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Author: Owen Rowe O'Neil

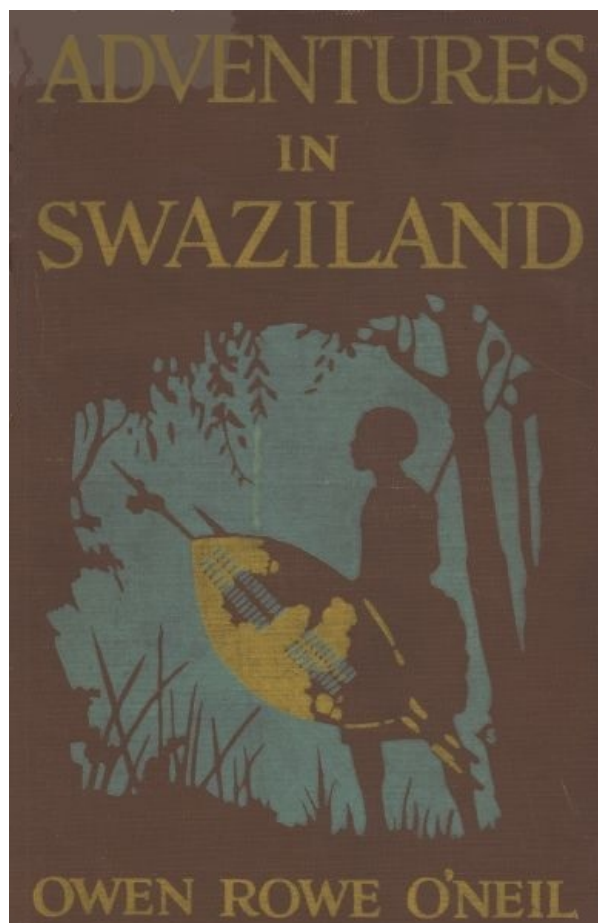
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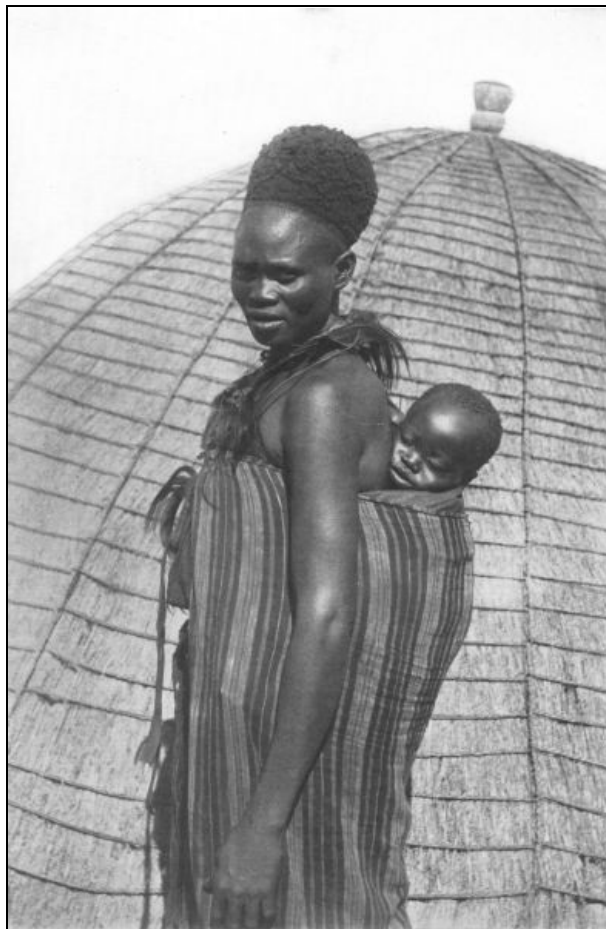
Ba - Ba Inkoos! *

Dr Leon W. Goldreich

With the authors
Compliments

Owen Rowe Meil
22nd Feb. 25

Translated from Swazi
"Greetings Great Teacher"



SWAZI MOTHER CARRYING HER BABE
Like most of the South African natives, the Swazis carry all burdens on their heads, the women invariably being the beasts of burden. Babies are the only things the women ever carry on their backs, this

being because they keep their children
with them while doing the housework. The
splendid stature and erect carriage of
Swazi women is directly due to carrying all
weights on their heads

ADVENTURES IN SWAZILAND

THE STORY OF A SOUTH AFRICAN BOER

BY

OWEN ROWE O'NEIL

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



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1921

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TO MY FATHER
COUNSELOR, FARMER, AND WARRIOR
THIS HUMBLE RECORD IS DEDICATED

CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER I</u>	PAGE
HOW THE O'NEILS CAME TO THE TRANSVAAL—BOERS WITH IRISH NAMES—OOM PAUL'S REFUSAL TO BUY DELAGOA BAY—THE BOERS BREAK FOR FREEDOM—THEIR BLOODY BATTLES WITH THE SAVAGE TRIBES—THE GRAT TREK—DINGAANZULU'S TREACHERY—THE DINGAAN DAY CELEBRATION	3
<u>CHAPTER II</u>	
RIETVLEI, THE "VALLEY OF REEDS"—THE O'NEIL HOMESTEAD—PIONEER HARDSHIPS—THE WAR AGAINST MALEUW, "THE LION"—"SLIM GERT" O'NEIL BREAKS THE POWER OF THE MAKATEESE KING—JAFTA, KING OF THE MAPORS—MY BOYHOOD AND "JASS"—SIBIJAN, "THE SKUNK," BECOMES MY PAL—MY FIRST TROUSERS NEARLY COST ME AN EYE—OUR TOY FACTORY AND MIMIC BATTLES—OOM TUYS GROBLER TELLS OF SWAZILAND AND KING BUNO, "THE TERRIBLE"	12
<u>CHAPTER III</u>	

MY DESIRE TO VISIT KING BUNO—HOW I WON THE TRIP ON A BET—A BOER RACE MEET—"BLACK HAND TOM," THE HOPE OF RIETVLEI—KLAAS'S RIDE TO SAVE HIS SKIN—FATHER GIVES PERMISSION FOR MY VISIT—BELFAST CELEBRATES THE BOER VICTORY 31

CHAPTER IV

I LEAVE FOR MY FIRST VISIT TO SWAZILAND—MOTHER WARNS ME ABOUT OOM TUYS—WHY THE BOERS PAID TRIBUTE TO KING BUNO—QUEEN LABOTSIBENI, THE BRAINS OF SWAZILAND—BUNO'S VISIT TO OOM PAUL KRUGER—OUR RECEPTION IN SWAZILAND—EZULWENI, THE "VALLEY OF HEAVEN"—BUNO'S RIFLE—SIBJAAAN AND I EXPLORE BY NIGHT 44

CHAPTER V

SHEBA'S BREASTS AND THE PLACE OF EXECUTION—ZOMBODE AND THE ROYAL KRAAL OF QUEEN LABOTSIBENI—COMMON AND ROYAL GROUND—WE REACH KING BUNO'S KRAAL AT LEBOMBO—GIN FOR THE KING—BUNO, THE REGAL SAVAGE—I PRESENT A RIFLE TO THE KING—LOMWAZI TAKES ME TO LABOTSIBENI—THE OLD QUEEN IS WORRIED OVER TUYS' ACTIVITIES—THE SHOOTING-MATCH WITH THE KING—TUYS AND I MANAGE TO MISS A FEW HUMAN TARGETS 57

CHAPTER VI

TUYS ORDERS ME TO REMAIN IN CAMP DURING THE CELEBRATION—I VISIT THE ROYAL KRAAL—FEASTING, DANCING, AND COMBATS TO THE DEATH—BUTCHERY OF YOUNG WOMEN—BUNO AND TUYS WRESTLE FOR GOLD—HOW TUYS BECAME RICH—A "LEGAL EXECUTION" IN SWAZILAND—THE UNFAITHFUL WIFE EXPIATES HER SIN—HOW TUYS SHOOTS—FATHER GATHERS INFORMATION BY MENTAL SUGGESTION 73

CHAPTER VII

I VISIT SWAZILAND AGAIN—BUNO'S ILLNESS—AN APPEAL FROM THE KING—THE RACE AGAINST DEATH—UMZULEK MEETS US—THE DYING KING—BUNO MAKES TUYS GUARDIAN OF HIS PEOPLE—THE LAST ROYAL SALUTE OF THE IMPIS—THE DEATH-DEALING PUFF-ADDER—BUNO DIES LIKE A TRUE SAVAGE KING—TZANEEN, THE ROYAL WIDOW, SUSPECTS MURDER—THE QUEENS MEET—TUYS ESCAPES THE FUNERAL SACRIFICE 92

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROYAL FUNERAL—THE "THUNDER OF THE SHIELDS"—NOT AFRAID TO DIE—THE WITCH-DOCTOR'S BLOODY WORK—WHAT LABOTSIBENI WANTED—THE BURIAL OF THE INDUNAS—RAIN-MAKING AND THE "RAIN STONE"—BUNO'S BURIAL IN THE CAVES—WITCH-DOCTORS PREVENT OUR ENTERING THE CAVES—LABOTSIBENI SENDS FOR GIN 110

CHAPTER IX

SIBJAAAN'S SPORTIVENESS ALMOST COSTS HIS LIFE—HOW TUYS BECAME THE FRIEND OF BUNO—LABOTSIBENI ENDORSED AS REGENT OF SWAZILAND—UMZULEK PLOTS TO SEIZE THE THRONE—THE BOERS INVADE SWAZILAND—TUYS DICTATES PEACE BETWEEN THE QUEENS—UMZULEK GETS HIS LESSON 129

CHAPTER X

WAR WITH ENGLAND—SIEGE OF BELFAST—OUR BOYISH IMPI ATTACKS THE BRITISH—GHOSTS DEFEAT US—JAFTA'S FRIENDSHIP—ENGLISH TROOPERS DO THE "SPORTING THING"—UMZULEK—STILL PLANNING DEVILTRY—DEATH OF KLAAS, OUR JOCKEY—FATHER SENDS ME AWAY TO GET AN EDUCATION 150

CHAPTER XI

BACK TO RIETVLEI FROM HARVARD—I LOCATE IN ERMELO—TUYS BRINGS NEWS THAT SEBUZA IS TO BE CROWNED KING OF SWAZILAND—I DECIDE TO MAKE A PICTURE RECORD OF THE CORONATION—THE TREK TO ZOMBODE TO GET THE ROYAL PERMISSION—SNYMAN PLAYS GHOST AND ALMOST GETS KILLED—VISIT TO MBABANE, CAPITAL OF SWAZILAND 163

CHAPTER XII

I MEET LABOTSIBENI AGAIN—FLATTERING A SAVAGE QUEEN—EXPLAINING THE "LITTLE BLACK MAGIC BOX"—CURING RHEUMATISM WITH TOOTH-PASTE, VASELINE, AND HAIR OIL—WOMEN AS CURRENCY—GIN, GOLD, AND COWS PAY FOR THE PICTURE RIGHTS—THE "FLU" STRIKES—JENNIE, THE "BLAAU APP," AND THE PEACOCKS' TAILS 188

CHAPTER XIII

I START FOR NEW YORK—THE RELIGIOUS ATMOSPHERE ON SHIPBOARD—"FLU" ATTACKS THE JAVANESE—THE MISSIONARIES REFUSE TO HELP—SHARKS AS SCAVENGERS—THE LITTLE MOTHER'S

