An Englishman Mr Alcock, residing with his family was present at all their transactions.

From me they went to Mr Lawrence and Mr Ward, storekeepers, both English the former under oath of neutrality the other having taken an oath of allegiance, and took from them their rifles. When they left us they promised to tell the people that they must not trouble us any more, as we were now under their protection. I knew however very well that in times like this, excited natives would not mind an order like this, especially if they brought a good war chief to ask pardon for what they had done us.

Two days later they commandeered 3 head of cattle from my kraal belonging to the Native Commissioner. Twenty years I had resided here under Boer and English rule, also under no white rule in the war 1880-1881, but never had a Chief entered my house by force or taken anything from me. I also most solemnly do assert that Kgolokoe's sons party never would have murdered a kraal in its sleep or entered a white man's house by force.

Many natives were most foully murdered in and outside the Location, which murders were either done by Sekukuni's orders or approved by him, or as in one case of which he seemingly did not approve, let go unpunished and took the murdered man's cattle. I will only describe two of them to shew how they did it.

Outside the Location in one of the Estates and Development's Coy farms, there lived a petty Chief, Malepping, one of the best policeman outside the Location. He was very much hated as he was very brave and did not allow any bribery. As soon as Kgolane's kraal was killed out, he was hunted over the veldt for miles and miles by an armed impi. Riding one of my donkeys, he was able to get away, although he had to leave the tired donkey in their hands. He fled to me, when I advised him to fly to Lydenburg. He refused, partly because he did not like to leave his wife and family behind, and partly because he did not believe that Sekukuni hated him personally, having no cause for this. He thought the one kraal only which hunted him, intended to take his life, because he assisted Mr Ward, the Agent for the Coy, to gather the taxes, as all his goats (50) were taken. I lent him one to send up to Sekukuni to ask protection. When Sekukuni's men came to take my rifles, he hid himself. I asked the Secretary (Assaph) what he would do to Malepping if he surrendered, he answered he would " guarantee him his life. I called him and made him surrender and give up his valuable Martin's Sporting Rifle. Just before the men left he overheard

he overheard a conference of the leaders, in which they agreed to take him with them and kill him on the road so he again hid himself in the hill. The Secretary became furious when they could not find him, broke into my house to search after him, and told me that he would now send out an order to kill him wherever he was. In the night a dark rainy night, I assisted him to fly away, He went as far as Sekororo's, far into the Zoutpansberg District near Leydsdorp. Sekukuni's bloodhounds found him there however, handcuffed him, brought him back and murdered him near Oliphants River, stabbing him when handcuffed. After a day the only remains of him were some few ribs. The natives having cut off all his flesh and made it into medicines to be eaten by the warriors to make them brave His poor old mother nearly lost her mind, especially because he was not allowed a burial. Some say this was done by a special order from Toeramatsane, as he once being full of beer and believing himself outside the Location had used some insulting names about her.

The second case of foul murder that I should like to mention, was done in the Location, if not by order (which all the natives believe) at least by approval

This is Phasaane, a son of Mamolobe of the big Chief Pasone of Mamolobe's kraal. Michael and an uncle of young Sekukuni's, an old bald headed Christian native, a very bad lot. He is a bad lot and ought to be diligent and rich man, had sent two oxen out of his span got rid of later on, as he seems and some money to Pasone, to ask protection. This was to be at the bottom of all the troubles. He has got plenty of brains. He has got plenty of brains. He has got plenty of brains.

hate him. One day some men whose Chief was Pasone, came to have a talk with him. They were sitting on the ground. All at once the men called out to a native teacher, Petrus Tulloane (who reported this to me "move away a bit" and deliberately in cold blood shot the poor old man and then stabbed him. The old man only cried out "Mercy, God of Israel, God of Israel" and was dead.

Grandfather of
Stephen Maboane

father of
Petrus
Mandi

Two parties who had been to Sekukuni to make peace told me that Sekukuni had answered, he knew full well they relied on the new Government (English) and that they would again try to be Government men, but they must look out, he would do again and worse. He will cut off arms and legs and throw them out for the ravens to feed on them.

