

at Potchefstroom by President Marthinus Pretorius, Matlaba was allowed to return to Matlwang in 1856, and lived there in comparative peace for another 17 years.

Seatholo, elder of the section at Thaba Ncho had died in 1846 (?), and the Thaba Ncho section of the Rapulana people was now under the sole charge of his younger brother Motuba. In 1864, however, Matlaba called Motuba to join him at Matlwang leaving the Thaba Ncho section of his people now under Goutlwetswe, generally known as Abraham Motuba. In reality this man was the son of Moilwa - Motuba's immediate elder brother, and only assumed the surname of Motuba because he had lived with him from childhood, and succeeded him as elder of headman at Thaba Ncho. This Goutlwetswe or Abraham Motuba was born in about 1830, and subsequently took Chief Moroka's daughter Nnana to wife.

In 1874, having been sought out and befriended by President Francois Burgers, Matlaba was directed by him to remove to Elandsfontein, and was soon after assisted by the South African Republic to settle at Bodibe or Polfontein, where he arrived with all his people, including the Thaba Ncho section of Goutlwetswe Abraham Motuba in April 1874. This latter place - Polfontein, was claimed by Montshiwa, whose people, Israel Molema and Stephen Lefenya among others, had lands there under irrigation from the fountain <sup>after</sup> ~~fater~~ which the place is named. They were unceremoniously pushed out in spite of Montshiwa's protests.

Mosikare Mothupi, a junior member of the Rapulana royalty, a cousin of the chief Matlaba and also <sup>maternal</sup> cousin of Molema equally like Matlaba himself, soon after this came from Bodibe (Polfontein) with a handful of followers to live at Lotlhakane or Reitfontein - about ten miles to the south of Molema's town of Mafikeng. Naturally he called on Molema to acquaint him with this step, and Molema would undoubtedly in turn tell Montshiwa, who was still living at Moshaneng under the Bangwaketse chief Gaseitsiwe. It is not likely that there were any conditions or formalities in connection with this coming and settlement of Mothupi. Lotlhakane had been the home of the original chief Rapulana in the previous century. Rapulana was the great-grand father of Mothupi as well as <sup>of</sup> Matlaba. He had come here with his clan on the dispersion of the Barolong nation at Setlagole about the year 1777, and here he had died and was buried. From here the clan had moved to Matlwang, then to Didibeng (Hartebeestfontein), then to <sup>an</sup> Motlhanaapitse near Warrenton and then to Thaba Ncho, from whence they were now returning after nearly a hundred years. Montshiwa, however, claimed Lotlhakane as his territory, and regarded Mothupi's visit and words to Molema as a request for permission to settle there, and therefore Mothupi as his vassal. This became quite a favourite legend among the people of Montshiwa.



In 1875 Matlaba ordered that section of his tribe that had remained behind under Seatlholo and Motuba but had now followed <sup>to Bodibe (Polfenken)</sup> up under Goutlwetswe to move to Lotlhakane. Their exodus from Bodibe was quite an imposing affair of 37 wagons, many horses ridden and driven, and a large number of cattle, sheep and goats. They made straight for Lotlhakane, and there Goutlwetswe, probably without consulting either Molema or Montshiwa joined Mothupi Mosikare, and being of senior rank superseded him as elder of the clan at Lotlhakane. Without any specific understanding, Montshiwa regarded Goutlwetswe (Abraham) as he had regarded Mothupi, that is as being tributary to him because he had come to live in what he claimed to be his country. Goutlwetswe on the other hand looked only to Matlaba at Bodibe as his chief, and regarded Lotlhakane as his inheritance.

Frequent mention of this clan will be made in the ensuing pages. vide pp.

