

Letter to Benjamin T. Pyne, 25 June 1843

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Kuruman 25 June 1843

My Dear Friend

In M^{rs} Pyne's letter I have neglected to give Missionary information. In this I shall endeavour to supply the omission and as you may feel a little interest in what relates more immediately to my own efforts in that cause I shall give you some account of my recent tour into the Interior I left on the 21st Feb, last & returned a few days ago, part of this journey was in my waggon & about 400 miles of it on a pack ox. It was very warm in that country I was exposed to some dangers but have much reason to be grateful to Him who preserved my health & rescued me from every danger. I had many opportunities of preaching the gospel, & frequently to those who had never before heard the voice or seen the face of a European. My first stage was 10 days from this & at the village where Sebegwe with the remains of his tribe have taken up his abode. I related to you the sad doings of Mahura among that tribe. Some of our people having been there (with S.) at the time of attack & under [in] circumstances which could not fail to excite the minds of the Heathen against the gospel I therefore felt most anxious to go & by my explanations & presence endeavour to eradicate their prejudices. that you may understand what the feelings of the heathen were in reference to our people I may mention that they having accidentally fired a gun the night previous to the attack, it was considered by S's people as having been the signal by which to apprise Mahura of the situation in which the Wanketze stood. the singing at family worship their incantations to insure success in the [the attack of] next morning & the collecting them together on sunday mornning for worship as no other than a pretext to get them more easily slaughtered. On account of these circumstances we felt much grieved, & earnestly longed for an opportunity to disabuse their minds But I could get no one to go out with me, some who thought I might ask them immediately absconded for the dread of certain death was on every mind when they thought on the Interior By the 21st Feb however I prevailed on three to accompany me. But a more craven hearted set never ate corn, one of them was with the party of believers who visited Sebegwe previous

to the attack. We unyoked outside his village & fearing to leave their
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man by the waggon as mischief might have ensued had he been recognised by the Wanketzi (apart from myself) I said come along let us go to the king. He seemed reluctant enough but followed. When we came to the cove where Sebegwe was seated on the ground I squatted down beside him. His warriors immediately recognised my servant & neither words nor looks betokened any complacency towards him. The poor fellow looked 'inutterable things' and as soon as the uproarious recognition was over Sebegwe turned to me & demanded why I had attacked him, destroyed all his people, & stolen his cattle. I in turn demanded why he had refused to the advice I tendered him by the messengers by whom he sent me an ox [& thus destroy himself] not to leave the Bakalihari desert. Did the messengers fail to deliver my message or did he discredit my words. I told him I had said to his messenger that if Sebegwe left that country Mahura would certainly attack him. He answered the messengers told him all. But his heart sore longed again to eat corn, fevers had destroyed many of his people while his oxen had increased to much he could not get them taken care of. He did not discredit my words but was induced to have that country by the ? of his people. & not knowing the power of guns he dispersed the Batlapi. Poor man he now knows it to his cost May these afflictions be blessed to his soul. some of the messengers who came to me last year still survive & recognised me. Sebegwe & I soon became very good friends. The day following that on which I arrived being Sabbath I was pleased to hear before daylight the kings herald proclaiming from an eminence "that no work must be done on that day. We must do nothing but pray to God & listen to the words of the foreigner, all must come to hear, Sebegwe will not suffer anyone to remain behind. This was by way of honouring me I having explained to him the day before the nature of our Sabbath. His people were all entirely ignorant of God. He was seen by M^r Moffat once, But does not remember anything that was then preached to him. It is probable as M^r M. was then young & did not understand the language the Wanketzi did not understand what was preached. The comet which M^{rs} P. averted to in hers of december last, we saw in the month of march. It was a glorious sight But inspired all the inhabitants of the interior with terror. The Batlapi thought that Sebegwe had brought it in order to kill them for their attack upon him, & Sebegwe asked me if Mahura was dead as he thought the comet was the signal of that event I visited the Bakhatla, the chief of that tribe fled into the desert with Sebegwe & has just now returned to his own land. He was particularly friendly to us, I asked him if he should like me to come & live with him He held up his hands & exclaimed O I shall dance if you say you will come, I asked if he would give me a garden, they have no idea of selling land. Wherever one chooses to plough that is his land. We however have to make a bargain in order to have a permanent property near their villages over which the king has no power He said

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I shall call all your people to ~~plou~~[hoe] for you, & you shall have more corn & sweet seed than I have. We shall do every thing to assist you. It is probable M^r Edwards & myself will go & settle with him soon. But I must go on to the rest of my journey.