CHAPTER XIV

OBSTINATE STOWAWAYS—FREE TOWN AND A FIGHT—BAY RUM AS A BEVERAGE—SUGDEN LETS OFF SMOKE-BOMBS—CAPE TOWN, A PARTY, AND SOME ANZACS—OOM TUYS ADVISES HASTE—THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA—AMERICANS AND BOERS IN ERMELO—A HURRIED VISIT TO SWAZILAND FOR INFORMATION—MYSTERY OVER THE CORONATION—ROYAL GIN FOR LABOTSIBENI—DEBESEEMBE DRINKS AND TALKS 226

CHAPTER XV

OUTFITTING FOR SWAZILAND—OUR COOK BECOMES "GUNGA DIN"—LOMWAZI'S MESSENGER—OFF FOR ZOMBODE—ROSSMAN GOES HUNTING—TOO MUCH RAIN—THE OXEN DIE AND ARE REPLACED BY DONKEYS—SNEAKING LIQUOR THROUGH MBABANE—EZULWENI MOSQUITOES RIVAL NEW JERSEY'S—WE ARE UNPOPULAR IN ZOMBODE—MANAAN'S DAMAGE SUIT AND SETTLEMENT 247

CHAPTER XVI

LABOTSIBENI REFUSES TO SEE ME—SUGDEN AND MY MEN ESCAPE ASSASSINATION—A FRUITLESS CONFERENCE—WE FLEE TO LEBOMBO—OOM TUYS TURNS UP—WE CONFER WITH QUEEN TZANEEN AND LOCHEIN—FIVE-AND-TEN-CENT-STORE JEWELRY HAS PERSUASIVE POWERS—SUGDEN FALLS ILL—WE BUILD HIS COFFIN—SEBUZA RETURNS FROM HIS SANCTIFICATION 268

CHAPTER XVII

L'TUNGA'S "MUTI" CURES THE SICK WHITE MAN—SEBUZA CHOOSES HIS WIVES—I RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM HIS MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR SWAZILAND—A FLYING TRIP TO MBABANE—THE GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO SANCTION SEBUZA'S CORONATION—HOW WITCH-DOCTORS SMOKE DAGGA 292

CHAPTER XVIII

WITCH-DOCTORS OF SWAZILAND—HOW THEY BROUGHT A FAMINE—L'TUNGA'S SCHOOL OF WITCH-DOCTORING—THE "POISON TEST" TO SETTLE OWNERSHIP—THE PROFESSIONAL WITCH-DOCTOR'S EQUIPMENT—L'TUNGA DECIDES A MURDER CASE—SOME GENUINE CURES 310

CHAPTER XIX

WEARISOME DELAY IN CORONATION—WAR SUGGESTIONS FROM UMZULEK—MY PLAN TO BLUFF LABOTSIBENI—THE BLUFF IS CALLED—A TICKLISH SITUATION—LABOTSIBENI REFUSES TO SURRENDER THE THRONE—OUR DEMONSTRATION FAILS—NIGHT MURDERS PROVOKE WAR 331

CHAPTER XX

LEBOMBO THREATENED WITH ATTACK—TZANEEN FLIES TO US FOR PROTECTION—VICTORY FOR SEBUZA—LABOTSIBENI'S MYSTERIOUS DEATH—LOMWAZI SPARED FOR EXECUTION LATER—FUNERAL SACRIFICE OF THE OLD QUEEN—QUEEN TZANEEN IN STATE—WE ARE FORCED TO JOIN THE ROYAL IMPI 355

CHAPTER XXI

OUR SANCTIFICATION IN EXILE—HARDSHIPS IN THE HILLS—OOM TUYS SAVES LOMWAZI'S LIFE—THE CELEBRATION—LOMWAZI FORMALLY SURRENDERS THE THRONE—WE ARE INDUCTED INTO THE ROYAL IMPI—MBABANE SENDS FOR INFORMATION—WE ESCAPE THROUGH PORTUGUESE TERRITORY TO AMERICA 371

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Swazi mother carrying her babe	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Map of Swaziland	32
Map showing section of South Africa	33
The result of the national sport	48
Interior of military barracks	49
Princesses and maid taking a morning bath	68
Young princesses amiably engaged in hair-dressing	68
Swazi girls	69
Pudana, favorite to the old Queen Labotsibeni	69
An actual combat in which the man on the left was slain	76

A type of dress worn by the royal executioner	77
Lomwazi, son and prime minister to the old Queen	77
Queen Tzaneen, mother of the crown prince	112
Queen Tzaneen with some Zulu princesses	113
Umzulek, a resourceful and influential exile	113
Swazi warriors and women dancing	128
Princesses of royal birth	129
Queen Labotsibeni, mother of King Buno	196
Lomwazi and his council of Indunas, or war chiefs	197
The stream that divides the royal from the common ground	204
Type of Afrikander cattle	205
Swazi women at home	205
On the way to the royal kraal at Zombode	256
The second trip into Swaziland	256
Mother feeding her baby	257
Maiden singing to the Crown Prince Sebuza	257
Dr. O'Neil and companions are received by Queen Tzaneen	282
Dr. O'Neil, Queen Tzaneen, Dr. Sugden, and Mr. Crespinnell	282
Wives of the prime minister to Sebuza	283
Queen Tzaneen and Lochien	283
Princesses at the sacred bathing pool	304
A scene at the royal bathing pool	305
Interior of the royal kraal	320
Chief witch-doctor of Swaziland	320
A school of witch-doctors	321
A Swazi seminary or school for young witch-doctors	321
Crown Prince Sebuza in festival dress	336
Crown Prince Sebuza	337
Lochien, commander-in-chief of Prince Sebuza's impis	352
Warriors of Prince Sebuza's impis starting out to battle	352
One of the royal impis	353
Priests building the sacred fire	360
A view of the kraal	361
Mr. Crespinnell at home among his black brethren	376
Dr. Sugden, Prince Lomwazi, and Dr. O'Neil	376
Dr. O'Neil, Mr. Crespinnell, and Dr. Sugden after their induction into the royal impi	377

[xii]

ADVENTURES IN SWAZILAND

[3]

CHAPTER I

How the O'Neils came to the Transvaal—Boers with Irish names—Oom Paul's refusal to buy Delagoa Bay—The Boers break for freedom—Their bloody battles with the savage tribes—The Great Trek—Dingaanzulu's treachery—The Dingaan Day celebration.

I was born only a few days trek, or march, from the Swazi border and even as a youth made numerous trips into Swaziland. Through my uncle, Oom Tuys Grobler, known as "The White King of Swaziland," I was practically adopted by the savage rulers of that country and have always been received with the greatest honor and consideration by the various members of its royal family. My family have always been interested in Swaziland and there was seldom a time when one of my ten brothers was not hunting or visiting there. As one of the O'Neils of Rietvlei, which means "The Valley of Reeds," any of us were welcome.

It may seem strange that Boers should bear the name O'Neil, but this is not out of the ordinary in the Transvaal. There are many Boer families, most of them prominent in South Africa, who have Irish names. My father's first wife was a Madden and our homestead at Rietvlei is only about seven miles from the town of Belfast, which our family founded and named. The record is not clear how these Irish names are found among the Boers, but the fact that many Boers have Celtic names refutes the statement that most of the Irish who fought against the British in the Boer War were renegades from the United Kingdom.

[4]

My father is Richard Charles O'Neil, known among our people as "Slim Gert," or "Slick Dick" as it would be Americanized, the title being a tribute to his astuteness and good business sense. He was for six years minister of finance in the cabinet of the late Oom Paul Kruger, who has come to be regarded as one of the really great South Africans, his fame being greater to-day than at the

time of his death. Father split with Oom Paul over the Delagoa Bay question and resigned from his cabinet. At that time the Portuguese offered to sell Delagoa Bay to Oom Paul for twenty thousand pounds. This was shortly before the Boer War. Father strongly advocated the purchase, since it would give our people an outlet on the coast, the Bay being a fine harbor. Oom Paul, however, emphatically refused to buy.

"It would only give our enemies, the English, a chance to attack us from the sea," he said, ending the cabinet conference. "Now they can't get to us through Portuguese territory."

To-day Delagoa Bay could not be bought for twenty million pounds.

My grandfather was John James O'Neil, a direct descendant of the O'Neil who fled from Ireland in the time of Oliver Cromwell, and it was he who chose Rietvlei as the family farm. When I say "farm," I use the term in the Boer sense, since Rietvlei includes more than 100,000 acres of the most fertile land in the Transvaal and is quite large even for South Africa, the country of vast distances. [5]

As one of the survivors of "The Great Trek," my grandfather had suffered the most intense hardships and escaped dangers that are almost unbelievable to-day. This trek was the wholesale migration of Boers who were dissatisfied with British rule and had decided to carve out a country for themselves in what was then wildest Africa.

The original Boers were the descendants of the Huguenots who were expelled from France to Holland and eventually went overseas. They made their chief settlement in what is now Cape Town, then a port of call for the far-flung commerce of the Dutch, who were at that time the dominant maritime nation. The British took Cape Town from the Dutch in 1806, but returned the colony to Holland a few years later. Finally, in 1815, the Dutch ceded Cape Town to the British for a sum said to be six million pounds.

Up to that time the settlers of the Cape Colony had only branched out as far as the Great Fish River. This was the limit of safety, since beyond lay trackless wastes and millions of savage natives noted for their hostility and cannibalism. Practically all these settlers were the ancestors of the present Boers.

As is occasionally the case in present times, it was the missionaries who caused the trouble that led to the breaking up of the old Boer homes in Cape Colony. A number of these religious gentlemen came out from England and lived for a short time in the Colony. On their return to London they misrepresented facts to the king to such an extent that a number of restrictive laws and regulations were passed. These made life impossible for the Boers, who have always been a freedom-loving people. [6]

Finally about ten thousand of the burghers got together and commenced their exodus from Cape Colony into the unknown territory beyond the Great Fish River. The Zulus and Basutus met the first party, there was a bitter fight, and every Boer man, woman and child was massacred. In many cases, when the men realized that there was no hope, they killed their own womenfolk so that they might not fall into the hands of the savages.

This bloody tragedy did not deter the determined Boers. Other parties followed, and soon these pioneers founded various settlements. Every foot of their advance was gained by fighting, and the Boer conquest of the Transvaal and Orange Free State may well be said to have been won by the blood of freemen. Some of these expeditions settled in Natal and founded the city of Pietermaritzburg, named after their great leader, Pieter Maritz.

It was during the year 1830 that my grandfather joined the Great Trek and left Cape Colony with a large expedition led by Piet Retief and Piet Potgier. The party had much trouble with the Zulus, its progress being a continuous fight. On reaching the Vaal River, Potgier and Retief came to loggerheads and agreed to separate. Each had his own opinion as to where they ought to go, and each followed his own idea. My grandfather remained with Retief and thereby nearly lost his life. With my grandfather was his brother, Richard Charles O'Neil, after whom my father was named. [7]

Piet Retief was killed by the Zulus, and this massacre is now history, almost sacred history, in the Transvaal. It seems that Retief led his party into what is now Natal and there undertook to come to some basis of peace with the savages. A truce was declared, and he went to the Zulu royal kraal and saw their great chief, Dingaanzulu. The chief agreed to cede certain territory to Retief if the Boer would recover for the Zulus certain cattle stolen from them by another savage nation. This land was to be the first of the new Republic of Natalia, which my grandfather and Retief planned to found.

