

# TAU

## THE CHIEFTAIN'S SON.

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### 1

#### THE VILLAGE OF PHATLA.

Far away in the Northern Transvaal there is a mountain called Hananoa. This mountain runs away from the rising sun towards the setting of the sun, and suddenly swerves off to the left. A little way further it butts into a short spur which bars its way. The spur bends its body to evade the charge, and so a deep horseshoe valley is formed. At the deepest end of the horseshoe there once stood a large Native village. The chieftain of this village at that time was Phatla, who ruled his people under Galuse, the great chief, who lived just under the highest peak of the Hananoa Mountains.

Bahananoa, the people of Hananoa, were so called, or rather called themselves by that name, because they had been expelled from their parent tribe.

"Listen, children of my children," the aged grandfather of the village says of an evening to a group of little boys and girls sitting round the fire. Although the mothers are cooking the evening meal, and although they have heard the story quite often, yet they keep one ear wide open, for grandfather tells this story very interestingly.

"Listen children of my children. Long, long ago there was a great king who lived towards the setting of the sun. Are there mountains like these? Oh no,

let me tell you. The country is one vast plain. Do not men see things far away? Aye, they do. The people did not till the land. They never ate mabele or mmidi. They hunted and killed. The name of the king was Moloto. He had two sons. The big one was called Masilo, and he was king-to-be. For was he not the son of the mother of the tribe? Aye he was the son of the "mohumogadi." The other son was Koena. He was the child of her whom the king loved best. The king loved Koena better than Masilo . . . ."

Here the old man took a pinch of snuff. The children looked at him silently and expectantly. It was a long process. First the old man loosened his snuff box from his belt. Then he opened it with his teeth and kept the stopper in his mouth, while he tipped a generous pinch of snuff on to the back of his left hand. The stopper was again put in with the teeth, and the old man carefully hooked the snuff box to his belt again. Then he carefully raked together the snuff on the back of his left hand and took the whole "pinch" between the fore finger and thumb of his right hand. The snuff now went up his nose. Grandfather sneezed violently, wiped the tears from his eyes and went on:

"Ah, Galuse loved Koena. Why? Was not Koena good to look upon? Aye, he was. And he was brave, he was a man with a heart. Masilo was a big man. He had a neck like a bull, but he was a bad man . . . his heart was black.

One evening just as the cattle were coming home, a band of maidens could be seen approaching the moshate. Mallo, how can maidens thus travel alone? Aoa, they came alone. Let me tell you. They had run away from their own home, because no rain had fallen, and the gods of their people were very hungry.

They wanted to eat these maidens. Galuse said to them:

“Stay with us children of my elder brother. Our gods eat not the flesh of man.”

Now one of these maidens was the daughter of the king. Men called her Maberone. She was good to look upon. Her face shone, she was not black, but red (copper colour). Mallo, she was a beautiful girl.

When Koena saw her, he loved her. But Masilo loved her too. There arose enmity between the two brothers, for each wanted the girl to be his wife.

These maidens had brought mabele and mmidi with them. It was their food along the road. They taught our women how to till the land.

Koena loved Maberone, and she looked with shining eyes upon him. Masilo saw this, and he was very angry. Did Maberone look at him? Aoa, verily she did not. She scorned the man.

Thereupon Masilo communed with his own heart how he could kill Koena. Koena had good friends who said to him: “Son of our Great One, your brother’s heart is black.”

Galuse saw too that Masilo did not love his brother. His heart felt for his beloved son, and so he said to him:

“My son,” he said, “take your regiments, take this maiden too, whom men call Maberone, and go and seek a country for yourself. See you are a Mohananoa, for you are not wanted here.”

By night Koena took his regiments, he called Maberone, and they all travelled to meet the rising sun. They came through this pass, and here they found the Mamoloko. They were people who did not know

war. Their spears were blunt because they were never sharpened. Koena conquered them and he said:

“Did not my father Galuse say: ‘You are a Mo-hananoa?’” Aye he did. Ye shall all be Bahananoa, and this land of our refuge shall be called Hananoa.”

Old Tau, he who has gone, the father of our More-na Phatla, led one of the regiments. When this land had been conquered, Koena said to him:

“Tau, do you build a village here. Guard you the pass that leads into the mountains from the setting of the sun, and do you see that no man enters by this gate.”

Tau, our father is dead. He has gone. Now Phatla rules in his stead. Is he not Tau's son? Aye verily he is. He is the lion's whelp with the old lion's claw and the old lion's strength.”

Meanwhile Phatla the chieftain was sitting in the enclosure of the men, at the fire of the men. A bright fire burned here in the evenings, for every man brought home a log of wood, when he came home from the veld. The fire was opposite the big gateway into the village. This gate faced West and was known as the gate of the men.

Phatla sat with his back to the huts in the chieftain's seat. From here he could see the gate and all those who entered through it. On his right hand were the cattle kraal, and the kraal for the goats and the sheep. Inside the cattle kraal was a small one for the calves.

When the herdboys brought in the animals at night, they drove them through the gate into the enclosure of the men, known as “kgoro,” and thence into the right kraal.

The huts against which Phatla leaned were the chieftain's huts. All these huts were built in a circle

with their doors facing inwards. A low mud wall, with a thick hedge of brushwood embedded in it, joined up all the huts and formed the family courtyard known as "lapa." This is where the family lived. Each family had a "lapa" of its own.

Phatla was an old man. He had six wives. His son Ramoroa was still a young man. He had only one wife. As he grew older he would marry more wives, because he had many oxen, cows and heifers, besides goats and sheep wherewith to marry wives. The name of his wife was Morongoa. She was the daughter of Phatla's younger brother, Ramoroa's uncle. Ramoroa and Morongoa had been destined for one another at birth. When Morongoa's mother saw her baby daughter she said: "Here is a mohumogadi for the son of Phatla." Ramoroa's mother replied: "Aye it is so."

Morongoa was good to look upon. Her hips were wide, her body was slender, her ears were so small that one could hardly see them and her lips were large.

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## 2

### TAU RECEIVES HIS NAME.

There was great commotion in the home of Ramoroa. The news had spread that Morongoa had given birth to a child, a boy, and "gossip it is a son." All the women young and old, came to the home of Ramoroa to see the child. The "big women" (midwives) went in and out of the hut, and passed on scraps of news, which were passed on from mouth to mouth and grew in transit.

At length a hush fell upon the assembly. It was rumoured that the grandmother, Ramoroa's mother, was bringing out the baby for all the people to see. The women had not long to wait. The old granny brought

out the child and held it up to view. A hubbub arose again. Each woman discovered some new beauty in the baby. Yet the highest praise that could be bestowed upon it was this: "Hai, you people, look at the ears, mallo the child has beautiful ears, they are the tiniest I have ever seen."

Meanwhile the old women, the grannies of the village, sat down in a ring at the door of the hut. Their business was very important—they had to find a suitable name for the baby. It was a difficult problem. If now some important person had visited the village at this time, the choice of a name would have been very simple. The baby would have received the name of that person, and a present besides, because the man after whom the baby had been named, would have felt honoured, and would have given the baby a fine present to show what he felt. Now all the rules of name-giving had to be recalled, and it had to be decided what rule applied best to this baby.

The grannies were soon engaged in heated arguments. Each had decided upon a name before the meeting, and each upheld her choice at the top of her voice. Ramoroa's mother had decided that the boy should be called Koena, after the founder of the tribe, and after the animal which the tribe venerated.