#### CHAPTER IX

##### ENTER PRESIDENT FRANCOIS BURGERS

Having forced Marthinus Pretorius and his state attorney Klein to resign their offices, the South African Republic, by the hand of its acting President Daniel Erasmus now issued a Proclamation, repudiating the Keate Award on the ground that the Ex-President Pretorius had no authority to sign the deed of submission. The burghers of the Republic were now unanimous in their desire to find a clever man to be their president, one who could competently argue their cases and defend their interests before any European council. They obtained such a man on the 1st July 1872 - in the Reverend Thomas Francois Burgers of Hanover, Cape Colony. He was duly sworn in as President of the South African Republic. He was full of energy, ideas and promise. His first duty was to prove this to his electors by neutralising the Keate Award and thus removing the dominant grievance of the Republic. His repudiation of the Award was expressed in forcible and forthright language in a pamphlet; his grounds were (1) want of authority on the part of the Republic's signatories to the deed of submission, (2) Want of decision in the deed of submission itself, and (3) Bias on the part of one of the arbitrators and of the final umpire.

He prosecuted some research into the history of the Barolong, and discovered that there were several clans - Ratlou, Tshidi, Makgetla, Seleka and Rapulana in that order of seniority, and that the principal chief of the senior (Ratlou) clan was Moshete, but that for some reason that individual was not at the head of affairs in his clan, let alone other clans, but that on the contrary he was employed as a servant and shepherd by a Dutch farmer...../



of their national integrity and they objected to the Imperial veto on their native legislation as an intolerable incubus. Amongst other things they demanded the re-affirmation or restoration of the Sand River Convention of 1852, a freehand in dealing with African tribes on the western Transvaal border, and addition to the Transvaal by the lands of Montshiwa, Moshete, Mankurwane and <sup>Moswell</sup> Mossou. In support of this last claim they put in a historical resume that their predecessors in office had conquered and expelled Mzilikazi who had over-run all these countries, and that therefore Bechuana-land belonged to them by right of conquest. They fortified themselves by citing the deeds of cession made by some chiefs - Moshete and Matlaba and <sup>Wen</sup> Mossou - to their former president Thomas Burgers. They referred to the Keate Award as a deliberate avulsion of the Transvaal.

"When the Transvaal delegates went to London, they imagined that they had only to come and see and conquer. If they had come nine months earlier their anticipations might have been fulfilled. When they arrived, however, it was too late. Mr. Mackenzie had been beforehand with them, and to their unconcealed chagrin, they found that the public would not tolerate their attempt to erect a Boer barrier across the great trade route from the Cape to Central Africa" (W.T. Stead in Pall Mall Gazette as quoted by W.D. Mackenzie. Life of John Mackenzie p. 309).

Lord Derby in replying therefore told the Deputation that Montshiwa and Mankurwane objected on behalf of themselves and their people to being included in the Transvaal, and there was a strong body of feeling in England in favour of their independence unless they were under British protection.

While willing to concede to the demands of the Deputation in most things, even to the point of further modifying the Transvaal boundary to include an additional 2,600 square miles of land being parts of the lands of Moshete and <sup>Wen</sup> Mossou, Lord Derby, liberal-minded, urbane and even "cold-water engine" as he was, was adamant in resisting the inclusion in the Transvaal of Montshiwa's and Mankurwane's territories and the Missionary or Trade Route.

In reporting this intransigence of Lord Derby to the Volksraad, President Paul Kruger stated "He could not say that the British Government had not been willing to hear them, yet it had been induced to withhold justice from the Deputation by lies and fraud on the part of traitors and intriguers of whom Mr. Mackenzie was one. There were officials of Her Majesty whom Her Majesty must believe. He said that if Her Majesty really caused an impartial investigation to be made, they would learn the whole truth. At

present...../



present the British Government went on the letters of liars. The Government in general, and Mr. Gladstone in particular were influenced by the opinion of the English people to whom they must give account. If it had not been for Mr. Mackenzie and the High Commissioner, everything would have been right. These liars had stirred up the people to stand on the way of the Government."

*Mackenzie's Austral Aff I 165 J.D. Mackenzie's Mackenzie's 1345 Hyatt S.P. Northward Trek p 37*

