

Letter to Robert Moffat 1, 12 May 1845

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Mabotsa 12 May 1845

My Dear Father

We recieved your very welcome letter by the Bakhatla who went out with Mosi & felt very thankful for it for we were very anxious to hear what you thought after perusing my long epistle on the disagreeable subject. We hope to have an opportunity soon so I begin to answer what is answerable & let you know how we get on. Your question about the Boerish peace makers is easily settled. The Interior is not yet pacified. Bube intends it is currently reported, to remove to a spot not very distant from this. He sent me word that he intends coming for the purpose [^][of] asking land next week, & the reason is, he fears the Matibele will come out during this winter. Sekhomi has stolen some sheep from Mosilikatse this year & he killed 23 of his people last year when they came to ask tribute. All are now dreading Mosilikatse's resentment. Sechele told me he would remove instantly to a fountain called Kolobeñ in hopes of getting a missionary if it were not for that same fear - And ~~last~~ two years ago when the Matibele attacked in succession the Bamangwato, Bakwain & Wanketaze of Sebegoe. the boers heard the news and fled. They would do so again this year Sechele went with large presents of ivory to Hendrick Potkeiter the commandant of the Boers to entreat their assistance for the recovery of his cattle. Instead of pacifying the poor fellow as he wished they told Mr Bain that the Caffres had come with tribute to them. Catch Sechele going back again with his ivory while M^r Hume lives. Not a single fray has been prevented by the Boers & the notion

Mary has been ill but a small bleeding has relieved the most troublesome symptoms & she now does

well. My arm is very much stronger but the splint is still in the same state

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that they drove away Mosilikatse I believe now to be very questionable. the Goolahs were the cause of his flight & not the paltry attack of Mosega Ask the people of Sechele how they like the Boers & they will tell you that rather than come near them again they will desert their chief

I began a meeting for the purpose of trying to interest the people in our meetings in general & have continued talking on different subjects calculated to engage their attention But have not met the success I expected. Our own people are the chief attendants and they seem to enjoy what is told them. The hearts of the Bakhatla must be changed before anything can be made of them, that is the first thing I see, and I shall attend to it as the everything. My mind has been taken up with the affair of Edwards to an extent far exceeding my wishes. I think of it when I ought to be meditating on better things But I hope I may not indulge in any improper spirit towards him. I have felt less anxious than I expected I should be when told I should have a committee held over me By the way, I may ask, if he will be allowed to speak or contradict without my presence, I conceive as I speak by writing he ought although there to do the same & then let the brethren judge I don't know what he will say after, he could speak about my shabby treatment when he offered to build the house, & no such offer was ever made

Another affair I wish to mention to you as I feel rather at a loss how to act in it, if I were not already involved with M^rE I should see my path clear [0003]

But as it is I fear I may act more from an improper spirit than f[...] in a wish to prevent the degradation of the missionary character. Some time last year M^rE told me that having been at Bube's a brother of the latter offered him a large tusk for a musket he had with him, But he (M^rE) had declined, the same man came here a short time before M^rE.. left for Kuruman & came to me & asked if I should give him a cow for a large tusk. I replied, no, I am not a trader. He said yes I know you are not a trader but Edwards helped me with a gun & I helped him with a tusk. M^rE. was that day down on a visit to the Bahurutse & having come home in the evening the man left on the day following and I neither asked nor heard any more about it untill the return of M^r Milligan from Bube's. M^rE's man went

with M^rM. to Bube's to purchase Karosses, for M^rE. (I suppose for carpets) and Mr M said to me, "O M^r Edwards has turned trader now". "His man brought a fine large tusk [^][this is N^o 2] from the Bakwains for him". If it were not for our difference I should ask an explanation from M^rE. and caution him against appearing to degrade the missionary character. He has been purchasing oxen ever since we came here but he always mentioned his journey to the Colony as the reason, and of course that journey does require many.