I visited the Bakwain again but the recent commotions have quite ~~[...]~~ changed all the former state of things. No one now lives where he formerly resided. Bubi has fled from the spot where we led out the water last year, Sechele has come southwards, the Bamangwato have fled into the holes of the rocks & live like the Bakua & Bamakalaka, many of Sebegwe's women were taken prisoners by the Matibele of Mosilikatze (who I may mention now lives 12 days E N E of the Bamangwato & still acts as formerly) these escaping from them met us at the Bakwainsthey had subsisted on roots by day & fled up some high rock for safety by night during the whole of this weary journey. Poor creatures it was affecting to hear their tale of woe. Their sufferings made them the mere skeletons of what they formerly were But as they were to use the native phrase, "only women" nobody cared about them. the sight of these people frightened mine, it was in vain I urged I had engaged them to carry me to the Bamangwatotho, they lay down on their faces & if there had not been black I am sure they would have [...] pale with fear. I had to leave the waggon with them & proceed on oxback with three of Bubi's men as guides, most faithful fellows I found them, they were as kind as men could be. they always gave me the best place at the fire, the best bed under the bush at which we slept & the first cut of the meat However hungry they were themselves they always waited untill I had eaten. We were entirely dependant on my gun for provisions. When I killed anything we took a meal off the carcase, a piece to hang over our shoulders & away we went Sometimes we had plenty to eat at other times we had to feast on the delectable things we saw in our dreams It was a tiresome journey of more than 400 miles But I saw many whom I should otherwise never spoken to I in particular remember my interviews with the Bakalihari through part of whose country we travelled. The Pleasure of visiting them & making known the way of life to their poor degraded & enslaved people far surpassed the fatigue of travelling. they were more attentive than any Bechuana I have seen. When at the Bakaa in descending the huge basaltic rocks to our sleeping place below with the testament in my hand I felt as if falling & making an effort to save myself struck my hand so violently against a sharp fragment

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as to fracture a finger bone which rested on the testament & nearly severed it from my hand. I got a very good splint made of a bit of reed, & it promised to heal soon. But one night we were aroused by a lion as near as from your parlour to the opposite side of

the yard. He roared terribly, my ox leaped out among us. My poor Bakwains shrieked for fear & I half awake siezed a pistol with the disabled hand fired at the monster but the rebound rebroke my finger. A few more shots sent him off & when Bakwains saw the blood again running they said, "You have hurt yourself but you have redeemed us by your hand. Henceforth we shall swear by you". O that they knew the value of the blood which was shed for their souls. this was worse than the first fracture after which I had to fast nearly two days a circumstance which I believe saved me from irritativefever But as I can bear a little pain pretty well neither was so bad as you may imagine. It did not make me rest a single day. I saw some of the Mabalaka who live close to Mozilikatze. I sent salutations & a message to that notorious villian. One took off an armlet & gave it to me as a pledge that he would deliver the message & asked me to give him a pair of earrings to shew Mosilikatze as a token that he had seen me. I gave him two of my metal buttons which pleased him much. I shall send this armlet to M^{rs} P. also some cloth of the Makalaka which I brought out for her I do not tell you the pains I felt to excite your pity. I did feel pain But I felt more pleasure & therefore I do not grudge it in the least. We have a kind master to serve, there never can be one more gracious Let us bless him for ever & ever

Seeds of medicinal plants sealed in tin would
be of great value to me. Those I got from you
were spoiled by the sea air & did not germinate

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