Suddenly there was a hush. All eyes were turned towards the entrance. An old woman came in. The oldest of the women were her children's children. Nobody could tell how old she was, for it was whispered that "she knew much." The old woman's face was a mass of wrinkles. There was not a tooth left in her mouth, and her eyes were faded and bleared. She leaned heavily upon a stout stick as she hobbled along.

As though guided by instinct she went straight to the group of grannies. Ramoroa's mother held up the infant for the old woman to see. The old eyes

lit up for a moment with a strange light. She peered intently into the baby's face. Then she gazed round the circle, and in a high pitched cracked voice, she announced:

"I have seen him, my children. He is Tau, the founder of our clan; Tau, the valiant, the strong, a man of brave deeds. Aye, he is Tau, I have spoken."

All the women clapped their hands, tilting forward on their knees, and murmured: "Tau shall be his name."

Then the woman took a string from her neck, to which was fastened a bag made of the skin of a mountain squirrel. This bag she hung round the neck of the infant. The bag was filled with dried roots, herbs, the Moumo fruit, and the gall of a tortoise. It served as an amulet. The old woman was murmuring to herself all the time, but few understood what she was saying. It would have been dangerous to interrupt her, because she was said to possess supernatural gifts. "Had she not lived? Aye, gossip, generations have passed before her eyes. Now each generation has left her a stock of wisdom and magic. Mallo, see, she is supernatural."

After this strange rite the old woman tottered out of the lapa. As soon as she was out of sight, the hubbub broke out afresh. It did not last long for soon after the departure of the old woman, Phatla came into the lapa, accompanied by Ramoroa and the praiser of the village. The men knew that the old woman had been there, because they had met her just outside the door, and she had put up her hand and stopped them. Then she had signed to Phatla to draw near, and had said to him:

"I have seen the child, my son. He is Tau of old, for though my eye is weak, my other eye was clear. Tau shall be his name."

Phatla had replied: "Tau shall be his name, Mother of my father's father."

The men drew near the circle of grannies, and the child was held up to them. The grandfather took the infant and holding it out to the assembly, he said:

"Behold the son of Ramoroa, from the clan of Phatla, your chieftain."

The women all clapped their hands and murmured: "Morena."

The praiser stepped forward and began an impromptu recital:

"Behold the beast of the field, the killer by night, the mighty by day whom all men fear, the ostrich that booms throughout the land, the slayer of foes, the drinker of blood whose fame outreaches the sound of his voice; great were his ancestors, great his forefathers, but he shall be greater. Men shall fear him; they shall tremble when they hear the tread of his feet. Such shall be his renown." This was all said without a pause.

When the praiser had finished speaking, Ramoroa said: "We thank thee, Makgato, son of Modimolle. We have a goatlet which but waiteth the knife of the slayer."

Ramoroa's sister approached and standing before Ramoroa she said:

"You, elder brother, the child is like his father." She grinned showing all her teeth.

Ramoroa laughed. Then he said:

"We thank you, younger sister. I have a little kaross."

The sister was delighted and replied:

"Mallo, our heart is glad."

Phatla now asked in a loud voice so that everyone could hear:



“How is Matau?”

Morongoa was thus publicly honoured. She was now one of the great women in the tribe, for she had become a mother. If anybody called her Morongoa now, it would be an insult, because everyone had to pay her homage and respect her.

A week later there was feasting and dancing in the village the whole night long, for Phatla and Ramoroa were rich, and could afford to entertain lavishly.

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### 3

## TAU'S EARLY YEARS.

Tau had come into the world and had been well received. Although he was the son of a chieftain, he was a child, and until he became a “man”, he would be treated exactly like the other boys in the village. His birth exempted him from none of the rules and duties.

His early years were spent among the women and girls of the village. If he happened to be awake at night when his father came into the lapa, after spending the evening with the men in the kgoro, his mother brought him, and Tau sat on his father's knee and was fondled. Yet Ramoroa knew everything about his son.

Since Tau was the first child, he was said to belong to his grandmother, and Ramoroa's mother claimed him from the beginning. She saw more of the infant than Matau. Matau was not jealous, because she knew that this was a great honour being conferred upon her and her child.

Tau's grandmother decided that her grandson was not getting fat. How could he ever grow up to be a strong man if he was not fed enough. She decided to feed Tau. Tau did not like his granny's method of feeding him. He squirmed and wriggled till he got



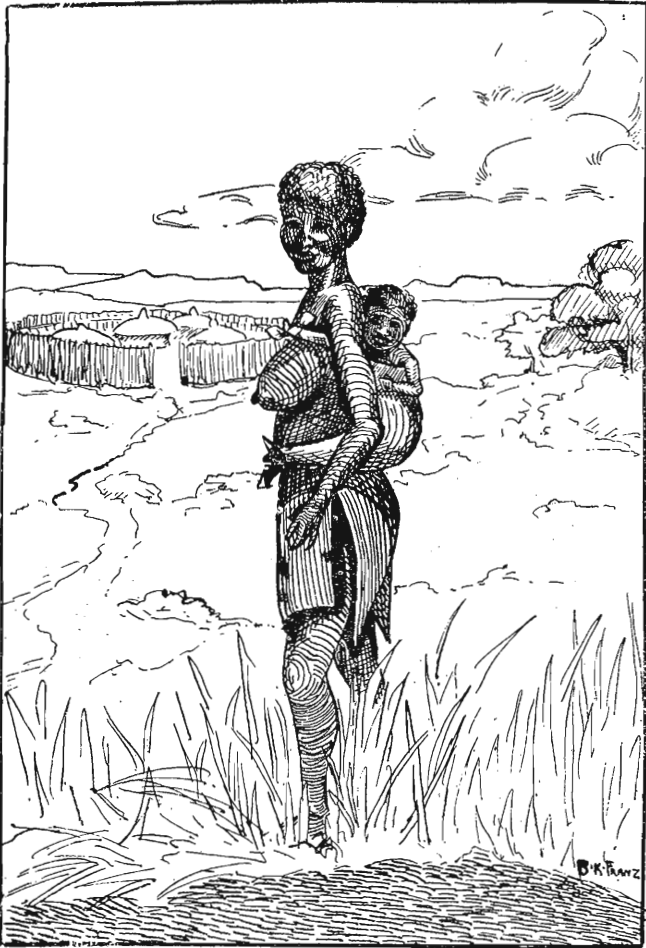
She decided to feed Tau. . . .

himself into a frightful mess. At first grandmother's method of feeding Tau resembled that of some birds feeding their young. She mixed some mealie meal porridge with water until it was as thin as soup. Then she took a good mouthful of the mixture and let it warm up in her mouth. When she was satisfied that it was warm enough, she pressed Tau's cheeks between the thumb and forefinger of her left hand so that his mouth opened, and squirted the food neatly into his mouth.

As Tau grew older, Grandmother changed her tactics. She mixed porridge and milk in a little earthenware bowl, called "morusoana," and fed Tau by hand. Tau had to sit between her knees and lean back against her. No time was wasted in coaxing him to eat. Grandmother pinched Tau's cheeks between the thumb and forefinger of her left hand as before, and cupped her hand under his chin. With her right hand she ladled the porridge into her cupped hand, and with the forefinger of her right hand, she pushed the food unceremoniously into the boy's mouth. Tau wriggled and squirmed, but he had to swallow. Grandmother would not cease feeding him until the tension over Tau's tummy was like that of a pumped up football.

Tau's tummy grew wonderfully. The more it grew, the more delighted Granny and Mother were. "Ah," they said, "he is getting a big man now. Look how nice and fat he is."

