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B. Mogorosi

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The War of the Basotho Chiefs.

Lerothodi was a chief of a certain portion of Basutoland. During that time a great war broke out on account of the disagreement that existed among a number of the chiefs of Basutoland. The war was between Chief Lerothodi and Chief Moeketsi. The quarrel was over a woman by the name of Mankeane. Mankeane was not a beautiful woman notwithstanding the fact that there was a quarrel over her. This woman Mankeane, ran away with a man who was a confidential servant of Chief Moeketsi. Moeketsi was the son of Mashopha. The woman over whom the quarrel took place was the wife of a man who was a confidential servant of Chief Lerothodi. This was what happened, which was the root cause of the fight. This man escaped to the country occupied by Europeans in the Free State and as he had taken Mankeane with him, Lerothodi said this to Moeketsi. "Now I will lay hands on you, because your man has run away with the wife of my confidential servant". Mashopha, the father of Moeketsi said: "I cannot agree to my son being captured". Lerothodi then said: "If your son does not go to look for the rogue which ran away with the wife of my servant, what must I do with him? They then started a great battle. The battle was continued until harm resulted. Mejela the son of Letsie had his arm cut off. One of the chiefs was killed in the battle. His name was Nako. Nako was the younger son of Letsie. After that, there was great sorrow in Basutoland. There was a great famine in the country. A beast was sold for a basket of mealies. The famine was so great that many people lived by eating grass seeds. Whilst the people were in this state of anxiety, they consoled themselves by saying. "The Sprits would come out of the Mountains to live amongst them so that they would eat in the same way as they did before.

The position was hopeless! Among other tribes things were so bad that the people were eating children. One man

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of the Makgaleng district prevented his wife from letting the child suck from her breast, so that he himself could suck. The wife said: Hey man, the breasts are dry! The husband said, "Why is it that the child is sucking? While the chiefs were still so much concerned about this famine, a European made his appearance. He was called by the name of Moletsaphala. He had food, and he sold a basket of kaffir corn for a beast. Another European also arrived who was known by the name of Seanamarena. He said, "I have come, I the God of the orphans; God of the children of Moshoeshoe. He brought kaffir corn over the Caledon River (Mohokare), piling it up all along as far as the Phutiatsana stream. A beast was sold for 6 or ten bags of kaffir corn. The people were then able to live through this whiteman. After that a heavy rain fell which filled the rivers until they killed some of the people. Nevertheless, there was an abundance of food which saved the people from the hardship of starvation.