Retief recovered the cattle and with one hundred burghers visited the Zulu royal kraal and returned them to Dingaanzulu. After the cattle were driven in the Zulu chief sent for the Boer leader, ostensibly to arrange about the land grant. He insisted that the Boers were now his friends and, as such, should leave their weapons outside the royal kraal and enter unarmed. The ruthless Zulu chief said that this would be "an evidence of the good hearts of the white men." [8]

With great foreboding Retief did as he was asked. With his hundred men he went into the kraal and found Dingaanzulu in the most friendly frame of mind. After fraternization the chief told the Boers that a great celebration had been prepared in their honor, and that night there was feasting, dancing, and much speech-making in front of the great fires.

I have often heard what happened next. It is history with us and tradition with the Zulus, Swazis,

and other natives of our section of the Transvaal. The story was first told me by an old Zulu who was a sort of farm-helper at our home when I was a little fellow. He claimed to have been there, and from his evidence I believe he was.

"There was a great feast and all the fires were lighted," he said. "Many cattle had been killed and all the royal impis (regiments) were in full costume. These were the picked men of all Zululand, and they danced for a long time before the fires.

"Dingaanzulu sat with the white leader, and they drank tswala (kaffir beer) together. Often they would shake hands, and it was as though they were brothers. All the other white men sat near the fires in front of the king. They, too, had much tswala and plenty to eat.

"When it was quite late and the moon shone through the flames of the dying fires, many of the royal impi gathered behind those who were dancing and waited for a sign from Dingaanzulu. Soon this came, and then the killing! Dingaanzulu stood up and threw his leopard-skin cloak about his shoulders. This was the sign. The waiting warriors dashed through the dancers and threw themselves upon the white men. Assegais flashed, and the Boer leader dashed to his men. These held together and fought the impis with bare hands. Some of the white men were very strong and tore assegais from the warriors and fought with them, stabbing, and stabbing, and stabbing!

[9]

"But there were hundreds, even thousands, of Zulus to each white man, and the fight could not last long. All the white men were killed, and some were stabbed scores of times before they died. I do not know how their leader died, but we found him with a broken assegai in his hand and seven dead warriors about him."

As soon as Dingaanzulu had murdered Retief and his band, he sent his impis to kill all the remaining members of the expedition. My grandfather and his brother were in charge of the main encampment, or laager, at Weenan, which means "Weeping," or "Place of Sorrow." The wagons had been formed into a hollow square, and the Boers finally drove off the Zulus after a fight lasting several days. Hundreds of the savages were killed, and the Boers lost a large number of men who could ill be spared.

Then my grandfather and his party settled in the district surrounding Majuba Hill. His brother founded the place known as "O'Neil's Farm" at the foot of Majuba, while my grandfather established and named the village of Belfast on the top of the hill. Following this he moved to Potchefstroom, and from there north-east, where he established the Republic of Lydenburg. These various little republics were discontinued, or rather merged into the modern form of government, when the Boers became sufficiently numerous and communications were established.

[10]

After the establishment of the Republic of Lydenburg my grandfather discovered Rietvlei, the "Valley of Reeds," which has been the O'Neil homestead ever since.

The massacre of Retief and his devoted band is celebrated yearly by a three-day holiday in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. The celebration is in the nature of a memorial service, followed by rejoicing. About every eighty miles throughout the Boer country a spot is designated, and the burghers, with their families, trek to this place. This trek is symbolic of the "Great Trek" in which their ancestors died. On the first day of the celebration there is a sham battle in which the fight at Weenan is acted again, and the last two days are given over to religious services and the festivities.

All self-respecting Boer families join in the Dingaan Day celebration, many of them coming scores of miles to do so. The children are taught the story of "the day" in the schools, and it is probably the most important civic celebration of the year.

[11]

Piet Potgier's party was entirely wiped out, none surviving attacks made by the combined impis of the Zulus and Basutus.

CHAPTER II

[12]

Rietvlei, the "Valley of Reeds"—The O'Neil homestead—Pioneer hardships—The war against Maleuw, "The Lion"—"Slim Gert" O'Neil breaks the power of the Makateese king—Jafta, King of the Mapors—My boyhood and "Jass"—Sibijaan, "The Skunk," becomes my pal—My first trousers nearly cost me an eye—Our toy factory and mimic battles—Oom Tuys Grobler tells of Swaziland and King Buno, "The Terrible."

Rietvlei is one of the most beautiful accidents of nature I have ever seen. To properly appreciate this wonderful Valley of Reeds, it should be approached across the high veldt. To reach it in this way is to receive a thrill that is seldom felt when viewing any scene. It is set like a jewel in the wilderness of the veldt and seems more like a sunken oasis than anything else. Time and time again I have been almost startled when I suddenly saw Rietvlei.

As you ride across the high veldt you are struck by its utter barrenness and the thousands of ant-

hills on all sides. The wild grasses, browned by the sun, are higher than your horse's belly and far in the distance are the barren hills. The veldt, with its altitude of about seven thousand feet, is much like the plains of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. It is almost desert. Hundreds of times I have crossed this veldt on my hairy Boer pony and always the same thing has happened. Several times, sometimes scores of times, springbok, blesbok, or duiker, the antelopes of the veldt, have jumped to their feet and scampered off through the tall grass. My pony would give one leap and then dash madly after them. If I was day-dreaming, I was likely to find myself unhorsed and facing a chase after my active steed. However, one gets used to such interruptions and it was seldom that I did not enjoy the chase. It is no use to think that a Boer pony can be prevented from pursuing these antelope; he is trained to do it from the first time he feels a saddle, and his quickness often makes it possible for the shot that provides fresh meat that night in camp.

[13]

After miles and miles of veldt, with the distant hills seeming to recede as one goes on, the fascination of space loses its grip and the fatigue of monotony follows. About the time I would begin to feel like a sailor adrift in mid-ocean the blessed relief would come—I would reach Rietvlei!

My pony would come to a sudden stop on the rim of a great precipice and thousands of feet below I would see the Valley of Reeds with the settlement that meant home. The high veldt breaks off abruptly, as though cut with a giant knife, exactly like parts of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado in America. Since the beginning of time the little rivers of Rietvlei have worn down the veldt until they have hollowed out thousands and thousands of acres. From the cool high veldt to the fertile green Valley of Reeds is a wonderful change, and it takes a full hour to climb down the winding trail.

My grandfather, John James O'Neil, was the first white man to see Rietvlei and he immediately decided that he need look no further for his home. He at once settled there and went through many hardships to found his home. The natives inhabiting the valley were the Mapors, then a powerful and hostile tribe. My father built our present home, which is of white limestone, iron, and wood, all of which had to be brought some six hundred miles by ox-teams. It was many years before the house was completed, but my father intended it as the permanent home of the O'Neils and it will stand for centuries.

[14]

The hardships endured by my grandfather and father were such as would have daunted less stern men, but they were Boers and all Africa knows them to be the greatest pioneers the world has ever seen. Jafta, king of the Mapors, whose royal kraal was about forty-eight miles from my home, was my family's greatest enemy. Both my grandfather and father were constantly at war with him and were forced to maintain a large force of fighting men to repel his attacks. There was always the threat that Jafta would overwhelm the little band of doughty Boers in the valley, and the white men practically lived with their guns in their hands.

Those were anxious days for the womenfolk. All supplies had to be brought in from the coast, and the wagons were months on the way. Sometimes they would be gone for nearly a year and during all this time the women never knew but that some hostile native tribe had overwhelmed the devoted burghers and killed all their men. Dogged, dauntless, and determined, the men won through time after time, until there broke out the great war fomented by Maleuw, king of the Makateese. He was known as "The Lion" and was a very able savage, brave, cunning, and a born leader of men.

[15]

Maleuw became obsessed with the idea that the white men should be driven out, and with this object provoked a war with Jafta, king of the Mapors. It seems that Jafta, although he had been carrying on his private feud against the white men, did not care to join Maleuw and refused to aid him. The Makateese were the most warlike nation at that time, probably owing to the inspiration of "The Lion," and they swept down on the Mapors with the expressed intention of exterminating them.

The war was most sanguinary. No prisoners were taken, and it soon began to look as though the Mapors would be wiped out. The white men made no effort toward peace, taking the view that the more of their enemies were killed the safer life would be for them. Soon Jafta and his troops were in full flight, and then the white men found themselves facing another and more real danger. With Maleuw victorious he could rally additional armies, and this meant he would be powerful enough to drive the white men out and probably kill most of them.

Under my father, Slim Gert O'Neil, a council of war was called at Rietvlei and the leading Boers and some of the British settlers attended. Chiefs of the Basuto and Swazi nations were sent for, and it was decided to save the remnants of the Mapor nation and in so doing break the power of "The Lion" and his Makateese armies. Umbandine was king of Swaziland at that time.

[16]

King Maleuw found himself attacked by a large army made up of Boers, British, Basutos, Mapors, and Swazis, and there were several fierce battles. In some manner the Makateese had obtained a number of rifles and there was much loss of life on both sides. This war ended with the utter crushing of Maleuw and his army, and since then the Makateese have never threatened the peace of the Transvaal. The final battle was the storming of Maleuw's kraal, which was a veritable fortress on the top of a steep hill about five hundred feet high.

The hill is now known as "Maleuwkop," in memory of the old "Lion." It was practically impregnable to a native army using only savage weapons. The "palace" proper was on the top of the hill and was entirely surrounded by walls of thorn trees and prickly-pear cactus. These thorn

trees are most formidable, the thorns being about three inches long and sharp as needles. The Boers call them "haakensteek," which is translated into "catch-and-stick." The British call them "wait-a-bit" thorns, and under either name they are equally dangerous.

Outside the thorn wall there was a row of huts in which the picked warriors of Maleuw lived. Below the huts came another thorn wall and another row of huts. There were eight or ten such settlements, each guarded by its own wall. I have heard many tales of the battle, which lasted all day. Finally the white men broke through the various thorn walls, and that was the end of the Makateese peril. My father in telling of the fight has often said, "If we had had one field-gun—only a little one—we could have blown 'The Lion' out of his lair and saved many lives."

[17]

Shortly after this war I was born at Rietvlei. I was the youngest of ten sons and spent my entire childhood without white playmates, except for my sister, Ellen, always my favorite. One of my earliest recollections is of seeing King Jafta when he paid ceremonial visits to my father. Under the conditions upon which the Boers agreed to help him against the Makateese, Jafta had ceded certain rich territories to Oom Paul Kruger. This land President Kruger sold to my father, who made an agreement with Jafta whereby the savage but now king-in-reduced-circumstances was allowed to remain in possession for a certain length of time. It was in connection with this agreement that Jafta would visit Rietvlei at certain intervals.

I was only a little child then, but I can remember the fallen king well. Owing to his lack of power he could not make much of a showing, but it was necessary that he maintain his kingly dignity on these visits. He would be accompanied by the last of his officers and a small impi, or regiment, and my father would treat with him exactly as though he were the powerful chief of former times. Jafta remembered this later and repaid us by giving us valuable assistance during the Boer War, at the time when the British were overrunning our lands.

[18]

The ceremonies attending Jafta's visits were always about the same. His courier would come ahead to announce his arrival, and my father would send word that he was pleased to see him and that his party should approach. Then Jafta, entirely naked except for an old silk hat my father had given him, would stride into the garden and when my father came out of the house would make an oration. My father would listen most respectfully and then would reply, always addressing the deposed king as "Nkoos," which has the same meaning to our kaffirs as "Your Majesty the King" has to the average Britisher.