Tau had no clothes to dirty during the feeding process because he was growing up as nature had made him. If anybody had suggested a bath both granny and Matau would have been horrified. The best bath Tau could have had, was administered by Granny's tongue after meals. "See, child of my child," Granny would have explained, "water will bring cold into the little body. When cold comes into the body, it makes the blood "stick" him, and this is very pain-



In this way she took Tau with her when she went into the fields. . . .

ful and he might die." Matau would have added: "Have we not a tongue? Aye, we have."

Ramoroa was very busy. When he gave a feast in honour of his son and heir, he chose a blue he-goat and killed it. He skinned the animal himself and was very careful not to cut the skin while skinning. Now he spent days and evenings at the kgoro breing (tanning) the skin. All the hair had to be left on and the skin had to be very soft for this was the "thari," the skin in which Matau would carry her son on her back.

When the skin was properly tanned, Ramoroa gave it to his wife. She tied the back legs round her middle, swung Tau on her back, pulled the skin over him and tied the front legs with a knot on her chest. The hair of the skin was on the outside and kept the child warm, while the mother's body warmed him on the inside. In this way she took Tau with her when she went into the fields, or into the veld to gather sticks for the fire. She had barely gone ten steps when Tau was fast asleep in his thari, and the regular motion of her body acted like a rocker and kept him asleep.

The wearing of a thari opened the door to another class. At first Matau was Morongoa a girl (ngoaneyana), then she became a woman (mosadi), now she was a "mathari," or wearer of a thari, and her cup of happiness was full to overflowing.

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#### 4

### TAU'S CHILDHOOD.

Tau's best fun began when he was able to run about. He now joined the mischievous band of urchins that surrounds every Native village. They spent their days in the open, and the evenings, when there was no moon, they sat at the fire in the lapa. If they

came into the lapa during the day, mischief was sure to be brewing. The first place they generally made for, was the hearth. Fire had a wonderful fascination for them; it has a fascination for all children. Fortunate was the urchin who managed to pass through all the years of childhood without burning himself with a red hot ember, or scalding himself by upsetting a pot of boiling water over himself.

One of the bigger girls was usually detailed off to guard the lapa during the day, while the women were away in the fields. The girls knew that the best way of preventing mischief was to drive all the children, boys and girls alike, out of the kraal. They were all quite safe under the big trees near the village.

The girls were usually armed with "moretloa" sticks. This plant grew round about the village. It had thin pliant sticks better even for disciplinary purposes than the conventional "kweperlat." They did not hesitate to make good use of the stick if any of the urchins sneaked into the village. While they were beating the hapless urchin they had caught, they used bad language. Woe betide them if they were heard by any of the men swearing at the children. Men did not like it. The women could not object, because the girls had learned all these words from them.

One of the first things a child learned was to dodge the girls and even the women who had been left in charge of them. Tau became very efficient in this. He soon learned that there were two things a woman could not do. One was to turn quickly, and another was to climb into a tree. Almost every day some hapless girl was to be seen running after Tau with a stick. Tau would run as fast as his little legs could carry him, and when he saw a hand stretched out to seize him he turned quickly to right or left, or fell flat on the ground. In her attempt not to tread

on him, the girl would fall. Tau would jump up quickly again and run in an opposite direction. Then he would hide away until the search for him was abandoned.

He was the leader of the urchins now, because he knew how to dodge the girls guarding the village. Very often he turned pursuit on himself when some less fortunate culprit was in danger of chastisement. He was not only admired by his companions, but all the women and even the men, entertained a sneaking affection for him. The words "o tantje" or "oa seleka" were often to be heard when Tau was being discussed. By this they meant that he was precocious, he was clever and mischievous. These are attributes which readily gained an urchin a great reputation in the village.

The rainy season was the most glorious time for Tau and his companions. The rain filled the "pan" near the kraal with water. This was the urchins' swimming bath. They played in the water all day long, rolled about in the sand, and dried their dark brown bodies in the sun. There was no danger of anybody drowning, because the pan was very shallow. Clay was plentiful and the urchins made all kinds of figures, kraals of oxen, goats and sheep, with which they played and over which they fought.

There was a game of war to be played with clay, which was as dangerous as it was exciting. Each member of the band armed himself with a pliant moretloa stick. To the thin end of the stick he stuck a daub of clay. Then he flicked the stick at his opponent. The recoil of the stick sent the clay hurtling through the air at a great speed. The hapless urchin who was hit by a piece of clay set up a terrible howling and yelling. As long as the clay was pure, no material harm was done, but sometimes a little stone was em-

bedded in the clay. As soon as the missile hit the opponent the clay scattered in all directions, but the stone cut into the skin and drew blood. As the little boys knew nothing about aiming, most of the shots either flew harmlessly into the air, or flattened themselves against the ground in front of the thrower.

The men favoured the game, but the women were passionately opposed to it. The men said: "It is good. It teaches the boys to throw straight and to dodge nimbly." The women retorted: "What will you say if one of the boys loses his eye through it?"

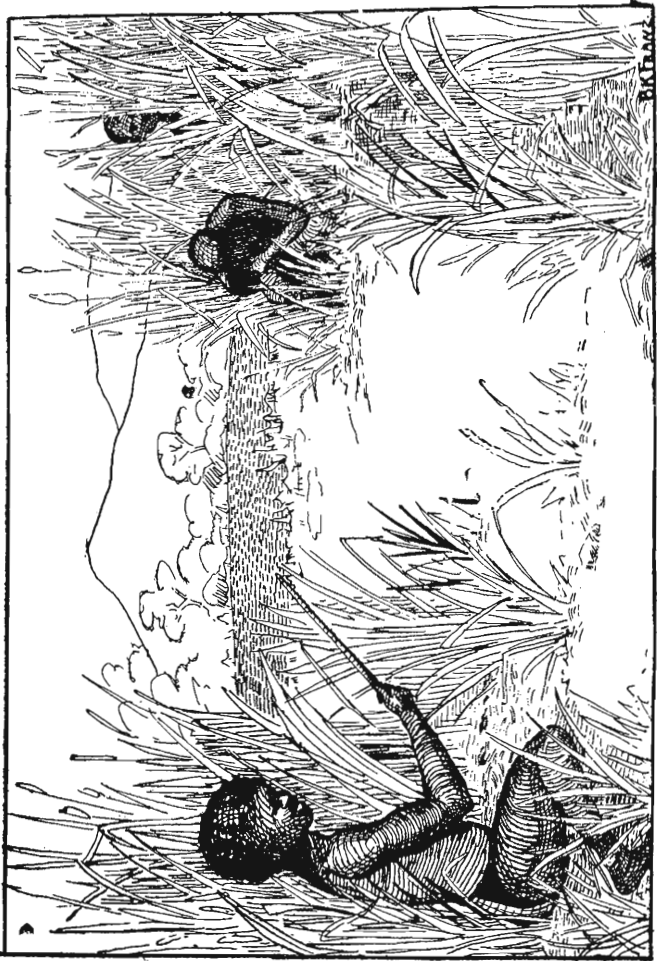
Whenever a boy was hurt, there was a tremendous commotion in the village. The mother of the injured boy was very angry and began to swear in a most shameless manner. She was not content with calling the offender bad names, but said all her anger dictated her to say, about the offender's mother, grandmother, greatgrandmother. If she was very very angry she found something to say about the offender's father and grandfather too.

This was the worst insult she could pass on anybody. She could have called the offender anything she liked. It would have made his mother angry. But the moment she called him "the son of . . ." or "the child of . . .," she was insulting a clan.