I shall not feel surprised although I hear that M^rE has made overtures to M^r Ashton to supplant me here. Many things have recently come back to my recollection which had entirely escaped me, and why they should have vanished from my mind I cannot conceive. But now when I put them together I see the reason of M^rE. running to a committee, He wishes to have me out of this altogether & he thinks M^r Ashton a more likely subject for him to twist round his finger. When ~~I returned from~~ M^{rs} Moffat wrote from Bethelsdorp she omitted mentioning anything about the young bretheren. When I returned, to the house this was the first piece of news I got, and M^{rs}E. having conjectured that there must be some difference among them. "A very good thing indeed remarked M^rE. if there is Moffat will not have it all his own way"

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and again on a subsequent occasion, I think after your arrival but I am not sure. Perhaps after my return from meeting you "I think Ashton is a man of independant mind & wont be led by the nose by Moffat" and then when I returned from seeing Mary, I was asked if I should not like to live with my father in law. I thought the question very impudent & simply said "No" & then among a number of fishing pumping questions put to Mary such as "You & M^{rs} Ashton must be very intimate, & if Ashton was to remain at the Kuruman, these things had all vanished from my mind, But in thinking over the other affair a connecting link I recieved from one of M^rE's intimate friends. came back with great vividness, "I advise you said he to be as little dependant on Kuruman as possible, we have all been too much so" Now I may be wrong but my close connection with Kuruman seems to have had some influence as well as my "dishonest dishonourable unchristian & shabby conduct".

The plough is in process of resuscitation and though M^rE consigned it to "old iron" I feel sanguine it will soon be of more use than that material. Not

having the instruments for boring or drilling holes for rivets I have taken the essential portions & let them into a log of murutu of this shape the different portions are firmly screwed to it & tomorrow we shall put in a new beam of white ash much thicker than the old but with the old wheel & coulter irons. M^r Milligan gave me an idea of the shape or I should have gone wrong, altogether. I had the handles in when he came & as I was doing it simply from my recollection of the shape of a plough I have the centre of the handles right in the centre of the plough & not chiefly on the furrow side as it ought to be. Will you send the iron which runs from the handles to the beam, which you shewed me in the printing office. the one you made is entirely gone.

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We have been favoured with M^r Greig's presence more than agreeable. We escaped from him only once & that was by getting all ready & starting for Sechele's as soon as he made his appearance from the other side. He was nearly quits with us for he said he would come to meet us We went round by another way But our gent. very soon came back to see if we had not arrived. I thought of going off to Bube but he is determined to accompany us So I give up that & now think of going Eastward to the son of Sebeque. I could easily be plain with him & get quit of his very insipid company but for one consideration Before we had been many days here he made some remarks which made me believe M^rE had been reciting to him the burden of his song, for instance, " M^r Edwards is a man of a very peculiar temper" "very difficult to get on with I should think" "He tells me he did the most of the work of the church at Kuruman" "at least all the woodwork" To these remarks I only replied that as M^r Hamiltom & Moffat were there it is not very likely they would be idle & avoided saying a word about Edwards. But believing that Edwards had given as M^{rs}E. would say "the other side of my character" I rather submit to be half eaten up by M^rG. than that he should have any thing to say against us. If we could by any possibility get a secondhand mill untill our own comes we should get on well whoever comes accross us We have maize & the large box which contained the drawers nearly full of wheat. We are inundated with pumpkins. I got two sheep for gun mending, thanks to you, and two karrosses (debt) which I shall send as soon as I get as payment for the steel. The people believe that having married your daughter I must know

as much about the business as yourself. the goodness of the steel confirms their opinion When putting on a plate for Sechele last week I soldered it very well with powdered glass instead of the borax you use But on hardening again the libi were not warm enough so I took it to the bellows & the copper came all out again. I tried it again with [0006]