The silk hat was very important in Jafta's eyes. It meant much more than a mere personal adornment. My father always wears silk hats, even when traveling about the farm, and Jafta attached much significance to the one he wore and always guarded it most carefully. In fact, one of the greatest honors he could confer on any of his officers was to make one of them official guardian of the hat when he was not wearing it. This was the savage conception of the coveted post of "Keeper of the Crown Jewels" that is found in some present-day monarchies.

However, Jafta finally came on more evil days. Owing to certain outside influences which were brought to bear upon him and to which he acceded, it became necessary to take severe measures, and he and his small band of followers were removed from the territory my father had loaned them. This was rather sad, because this land had been the site of the royal kraal of the Mapors since time immemorial.

[19]

Nevertheless, we have continued to employ Mapors on the farm and have a number of families there now. My old nurse was a Mapor woman. She was faithfulness personified, and I led her a merry dance. Her only garment was a loin cloth made of a duiker skin, and on account of her scant clothing my older brothers nick-named her "Jass," which means "overcoat." Jass was the mother of several little Mapors, the scars on her forehead showing their number. Like all the other savages in the Transvaal, the Mapors practice scarification to a great extent. The women are scarred either on the forehead or breasts, while the men are entitled to a scar on the forehead for each enemy they have killed.

Until I was sent to boarding-school in Grahamstown, that is, until I was well into my teens, my only companions were little kaffir boys. My best pal was Sibijaan, whose name means "The Skunk," and even today he is my body servant when I am at home. How we came to possess him is illustrative of conditions in the district surrounding Rietvlei.

Sibijaan and two other little kaffirs were brought to our home early one morning by a neighbor of ours who had captured them on our property. It seems they belonged to some tribe that had recently been wiped out by the Zulus and had been fleeing north to get away from the death that caught their people. I have never seen so miserable a trio as these poor little natives. They were almost starved and were unutterably dirty. In addition, they were in a state of most pitiable terror. They regarded the white men with bulging eyes and seemed only to want a place to hide.

[20]

Since they had been captured on our farm, they belonged to us. My mother was at home at the time, and the neighbor and she had a pretty argument as to the disposal of the captives. I listened to all of it, keeping one eye on the little boys and wondering how I would feel if I were in their place.

Finally my mother agreed that the neighbor should have the largest of the three, since he was big enough to be of some use in herding cattle and sheep. The two little fellows were to belong to us, and subsequent events proved that we had much the best of the bargain. The one taken by our neighbor soon escaped, while our captives quickly became devoted to us and are with us yet. The elder of the two was Sibijaan, and my mother gave him to me for my own servant and playmate.

Several of my brothers happened to be spending a few days at the farm at this time and they gave Sibijaan his name. Dick did the naming when he said, "The little nigger would make a skunk blush with envy. Let's call him The Skunk!"

Sibijaan and I soon had definite tasks assigned to us. On a Boer farm no one rests—all have their work, even to the women and children. We were sent out to mind the sheep, of which my father had thousands, and were given about a dozen other little kaffirs as assistants. I was about seven years old at this time, big and strong for my age. [21]

During those years there was a great lack of traders in our section of the Transvaal. This was due to the continuous wars in which the native tribes fought one another and now and then raided a Boer farm. Traders had been killed and their goods stolen, and none ever stopped at the Valley of Reeds. This meant that my father had to outfit expeditions and make the long journey to the coast and back again, if we were to have any of the civilized necessities or luxuries.

Our neighbors would join in these expeditions, and often there would be a score of ox-wagons and several score Boers in the parties. I remember these expeditions well for many reasons—my mother used to spend anxious months during my father's absence and about this time there was an expedition which brought me my first pair of trousers. These, in turn, were the cause of my receiving an injury to one of my eyes from which I never fully recovered. My father had been away for seven months this time and we had begun to fear that hostile natives had attacked the caravan and done him some harm. Many and many such an outfit had been wiped out by the Zulus, Makateese, or other hostile tribes, and there never was any assurance that the few rifles of the Boers could stop the rush of the savage impis. [22]

On this occasion Sibijaan and I were minding a small herd of sheep on the little plateau that overlooks the heart of Rietvlei. We were quite busy trying to drive the flock to a better feeding-ground when Sibijaan suddenly stopped and listened.

"Strangers coming!" he shouted. "I smell oxen and wagons. White men coming up the Rietvlei!"

We looked in the direction he indicated and saw a cloud of dust creeping along the rough road. A second later a man in a silk hat, riding a familiar horse, emerged from the dust. Even at that distance I could see the rifle across his saddle. It was Slim Gert O'Neil, my father.

Sibijaan and I, followed by all the other little kaffirs, raced to the wagons, where my father swung me on his horse and greeted me most affectionately. A few moments later occurred the first really great event of my life—I received my first trousers! My father took me back to one of the wagons and presented me with a stout pair of corduroys. I was overjoyed and danced up and down, Sibijaan and the other little savages joining me, as though at a celebration. Now, I felt, at last I am a real white man, and the distance between my black playmates and myself seemed to become immense.

A little later I had slipped into the trousers and was proudly marching at the head of my little impi. We saw the wagons into the home kraal and then went back to our sheep. I was the hero of the hour among my playmates, and this led to the injury that has affected my eye ever since. [23]

Sibijaan, who had always shared with me the leadership of our impi, lost caste when I donned the trousers and instinctively became the kaffir. This hurt him, and late in the afternoon he made me the following proposition:

"Klein Baas (meaning 'Little Boss')," he said, in his pathetic earnestness forgetting to address me by my native name, "Mzaan Bakoor," "you have been wearing the trousers all day. Don't you think it is my turn to wear them? We are both indunas (leaders) of our impi; it is not right that one should be better than the other. Let me wear the trousers until sundown and show our men that we are brothers-in-arms!"

This seemed reasonable to me. Sibijaan and I had shared our joys and woes for several years and there was no reason for my refusing him the honor of wearing the wonderful corduroys. We changed. I put on his beads and he got into my corduroys. Then came a perfect exhibition of the kaffir temperament. Sibijaan became insufferably arrogant. He gave orders to our impi, and for a moment I thought he was going to try and command me. The more he lorded it over the others, the more sullen and angered they became.

Of course the inevitable happened. Several of the little lads demanded that they be allowed their turn at wearing the trousers, the badge of authority, as it were. Sibijaan refused. [24]

"No, no, you cannot wear them!" he shouted. "Now I am a man; I am almost white! I am a man and you are little boys! Who am I that I should take notice of such dirt?"

But he did. This last insult was too much. The indignant lads attacked Sibijaan, and in a second there was a squirming mass of black legs, arms, and bodies, with my precious trousers in danger of destruction. We all had assegais, or short stabbing spears, and regardless of these I dashed into the mêlée. Death or wounds were little things compared to the loss of those trousers.

When the fight was over I had been stabbed in the eye, but I had the trousers! Practically every boy had at least one wound, and one of the little fellows died before we got him back to the house where he could have attention. Owing to lack of proper medical care my eye was allowed to get well without expert attention and will always show the effects of this trouser-fight. From then on, however, I wore the trousers.

I shall always remember my father's comment on this happening. He asked me how the row had started and who had stabbed the boy to death. It was practically impossible to determine the latter, and I explained why. He listened in his quiet way and then gave me a talking to.

"Yours is the guilt for the death of that boy," he said. "You forgot you were a Boer and lowered yourself to the level of a Mapor! When you gave Sibijaan the trousers you became as the dirt under his feet. White men wear clothes; kaffirs go naked. Does my son, the son of Slim Gert O'Neil, want to be a nigger?" [25]

Only in one other way did Sibijaan threaten my supremacy as the undisputed leader of our impi. This was due to his extraordinary knack in handling clay in the making of models of all kinds.

Not far from the house, along the bank of the river, there was a large clay-bank. I established a toy factory there and we made all sorts of clay toys, including idols, oxen, horses, and models of everything we handled in our daily life. To make it a contest Sibijaan and I, with our followers, used to compete with Klaas and his in the excellency of our models. My sister, Ellen, was the judge. Klaas, by the way, was the other little kaffir who was captured at the same time our neighbor brought Sibijaan to us.

Klaas would make a number of things, and his followers would duplicate them. Then he would challenge us to do better, and we would get to work. Many and many a day we spent in this toy factory, and the competition was keen. Soon, however, Sibijaan began to outstrip all of us in the excellency of his models. He was so much better at the play than I was that I soon found myself ashamed to place my models against his.

I found myself again in danger of losing caste and soon hit upon an idea that saved my face. Now the Boers are a deeply religious people. In our home we always had morning and evening prayers and the fact that we were scores of miles from the nearest church was the only reason that we did not attend one. Not long before the toy factory began to be a sore spot with me, a minister of the Dutch church had visited Rietvlei. He was visiting the outlying districts of the Transvaal and performing marriages and christenings. Naturally, the minister held services, the most interesting part being the sermon. He spoke with great force and many gestures, all of them most emphatic. Like all the Boers, he was bearded and had shaggy brows. I found his sermon most entertaining, although I understood little of what he said. [26]

However, the sermon gave me an idea. I decided I would be a minister and the very next day commenced preaching. There was a ruined kraal, formerly the residence of a long-dead cannibal chief, on a little hill near home. I summoned Sibijaan, Klaas, and all the others of our impi to attend services there, and then proceeded to deliver a loud harangue to them. As I spoke in Dutch, with now and then a Mapor phrase, they did not understand much of what I said, but I made up for this by my forceful delivery. The natives are never more happy than when delivering an oration, the words illustrated with full-arm gestures, and I found my audience most appreciative. Religious services as I conducted them appealed to the savage mind, and Sibijaan's superiority as an artist faded to nothing.

Shortly after the minister's visit, my uncle, Oom Tuys Grobler, came to stay with us for a time. He had come from Swaziland and brought wondrous tales of battles there. I do not remember what war was going on, but Oom Tuys made us believe that war was the chief occupation of the Swazis. He used to while away the long evenings by telling me about King Buno and his mother, Queen Labotsibeni. To my childish mind Buno appeared as the embodiment of all things savage and ruthless, while his mother was not much better. I was fired with the desire to visit Swaziland and see the great King Buno, and I asked Oom Tuys to take me with him on his next trip. He did not refuse, but tried to discourage me by relating weird stories of how white boys were sacrificed and eaten by the Swazi warriors. These tales did not impress me very much, since I felt that I would be safe with my uncle, who was known throughout the Transvaal as the only Boer King Buno trusted. [27]

These tales of battle inspired Sibijaan, Klaas, and myself with military ardor, and soon we prepared to play the game of war. This was only the play of little black boys led by a white, but out of it came my native name. I am called "Mzaan Bakoor" by all the natives of our section of the Transvaal. The name means "He of the Great Ears," or "He Who Hears Everything." How I earned the name illustrates our method of warfare.

Klaas would lead one force, and Sibijaan and myself the other. Our weapons were long reeds and pellets of clay. The pellets would be fixed on the end of the reed and thrown with a full-arm swing. They would travel like a stone from a sling, and after a short time we became very proficient in their use. We could hit our target more times than not, and I well remember that one of these clay pellets made a dangerous missile. [28]

The battle would start at long range, and sometimes would continue for hours before we got to grips. When we were satisfied with the long-range execution, we would rush together and attack one another with our hands. Sibijaan invented the method followed in this close-range fighting. Adversaries would pair off, each grasping the other by the ears. Then would ensue an ear-pulling match which was only decided when one of the warriors cried quits. Because I seemed able to stand any amount of this torture, they called me "Mzaan Bakoor," and the name has been mine ever since. This method of ear-pulling was another tribute to Sibijaan's cunning, for both his ears had been bitten off in the trouser-fight and it was practically impossible for any one to hang on to the remains!