The mother of the offender was not silent. After a few vain attempts to pacify the outraged woman, she retaliated and returned insult for insult. Very often words led to blows. Every kind of weapon was used, and if there were no weapons handy, the combatants used fists, nails and teeth. The sequel of this was that both had to appear in the *kgoro* before the men, where they were thoroughly hauled over the coals.

Tau and his companions hid themselves at the first sign of trouble. By the time the women had heard the crying of the injured boy and were all running out





The rain filled the "pan" near the kraal with water. .

to see if it was their child that was hurt, there was only one boy to be seen. The others had all vanished, because they knew that if the offended mother caught sight of any one of them, he would have to bear the **brunt** of her anger. It did not matter whether he was guilty or not. Very often no guilt could be fixed on any special boy. Clay would be flying about in all directions, and nobody knew who had hurled the piece of clay which had caused the trouble. The offender himself did not know that he had done it.

As soon as the urchins saw that the mother's wrath was directed against some other mother, numerous woolly heads began to appear out of the long grass, or from behind shrubs and trees. Then the owners of these heads would come out and be very interested **spectators** of the sequel of the mishap. The injured boy would by this time be as interested in the proceedings as his companions, and would probably have forgotten all about the injury he had received. Half an hour later all the urchins would be sitting in a ring. Peals of laughter could be heard while two of them **were mimicking** the angry women and all the filthy language was being repeated in a high childish treble.

Tired of this Tau racked his brains for some new adventure. He rose and merely ordered: "Come". Off they all trooped after him. On the other side of the pan grew a lot of bullrushes. Here the finches had built their nests on the leaves overhanging the water. The boys had often been told not to go there, for where there are finch nests, there are also snakes. The "ringhals" loves birds' eggs. Of course prohibition only added spice to the adventure. The boys were not looking for the eggs, but for the unfledged birds, which made a dainty morsel. Soon all the boys were in the water again, the rushes were bent down and the nests were examined very carefully. There was a huge haul,

and no nest would have escaped if one of the boys had not given the alarm of "noga, noga" (snake).

All the boys ran out of the pan and assembled on the bank. The boy who had given the alarm was crossquestioned, and it turned out that his "noga" was nothing but a rush leaf floating about on the water. Yet no boy ventured back into the water, although they all agreed that Nako was a coward.

They had birds in plenty, but they had no fire to roast the birds. Tau ordered Nako to fetch fire from the village. Nako refused. Under ordinary circumstances Tau would have thrashed Nako into obedience, but he had done it once before. The fight had ended in a huge hubbub, in the course of which the true cause of the fight had been discovered. Tau had been thrashed by his father then, because the men and not the women had told the boys not to touch fire.

Now he merely called Nako a coward, a girl, an old woman, etc. etc., but nothing would induce Nako to fetch the fire. Tau finally decided to go himself. It was a hazardous undertaking. If he was detected, his father would thrash him more severely than before.

Tau carefully made his way through the kgoro where there was nobody at this time of the day. His father's lapa was at the end of the kraal, but his grandfather's lapa immediately adjoined the kgoro. He peeped carefully into the lapa. It was empty. A murmur of voices came from the adjoining lapa, that of his grand uncle. He slunk up to the edge and looked through. There was his grandmother talking to his aunt. In the lapa adjoining that, a woman was singing at the top of her voice. She at any rate, would notice nothing. One person he did not see however, and that was Morongoa, a girl of about his own age. She was sitting in the verandah of the hut playing with her own grinding stone. She saw him but kept as still as a mouse.

Tau now slunk to the hearth and scratched amongst the ashes with his fingers until he found a live coal. He looked about and saw a piece of earthenware, chipped from a cooking pot. He deftly took the coal out of the ashes, dropped it into the earthenware chip and slunk out of the lapa. Once outside he ran as fast as his legs could carry him, to his companions. They were for lighting a fire at once, but Tau was cautious. The smoke might be seen. He therefore led his companions to a little bush farther away. There they lit a fire and roasted the birds.

There was no fighting over the birds. Native boys are taught that it is very rude to eat and leave another looking on without offering him a share. If he refuses, it is well, you have done your part. The formula "rea ja" (we are eating) is the first a Native boy learns.

When the boys had finished, that is, when they had rolled the birds over once or twice in the coals without cleaning them, and had then torn them to pieces and swallowed them head and all, they went back to their old haunts, lest they should be missed. In that case their sin would have been detected.

Unfortunately Phatla came past the place where the fire had been kindled. He examined it carefully and saw numerous footprints which could have been made by nobody but these little boys. He threw sand on the still glowing embers and went home. The boys were quite ignorant of this. That night they were summoned to the kgoro. They were very frightened and their mothers trembled for them too. Then they were crossquestioned. Phatla did all the talking.

"Where were you to-day?" Phatla asked.

"We were bathing in the pan."

"And then?"

"Aoa, we only played about."

"Where?"

"Round about the kraal."

"And then?"

This "and then?" was rather disconcerting.

"We bathed again."

"And then?"

"We played again."

"Where?"

"Under the trees."

"And then?"

The boys were getting restless. Now it dawned upon them why they had been called.

"We went into the water again."

"And then?"

"We came out again."

"What did you do in the water."

"We... we... bathed."

"You lie." This was the first blood that had been drawn.

All the boys looked at one another and then at the ground, just as much as to say: "He knows."

"Aaah, you see. Now I shall tell you what happened next. You raided the nests and found a lot of little birds. Then you said: "Let us fetch fire, and roast them." One of you went and fetched a coal out of the village, and then you went behind the little mokgalo bush out here and made a fire. You think that nobody has seen you. Speak now... the truth."

The boys stammered: "It is so."

"Now I want to know who fetched the fire."

If Nako had been there he would have blurted the whole thing out. But Nako was not there. He had instinctively known that trouble was brewing and had hidden himself. The band of little boys merely replied: "We did it." Tau glared round the circle, and all the boys were more frightened of Tau than of his grandfather.

Phatla changed his tactics: "You say "we," who were all the "we"?"

The whole band was mentioned by name and Phatla looked at each boy as his name was mentioned. Each one looked guilty, and so Phatla could gain nothing from close scrutiny. At last Nako's name was mentioned.

"Where is Nako?" Phatla asked.

Nobody knew. This was bad for Nako, because everybody naturally concluded that Nako was guilty. The others breathed more freely, and fervently hoped that Nako would not be found. They knew that his mother would try to hide him, hoping that the men's anger would cool off. But Phatla had other methods. He asked one of the younger men to go into the lapa and look for Nako. Each of the boys had hoped that he would be sent. In that case nobody would have seen him again that evening.

While the young man was away looking for Nako, Tau's grandmother came in leading Morongoa by her hand.

"Morena Phatla," she said, "this little girl says that she saw Tau creep into the lapa and take away a coal from the hearth." Tau glared at Morongoa in speechless rage. Girls were one of the problems he could never solve. Nothing happened but they saw it, and were ever ready to tell tales (tlalea). Yet they could not be thrashed without incurring the anger of the men and women. Men laughed when he thrashed a boy his own age, but if he touched a girl, they did not laugh, but took her part. It was heartrending.

Phatla fixed a stern eye on Tau and said:

"What have you to say, young man?"

"Aoa, I did it," was the sullen reply, while Morongoa dodged behind her grandmother to escape the glare directed at her.

"This is the second time you have done it, is it not?"

"It is."

Phatla said to one of the young men: "Fetch a stick."

