

months; a further 800 are receiving training as bricklayers, masons, carpenters, plumbers, fitters, welders, electricians, decorators, turners, tailors, shoemakers, and motor mechanics. In spite of the shortness of the period of training, general satisfaction with the competence of the trainees has been expressed by employers. The government electrical engineer has accepted 50 men in the last 6 months; these constitute half the non-European staff of his department. At the centre there is one European supervisor to 50 trainees and one African instructor to every 15. As a training school of ex-servicemen, the school is due to end its career in December 1948, but plans have been formulated to establish it as a permanent college for adult African students.

### *Thomas Mofolo*

THOMAS MOFOLO, the author of *Chaka* and other notable books, died on 8 September 1948 at his home at Teyateyaneng in Basutoland, after a long period of ill health. The second son of Christian Basuto he was born at Khojane, in the Mafeteng district, in August 1877 but spent most of his boyhood at Qomogong in the more southern district of Quthing. His life as a herd-boy in that region of imposing mountains and fertile valleys left a lasting impression upon his mind and is reflected in his books which, incidentally, disprove the often asserted statement that the African has no eye for beauty. He attended a village school superintended by the Rev. Lechesa Segoete (another name that figures in Sotho literature), one of the native pastors, and at the age of twenty entered the Mission school at Masitisi. Thence in 1894 he went to continue his education at Morija, the central station of the Paris Evangelical Society, where after a course at the Bible School he was enrolled in the Normal School and passed out with the teachers' certificate in 1899. It was at that time, when teaching at Morija, I met him first and little thought that one of my students would make a name as a writer. He worked as proof-reader in the Morija Book Depot until this closed down for a time in consequence of the South African War; taught in a school at Maseru until the end of the war and then returned to the Book Depot. In 1910 he went to the institution at Leloaleng to teach and to learn carpentry. Thereafter he took a spell at mining in Johannesburg and later engaged in recruiting labour for the mines, at first as agent of the Eckstein group of mines and afterwards as a free-lance. His next experiment in life was to open a trading-store at Bokong in the mountains of Basutoland. This was in 1928 and the business, together with a mill which he had started at Teyateyaneng as early as 1916, occupied most of his time until ill health forced him to leave his native land. He bought a farm in the Matatiele district of the Union but found difficulty in running it under conditions imposed by the Land Acts and returned to his home, where he remained, always a sick man, until his death.

He began his literary efforts while engaged at the Morija Book Depot, and his first book appeared in serial form in the Mission newspaper, *Leselinyana*. It was later published in book form with the title *Moeti oa Bochabela*, and translated by H. Ashton into English as *The Traveller of the East* (S.P.C.K.). More appropriately it should be entitled *A Traveller to the East*, for it tells how a MoSotho of olden time set out on a quest to the East in search of the legendary Ntsoanatsatsi (the original home of his people) and Molimo, the God of whom his fathers spoke. Fekisi, the hero, reminds one of the Buddhist lama in *Kim* and his search for the river; and of the old MoSotho of whom Eugene Casalis writes, who sought for a solution of the enigma of this universe. Mofolo's second book, *Pitseng*, has not, so far as I am aware, been put into English. It is a novel on more familiar lines and is written in what all BaSotho say is the most charming Sotho.

It is chiefly on his historical romance *Chaka* that Mofolo's fame rests. This was written after careful study of the traditional accounts of the Zulu king and conqueror, but is no mere chronicle. It was translated into English by F. H. Dutton, Director of Education, and

published by the International African Institute in 1931 with an introduction by Sir Henry Newbolt, who dwells upon the richness and vitality of the whole work.

The book inevitably loses something in translation, but even in its English dress the author's psychological insight, imaginative power, and literary skill are evident. It has been described by a competent South African authority as the finest literary achievement produced in South Africa.

Many of us hoped that Mofolo would follow this up by a study of the national hero Moshoeshe. I am told that he actually began to write this but the manuscript was lost or destroyed. He attempted to rewrite it from memory but his broken health did not allow him to complete it.

E. W. SMITH

### *Tigré or Tigray?*

DR. S. F. NADEL, in the concluding paragraph of his review of Miss Perham's 'Government of Ethiopia' (*Africa*, Oct. 1948, p. 310), objects to the use of the word Tigré to denote the northernmost province of Ethiopia and states that: 'the correct name . . . is Tigray, not Tigré; although the use of the latter term is very widespread it leads to considerable confusion since there is also a language called Tigré, spoken in parts of Eritrea and the north-western Sudan'.

Dr. Nadel's statement in this form is, I fear, incorrect. His objection is twofold: (a) Tigré is 'incorrect', (b) Tigré 'leads to confusion'.

As to (a) there can be no doubt that Tigré is philologically the correct form for the northernmost province of Ethiopia. The form Tigray is a derivative from Tigré and the suffix *-ay* is the common Ethiopian equivalent of the Arabic Nisbe form *-iyyu* denoting that a person or thing belongs to or is connected with a family, tribe, country, &c. Thus Tigré is the name of the province (and all natives refer to it by this name), and Tigray is either a man of the Tigré (thus in Ethiopic literature: *Tigray* = *Tigreensis* in *Maṣḥafa Mestir*, folio 344; cf. Dillmann, *Lexicon*, col. 1415) or anything else belonging to the Tigré, such as its language which is either called Tigray or latterly more frequently Tigrinya with Amharic termination.

However, apart from these unassailable linguistic arguments objection must also be raised to the second part of Dr. Nadel's statement. The use of Tigray would lead to confusion with Tigrinya which is still called Tigray by most Italian and French scholars. Thus by avoiding one source of confusion we would only create another. Moreover, the danger of confusion with the language Tigré is not very serious nowadays, as Tigray and *not* Tigré is spoken in the Tigré province, although Tigré originated there just as much as Tigray (= Tigrinya), the former having retained the name of the province in its original form.

To these cogent linguistic and general reasons one might add that Miss Perham finds herself in very illustrious company in calling this province 'Tigré', for Ludolf, Bruce, Salt, Munzinger, Dillmann, Guidi, Conti Rossini, and others all do so as well. Budge and Padre Francesco da Bassano use both Tigré and Tigray side by side.

E. ULLENDORFF