In addition to herding the sheep, we boys were in charge of a herd of about two hundred little calves. Our chief work with these was to prevent them getting to their mothers, the milch cows of the farm. Each morning and evening the calves were allowed to spend half an hour with their mothers, but the rest of the time they had to go without milk.

Milking time was always a busy period for us. The cows were kept in kraals, or open enclosures, and each morning we would have to catch them for the milkers. This was done with a rope-loop on the end of a long stick. When the cow was captured the rope would be passed around a post, the cow being drawn in and securely tied. The suckling calf was then brought to its mother, and this soothes the animal. As soon as the cow was quiet, her hinds legs and tail were tied together and she was ready for milking. [29]

The milker would get ready, and then we would have to drive the calf away and keep it away with a long stick until the milking was finished. It was all a primitive and strenuous performance, but these Afrikaner cattle are very wild and cannot be handled.

Another busy period for us would be during the sheep-shearing season. The sheep are divided into lots and classes, being ear-marked, and it used to be our work to keep them together and make ourselves generally useful. Another duty which fell to us was the leading of the ox-teams, for, in fact, the boys of my impi could be used for every service not requiring the strength of a man.

During all these busy boyhood days I lived practically the outdoor life of a savage. My early education was given me by my mother and my father's private secretary, an Englishman with a university training. I was quick to learn my lessons, chiefly because success meant speedy escape to the wild pastimes of the little savages who were my companions. Practically all our sports had to do with war and the hunt, so that I grew up to regard death as only an incident in the life of a warrior and not an event to be feared or worried about. [30]

However, on my first visit to Buno, then king of Swaziland, I saw death in a form that shocked me by its needless brutality and utter wastefulness.

CHAPTER III

My desire to visit King Buno—How I won the trip on a bet—A Boer race meet—"Black Hand Tom," the hope of Rietvlei—Klaas's ride to save his skin—Father gives permission for my visit—Belfast celebrates the Boer victory. [31]

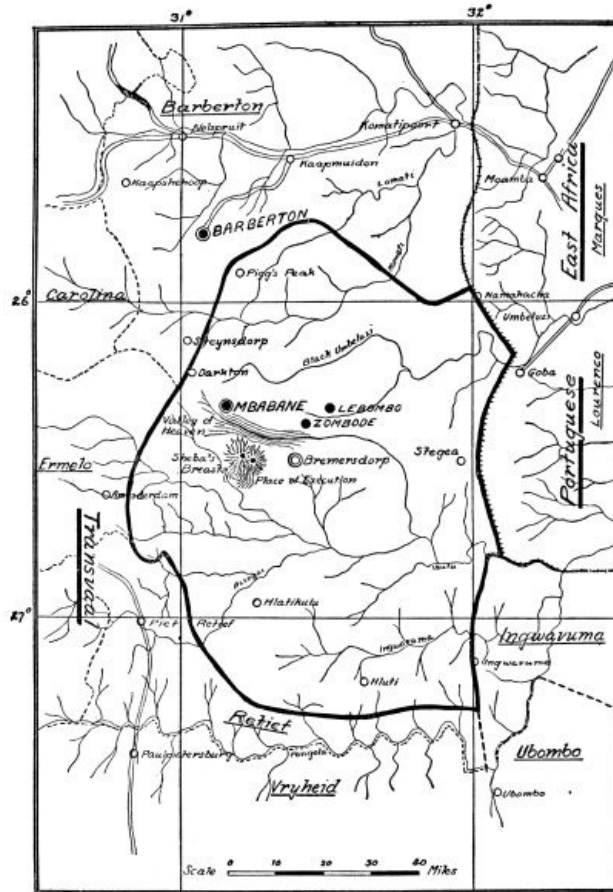
My absolute conviction that no one in the world owned a faster horse than "Black Hand Tom," my father's favorite, earned me my first visit to Swaziland. This was during the summer after the Great Drought, when the bloody rule of King Buno had become the shame of South Africa.

Day after day I had heard tales about Swaziland that fed my desire to go and see some of these things, and Oom Tuys never forgot to make my hair stand on end with his stories about his friend, Buno, and his warriors. I was just in my teens and the desire to visit Swaziland was the one thing I lived for. Whenever Tuys came to visit my father I would get him aside and beg him to take me with him on his next trip. Indeed, I kept after him until I became a nuisance. Each time he would promise, and then find a good reason for putting me off until some time later. His evasions only whetted my appetite for Swaziland, but it was a kind fate, combined with a little boy's abiding faith in his father, that finally won the day for me.

Like all the Boers, my father was a great horse fancier and took pride in several fast animals that he had bred at Rietvlei. Looking back, I realize that these must have been very good horses, their forebears being imported stock of the best European blood. [32]

It was in the summer of 1897 that my father arranged a race meet at Belfast, about eight miles from our home. This was the nearest town, and the race was to be the crowning event of a sort of festival lasting several days. Previously my father had caused the word to get abroad that he had several of the fastest horses in the Transvaal, but that he was keeping them under cover, hoping for a chance to win some races at large odds. Of course all Boers are good sportsmen and keenly interested in racing; in addition, there were a number of sporting Englishmen who noted the fact that Slim Gert O'Neil was training horses in the Valley of Reeds.

The result was what my father anticipated. Word was sent to him by the sporting crowd in Johannesburg that they did not believe that any of his horses were "worth the powder to blow them to hell"—as the message was delivered by Oom Tuys. My father took this to heart and sent back word that the Johannesburgers were invited to bring their race horses, "if they had any worthy of the name," to the race meet at Belfast. There was a little further correspondence, which bordered on insult on the part of the Johannesburgers, and the arrangements were completed for the meet.



SWAZILAND
 Drawn by Dr. Owen Rowe O'Neil



SECTION OF SOUTH AFRICA
 Showing Swaziland and its relative position to other states

My father sent Mapor and Swazi runners to all the Boer farms within a week's trek of Rietvlei, announcing the races and inviting his friends to "come and see what a country-bred can do against the pick of the Transvaal and Orange Free State." It was a great day for all us little fellows when we moved over to Belfast. All but a few old women left Rietvlei, and we arrived in Belfast to find thousands of strangers thronging the town.

[33]

Boer farmers had trekked in from almost a hundred miles away, and I have never seen so many great bearded men in my life. With their great slouch hats and heavy boots, they could be seen swinging along the streets in all directions. There were literally thousands of kaffirs, Mapors, Swazis, Makateese, and Zulus, who belonged to the various parties of Boers and who kept close to them as they wandered about Belfast.

Some of the native tribes were at war at that time, I remember, and there was some fear that there might be an outbreak in the town. This fear was quelled, however, when word was passed that the first kaffir who raised a hand would be shot on sight by the nearest Boer. He would have been, too, because the Boers never hesitate when dealing with the blacks. Always our people have been firm in their dealings with the natives, with the result that they have a wholesome

respect for us. It is the English, newly arrived in the Transvaal, who make all the trouble with the kaffirs. Particularly do the English and American missionaries create dissension among them. They give the kaffirs mistaken ideas about their importance in the scheme of things and lead them to believe that they are as good as white people. Taking it all in all, they have created more trouble than they have done good. The missionaries seldom change their teachings, but the Englishmen soon wake up and after they have been in our country for about a year know how to treat the natives.

[34]

There was no trouble in Belfast, although it was said that there were several combats outside the town in which about a score of blacks were killed and wounded.

Our arrival for the races must have been quite an impressive event. My father on his great horse, wearing his silk hat, led the procession. Then all his sons and several of the girls followed, on horses also, and then came my mother in a light road-wagon. After her came our horses, led by Mapors, and behind them came several hundred of our retainers, all decked out in their festival costumes and carrying their short spears and knob-kerries, or fighting clubs.

Oom Tuys met us at the edge of the town. He was riding a great roan horse and was accompanied by a number of father's friends. From his gestures I knew that he was excited, and I slyly pressed my horse forward until I could hear what he was saying.

"The Johannesburgers have brought their best," he told father. "Slim Gert, you will have to have all the luck in the world to beat their horses. Never have I seen better! They have also brought much money and are waiting for you to bet. Will you bet with them? I advise you not to. They have the best jockeys in the Transvaal, too!"

"We shall see; we shall see," was all father would say.

[35]

"They are at the hotel and they wait for you," Oom Tuys went on. "I told them that I would bring you to them."

My father seemed to start at this, and I saw him look sharply at Tuys. Then the color mounted in his cheek.

"Who are they that I should go to them?" he asked indignantly. "Why should an O'Neil of Rietvlei wait on these common gamblers from Johannesburg? If they want to see me, let them come to my house!"

My father had a house in Belfast where he transacted business and often spent the night when it was too late or too rainy to return to the Valley of Reeds.

Soon we reached the center of the town and found thousands waiting to welcome us. All the Boers knew Slim Gert O'Neil and his sons, and we received an ovation. We passed through the town to father's house, and the horses were placed in the small kraal at the rear. He looked them over, Oom Tuys also being a keenly interested observer, and then went into the house. We boys remained outside, and it was one of the proudest moments of my life. So proud was I that I felt impelled to tell all the town boys what I really thought about father's horses and in particular about the speed of "Black Hand Tom."

"He is so fast," I assured them, "that he outruns bullets. Only the lightning can catch him, and I am not any too sure about that!"

Some of the boys jeered at my claim, and thereupon ensued a small battle. My impi backed me up, and it began to look as though some one would be badly hurt when Oom Tuys dashed out of the house and scattered us.

[36]

"Mzaan Bakoor, you little devil!" he shouted, catching me by the ears. "Why do you make so much fight? Why do you tell such lies? 'Black Hand Tom' will only eat the dust of these Johannesburg horses. They are race horses!"

Now this was sacrilege. To hear my uncle, the great "White King of Swaziland," say such a thing gave me such a shock that I forgot to kick his shins for tweaking my ears. Then came my inspiration! Brought up among sportsmen, I seized my chance.

"If 'Black Hand Tom' is so slow, then you bet against him. I dare you!" I said.

"Of course I will. I am no fool!" Tuys assured me.

"All right, Oom Tuys, then you bet with me first," I said. "If 'Black Hand Tom' wins his race, you must take me with you to see King Buno the next time you go. I dare you to make your promise good. If father's horse loses, I'll never ask you to take me to Swaziland again!"

Tuys let me go and hesitated a moment. I taunted him and dared him to take my bet, and he finally agreed.

"If 'Black Hand Tom' wins, you leave for Swaziland with me in two weeks," he promised.

We went into the house and found several of the Johannesburg gamblers there, waiting to talk to my father. They were drinking gin and whiskey, and I remember marveling at their wonderful clothes. Never before had I seen such waistcoats or such cravats, and their great, soft, light-colored hats were a revelation to me. I particularly noticed that they all smoked long black cigars, wore huge diamonds, and talked in loud coarse voices.

[37]

Soon father's secretary came into the room. In his quiet English way he told them that his master did not care to see them that night and would talk to them in the morning. The races were to be next day and the gamblers left the house quite disgruntled. As they went out of the door I heard one of them say, "Never mind, we'll get his money to-morrow!"

Shortly before prayers that night I told my father what this man had said, but he only smiled in his dry way.

"Don't worry, Owen, my lad," he said. "Your father is not always such a fool as he might look. To-morrow night may have another tale to tell!"