Tau was soundly thrashed. At first his grandfather did not hit too hard. Tau manfully suppressed the cry that was rising to his lips, but when Phatla hit harder and harder, he yelled at the top of his voice. Then Phatla asked: "O lahlile?" (Have you had enough?).

Tau roared: "I shall not do it again, truly."

Meanwhile Ramoroa had to hold back his wife. She was like a mad tigress while her son was being thrashed. "Let me go," she yelled, "Why should he alone be beaten when they all did it?"

Ramoroa replied: "Keep quiet woman, the court of men has judged the case."

Matau was not quiet however, but yelled at the top of her voice:

"Jonna-jo, they are killing my child."

Finally her husband dragged her from the kgoro.

Tau ran off to the lapa and hid himself in the hut as soon as he could. He felt very sore and very hurt. For some inexplicable reason he blamed Nako for the thrashing he had just received.

Next day when Nako joined the band of urchins, he was received with remarks like these:

"Here comes the coward." "Go and hide away you son of a slinking antbear." "Look at the girl." "Go home and play in the lapa."

Nako had a very bad time of it but like most people of his stamp he had a thick skin, and finally the boys gave up teasing him.

Tau had grown in estimation in the eyes of the men. When he had run away after the thrashing, Phatla remarked: "That boy has pluck, some day he

will do great things." The men thought no less of Tau because he had not owned up. If he had escaped it would have been his good fortune. What they admired, was that he had not whined and cried before the stick touched him, as was usual with boys of his age.

Tau soon forgot the thrashing, but he was more careful thereafter that no girl should detect him in his forbidden adventures. Boys he could manage, but with girls there was no redress.

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5

### TAU'S CHILDHOOD (CONT.)

Tau's early education was gained from his mother and grandmother and from the other women in the kraal. At first he was taught to show respect to all the grown up members of the village. His grandmother would say: "Clap hands to daddy," and she would clap his hands together. After a time he understood this, and whenever the order of "Locha" (clap hands) was given, he would do so much to the delight of the person thus honoured. When he could walk, he learned to drop everything in his hands and to "locha" whenever he saw any grown up person. He also learned to add: "Rea locha Morena," "we clap hands to you Sir," or "Rea locha Mma," "we greet you Mother."

Grown up people encouraged him by answering his salutation. They always stopped and replied: "Ishe Papa" or "Agee, lesogana." ("Aye, father" or "good-day young man.") If the man saluted was very old he would reply "Dumela rakgolo" (good-day grandfather). Tau was very pleased with these titles, and never failed to greet people when he met them.



To pass a child by without returning a greeting was considered an insult to the parents of the child, and Native Justice, which on the one hand punished the child for not honouring grown up persons, punished the adult for not acknowledging the greeting of a child. There is a natural dignity and chivalry in the Native which has made him recognise this great principle, and he religiously adheres to it.

In all tribes and in all nations the women are the real educators of the youth. It is at mother's knee that the child first learns the language and his religion. So it is amongst the Natives. Tau learned his language from his mother and grandmother.

He learned more. They told him many wonderful stories about animals, and when he was naughty, they told him all about the bad men and monsters which took away naughty children and devoured them.

"You see," his mother explained, "everything belongs to somebody. The owner's spirit is all round the thing, even if he has lost it. . ."

"How does the owner's spirit know which is which?"

"Oh the doctor sees to it. You go to him and say: "I have my possessions." Then he gives you some medicine and that thing is safe. If you chance to pick up anything, you must bring it immediately to your father and he will give it to your grandfather. He will find the owner and return the thing to him."

"And if he cannot find the owner, will he give it back to me?"

"No my child, it is not yours. He will give it to the Great One in the mountains, and he will find the owner."

"And if he does not find the owner, what then?"

"He puts it in a room where all such things are kept."

"Won't the spirit seize him then?"

"No it won't. This room is safe against all spirits."

"How?"

"The chief knows how to keep away spirits. He is our chief."

After a little thought she went on:

"Never go into a garden and break off any mealies. You will go into the garden but you will not come out again. Whenever we make a new garden, we call the wise one, and he makes it safe against all thieves. You heard the story of Machaka. He came to a garden full of ripe water melons. "Ah," he said, "those are fine melons, I must have some." He looked this way and that and saw nobody. Then he opened the gate and went in. He found many melons, and they were very nice. He ate till he could eat no more. Then he decided to go out again. When he came to the gate, mallo, he found a huge snake lying across it. He ran back again in fright. Then he tried the other side of the garden. The snake was there before him. So the snake went round and round the garden and kept him there till the owner came. Thus was Machaka caught and beaten because he had stolen in another man's garden. His father had to pay a goat to the owner of the garden, or else that snake would have come into their hut that night.

"I should have picked up a stone and killed the snake," Tau answered with confidence.

"Would you, Hmmm. You know a lot. That snake was sent there, and no man can kill such a snake."

Tau did not believe all this talk about spirits that guarded property, and so he decided to test the theories for himself. Not long after he picked up a knife. "Ah," he thought, "I shall keep this and see if the spirits go for me."

He carefully hid the knife amongst his treasures. Later on he wanted to whittle a point on a stick. The knife was taken out. Everything went well and Tau gained more and more confidence; the spirits were probably asleep. Suddenly the knife slipped and cut poor Tau on the finger. He dropped the knife and ran to his mother.

“What did you cut yourself with?” she asked.

“With a knife.”

“Where did you get that knife?”

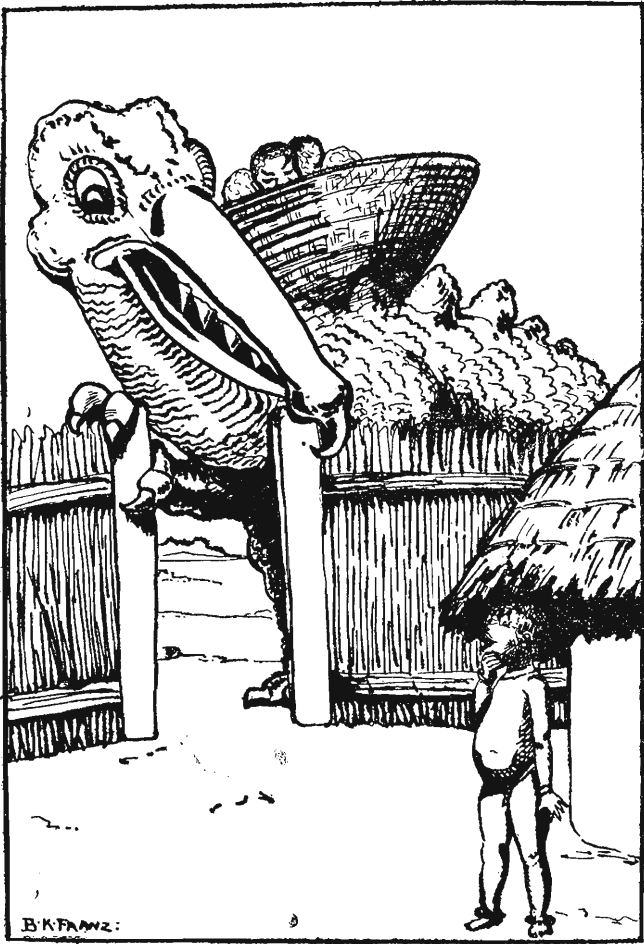
“I picked it up.”

“You see, what did I tell you yesterday? Bring that knife quickly before any mischief is done. You will die from this cut if the knife is not returned immediately.”

Tau had learned his lesson.