The establishment of a British protectorate over the lands of Montshiwa and Mankurwane was at the same time decided upon, and a commission was issued to Sir Hercules Robinson to protect British interests in Bechuanaland, and the High Commissioner recommended the Reverend John Mackenzie to be Special commissioner on the spot to assist him. Mackenzie was not a persona grata in the Transvaal. He was too outspoken a critic of their native policy, and no sooner was his appointment known of in South African than there was <sup>an</sup> outburst of indignation against it expressed in telegrams of protest to the Colonial Office. The news of the new delimitation of the western Transvaal boundary and the probably establishment of a British protectorate over the countries of Montshiwa and Mankurwane at once incited the freebooting volunteers of Moshete to greater activity, and after holding several meetings in March, they determined to get possession of Montshiwa's lands in anticipation of the actual erection of beacons and the issue of the proclamation of the protectorate. On the 1st of April (1884) Gey van Pittius, "Administrator of the land of Goshen" and leader of Moshete's volunteers gave Montshiwa four days' notice to quit these lands at Rooigrond, which Montshiwa's people had never wholly vacated in spite of the expropriating provisions of the Snyman Treaty of 1882. Montshiwa of course refused to quit, and said he would regard any attempt to dislodge him as an act of war. The Goshen volunteers thereupon turned their cattle and horses into the Barolong ripening cornfields, and at the same time, Gey van Pittius gave notice of his intention to survey Montshiwa's land, cut it up into farms, set it up as the Republic of Goshen and occupy it. On this, Montshiwa wrote to Gey van Pittius:- "I have heard that your intention is to come and survey my country, and that you will also take my cattle. You cannot look to me for payment or for farms. I did not hire you. You all know this. I did not interfere with your seeking your payment from the person who hired you as his volunteers. At the same time I warn you to leave my country. I do not know the land of Goshen you write about. My people are living on the lands their fathers have lived on - the land of the Barolong."

On the 12th of May, after giving Gey van Pittius due notice, Montshiwa sent 300 armed men to expel the freebooting volunteers of Moshete from Rooigrond across the Transvaal border, which they did, burnt their huts and occupied Rooigrond.



On the 12th of April, the Reverend John Mackenzie had received the following orders inter alia from the High Commissioner:-

"The case of persons laying claim to the so-called Land of Goshen would appear to differ materially from that of the present European population of Stellaland. The farms assigned to Moshete's volunteers in Montshiwa's country have never been inspected, surveyed, occupied or improved. Moreover the territory left to the chief Montshiwa by the new (London) Convention is so limited that no portion of it could well be alienated, and you may find yourself obliged to order the ejection of the persons now trespassing at Rooigrond. In such a case it may happen that prompt and decisive action may be necessary, and should you feel yourself strong enough, you are authorised to take such action as may seem to you to be desirable without delaying for a further reference to me."

Mackenzie went north, and arrived at Taung (Taungs) on the 30th of April and at once entered into treaty with Mankurwane after explaining to him the nature of the protectorate over his country. From Taung Mackenzie went to Vryburg and with the cooperation of Gert van Niekerk, the "administrator" of Stellaland, secured the submission of that state to the British crown. He then visited Moshete at Khunwana to find that the chief was in complete darkness about the moves that determined the destiny of his country in the recent Convention and was now blaming everybody except himself. From Khunwana, Mackenzie went to Mafeking, where he arrived on the 20th of May. There was great excitement among the Tshidi Barolong at the arrival of their old friend John Mackenzie in his new capacity as a messenger of Queen Victoria to restore order and bring peace to their strife-torn country. The Chief Montshiwa was especially delighted at the prospect of the establishment of the Queen's authority <sup>because of</sup> after petitioning for it for so many years, and the constant fear of his country being snatched by the Transvaal. It is an interesting psychological problem that Montshiwa was happy to lose his independence to the British Government but was bitterly averse to losing it to the Government of the South African Republic. It was like a choice between drowning in clean water or in dirty water. The end result is the same, namely loss of life.

But Montshiwa had said it many times that he had the greatest confidence in the humanity and justice of the British Government and its representatives, while for the Government of the South African Republic he entertained feelings of distrust and dislike.