It remains to mention the Boer Government's doings under these circumstances:- As soon as they saw that it would not be convenient to give protection to their own loyal party, or even to the white men and their properties what did they do? They simply threw their own poor deceived party over, and asked peace from Sekukuni giving up the whole land to him, making the Steelpoort the boundary, asking Sekukuni not to cross it and to leave their farms and cattle alone. This chiefly was the doing of the Landrost of Lydenburg, (his tact he called it) and those Boers whose farms were near the Steelpoort or even on the Steelpoort, like D. Schoeman's which they wished to preserve (my new house, only just furnished as one told me). Those Boers who remonstrated were silenced by lies, making it out as though it was only a quarrel amongst the natives, laying the fault even on those armed Boers, who in the beginning of the war, had kept the rising down, nay, on the Government itself, which never ought to have allowed the division of the Location (as it were a matter of the Location alone, and after Sekukuni had burnt the Government offices and taken the Government forage, looting the Native Commissioners house, disarming three Boers who passed through his Location, taking cattle belonging to the Native Commissioner, compelling the Landrost himself to ride under a white flag through a part of his own District). The Native Commissioner must have known in some way of the coming trouble, as he just got his family away before the storm began. He himself with a few Boers, was still at his office, even some days after Kgolane's and the kraal near his house had been

killed out, strange though that he never gave the other white families (far more in the midst of the natives) notice that there was any danger. The Commandant of Sekukuni land who lives over 20 miles from the Steelpoort came with 25 men and got his boers out, even with a wagon load of goods and rifles &c also with a loyal kraal, with its women and children from Magnet Heights to Steelpoort 12 miles. They had to fight their way out through hordes of natives. Although the natives told me they had killed 4 boers, it appears they got through unharmed not alone that but also killed about 30 natives, one of their horses however being taken.

The President hearing of this and afraid the Lydenburg Boers might lay hold on this fresh excuse for not appearing at the front when commandeered, sent the Landrost several times to Sekukuni to come to an agreement with him. Sekukuni was only too glad. Although the natives and nearly all the Chiefs told me, they were not a raid of the Boers, as they were utterly down.

Sekukuni knew better and was awfully afraid of the Boers might join some big kraals, which were still to be killed out by him near Fort Weber (Middelburg District) as also some near him which only assisted him by compulsion (one had in secret received 1000 rounds of Martini cartridges from the same Landrost) so he was only too glad to temporise.

At the same time he had also sent a letter secretly to Lord Roberts in Pretoria, of which I do not know the contents but in which to be sure he tried his deceiving tricks, the same as he did with the Boers.

Would it be believed that the Landrost even used this situation to his personal emolument to the harm of the Government, by selling a good horse to Sekukuni, of which his own Government just then stood in the greatest need, so that they took them at last by force from the poor burghers. He got 10 head of cattle for it (N.B.

Cattle looted from the kraals that Sekukuni had killed out). The last time he passed my house returning from Sekukuni he strongly advised me to ask Sekukuni to allow me to bring my family out, even if I should be obliged to leave all my goods and cattle behind. I preferred not to leave my little station and to risk rather any danger, knowing that the natives believed me not alone to be of strong English sympathies, but also to my having the station and farm from the English.

The Landrost had promised to deliver Kgolane, who had fled to the Boers for protection, into Sekukuni's hands. Kgolane however with 80 of his men left the Boers, and went for protection to the son of Mampur, ie Malakuti, in the Middelburg District near Fort Weber.

Sekukuni just after an easy victory at Magakal, in the Zoutpansburg District, now intended to cross also the Middelburg boundary and to attack Mampore's son, where also Kgolane was. This Chief in his danger applied to his Native Commissioner, (Christian Fourie) for protection at least for ammunition which he got. The largest Impi which Sekukuni had ever got together, reinforced by over 300 men from the Zoutpansburg went out, attacked, and was miserably defeated with a heavy loss in killed and wounded. Sekukuni seeing his ammunition was finished asked the Landrost of Lydenburg for a fresh supply and he really got it. Sekukuni prepared a new expedition into the Middelberg District, calling up re-inforcements even from Sekororo, Leydsdorp, and Mapulanaland. As however the English are said already to be near Lydenburg, we hope to God they may be in time to prevent further butchery going on.

J. Winter
(Missionary)

Mosego (Fighting Hill)

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