However, I went to bed much troubled that night. We seemed such country people compared to these flashy horsemen from the great city of Johannesburg. I tried to sleep though quite unhappy at the thought that father might be mistaken, but his quiet confidence somehow reassured me to a certain extent. My father was a very great man to me—the greatest in the world—great even when compared to Oom Paul Kruger, our idol. It seemed impossible that his horse should not be the best and, comforted by my faith, I finally fell asleep. [38]

Oh, the glories of the next day, the day of the races! Even before breakfast we boys trudged to the race track and watched several horses working out. Two of them were from Johannesburg, and even their blankets failed to hide the fact that they were fast. In addition to their white trainers, each horse seemed to have almost a dozen kaffirs in attendance, and all about the track were hundreds of black and white men watching the trials.

On all sides of the track, also, could be seen the wagons of the Boer farmers who had trekked in to the meet. Slender spirals of smoke were rising from each group, showing that breakfast was being prepared. There must have been hundreds of wagons, and the whole territory about the race track was one great camping-ground.

We returned to the house to find father and Oom Tuys out in the kraal carefully examining our horses. I remember how father ran his hands lovingly over the sleek body of "Black Hand Tom." The horse would allow few to approach him, but he nuzzled my father's hand, as though to say, "I'm fit for the race of my life. I will not fail Slim Gert!"

After breakfast, instead of taking our horses to the track, my father had them worked out along the road which ran by the house. Later I learned that this was a disappointment to the gamblers from Johannesburg. They had hoped to see "Black Hand Tom" on the track before the race, so as to get a line on him. [39]

Shortly afterward my father and Oom Tuys rode over to the track, and we all trooped after. Early as it was, crowds were beginning to gather and I never saw so many people in my life. I was surprised at the number of white men there. I knew that there were millions of blacks in our country, but was greatly astonished to see so many of our color.

Father rode among the wagons surrounding the track, greeting his friends and everywhere receiving a joyful welcome. Each one asked him about his great horse, and his answer invariably was, "He is ready to do the very best he can. The rest is with God!" This seemed to satisfy the Boers, and I know it was all I wanted to hear. I immediately announced to all the lads with me that the race was as good as won.

Oom Tuys took occasion to remind me of our bet and chaffed me, saying, "Now you will never see King Buno!" This made me wrathful. It was unspeakable that he should doubt that father's horse could do anything but win!

While at the track I remembered a little talk I had planned to have with Klaas. Owing to an uncanny knack with horses, the little beggar had been trained as our jockey and was to ride "Black Hand Tom" in the great race. Sibijaan and I returned to the house and looked him up. We found him chumming with the horse, and called him out of the stable.

Now Klaas was smaller and lighter than either Sibijaan or myself and stood no chance with us in combat of any sort. We took firm hold of him—Sibijaan by his arms and I by his ears—and then I delivered my ultimatum: [40]

"You see all these white men, Klaas," I said. "They are thieves. They have come here to steal all the Ou Baas's (Old Boss's) money. You've got to ride your best to-day. 'Black Hand Tom' is the best horse. He'll win if you ride him right. If you lose, Sibijaan and I will kill you! Won't we, Sibijaan?"

My fellow conspirator most emphatically agreed. He made motions that illustrated a neat and expeditious way of cutting Klaas's throat and of visiting other unpleasant deaths upon him. Klaas was properly impressed.

"If I don't win the race I am willing to die!" he said, and with this understanding we returned to the track. I found my father surrounded by the Johannesburg gamblers, and squeezed my way into the group to find much betting going on. With Boer shrewdness, father was demanding and getting good odds. He took the stand that "Black Hand Tom" had never been raced and had never won a race, while the horses of the others were tried campaigners of great reputation. The gamblers grumbled, but finally gave odds, until father stood to win or lose thousands of pounds.

Finally race time came. I suppose there never was such a crowd as swarmed about that track. It [41]

was about three quarters of a mile around, and the entire circumference was lined with people. The whites were all grouped about the start and finish line, while all the remaining space was one deep belt of black men. There were literally tens of thousands, among them many women.

The distance of the race was four times around the track. Excitement was intense when the horses came out on the track. It was a perfect day, the sky cloudless and the air like diamonds in its sparkling clearness. "Black Hand Tom" was the last horse out, but the minute he appeared, with Klaas perched on his back and all decked out in the O'Neil colors, there was a roar from the crowd.

I was at the starting-line, Sibijaan at my side, and we were fairly dancing with excitement. A moment later the horses—nine of them—were strung out along the line and the starting began. Three attempts were made, our horse always being the last over the line. This was criminal in my eyes, and both Sibijaan and I shouted threats of sudden death to Klaas.

On the fourth try they were off and the race was on. If I live to be as old as Queen Labotisibeni, I shall never forget the agony of that race! Round and round the horses went, first one and then another in front. At the end of the first lap "Black Hand Tom" was last. We shouted ourselves hoarse, hurling imprecations at Klaas. At the end of the second lap our horse was next to last, and then Sibijaan and I knew exactly how we would despatch Klaas as soon as we could get hold of him. [42]

Then came the sensation of the day, of the age! At the first turn of the third lap "Black Hand Tom" swung wide and began to pass the other horses. One by one he caught them and went by. Each time he passed one the crowd fairly roared its head off. As they swept by on the beginning of the last lap there were only two horses ahead of ours, and they seemed tiring. At the first turn "Black Hand Tom" passed one and then, on the back stretch, went by the other! The crowd fairly split the heavens. A moment later "Black Hand Tom," the greatest horse in the world, tore over the winning line a good three lengths in the lead! Absolute pandemonium broke loose. I remember catching hold of Sibijaan and dancing up and down like a lunatic. Every one seemed to be doing the same thing.

We tore through the mob to where our horse stood entirely surrounded by crazy Boers and as many natives as could get close. There was father, quiet and self-contained, with his silk hat on his head at the usual angle. He was as undisturbed as though nothing had happened and seemed more anxious to get out of the crowd than anything else. From all sides his friends crowded in on him, shaking his hand and patting the great horse. Klaas, still in the saddle, wore the air of a conquering hero, and some enthusiastic Boer had presented him with a lot of money which he held closely clutched to his thin stomach.

Father spied me and smiled the ghost of a smile. He reached out his hand, and when I took it said, "Well, you have won your trip to Buno's kraal!" This was the first inkling I had that he knew about the bet, and later I learned that he had agreed to my going because he felt my faith in him and "Black Hand Tom" deserved the trip. [43]

That night there was a glorious celebration in Belfast. Great fires were lighted in the streets and much gin and whiskey was consumed. The kaffirs danced until the small hours and their chants filled the air. We boys were part of it all, and Klaas was the hero of the hour. In fact, so great a hero was he that Sibijaan and I were glad to bask in his reflected glory. The little beggar fully enjoyed his hour of triumph and it was well he did, for we soon took him down a few pegs when we got him back to Rietvlei.

CHAPTER IV

 [44]

I leave for my first visit to Swaziland—Mother warns me about Oom Tuys—Why the Boers paid tribute to King Buno—Queen Labotsibeni, the brains of Swaziland—Buno's visit to Oom Paul Kruger—Our reception in Swaziland—Ezulweni, the "Valley of Heaven"—Buno's rifle—Sibijaan and I explore by night.

About a fortnight later Oom Tuys and I left for Swaziland. I shall always remember getting ready for the trip. For days and days I added to my little outfit, until by the time Oom Tuys was ready to start I had accumulated enough dunnage to fill a wagon. When the bluff old man looked it over he turned to my mother and said, "Well, you are going to lose your son. Owen is going to spend the rest of his life in Swaziland; he is taking enough things to last him for the next hundred years!"

Then he calmly sorted out my kit, leaving me about one tenth of what I had intended taking along.

"We travel light, my boy," he said. "We travel fast and take but one wagon, and that a little one."

A day later we were off. Our caravan consisted of Tuys and me on horses, a light cart drawn by six mules, and half a dozen kaffir servants. Of course Sibijaan went with us, and was elected to the job of driving the mules. The other boys were foot-passengers, their job being to keep the mules moving and do the camp work.

My mother knew Oom Tuys of old and gave me a serious talking to the night before we left.

[45]

"My son," she said, putting her arms about me, "you must not follow Oom Tuys too closely. He is wild and sometimes as bad as King Buno himself. You will see many things that we Boers would not permit here, and you must not take these things too much to heart. Remember that you are an O'Neil, and take good care of yourself!" Then she kissed me good-by with a fervor that was quite unusual. We Boers are an unemotional people—that is, on the surface.

Oom Tuys's periodical visits to King Buno had always been a mystery to me. I had heard that they concerned some sort of a tribute to the savage king, but my father never encouraged my requests for details. "That is Oom Tuys's business," he would say. "Ask him why he is the servant of Buno!"

I did, just as soon as we were well on our way. However, I did not use father's words. Even big men hesitated to take liberties with Tuys, and I was only a boy. It was a wonderful day, and as we rode across the veldt into Swaziland Tuys told me the whole story of how he became known as "The White King of Swaziland."

"Mzaan Bakoor, for I shall call you that while we are in Swaziland, just as you shall call me 'Nkoos'," he said, "I go each moon to pay King Buno the tribute. Oom Paul sends me, and I always take two thousand gold sovereigns and quantities of gin and champagne."

This explained the mysterious cases in the wagon, the contents of which I had not yet dared to ask about.

[46]

"Buno is a very great man," Tuys went on. "He is a great king and has as many warriors as the blades of veldt grass. His impis are countless, and just recently he has married Tzaneen, a princess of the Zulus.

"Here is how it happened that we Boers must pay him tribute. His father, Umbandine, built up the Swazi power until he had enough warriors to be dangerous to us and to all the surrounding tribes. Even the Zulus feared him. Now Buno, guided and advised by his mother, Queen Labotisibeni, has kept the Swazi impis up to the greatest possible fighting strength, and he is the one savage chief we Boers have to reckon with. He is my friend, and Oom Paul depends upon me to keep him satisfied and prevent him from making war on our people. According to the agreement between Oom Paul and Buno, we pay Buno the gold and gin each month, and I am the one who brings it to him. Lately, however, he has objected to so much gold and wants more gin. Buno says he can only look at the gold, but he can drink the gin. This time I am taking an extra supply of gin."

Tuys explained to me the politics of Swaziland and seemed to think that Queen Labotisibeni was the brains behind King Buno's administration. The wanton cruelties of which Buno was guilty were contrary to the wishes of his mother, but she only mildly protested against them, since they helped to maintain the king's authority. According to Tuys, death was the punishment for all offences, and Buno often butchered his people for no reason at all.

[47]

A short time before our visit to Swaziland, King Buno had gone to Pretoria to see Oom Paul. For some time Buno had been sending complaints and objections about various matters to the President, and Tuys would carry these to Pretoria. Finally Oom Paul became exasperated and commanded Tuys to bring Buno to him.

"Bring Buno here," said Oom Paul, "and I will talk to him like a Dutch uncle. We pay too much now, and if he does not soon behave himself, I shall send a commando or two into his country and make a new king in Swaziland!"

Buno's visit to Pretoria is a classic in the Transvaal and shows the kind of man our old President was. Tuys told Buno that Oom Paul was too ill to come to visit him and that he begged that the king of Swaziland honor him by coming to Pretoria. It took much persuasion on the part of Tuys, for Buno thought he was too important a person to visit Oom Paul. Finally Tuys soothed his royal dignity and they started out for Pretoria.

