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MABINDELA

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MABINDELA

A 71/25-7

individual, having worked for his contract time, returns to his own tribe. Here, we might almost say, is where the Imperial difficulty begins. Reports from Basutoland, which is in some respects a model "native reserve", before the war tended to show that the return to their native kraals of young men who had earned enough money in a few months to be, as it were, rentiers for the rest of their lives, was by no means advantageous to the tribe. The labourers had often picked up bad habits, and had invariably lost their respect for their chiefs and for tribal customs without acquiring any real notions of civilized order. Dr Hillier has no paracaea, but he understands the gravity of the "native question". Now that all South Africa is to be within the Empire, it is time that we studied the risks of the future. The mines are a great solvent of tribal distinctions. Gradually the incidence of our rule will obliterate tribal landmarks. Have any of us really considered what it will be to find ourselves confronted with an enormous quarter-civilised Bantu nation? *Chd. 2/1*

"The writer (Hillier) has lived for sixteen years among Boers and Outlanders, he possesses a judicial mind, and he is an acute observer." "Dr Hillier was connected with the reform movement in the Transvaal." "Often the Colonial Englishman judges much more soundly than the home-staying, and herein is the hope for the future." (from same article). *v*

19.12.00 I yesterday morning ^(early) had a conversation with Mabindela, an Official Witness living in Klip River Division and living in the vicinity of Spion Kop (Matlamnyema). ^(Ndukwana was present) He belongs to tribe of Sibamwe who lives with the greater portion of his, the Amangwe, tribe in Estcourt Divn. Mabindela is a very able and intelligent man aged about 40. He got Ndukwana to introduce him to me. His (Sibongo) is Mazibuko. Father was Mtu-lini. Chief Sibamwe's father was Manzezulu ka Putini ka Matchoba. ^{v.p. 33.} The Amangwe tribe came from near Engaka ^(beyond Vryheid + near Durgole) with Putini (not Putili), for Matchoba was buried ^{at or} near Engaka. Putini left with the tribe many years ago, possibly in Ishaka's day & when he died in Natal he was of a very advanced age. Not known to what regiment, if any, he belonged to. The tribe occupied at first ~~new~~ land where Ladysmith now stands ^{but} and on the approach of Europeans, moved off to near the Drakenburg, Estcourt Divn. A large section of the people still lives in this Divn (Klip River). The tribe is quite apart from Amangwane tribe. Gadeleni a younger brother of Manzezulu had a quarrel with Manzezulu whereupon Manzezulu allowed him to go off to Ngqutu Dist, Zululand where he

was permitted to live under Chief Mlubi, but the Govt. allowed him a very large measure of autonomy, still he, though a member with his followers of Manze-zulu's (Sibamu's) tribe, is subservient to Mlubi.

Mabindela was, he informed me, dressed in a tailor made suit. He has other clothes at home made by his tailor, Riddell of Ladysmith. He says his reason for having his clothes specially made ~~is~~ was because 'reach-me-downs' fitted so badly, burst if too small at waist, ^{when sitting down to drink beer,} had to be cut if too long in the leg. The blue serge coat and waistcoat he had on cost him £3.10. He is not a Christian. He has ^{now} five wives, the sixth having died. They are not dressed like Christian natives, but in their ordinary dress. M. himself as soon as he gets home, not a kraal however but a properly built European house, throws his tailor made clothes aside, and dons the mutsha and will not allow any of his children to wear European clothing. He lost a son (son & heir) who not many weeks ago was run over by a cart carrying mabele's seed to his gardens. He, seeing how ~~was~~ bad a case it was, and knowing that on account of the profuse bleeding no natives could be got to bury the corpse, ordered a properly made coffin, lined inside with calico and covered outside with some speckled cloth. In this the boy was buried lying at full length instead of being drawn up after the native manner; a proper grave moreover was dug to receive the coffin. He paid something like £3, I think, for the coffin. Many natives M. says are taking to burying their dead away from the kraal and at a single spot which thereby becomes a cemetery. Ordinary native custom required burial at the kraal itself. — M. was born at Dewdrop in Klip R. Div. Proposes to educate his children as they get older. Was a ~~scout~~ scout in the late fighting about Ladysmith and attached to Buller's forces. He, knowing the country well, was selected to lead the forces. Boers destroyed his house and would have killed him. — There was a large native dance at his place last year before the war came on. These are the circumstances, briefly: ^{20.12.00} The Military wanted to see a Zulu Dance, Mr. Rulph ^{or agreed to} proposed its being held at Mabindela's, M. was told to arrange for one, he came to Mr. Rulph to say ^{he thought} his chief Sibamu and his representative ^{in this dept. (Tomsoni)} should be informed & their permission got. Mr. R. said that was a proper course to adopt and that both Mabindela and Tomsoni should go and seek the necessary permission from Sibamu. Permission was accordingly got in that way. The Military subscribed £3 and £3.10 ^{with} the former amount M. was told to buy goats and with the latter mabele. He procured 3 goats and 3½ sacks of mealies. On the day appointed the dance was duly held at M's house. ~~at~~ Sibamu attended it though he arrived after it was nearly over,

(Juggla)
due to the river being impassable. The dance was a good one, natives being properly attired for it. M. received £3 for his trouble after it was all over.

Rather over a fortnight ago M. was suddenly sent for to meet Lord Roberts at Spion Kop. M. took another man with him; he could not understand what he was wanted for. It appeared he had been sent for by Major G. F. Tatham of Ladysmith who was in attendance on Roberts. He was wanted to show Lord R. where Potgieter's Drift was. Lord R. spoke to him, & had some words about his having tailor-made clothes and procuring coffins. He told Lord R. and part of his large escort on to said Drift. Here horses of Lord R.'s trap got off and ran away as everyone had got out of trap. After chasing the trap for some distance M. succeeded in securing the horses when many of the escort, ^{following} came up and assisted. Lord R. thanked M. for what he had done. After inspecting locality party returned & M. separated from them. "But," he says, "after all this I got nothing but thanks. I may be given a medal but I am not certain of even that." M. was ^{favourably} impressed with Lord R. -

20.12.00
Conversation this morning, about 11.30 - 12.30, with H. J. Colenbrander chiefly with regard to settlement of Natives at Weenen. He was Magistrate (acting) and Clerk there several years and had otherwise special cause to interest himself particularly in the matter. He says Weenen was laid out as a township by the Boers in 1845, being called Nobamba after the famous Zulu kraal. The following is from a ^{very rough} sketch by C.:-



Notes.
a = 100 Native Kraals.
Blocks = 150 acres each.
Commonage and Townlands etc = 23,000 acres. -

There are about 100 kraals on the Townlands, & situated here and there. The Natives, it seems, were refugees from Zululand in 1857 after the Cetshwayo and Mbu-yazi fight. Sir J. Shepstone arranged with the Boers living at Weenen that these