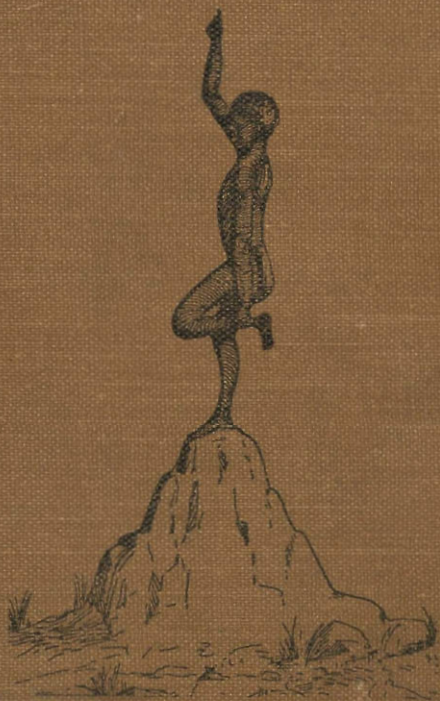


TAU

THE CHIEFTAIN'S SON



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FRANZ

G. H. FRANZ, B.A.

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THE CHIEFTAIN'S SON.



By G. H. FRANZ.

Illustrations by
B. K. FRANZ.

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THE EBENEZER PRESS,
Printers and Publishers,
DUNDEE, NATAL.
1929.

This Book
is dedicated to my Father.

PREFACE

An introduction is more than usually out of place when prefixed to a story, yet a few words regarding the subject of the book and its author may perhaps be forgiven in the case of our first South African Ethnographical novel in English.

The scene of this story is laid in the Northern Transvaal where tribes are somewhat more mixed than in other parts of South Africa. There we have Tonga, Transvaal Basuto, Bavenda and other tribes inhabiting the same area. The ethnography of the Tonga has been written by M. Junod in his *Life of a South African Tribe*, the Bavenda are now being studied with great care, but so far as the present writer knows this is the first attempt to describe in the guise of a novel the ethnography of the Transvaal Basuto—one of the most interesting of all African tribes. There is a striking similarity in the fundamentals of Bantu ethnography, and Mr. Franz's interesting story might serve as a pleasant introduction to the study of Bantu ethnography generally.

Mr. Franz is an Inspector of Native Education in the Orange Free State. The son of a Missionary he grew up among the people whose customs he here describes and whose language he speaks. His natural advantages for this type of study have been developed by his school and University training so that today he ranks high among our growing band of Bantu ethnographers. Throughout his book there is the mark of certain and first hand knowledge. The reader may rest assured that this charming story is fact throughout and not fiction. Tau's childhood games, the sombre initiation rites, the hard bargaining over the **lobola** or bride price are true, not only of the Basuto, but of

many other South African tribes as well. Although the ritual murders of which he speaks in his chapters on the initiation ceremonies would not ordinarily take place today where European rule is strong as in the Union of South Africa, there is no doubt that such killings took place before white occupation, and do indeed take place today in the remoter parts of the continent.

There is a distinct need for such true-to-life stories of our Native tribes as this interesting story. Fiction of the Rider Haggard type and history coloured by the over emphasised Kafir Wars, have presented the South African Native to the world in a false light. Our Natives are not the bloodthirsty, cruel warriors which they are believed to be, but for the most part are conservative, peace loving, hospitable, superstition-ridden people, with a highly intricate social system, and a most charming family life. It seems wise that Mr. Franz should depict them as they are, adding nothing and concealing nothing.

It is hoped that this book will be widely read not only by those who are seeking the knowledge without which South Africa's Native problem cannot be solved, or those who have an interest in folk lore and ethnology, or even those who are seeking good reading for school use, but by those who simply want a true story about one of our most interesting African peoples.

C. T. LORAM.

Native Affairs Commission,
Pretoria.

Oct. 1, 1928.