It is <sup>an</sup> undeniable fact that from experience African tribes early learnt to look to the British missionary and British officials for justice and protection, while at the same time regarding the Boers and people of Dutch and German extraction with suspicion and dislike. These feelings of trust and faith, like the subconscious impressions of early childhood, though they might alter in intensity have...../



never quite disappeared until the middle of the 20th Century either because of the limited sympathy of the present day missionary, trader or Government official, or because the African is more sophisticated, more critical, and more independent. No distinction is made now between Boer and Briton - be they preacher or politician. *the one is feared and distrusted as much as the other*  
 "And what did all this agitation secure for those who were supposed to be British Special proteges? Absolutely nothing. Bechuanaland has become a portion of the Cape Colony. *7 then of the Union of South Africa* The chiefs who were so belauded in England in 1884 have been absolutely wiped out by forces, official and industrial, consecrated by the shadow of the British Flag." (J.R. Stratham Paul Kruger p.172). Equally with the successors of Moshete, Matlaba and *oswele* Massou, the heirs of Montshiwa and Mankurware have lost their country.

Mackenzie first went to Rooigrond to warn the Goshenites who were still in camp there that the Queen's authority was now extended over Montshiwa's country as defined by the London Convention. He was accompanied by Kebalepile, Montshiwa's eldest son and heir, Stephen Lefenya, the Chiefs secretary and the Reverend Stuart Franklin, the Wesleyan missionary stationed with Montshiwa.

As Gey van Pittius however declined to meet Mackenzie, the latter returned to Mafikeng where he wrote out a public notice and sent it to him: Public Notice.

"To the Europeans now residing on the boundary line between the South African Republic and the Barolong country at a place Rooigrond and to all whom it may concern:

Public notice is hereby given that it has pleased Her Majesty the Queen to establish a protectorate in Bechuanaland and for that purpose among other steps, to enter into a treaty with the Chief Montshiwa, by which that chief concedes to Her Majesty jurisdiction and authority over all white people and black people within the Barolong country.

In terms of my commission as Deputy of His Excellency the High Commissioner and in accordance with the treaty now mentioned, I hereby declare the whole of the Barolong country to be under the protection, jurisdiction and authority of Her Majesty the Queen etc. (C.4194. 50).

On Thursday the 22nd of May 1884, a treaty was entered into between the chief Montshiwa and Deputy Commissioner John Mackenzie representing Her Majesty's Government, whereby Montshiwa *formally* ceded jurisdiction of his country to the Queen's Government. The ceremony was performed in the royal kgotla or forum before a large and excited gathering of tribesmen, who applauded the chief and the commissioner to signify their approval.

After the treaty had been *signed by* signed (or marked) by the chief and his son Kebalepile and his nephew Israel Molema and other ....



other princes, Christopher Bethell, Stuart Franklin, Edgar Rowland and J. Mahon attested the signatures. A prayer of thanksgiving was next offered at the request of the chief, and then Montshiwa's cannon and a volley of musketry was fired to mark the historic occasion and the joy of the people.

The crowd had not yet dispersed when there was a report that the Rooigrond freebooters had gone across the line on the north-east from the direction of Zeerust, and had raided Montshiwa's cattle posts at Tlapeng taking hundreds of cattle and sheep. This was an early indication to Mackenzie and Montshiwa of the contempt with which Gey van Pittius and his men treated the Imperial Government's assumption of authority over Montshiwa's country, and that the chaotic state of affairs reigning in the western Transvaal border was most likely to continue.

Mackenzie followed up the captured cattle to Zeerust, and there made representations to the landdrost Otto, and also reported the matter to the British Resident at Pretoria, and to the High Commissioner, but no tangible result was obtained. Leaving Mafikeng Mackenzie travelled westward along the Molopo River and concluded treaties of submission to the Queen with Chief Makgobi at Phitshane, Chief Bonokwane at Morokweng, and Chief Letlhogile at Ganyesa, and then returned to his station at Kuruman on the 21st of June to write out a report for the High Commissioner. By Mackenzie's treaties the whole of the country north of the Cape Colony, west of the Transvaal, and east of the 20th meridian of east longitude became a British sphere of influence.

