

THE DISPUTED BARALONG SUCCESSION.

Yesterday morning we were waited upon by the chief Samuel, the legitimate son of the late Baralong chief Moroko, together with one of Moroko's brothers, two counsellors, and an interpreter. Samuel came down to Cape Town in the early part of the month, with the intention of proceeding to England for the purpose of laying his case before the Imperial Government, and inducing them, if possible, to make such representations to the Free State Government as would lead to the reversal of the decision of the Commission which sat about three years ago to adjudicate upon the rival claims of these contending chiefs. Sepinare was born previous to the marriage of his mother with Moroko. Samuel is, without doubt, one of the most intelligent looking natives we have met, and it was noticeable that his great anxiety did not seem to be so much with respect to the loss of his territorial heritage as the fact that his people—those Baralongs who remained loyal to him in spite of Sepinare's preferment—are scattered all over the land like sheep without a shepherd. Our conversation with the chief took somewhat the following shape:—

Is it not three years since the Free State Government adjudicated on the rival claims of yourself and Sepinare?

Samuel:—Yes, and they wrongfully decided in Sepinare's favour.

How is it you have been lying by these three years?

I have been waiting the result of an appeal to the Volksraad. I sent a petition to the Volksraad, in writing, and went myself to Bloemfontein. I first sent a letter to President Brand, and he wrote back and told me that my case would be heard by the Volksraad—only a little piece of paper, written in Dutch, was sent me. I then went to Bloemfontein, but I did not see President Brand.

Why have you been waiting all this time without doing anything?

Because the Free State Government told me that I could not go wherever I liked. I was not a chief, and could not move about, or I might have collected all my people. The Boers have treated me very unjustly.

When Moroko died, were you living with him at Thaba 'Nchu?

Yes; and Sepinare was also there.

How is it that so many of the Baralongs support Sepinare, and so few call themselves Samuel's people?

The chief was surprised at an inquiry of this sort, and, half-rising from his chair, in an earnest and somewhat excited manner, exclaimed, "No, no, that is not the case, most of the Baralongs are my people and my followers, but Sepinare is helped by the Boers."

"How is it," we inquired, "that the Boers chose to support Sepinare, and not you?"

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"How is it," we inquired, "that the Boers chose to support Sepinare, and not you?"

Why? Because Sepinare promised to give the country up to the Boers. If President Brand had awarded the dispute in my favour, and given the country to me, he knew quite well that I, being a friend of the English Queen's Government, would have sought to be taken over by the English.

We remarked that we were under the impression that Sepinare wanted the country for himself, and it was certain that so far he had not given it to the Boers; whereupon Samuel rejoined that Sepinare had been very liberal in presents of farms to the Boers. All his Boer advocates had received farms at Thaba 'Nchu.

How many?

Well, at least eleven farms have been given away already. Of these, four had farms at Thaba 'Nchu, when Moroko was living, that is, they rented the farms from my father. I hardly think (and here the Chief smiled) they pay any rent to Sepinare now.

How many people has Sepinare got with him?

He has from 300 to 400, and they have all plenty of land.

We then advised Samuel that, in our opinion, he was only wasting his time and his money in going to England. England (we said) cannot do anything for you, as Thaba 'Nchu is in the Free State, and the English Government has quite enough to do to look after the natives in the Queen's country. The English people have made up their minds not to interfere with the affairs of natives in other countries. It may be true that you are the rightful chief of Thaba 'Nchu, but the people in England would say that the question was settled three years ago, and why should it now be re-opened? When Moroko died, and Sepinare set up his claim to the chieftainship, you should have lost no time in wiping him out. If you knew that the Boers would support Sepinare's claims, and not yours, you should have done this quickly and effectually, and then you would not have had all this trouble. But as Sepinare is now there, and has more followers than you have, besides being supported by the Boers, your best plan, instead of going to England, is to look for a new location somewhere, and settle down there.

The chief appeared to be somewhat taken aback by this manner of treating his case, and considerably shaken in his belief as to the propriety of his trip to England.

We asked him, "Could you not get a tract of land in Mankoroane's territory? There is plenty of vacant land there, and Mankoroane wants men to strengthen himself against the freebooters who infest his country. Have you seen Mankoroane in Cape Town?"

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"No, I have not; I have heard that he is here. I know him a little—he was the friend of my father, Moroko. I do not think I could sit under Mankoroane, as he is speaking (in dispute) about his own country." The chief, with considerable warmth, and, extending his right arm, said earnestly, "All the native chiefs know quite well I am the rightful heir of my father. I have been oppressed by the Free State, who have taken my country, and given it to Sepinare, and surely the English will help me to get my country back. I do not want the English to fight with the Boers, but the Queen's counsellors are strong and wise, and surely they can tell the Free State to set me—the rightful heir—in the place of my father."

We explained to him that there were two courses open for the Queen's Government. They could write letters, and they could go to war. There was no use in writing letters, and they certainly would not go to war, in his behalf. What was he to do? Three years ago, we told him, we lost a £5 note. We tried to find it, but soon saw that it had gone past recovery, and we said, "All right, it is gone; all we can do now is to bear with the loss." Three years ago he—Samuel—lost Thaba 'Nchu. He had tried to get it back, but the Boers said he should not have it. What was the good of trying any longer? This is a big world, and there were plenty of places for Samuel besides Thaba 'Nchu.

"Oh yes, it is a big world," Samuel persisted, "but Thaba 'Nchu is a part of the world that is mine by right." I have (he continued) sent letters to Mr. Sauer, the Secretary for Native Affairs, and I have, for three weeks, been waiting for a reply, but have not received one yet.

We again told him that he was only wasting his time and his money in going to England, except to see that country; but he should not think of trying to get Thaba 'Nchu back. It would be much better, we said, if he spent his money in Cape Town in purchasing guns and ammunition, and ploughs for his people.

"I have been in England before" he replied, "and the thing that impels me to go again is my great sorrow for my people. I do not care about the spending of the money, but my people are scattered all over the Free State, wandering about without a place to live, and if I can get my country back, and gather my Baralongs around me, then I shall spend more money in buying for them all these things you mention."

Why not settle down in Mankoroane's country, and get your people around you there? If the Boers do not love you now, they will not love you any the more when they find that you have come down here to go to England in order that you may see about getting your

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Why not settle down in Mankoroane's country, and get your people around you there? If the Boers do not love you now, they will not love you any the more when they find that you have come down here to go to England in order that you may see about getting your country back.

I am not frightened of the Boers. I know well enough they hated me long ago. But (he added, argumentatively) you talk about having lost £5—that is a small thing to be compared with my country. Have I not lost all my people?

We suggested that if he did not care to settle down in Mankoroane's territory, with that chief's permission, he would be able to secure a location in Griqualand East, where there is a great deal of vacant land, under the Berg, and where a number of loyal Basutos had been settled. We told him that we spoke to him as a friend who believed that his claims to the chieftainship of the Baralongs were perfectly sound, but we once more pointed out the hopelessness of the smallest success attending his projected mission to England.

The chief, through the interpreter, thanked us for our advice, and retired with his attendants. We expect that, as in most cases where counsel is sought, this chief with a grievance will follow the dictates of his own sweet will.

—On Tuesday last