It was a remarkable party. Buno took with him ten thousand of the picked fighting men of the household troops, and these wore all their savage finery. Being of the royal impis, they wore the great white headdresses and carried shields with the king's mark emblazoned thereon. Their costumes were the last word in savage gorgeousness. Each man was armed with the knob-kerrie, assegai, knife, and shield.

48

At this time the railway from Pretoria to Delagoa Bay was under construction and had already reached Middleburg. The party found a special train waiting for them at this place and Buno had his own private car. None of the Swazis had ever seen a train before and their astonishment at the great "iron horse," as they immediately called the engine, was almost pathetic. When they first saw the engine, seemingly breathing smoke and fire, they were terrified, and Tuys had to reassure them to prevent a panic. Then a number wanted to prostrate themselves before the engine and worship it, so that it was a most difficult thing to prevent their being run over. According to the various accounts of these incidents Tuys had his hands full. Buno, however, refused to be much impressed with the engine or train and complained bitterly because he was not given enough gin.

It was a wonderful sight when the train pulled out of Middleburg. Buno, with Tuys and the royal party, was in the private coach behind the engine, and the ten thousand warriors were packed in a score of open trucks behind. Naturally they all stood, and it was extraordinary to see the

thousands of savages in full dress, with wonderment and fear written on their faces, as the train swept by. The trip lasted all night, and when morning came the train pulled into Pretoria. At the station a coach and pair of fine horses waited for King Buno and Tuys. They got in, and then Tuys's natural deviltry asserted itself. He slyly poked the driver in the ribs with his revolver and commanded him to drive as fast as he could. A second later they were off at a gallop.

[49]



THE RESULT OF THE NATIONAL SPORT

Two bulls have been killed by a warrior armed only with a short stabbing spear. The bulls are surrounded by a regiment of Swazis with spears pointing inward. The bulls become infuriated, and when made as angry as possible, the chosen warrior dashes into the arena and fights them. He has but one choice—either to kill the bulls or be killed by the spears of his comrades-in-arms. Sometimes more than two bulls are used, thus making the sport more exciting and the measure of the warrior's prowess greater—if he wins. Following the contest, the bulls are eaten at a great feast



INTERIOR OF MILITARY BARRACKS

A warrior making war decorations. Through a peculiar process, hides are treated and worked into shape as braid, which they wear cross-wise around the waist

Now the doors of the trucks were not yet opened and the warriors were gazing in awe at the station, the largest building they had ever seen. Suddenly the cry was raised that their king was being stolen! They began throwing themselves out of the trucks, shouting battle-cries and brandishing their knob-kerries and assegais. There was a wild rush to catch up with the galloping carriage and more than a score of white railway employees and officials were killed in the mêlée.

Mad with fear that they were losing their king, the whole ten thousand of them raced down the streets, and Pretoria thought it was being captured by the savages. Soon, however, they caught up with the carriage, and shortly after fell into orderly array and marched on to Oom Paul's house.

The old President had risen early, as he always did, and was sitting on the stoop of his simple, flat-roofed home, drinking coffee and smoking his pipe. The carriage drove up and the warriors fell into regimental formation as Buno and Tuys got out. As they started for the little gate the ten thousand men gave the royal salute, their feet coming down on the roadway with the sound of thunder, their shrill whistle echoing from the low eaves of the house.

Oom Paul did not move from his low chair. Pipe in mouth, he looked beyond Tuys and Buno, just as though they had been ordinary kaffirs. There was an embarrassing moment—that is, it was embarrassing to the visitors—and then the old man slowly took his pipe out of his mouth and spoke. I have never heard what he said, but according to accounts he made good his threat to talk to Buno "like a Dutch uncle".

[50]

"He gave us the very devil," is the way Tuys tells about it. "Oom Paul told us both that we were children, and bad children at that! He said that he was minded to soundly spank us both, and he was so fierce about it that I thought he was going to do it."

The outcome of the interview was that King Buno went home a chastened and contrite monarch and there were no more complaints from Swaziland. This shows the extraordinary character of Oom Paul and explains why he was so highly regarded by all, Boers and English alike.

Trekking with Oom Tuys was a thoroughly delightful adventure. He had planned the trip into Swaziland so that at night we made camp at some Boer farm, and everywhere he was received with open arms. Each night there was a little jollification in which Tuys was the center of interest. He always pushed me forward, and the simple Boers made much of me, all of them knowing my father and having the highest regard for him. Although we traveled fast there was little hardship. It was after the rains and the whole veldt was a bright green, with the little thorn trees in bloom.

[51]

We found the Vaal River fordable and the going was easy. Whenever we were unable to reach a farm-house for meals, we fared well on our own biltong and rusks. The biltong, so much eaten in the Transvaal, is dried beef which is usually cut into strips and chunks and eaten without cooking. Rusks are the biscuits all Boers make, and we ate well, having enough of both.

Shortly before reaching the Swaziland border we were met by several fine looking Swazi warriors. I immediately noted their superiority to the kaffirs I had known. They were about six feet tall, perfectly proportioned, and carried themselves with a swinging dignity quite unusual among the Mapors and other natives.

Oom Tuys introduced me to them and they met me as man to man, giving me the same salute they had accorded my uncle. They told Tuys that their king was waiting for him and that he had planned a celebration in our honor.

"You hear that, Mzaan Bakoor?" Tuys asked. "We are going to be royal guests and you will see the real Swaziland. Watch me and do as I do in all things, and you shall have much to tell when we get back to Rietvlei."

As we came up the wide trail to the border of Swaziland, I saw several hundred warriors at the top of the hill. As soon as we came close to them they began to wave their knob-kerries and shields. Down the slope came the deep bass of their voices as they chanted a welcome, the sound being suddenly cut off short as they brought their feet down in the heavy stamp they use when dancing. They were our escort—all picked men of the household impi—and their leader was a noted warrior who was an old friend of Tuys.

[52]

After a short halt for this officer to deliver a brief address of welcome, Tuys ordered our party to proceed. I noted that he treated the officer with scant courtesy, and he explained this by saying, "Here I am a king; he is lucky if I even look at him!"

A little later we dropped into the Valley of Heaven. This is really the most delightful valley in Swaziland. It is well watered, and thousands of the natives have their kraals there. Swaziland is a broken country, alternating between veldt of from two to five, and even six thousand feet, and there are small rivers everywhere, flowing from west to east. Each of these rivers has cut out its own valley, but the Valley of Heaven is the most fertile and beautiful of all. Trees, sometimes in clumps but more often singly, are found along the banks of the rivers and each kraal is practically surrounded by big and little ones.

Our progress down the Valley of Heaven was practically a parade. At each kraal or village, a village being a collection of kraals, we would be greeted by hundreds of warriors and children. The women would usually remain in the background, but were quite in evidence. Young as I was, I could not help noting that they were the finest looking savages I had ever seen. These women have perfectly proportioned bodies and stand erect, with their heads thrown back. They are the women of a proud nation, and they show it. I particularly noticed their splendid shoulders, these and their erect carriage being due to carrying all burdens on their heads.

[53]

At each village the local chief would offer us tswala, or kaffir beer, and we were lucky to be important enough to be able to refuse to drink. If we had taken all that was offered, we would

have been drowned long before the end of the first day in the Valley of Heaven. The fact that our escort consisted of picked warriors from the royal troops and that Oom Tuys was known to be the intimate of their king made it permissible for us to refuse to associate with the little chiefs along the line of march.

Camp on the last night before reaching the royal kraal at Zombode was pitched in the valley, and we saw the sun set over the plateau on which King Buno made his headquarters. After supper that night Oom Tuys confided to me a great secret.

"Buno has asked me a thousand times to bring him a rifle," he said, "but always I have refused. As you know, the Swazis, like other kaffirs, are not allowed to have guns. Death is the punishment we deal out to those who sell rifles to these savages. Now Buno has his heart set on owning a rifle, and the last time I saw him I promised that I would get him one.

"In the cart I have a Mauser with about five thousand cartridges, and the outfit is for Buno. You will want to come to Swaziland many times in the future, so I am going to make Buno your friend for life. I am going to allow you to present the Mauser to him!" [54]

"No one will know how he got it and you will be as big a man in Swaziland as I am, once you have given the rifle to Buno. Now what do you think of your Uncle Tuys?"

Naturally, I was very grateful, since I had already begun to feel the lure of Swaziland and dearly wanted to be a little king there myself.

That night was memorable for several reasons. Soon after dark Sibijaan and I climbed up the trail a little way and looked up the valley. Here and there we could see fires burning at the various kraals and quite often the wind brought us the pungent smell of wood-smoke. The sky was clear as it only is in South Africa and the stars glittered with all the hard brilliance of diamonds. However, we did not remain long admiring the beauties of the Valley of Heaven.

Down below us we suddenly saw what seemed to be a dark cloud of men coming up the road. Discreetly we hid in the brush along the trail and watched them go by. They were warriors in full costume, their faces hard and set in the dim light. There was only the sound of their feet on the road and their silence was unnerving. The Swazi warrior chanting and dancing in the sunlight is awesome enough, but when he becomes a silent swift-moving shadow of the night, he is terrifying. Particularly is this true when you are only a small boy and know that the shadow is fully armed and is deplorably careless with his weapons!

Sibijaan was shaking with terror, and as soon as the shadows passed on we started back to camp. Neither of us spoke. We didn't need to. We knew that we wanted Oom Tuys and without a word started for him.

A moment later we saw another band of warriors coming swiftly up the trail, so again we hid. As we dived into our little camp a third band passed. I was very glad to find Oom Tuys smoking by the fire, and for the first time in my life I realized that a fire is a friendly thing.

Tuys noted that we had been hurrying and asked the reason. I told him about the shadows on the trail.

"It is well that you hid," he said. "It would have been better yet if you had not been so foolish as to wander about at night. Don't you know that sudden death is always walking abroad at night in Swaziland? Have I not told you?"

Then he explained that practically all Swazis travel at night, whenever possible, so as to avoid the heat. He said that those we had met were going to Zombode, as the king had issued a call for his warriors to attend the celebration in our honor. That night I waked several times, cold with an unnamed fear, and was comforted by seeing the massive bulk of Tuys sleeping nearby. His steady breathing seemed a guarantee of safety and I would drift back to sleep feeling that the shadows on the trail were far removed from me. [55]

CHAPTER V

Sheba's Breasts and the Place of Execution—Zombode and the royal kraal of Queen Labotsibeni—Common and royal ground—We reach King Buno's kraal at Lebombo—Gin for the king—Buno, the regal savage—I present a rifle to the king—Lomwazi takes me to Labotsibeni—The old queen is worried over Tuys's activities—The shooting match with the king—Tuys and I manage to miss a few human targets. [56]

Next morning we waked to find several hundred more warriors surrounding our camp. A more important chief was in command, and when Tuys had made a brief but leisurely toilet, he talked to him. Again Tuys was given kingly honors, which he accepted with marked condescension. This chief informed him that King Buno was waiting for him and had sent greetings to "his white brother." Many dramatic gestures accompanied this announcement, and I was quite impressed with the manner of the chief. He was a fine figure of a savage and had a great number of scars on

his forehead, showing that he had killed many enemies.

We broke camp shortly after and started on the short climb to the top of the plateau. With our escort we made a party of about five hundred, and I felt very proud to be riding with Oom Tuys at the head of so imposing a procession.

When we reached the top, Tuys reined in and pointed across the Valley of Heaven to where two rounded peaks rose about a thousand feet above the river. [58]

"You see those?" he asked. "Those mountains are Sheba's Breasts and are known everywhere in Swaziland. Beyond them is the Place of Execution. If you look closely, you can see that sharp cliff to their left."