In spite of this the freebooters continued to attack Montshiwa and on the 20th of June there was heavy fighting. The Barolong had gone out to reap their lands at Dishwaing (corresponding to Buurmansdriep and Lucydale). The reapers were supported by three regiments - Madisakgomo (Captain: Kebalepile), Matsetse (Captain Besel) and Magodu (Captain: Tawana) - 24 years to 32 years age groups. Altogether they numbered about three hundred men. They were attacked by the men from Goshen and Zeerust, and intercepted on their return to Mafikeng. A sharp skirmish ensued and continued for about three hours, and many were killed on both sides - 16 of the Barolong, among whom was Makgetla, Montshiwa's son, and also his cousins Isaka Mococe and Morwenyane Leteane. The Boers lost perhaps half that number. When the Barolong depleted regiments arrived at Mafikeng in a funeral mood by reason of the death of their prince, Montshiwa upbraided them: "Who think you must die for the father-land if not the princes? Think you an enemy's bullet or ball respects a king's son, or that a king's son is dearer to his parents anymore than a commoner's son to his parents? Away with your heaviness of heart: **Makgetla** has died gloriously because

he...../



he has died as we should all be prepared to die; So on with the struggle for our land and our freedom."

For this attack on Montshiwa and the loss of life inflicted after the Queen's protection had been proclaimed, the British Resident and the High Commissioner made feeble remonstrances with the Transvaal Government, but that Government knew that that was just so much waste of breath and time and paper, ~~and the~~ a mere <sup>d</sup> flash in the pan - and the men of Goshen carried on unfettered in their ~~determination~~ intention and activities to sieze Montshiwa's country .

Mackenzie had left Mafeking at the end of May. As soon as he had turned his back, there was renewed activity in recruiting for the ranks of Moshete's volunteers, and on the 24th of <sup>January</sup> ~~June~~ Gey van Pittius had published in a Pretoria paper - Die Volkstem - a "Declaration of War in the fullest sense against Montshiwa," and invited "All true Sons of South Africa " to join the ranks of the Volunteers upon the understanding that they would share in the land and booty to be procured, which "With Gods help we hope to bring to pass."

When the British Resident complained of this to the Transvaal Government, the latter issued a Proclamation "Strigently prohibiting anyone from engaging in the hostilities, and enjoining the Transvaal officials, that is - field-cornets and landdrosts, immediately to report to the Government all persons contravening the irder.

At the same time the High Commissioner formally notified the Transvaal Government that a "British Protectorate had been established over Bechuanaland, and a cession of jurisdiction had been accepted from the Chief Montshiwa ." But ofcourse no one in the Transvaal took these notifications and prohibitions seriously, nor paid the slightest heed to them, and raiding and fighting went on just as before, and were in fact working up to a grand climax.

On the 12th of July 1884, Montshiwa received alarming news. Chief Tshipinare Moroka of Thabancho had been assassinated by his half brother Samuel, who claimed to be the rightful successor of Moroka - chief of the Seleka branch of the Barolong at Thabancho. Tshipinare was both Montshiwa's nephew and son-in-law, being the husband of Buku, Montshiwa's only child by his principal wife Majang. *son of Selesela - Montshuwa's brother and*

On the 31st of July (1884) some 300 Dutch-Boers from Rooigrond raided the Barolong and Bangwaketse cattlaposts at Tlapeng, sixteen miles to the north-west of Mafikeng, and ~~drove~~ drove off over 3,000 herd of cattle. News of the raid had been received, and in the early morning of the next day, the Barolong were assembled in the letsholo - a war munt or battle muster - preparatory to going out to dispute the possession of the cattle with the Rooigrond volunteers. Mathhare Nkgwang the M.O.H and royal magician was still busy sprinkling the warriors with his ~~protective~~ prophylactic infusions, and immunising them with incisions, scarifications and inunctions and <sup>incantations</sup> ~~incantations~~



incantations against military accidents, and Montshiwa was still giving final orders when the enemy came in sight. On return from Tlapeng, they had driven their loot along the west and south of the Barolong village of Mafikeng, purposely near enough to be seen, and thereby lure Montshiwa's men to fight. Sure enough, unable to resist the desire to recapture their cattle, the Barolong at once went out to attack. A severe engagement followed on the Lotlhakane and Magogwe spruits four miles to the south of Mafikeng village, ebbed and flowed, now forwards towards Lotlhakane, and now backwards towards the village as the Barolong or the Boers dominated the fight.