Native women frighten their children dreadfully. They are terrible cowards themselves and therefore know how to picture the most horrible monsters to the child's imagination. It was no wonder that a Native child feared to go out alone into the dark night. The initiation school drove this fear out of the boys, but the girls never lost the fear. Tau's mother and grandmother knew many fairy tales and fables, but their best ones were told to the children when they had been naughty.

There was the wolf who raided the village every night and took away naughty children. Tau soon learned that the wolf could not jump over the lapa hedge. He dealt in the same way with all the natural monsters. In desperation his mother told him about a creature to whom hedges were child's play. This was the Setataoe. It was a monster with human power and intelligence. On its back it had a basket into which it threw children who had been naughty. How it did



This was the Setataoe.

this was never explained. Once it had the children in its basket, it ran to its den as fast as it could and devoured them there. Oh no, father could do nothing against it, because no spear or axe could harm it. This floored Tau thoroughly. If his father could do nothing against the animal, then he was certainly lost. Yet he would not give in. The whole village, the Great One could war against this animal and kill it. "If they could," the mother replied, "they would have done so long ago." This argument was conclusive. Mother added: "The setataoe will certainly come to-night, because you have been very naughty."

Tau was very quiet when he sat next to the fire. If his mother asked him to fetch some more wood, he went hesitatingly and returned at a run. No power on Earth could induce him to go into the hut if there was no one there. Matau now became afraid. The men did not approve of this frightening of the children, and Ramoroa would certainly have something to say if he heard what Matau had said to her son. Yet she was not going to surrender unconditionally and said:

"My son, you are frightened. Your heart tells you that you have been naughty. If you promise to be good, I shall tell you a method of escape."

Tau readily promised.

"You must sit quietly in the basket and wait till the monster passes under a tree. Jump up and seize the nearest branch and when the monster has passed, climb down and run home as fast as you can."

Tau was more at ease, but he kept an eye on the shadows.

This story kept Tau quiet for a week. Soon however familiarity bred contempt for the monster, nay more, a sneaking thirst for adventure challenged the appearance of the Setataoe. He became unruly. With

naive illogic Matau invented the Lekgoa (white man), about whom marvellous tales were brought back by men coming home from work. He was a giant who blew smoke out of his mouth, and spat stones and other things at naughty children. Then he put them into a big bag and carried them deep down into a dark hole, where he ate them.

This kept Tau quiet for another week, and then his mother was forced to tax her imagination for more horrors.

He also learned to interpret the calls of the birds for which his mother had many versions.

Early in the morning and in the evening the ring dove sang:

Kunkuru, kunkuru

Thabaneng ea ba disha (To the mountain of the  
herdboys)

At midday the red dove replied: rukutukutu,  
rukutukutu,

o ntima sebete sa khudu (You deny me the liver  
of the tortoise)

Deep down in the kloof behind the village the mourning dove sang:

Bomma le bopapa Mother and father

Mogolo le moratho Elder brother and younger sister

Ba ile have gone

Ba huile are dead

Ke shala ke re I remain behind and say

Tum-tutu-tu-tutu-tu-tu-tu-tu

At night the giant owl sat on the dry withered tree outside the village and sang:

Hu-hu-huhu-hu

Re chaba lehu We are afraid of death.

---

N.B. Tu means "still", "go re tu" means to be absolutely alone and quiet.

Then there was a delightful game to be played with the fruit of the creeper which grew over the hedge of the cattle kraal. As soon as this fruit turned to an orange colour, you picked it, pinched its cheeks very slightly and said:

Mpua, mpua thsega, thsega

Mpua, mpua thsega, thsega (Baby, bay, laugh) and the fruit would burst open and show an interior of dark red, and stick out a long tongue. If the baby would not laugh any more, it was thrown away and a new one was made to laugh.

The fables were delightful. The tortoise, the spider and tladi, the lightning bird, were Matau's favourites. Tortoise lived on the ground but Tladi lived in the skies.

Once Tladi went out hunting and killed a duiker. This he did by hurling his knobkierries from on high. He had the meat but did not know how to take it back to his home in the skies. Then he met tortoise. "Good-morning Morena," he said. "We see you, Grandfather," tortoise replied.

"How are you?"

"We are still alive," tortoise answered.

"Aoa, that is good," Tladi replied.

"Where do you come from?" Tortoise asked.

"We have just come down from the skies to do a little hunting. We are hungry up there."

"You speak the truth. We heard the noise of your knobkierrie, and I said to my friend the dassie, "There is Tladi out hunting. The animals had better hide because the Morena of the Skies never misses."

"You speak the truth. We never miss. A duiker is lying just behind that Mooka tree yonder."

"Ah, then we spoke the truth indeed," Tortoise replied.

“Ee. Now there is a great difficulty. Men say the tortoise is wise.”

“They speak.”

“Agee, this is the difficulty. We cannot take the meat to our home in the skies.”

Tortoise looked this way and that. Then he took a pinch of snuff and offered some to Tladi. At last he said:

“Go back to your home in the skies, Tladi, for am I not treading on your heels with the meat? Aye, you shall see, I am.”

“Au revoir, Tortoise,” Tladi replied, and “frrrr, there he goes, subeeee, there he has disappeared.”

Tortoise did not mean Tladi to have all the meat. He wanted the best portions for himself. So he opened the buck and took out the liver and the entrails. Then he cut off the hindquarters and hid them in an antbear hole nearby. He went to the spider who had just trapped a fly and was spinning its thread round it and said: “Bashomi, workers”. “You see them,” Spider replied and went on busily spinning her kraal round the fly. Then she went to the far end of the kraal and had a careful look round. She saw a weak spot, and came back to strengthen it. When she had finished Tortoise went on: “We have come.”

“Aoa, we see you.”

“Tladi has killed a duiker, and he wants us to carry it up to him.”

“No fear,” Spider replied, “why should I help Tladi? Does he not pour water all over my kraals? Aye, he does, and then they lose their stickiness. Then he comes hurling knobkierries and frightens all my game away.”

Tortoise knew that Spider did not like Tladi, so he said:



“Hush, friend. Tladi is a mighty lord.” Then he offered Spider some snuff. He went on: “We are not going to give him all the buck. We shall share the best parts.”

“Now you have spoken,” Spider replied, “speak on.”

“Aoa, you must spin a strong rope ladder to the clouds, and then we shall carry the portion of the buck we do not want, up to him. I have hidden the other securely. If he asks us where the rest is, we shall tell him that the buck was too heavy, and we shall come for the remainder when we have rested a little.”

“That is a good plan. But what then?”

“Oh leave that to me,” Tortoise said.

“It is well,” Spider replied, “now let me bring this fly into safety otherwise those scoundrels of birds will rob me.”

Spider began to spin her ladder and the wind took it up and hooked it to the cloud, which was Tladi's village. When it was finished, Tortoise came to the foot of the ladder carrying the meat. Spider said:

“Cousin tortoise, climb. I am behind you.”

Tortoise climbed and climbed till he disappeared into the cloud with the meat. He entered the lapa of Tladi and threw down the meat. His back and shoulders were “khuibiiii” with blood. Tortoise wiped his forehead and breathed hard. Tladi came and saw only part of the buck:

“How is this, friend?” he asked.

Tortoise replied: “Morena, it was too heavy. Men carry much more on even ground than they do climbing up a long ladder. Let me but rest and I shall fetch the other.”

“It is well,” Tladi replied, “rest motlogolo.”



Tortoise climbed and climbed. . . .

Then he called all his wives and they brought meat and beer for Tortoise and Spider.

When Tortoise and Spider had rested, Tladi said: "Friend Tortoise, you have rested. The vultures will eat the other meat below."