other copper no fewer than four times & it always ran any where but where I wanted it. In despair I put in some white lead. What must I do if I make the same mistake again? the old files you gave me I case hardened & find they supply the place of the fine large coarse toothed one you gave & which I got spoiled by lending to Paulus. If you have any others from M^r Hamilton's burned house which you dont care about I shall feel thankful for one or two either to harden or make taps of. My small plate has been spoiled by some one. the thread is nearly gone, I have made taps of those holes which will make them and will take the liberty of sending out two of the smaller ones for the screw from your plate and then I shall try & finish a plate which I have already forged. The small screws I need are those inside a lock, particularly that which goes through the pan. I have got the chief & a few of his principal men to try their hands at the anvil and this although they believed they should die if they did. One of the hereditary smiths came and taught us how to make native axes. I did not know to fold in & weld a thin bit before I saw him do it. I took one of the antient smiths with us to Sechele's to shew me where his forefather found the tsipi & men. there are many mines and the smoke of the fires is still adhering to the roofs but they dont go in far. the veins reach the surface & are about 2 inches in diameter only The man asserted while in the first recess [or][mine]that the rock above contained the ore. It is nearly identical with the KurumanTrap. I doubted but as he repeated his assertions with great confidence I thought perhaps it was the ore of tin. As I have nearly forgotten its appearance But when [0007]

we came out I noticed a piece of the pretty green copper ore in a vein of about ½ an inch diameter & pointed it out to him He said yes it is so after it is subjected to the fire. These were copper mines The tin I believe is found nearer to this place but in

the same direction M^r Evans found a piece of the ore much richer than any I have seen although I have been on the look out for it every time I have been in that country. The hill where I think it must lie in is called Tsipcane or as Batlapi would say Tsicane.

Sechele you will have heard lately put a man to death for witchcraft. We of course had a great deal of conversation on the subject & on that of revenge. Before the former subject was introduced He asked me if an individual acted justly, fairly avoided fighting treated both his own people and [...] trangers kindly, killed witches & prayed to God would he [^][be] saved - this question made me see he thought he had committed a meritorious action in killing the man. The above affair became mixed up with another which you will perhaps [...] lso hear about. One of his people who formerly killed an uncle of Sechele fled on hearing that the witch had been killed & came here, being afraid that he might be the next. When he arrived here he told the people that Sechele wished to kill him on account of his cattle &c. The man's father brought all his son's sheep &c. to Sechele after the latter had fled & divided them among the principal people. Sechele took one only & eat it & told the others not to slaughter any of them untill he had tried to recover the man the man was sent for & returned and is now alive & well. M^r Edwards believing the man's testimony against Sechele sends him "a severe reprimand" as he expressed it to M^r Greig for a deed which he did not do. M^rE. does not like Sechele because Sechele is rather friendly with me [0008]

when leaving in order to visit Sechele last time the chief here said to me, "Yes you can go to visit Sechele, you dont know him Edwards knows him & he says when I took the Doctor to the Bakwain country I let him see what Sechele was but he does not see now" If I liked I could get plenty of evidence of "going to natives" for expressions are let drop perpetually which convince me that the rogue was suspicious because he knew his own deeds I believe [^][he] thinks I have ventured to you all the nonsense he talked about you & everybody else at times, and that you have told me all he wrote about me, but in [...] case it was simply impossible for it has all gone from my memory. If I shall be worried by the reiteration of his little childish tricks & talk as M^r Hume was it will be [^][a] great hindrance to me in my work.

I have written M^r Arundel about my watch. But
I believe I mentioned this last time. I am sorry the wood
split up so. I spoiled a pair of shoes after the ash
but could not succeed. I was at the same time warned
by M^rE. All the good ones have been cut down
by the Bakhatla. I know however of good ones at
a little distance Could you spare another bottle
of linseed oil for the [...]
begging af[...]

We wrote by M^r Edwards, & hope you
recieved all safe. Will you
purchase for me some pencils
from M^{rs} Greig. We shall be
obliged by some cows from M^r Hume
as soon as possible. Going over
1845 if possible the [...] ast were rather
old. We want more for winter

Rev^dR. Moffat
Kuruman