In the afternoon a contingent, consisting of farmers who had just arrived at Rooigrond from Stellaland and Harts river district came to assist their kinsmen, and turned the scales against the Barolong, who were, in any case already running short of ammunition. The Barolong were utterly defeated, and suffered severe losses in 181 killed and about as many wounded. Of the killed, 67 were Bangwaketse tribesmen, whose cattle had been among those stolen, and which they had followed up. The Rooigrond volunteers lost about 50 men, among them two Coetzee brothers. This was a decisive battle, and to the Barolong the most disastrous of the campaign, wherefore they call it "Tigele", meaning collapsion, prostration, subsidence or submergence.

The Rooigrond men and their allies were masters of the field, and after mopping up small pockets of resistance, they collected their slain and wounded, and triumphantly drove their booty over the Transvaal border at Rooigrond.

There was much weeping and lamentation in the Barolong town that night as one after another corpse of the men who had given their lives for their country and for freedom was brought in. Among the slain were several Barolong princes, Tawana Molema, Makgetla and his brother Makgetlanyana Phetlha. The Barolong also lost two Europeans who had been assisting them - Christopher Bethell and Nathan Walker. The circumstances of Bethell's death were unsavoury, and led, afterwards to much correspondence between the British authorities and the Transvaal Government, not without bitterness. According to Reverend J. Mackenzie, "Mr. Bethell and Israel Molema, a nephew of Chief Montshiwa and member of the Wesleyan Church among the Barolong prepared to escape together. While doing so, however, Israel's horse was first shot, and then he himself was shot through the shoulder. Mr Bethell attempted to lift Israel on to his own horse, intending to spring on behind him, but did not succeed in this. Israel was unable to help himself and begged Mr. Bethell to leave him and make his escape. While still persisting in his efforts to carry off his companion, Bethell was shot in the face. The bullet almost missed him, but entered

below...../



below one eye which was destroyed, passing out in front of the ear. Thus wounded he fell to the ground and his horse ran away. The first freebooter who came to the place was an Englishman. He recognised Bethell and taunted him with his condition. Bethell asked the Englishman to take him to the camp as a prisoner. This man consented for himself but said he would not answer for the Boers. Then two Boers came up, and after taunting Bethell shot him through the head, both firing at him. Israel Molema feigned death successfully while all this took place and after nightfall made his escape to Mafikeng, where he announced to Mr. J. Wright and to Montshiwa the manner in which Bethell had met his death. "(Australia Africa Vol. 1 p.389). Wright, who was captured by the freebooters upon the day following, had also opportunities of hearing ample corroboration of the story from Boer sources, as it was at this time rather boasted of as an achievement" (Ibid).

Two days after the engagement, Commandant J.P. (Kotie) Snyman of Marico, the same who had dictated the harsh peace terms of October 1882, came to Montshiwa to ask for his submission as it was clear to friend and foe alike that England would not, or could not help him. Though torn and bleeding, Montshiwa was, however, neither "mors-dood" (stone dead), nor despondent, and he declined Snyman's proffered hand. The commandant returned to Marico breathing out threatenings and slaughter against Montshiwa and his tribe.

Although Mackenzie had been appointed Deputy Commissioner by the Secretary of State at the special request of Sir Hercules Robinson, it was surprising how completely the latter on his return to South Africa succumbed to colonial views and prejudices and aligned himself with Mackenzie's opponents. Mackenzie was now accused of being too partial to the Batswana, and being a liberal, whose attitude towards the blacks was disliked, and his policy was steadily undermined by Colonial officials - Sir Thomas Uppington (Prime Minister), Graham Bower Colonial Secretary, and Cecil J. Rhodes, who wielded great influence with the High Commissioner. These powerful men ultimately changed the views and sympathies of High Commissioner Hercules Robinson, a man never remarkable for originality and stability, and thus almost from the first day of Mackenzie's entry into Bechuanaland and commencement of his duties as Deputy Commissioner, he was working under a running fire of adverse criticism from his powerful opponents, from his superior officers, from members of the Colonial Parliament, and of course

from the officials of the Transvaal whom he had so annoyed at the negotiations of the London Convention and whose plans he had so thoroughly spoiled. It was no wonder, therefore that after assiduous misrepresentations by Rhodes, who offered to replace Mackenzie as Deputy Commissioner in Bechuanaland, and hostile criticism by Sir Thomas Uppington, the High Commissioner on the 18th of July already groans and moans in...../



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