"Nay, friend they will not eat it. I hid what was left in the hole of my friend the antbear. But still, the sun has run away from us and I shall have to hurry if I want to bring the meat up to-night."

Thus Spider and Tortoise took leave and left the village of Tladi. When they came outside the village, Tortoise said to Spider: "Elder brother, we must break the ladder somehow, but I must be down on the ground before it breaks."

"It is well," Spider answered, "do you go down and I shall follow. A little from the top, I shall bite through the ladder and then float down on it to the Earth."

Tortoise climbed down while Spider remained hidden in the thickest part of the cloud. When he saw Tortoise step down from the last rung, he began to descend. A little way down he bit through the ladder and the wind gently brought him down to Earth. Then Tortoise and Spider shared the best portions of the buck.

Next day Tladi came down to Earth, and went straight to the house of Tortoise. When Tortoise saw him coming, he began to limp "kutu-kutu-kutu", then he sat down and sighed most brokenly "ahemmmm." Tladi's heart was sore, and he said: "Whatever is the matter, friend Tortoise?"

Tortoise gave another long sigh "Ahemmm" and said:

"Morena Tladi, I did not sleep last night, because I thought: 'What will the Morena of the skies say?'

But believe me, Lord, it was not my fault. It was the fault of that awful ladder. I fetched the meat and began to climb up with it. Behold when I had climbed as high as this house, the ladder broke, grrrrrr, and I fell down meat and all. I was unconscious. When I was a man again I tried to walk, but I found that my legs were so sore that I could not carry the meat. That is the truth, Morena Tladi, as you can see for yourself."

Verily then Tladi felt for Tortoise.

"We have heard, motlogolo," he said, "and we feel sore for you. We feel also that the fault lies with us. It is not right that good men should suffer for others. Keep the meat that you have got and we shall quickly kill another buck so that your children may not die of hunger while you are ill."

"Morena, King, Father," Tortoise said and clapped his hands. "Your heart makes my heart so full that it runs over at my eyes. See how I weep."

Then Tladi went away and "Tuhu-pawha-ruthu," his knobkierrie killed a gemsbuck, "hierrie-hierrie-brrrdom" and a wildebeest died. He came back and said to Tortoise:

"See Motlogolo, I have killed a gemsbucklet and a bluewildebeestlet. They are yours. Come, let me show them to you."

Tortoise was not at all pleased with this, because he must limp all the time. He grunted "hekke-hikki-hekke" and limped "kutu-kutu-kutu," then he wiped the sweat from his brow. At last he said:

"Morena Tladi, it is not right that we should allow you to come with us. Your heart is great, and our heart sings within us. But we fear that we are keeping you from other things you would like to do, and that makes our heart heavy."

Tladi said:

"You have spoken. Goodbye motlogolo," and he flew away into the clouds "subeee."

Tortoise and his wives and children ate meat for a whole month.

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6

## TAU BECOMES A USEFUL MEMBER OF SOCIETY

When Tau was seven or eight years old, he passed out from under the rule of the women and came under the rule of the men. The fact that he was the son of the chieftain did not exempt him from any of the duties imposed by the community upon its members. He had to pass through all the ranks of herdboy like all the other boys in the village.

His father had been very busy during the last three weeks preparing his first article of clothing. He took the skin of a lamb, removed all the hair and breid it until it was quite soft. This was a loin cloth for his son. Then he carved a beautiful knobkierrie out of the "wag-n-bietjie" tree and a stick from the same wood. These were emblems of office, and it would have been a disgrace for any boy to lose them. Meanwhile other fathers, or elder brothers, where there were no fathers, had been doing the same thing.

One night the boys were summoned to the kgoro. The young man who had called them announced:

"Here they are, Morena."

The boys all kneeled down, clapped their hands and said:

"We clap hands to you Sirs."

All the men replied: "We see you, young men."

Then Phatla began to speak:

"We have called you, young men. The old men have decided that you are all old enough to look after

the lambs, kids and calves. Now listen to the law. You are not to go far from home. You are to wait till the big animals are right out of sight before you let out your herd. You know that the gardens are nearby, and so you will have to stop playing all day long and watch that your animals do not go into the fields and spoil the crops. If the animals enter any garden you will be severely thrashed. In the afternoon you must bring home the animals early, especially the calves, or else there will be no milk. At night your work will be to help the bigger boys with the milking. You will have to keep the calves off while they are milking the cows. Then you must help to drive the calves into their own kraal."

Phatla now turned to the men and said:

"Is that not all?"

"That is all, Morena," the men replied.

Each man came forward and gave a boy the knobkierrie and the stick he had made. When all the boys were equipped, Phatla said:

"Have you understood, you boys?"

The boys dropped their sticks, clapped their hands and said:

"Aye, Lord."

Phatla then dismissed them with the words:

"Sleep well young men."

"Sleep well, Lord," the boys replied and went to bed.

In the lapa the boys were met by the women who had been dying of curiosity to know what the men wanted the boys for.

"What did the men say?" they asked.

"Aoa," the boys replied, "we are going to herd."

The work of herdboys is a responsible one, but not very difficult. Native animals are as a rule very

tame and listen very readily to the peculiar whistle which every herdboys knows. Every animal has a name, and the herdboys need merely whistle and call that animal by name. It will obey the command of "boea," come back. Each calf receives a name immediately after birth. When the boy wants a particular calf out of the kraal at milking time he merely stands at the door and calls out the name of the calf. To begin with the calf does not know its name, then he has to go into the kraal, single out the calf, tap it with a stick calling out its name all the time. The calf learns very quickly. It is wonderful how soon the cows learn the names of their calves too.

It is chiefly during the midday hours that the herdboys have nothing to do. At that time the animals move about very little, but are content to lie about in the shade of the trees and ruminate. This is the herdboys' hour. The younger boys go mouse hunting, while the older ones creep softly through the grass to try to find a hare asleep. Then they surround the hare and kill it. During the summer months they chase and kill small buck.

Tau and his companions took out the young stock next morning. They were very conscientious for the first few days, because this was a novel experience, and so no animals returned home in the middle of the day, or were left to stray about. After a few days however, the novelty wore off, and the men and women in the village had to drive lambs and kids, even calves which had returned home during the day, back again to the pasture. There was no sign of the herdboys. At last they were found playing in the long grass. Imagine their fright when they suddenly saw Ramoroo standing before them asking:

"Where are the kids and lambs?"

The boys were too frightened to answer and

Ramoroa drove them scuttling all over the place to look for their herd.

"Are they all here?" he asked the boys when they came back.

"Aye, Morena," they replied.

"Which is the one bleating over there?"

The boys scattered again and brought back a few more animals.

Ramoroa stayed with them until all the herd had been collected.

The boys held a council of war as soon as Ramoroa had left. They were not worried because they had let the herd scatter. What troubled them was that they had been caught by Ramoroa. At last Tau had a good plan.

"We must not play all of us at the same time," he said. "While some of us are playing others must look after the animals."

Everybody agreed to this, and Nako and Mashilo, two of the weaker boys were immediately detailed off to look after the herd while the others went mouse hunting.

The next week a fine drizzling rain set in. Tau and his companions were not allowed to make a fire to warm themselves, and had therefore to keep moving about for warmth. In the vleis were many birds with long heavy tails. These tails had been soaked by the rain and were heavy, so that the birds could only fly very slowly. They could not fly very far either because they soon grew tired. Under the leadership of Tau a great hunt was instituted. Nako and Mashilo were again left in charge of the herd.

It was an exciting hunt. The boys singled out a special bird and chased it continuously. They would not give it any time to rest. While they were chasing



it, they threw their sticks at it. Very soon the bird was exhausted and fell into the long grass. The boys caught it and killed it. Another bird was now chosen.

Meanwhile Nako and Mashilo were watching the game with keen interest. They had no eye for the herd, and longed to join in the sport. They controlled themselves, however, until one of the birds flew directly over them, and settled quite close to them. They gave chase and brought it to earth within about a hundred yards from where they had begun. The herd had no herdboys now.

The animals soon felt this too. Led by an old goat, which was lame and had therefore to stay with the lambs, the whole herd made for a kaffir corn land. There were monkey nuts growing in amidst the mabele. Goats love monkey nut leaves, and so the herd was very soon running zig-zag through the field, each animal taking huge mouthfulls of leaves from every plant.

It was in one of the lulls in the chase that Tau suddenly realised that the animals were nowhere to be seen. He yelled to Nako, but Nako was at the other end of the vlei. The herdboys scattered in all directions to find the herd, and it was Tau's misfortune to come to the field just as the owner arrived there too. He ran in and drove out the kids and lambs as quickly as he could. The owner allowed him to do this, then he called him. Tau came hesitatingly. The owner asked:

"Who are you?"

"I am Tau."

"Who is your father?"

"Ramoroa is my father."

"Hmmm. Where are the others?"

"They are looking for the animals."

"What were you doing when the animals got into my field?"

"Aoa, nothing."

"Hmmm, nothing. I saw you running after birds up and down the vlei."

The man was silent for a little while, then he said:

"Come with me!"

Tau followed the man. In the middle of the field there was an antheap. The man made Tau stand on this antheap on one foot; the other foot he had to hold up behind him, with his left hand, and with his right hand he had to point to heaven. Tau did not dare to disobey because the man had cut a long moretloa stick before he came into the garden.

"Now," the man said grimly, say after me:

"The herdboys play . . . ."

"The herdboys p-p-p-play . . . ." and Tau fell off the antheap. He was thrashed until he got up again.

"The animals stray . . . ." the man went on inexorably.

"The-the-a-a-n-n-animals s-s-tray . . . ." Tau with difficulty retained his balance. The man whacked him and ordered:

"Say it properly."

"The animals stray," Tau yelled in agony. The hand pointing to heaven was growing very tired and he tried to lower it. A sounding whack sent it back again.

"The fields are near."

"The fields a-a-a-are n-n-near." Tau repeated, helped on by the stick.

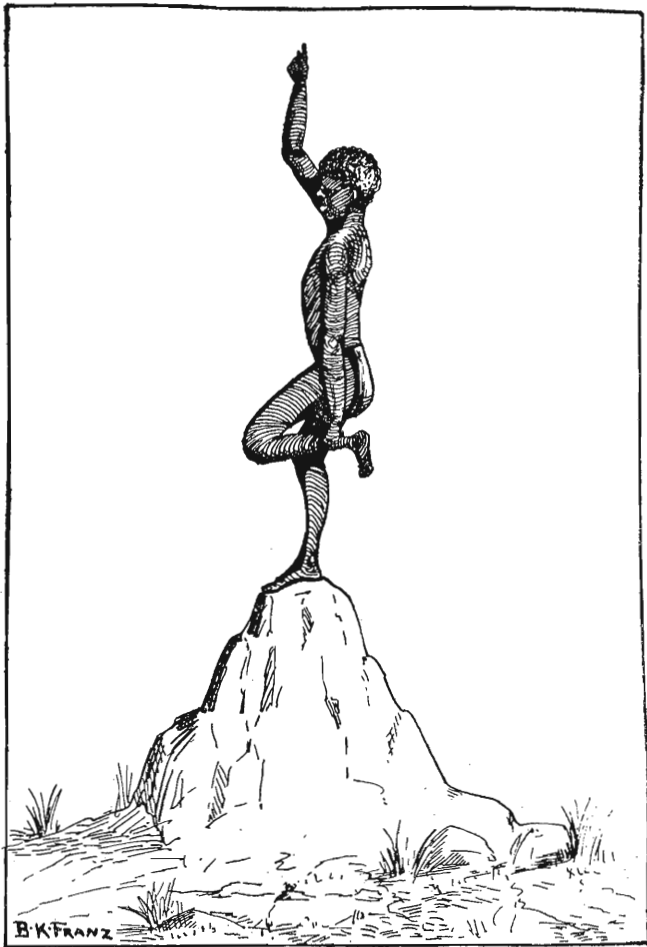
"The crops are dear."

Th-th-the . . . . please, I won't do it again."

"The crops are dear," the man repeated hitting Tau.

"The c-c-rops are d-d-d-."

Tau fell off the antheap too tired to balance him-



The man made Tau stand on the antheap on one foot.

self. The man thrashed him, but Tau was not going to mount that anthheap again, and, picking himself up, he ran away as fast as he could. The owner contented himself with giving him a few farewell whacks and set about examining what damage had been done. Later in the day he reported to Ramoroa what had happened. An apology accompanied by a goat to soften the owner's heart, settled the matter, because the owner had punished one of the culprits.

Meanwhile Tau and his companions had collected all the herd and had driven it as far as possible from the fields. Then the herdboys came together to compare experiences. Tau told them all and added to the account. He ended up by saying:

"I ran away. He ran after me, but I dodged through the mabele till he could see me no more. Yet I could hear him all the time looking for me, the son of a witch."

Others had had nasty experiences too. One boy had run away from a woman, who had called him all kinds of names. It appeared that only Nako had escaped because he had been clever enough to let the others look for the herd while he hid himself in the grass. Tau suddenly remembered Nako and cried:

"The fault is with Nako. Why did he leave the herd, when he had told him to look after the animals?"

The boys fell upon the unfortunate Nako. He had no chance against the mob. They tackled him from all sides, pommelled him and kicked him. He was mauled thoroughly. Tau did not touch him at all. He merely looked on while the others taught Nako a lesson. As soon as he could extricate himself, Nako ran home yelling and crying at the top of his voice. At the kraal gate he ran into one of the men, who asked him what had happened, and why he was crying. Between

sobs Nako replied that the other herdboys had ill-treated him, and that he refused to go back. The man was not at all sympathetic, but sternly told him to go back and not be a cry-baby. Nako tried to dodge back into the kraal, but the man caught him and brought him back to the herd. Arrived there, he called together the boys and told them to leave Nako alone.

Needless to say the boys did not leave him alone. It is true they did not hit him, but they jeered at him and teased him mercilessly.

The rainy season passed and the harvesting time arrived. This was a busy time for the women, who had to cut the mabele and carry it home. The herdboys had great fun hunting the little birds called tsuui, a type of quail. These birds were sleek and fat, so fat that they could not fly very far. The boys hunted them in the same way as they had hunted the long tailed birds during the rainy season. When the quail was tired it hid itself in the grass, and then it was very difficult to find because it was the colour of the grass. When the boys saw that the bird would rise no more, they formed a cordon round the place where it had last settled, and slowly but surely closed in upon it. They had to go down on their hands and knees and search every inch of ground, otherwise they would lose their prey. As soon as the first cold sets in these birds change into mice, and spend their winter underground like mice.

Three years passed, then Tau became a goatherd.

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## 7

### TAU THE GOATHERD.

Herding goats was a greater responsibility than herding the lambs. The boys had to go farther afield and there was more danger of goats and sheep being lost or killed by animals of prey. The new herdboys