The rounded peaks looked exactly like a woman's breasts and were very striking. There are many tales about them and they are supposed to be the home of spirits of all kinds. I could see the cliff Tuys spoke of. It appeared to be a sheer drop of many feet.

The plateau was much like the high veldt in our country. Except for the tall grass and a few rocks raising their rugged tops here and there, it was absolutely barren. These rocks look like little black islands in a vast rolling sea of dull brown. Back of this are the bare mountains, rugged and naked in their rocky barrenness.

We came to a little stream, which appeared to head up in these hills; then suddenly a great collection of huts seemed to spring up out of the plain. Hundreds of poles projected above them, and soon we saw a number of kraals. There were a few patches of trees, their green being the only relief from the dull brown of the scene. We seemed to come suddenly on the settlement because its huts and kraals were of the same color as the grass, which gave them a fine camouflage.

This was Zombode, formerly the royal kraal of King Umbadine.

"Queen Labotsibeni, his royal widow, lives there now," Tuys told me. "All Umbadine's other widows live there, too. I think there are about twenty of them. When we get close you will find that the big mountain behind is already throwing its shadow over the place. It will be cooler then." [59]

Soon we came to the shadow and it was very pleasant to get out of the scorching sun. This mountain was a sort of natural fort and protected Zombode from attacks from the west. East of Zombode was a rolling grass-covered plain.

Close to the outlying kraal was a small stream. We did not cross this.

"That marks the line between the common and royal ground," Tuys explained. "We will follow it and push on to Lebombo, Buno's kraal. If we wished to call on Labotsibeni, we would wait here until we received permission to cross this water. Then we would camp on the royal ground and she would send for us."

By this time I could see scores of Swazis running out of their kraals to inspect us. A chief, accompanied by a score or so of warriors, came to meet us. We kept on, and he caught up to us by running. Tuys paid no attention to him and advised me to do the same. One of our servants told him that "The White King" was going to visit his brother, King Buno, and I looked back to see the chief and his men watching us as we went on.

About three or four miles farther on, over the same barren brown country, we came to another stream. This is about midway between Zombode and Lebombo. Lebombo came out of the ground exactly like Zombode and was situated in exactly the same way at the foot of a high mountain, facing the East. It was simply another Zombode. [60]

"That's where Buno lives," said Tuys. "The big kraal in the center is his, and all the little ones belong to his indunas. Each of the indunas has a number of wives and is the leader of an impi of about a thousand men. King Buno has twenty-six wives and I don't know how many children."

As we went on I could see the people coming out to meet us, the small boys running swiftly and shouting as they ran. Here also there was a little stream separating the common from the royal ground. By the time we reached this dividing line several indunas had come to meet us, and we forded the water and pitched camp on the royal ground.

Tuys went to the wagon and soon appeared with a quart of gin. This he gave to the most imposing of the chiefs, who seemed to be a sort of special representative of the king.

"Tell the great king that his white brother comes with presents and the tribute," he said. "Tell him that our king, Oom Paul, sends greetings and prays that his health is good and that he will live forever!"

"Nkoos, it shall be done!" the induna answered, saluting with his shield and knob-kerrie.

Then he retired swiftly to the royal kraal. [61]

Less than ten minutes later he came back and said, "The great King Buno, ruler of Swaziland and leader of countless warriors, bids you approach!"

Oom Tuys stepped into our tent and called me inside. He gave me the rifle and handed Sibijaan a

heavy bag of cartridges. Then he loaded a dozen of our escort with more cartridges and bottles of gin. Thus loaded down, we set out to call on the most powerful and savage king in South Africa.

After passing the triple walls of the kraal we found King Buno standing in front of the royal palace, or rather, hut. He shook hands warmly with Tuys, who handed him the gold. I noted how easily Buno handled it. He was a strong man. While he talked with Oom Tuys I had an opportunity to look him over.

King Buno was well over six feet and must have weighed at least two hundred and thirty or forty pounds. He was very deep chested and had a body like an ox. His legs were well shaped and very muscular. Of course he was too fat, but this was explained by the fact that the Swazis consider corpulence a sign of aristocracy and are proud to "carry weight."

Without doubt, Buno was the most powerful savage I had ever seen. He was every inch a king, and he knew it. While I was admiring him he suddenly turned and looked at me. His eyes were the cruelest I have ever looked into, and it came over me with a rush that he must be quite as black as he was painted. I was only a boy, but I could feel the cruel brutality of this savage the minute he looked at me. [62]

Tuys motioned me to come forward.

"O King, this is Mzaan Bakoor, my nephew, who has come all the way from Rietvlei to bring you the rifle you desire!" Such was his introduction.

Buno shook hands with a grip like a vise and took the Mauser from me. He seemed to gloat over the weapon for a moment, and then spoke:

"The king thanks you, Mzaan Bakoor, little white chief," he said, and his voice was deep and melodious. "You are the near relation of my friend; you shall be the friend of the king. All my subjects shall be your slaves!"

Then he fondled the rifle a moment, throwing it to his shoulder and going through the motions of shooting.

"It is a good rifle," he said, using the native term of "mroer," "and to-day we shall try it. Already I know how to shoot, and this afternoon we shall have a shooting match. I shall show you how the king can shoot!"

There was a little more conversation about the rifle and Buno was much pleased at the quantity of cartridges we had brought. He was as delighted with the Mauser as a child with a new toy. Later that day I found myself regretting that the weapon was not a toy.

At length Buno said something to Tuys that I did not hear. The latter turned to me and said, "I have some business to transact with the king. You go back to our camp and wait for me."

I would have given much to know what this business was. Tuys and Buno had been in some queer deals together and I felt that they were planning another. Both were reckless and lawless, and, backed by the thousands of Buno's impis, they were able to do anything they had a mind to, at least in Swaziland. [63]

Tuys and Buno dropped to their knees and crawled into the royal hut, and I returned to our camp. Sibijaan was as curious as I was and made an attempt to pass in the rear of the king's hut with the intention of hearing something. He did not get far and came back with speed, for he had run into a six-foot Swazi warrior with an evil eye who appeared to be on guard.

Boylike, I was hungry when we reached camp and was glad to see that we were to have fresh-killed beef for dinner. I was munching a rusk when Sibijaan hopped into the tent, his eyes flashing with excitement.

"O Mzaan Bakoor, there is an induna asking for you!" he said. "He says he comes from Queen Labotsibeni and must see you!"

Outside I found a young chief who looked very much like Buno. He had the same great body and hard eyes and carried himself with the same "swank" affected by the king.

"Mzaan Bakoor, little white induna," he said in the same rumbling melodious bass so common among the Swazis, "I am Lomwazi, brother of the king and son of Queen Labotsibeni. My mother would see you and has asked that I beg you to visit her. She waits for you!" [64]

Realizing that it was not fitting that an O'Neil should run at the command of a kaffir queen, I told Lomwazi that I would go when "the shadow of that tree strikes the tent." I estimated this would be in about half an hour, and I was right. Lomwazi, great induna that he was, squatted outside the tent until I was ready. He evidently expected that I might offer him gin or some present, but I decided it would be poor policy to do so, since I intended giving gin to Labotsibeni.

As soon as Sibijaan told me that the time was up I went out and found Lomwazi with an escort of half a dozen warriors waiting for me. Sure that Buno's friendship would protect us, I followed Lomwazi without hesitation. As we went along I noticed the deference paid us and realized that Lomwazi must be a power in the land.

We found Queen Labotsibeni in a nearby kraal, which she used when visiting Lebombo. It was a sort of guest kraal placed at her disposal by King Buno. There were huts sufficient for all her

retinue, among which were some of the other widows, whom she ruled with a heavy hand.

Labotsibeni was very stout and tall, even when sitting down, as she was when I first saw her. She had an intelligent face, with the same eyes, though not so cruel, as Buno and Lomwazi. Her beautifully shaped hands were much in evidence, and I don't recall having ever seen cleaner or better manicured fingers. Like the other women in Swaziland, she was practically naked, except for a covering draped from the waist. Her hair was piled high on the top of her head and was bound so that it looked like a melon. When she spoke I noted that her teeth were perfect. This, of course, is the rule in Swaziland, since these people take care of their teeth from earliest childhood. They never finish eating without carefully rubbing their teeth with charcoal or some fine sand. If the Swazis have no fixed religious observances, they certainly are religious in the care of their teeth.

[65]

Labotsibeni had not lost her sight this first time I saw her, and she looked me over for a full minute before speaking. Then she motioned to me to be seated and addressed me:

"Nkoos, little white induna," she said, "you come to Pungwane (the native name for Swaziland) as the friend of our great white leader. Oom Tuys is the trusted friend of my son, the king, and you shall be trusted likewise. Our friend always brings presents; thus do we know that his heart is true to us!"

I accepted the hint and produced the quart bottle of gin I had brought for her. She grasped it greedily, and the interview was interrupted until she had gulped down what I estimated to be nearly a pint. Her capacity for gin was extraordinary, I learned later, although all the Swazis will drink alcoholic liquors without restraint. They have absolutely no sense with gin or whiskey, and only stop guzzling when the supply runs out or they are completely paralyzed.

[66]

After taking her drink, Labotsibeni wiped her lips on a leaf—one of a pile she had at her side—and then spoke:

"Oom Tuys comes to pay the tribute," she observed, "but my son and he have other plans they will carry out. You are close to the great white man. What are these plans?"

I then realized what she was after. Of course I knew nothing about what new deviltry Buno and Tuys were hatching, but I realized that it would not do for me to appear to be on the outside. I would lose prestige.

"Oom Tuys and the king plan great things for the people of Swaziland," I solemnly assured her. "It is not for me to say what they will do. When we have left Swaziland the king will tell you everything. Until then I must remain silent."

This cryptic statement did not seem to satisfy the old queen and she several times reverted to her question in our subsequent conversation. Lomwazi was also present at the interview, but only spoke to agree with his mother. Behind her in the shadow of the hut sat several of her maids. They watched their mistress keenly and hastened to assist her when she rose as a signal that the interview was over.

The impression Labotsibeni gave me was that she was very cunning and intelligent. I could readily understand the common belief that she was the "brains behind the throne" in Swaziland.

[67]

Tuys was waiting for me at our camp and was much interested to learn that I had been to see the queen mother. He was amused to hear that she was anxious to know what business he and Buno were planning.

"So she is worried, eh?" he observed. "Well, that's good for her! She has kept Buno tied to her apron-strings too long, and I suspect she is playing into the hands of the Britishers. We must keep Buno as a friend of our people. If we don't, we shall find the English behind the Swazis in the next war."

After dinner, during which Tuys told me more stories about Buno and his cruelty, we attended the shooting match. I don't suppose there was ever another like it. It was a most terrible exhibition of savage beastiality and ought to have been called the "murder match," instead of a shooting contest.

When we arrived at Buno's kraal we found him walking excitedly up and down, the rifle in his hands. Standing near him were a score or more of his indunas, and we were struck at once by their look of apprehension. Lined up on either side of the wide roadway leading to the royal kraal were thousands of warriors. More than a dozen impis were in line, every man in his full war costume. Their knob-kerries were held at the ready, their shields across their bodies, and each had shifted his assegai to the position used in battle.

The lines of savage warriors stretched away from the kraal for hundreds of yards. It was the first time I had ever seen the impis of the king on parade and it was a most impressive sight. There was a slight breeze and the white plumes on their heads danced in the sunlight. What struck me most was the splendid build and stature of these men. They were all six feet or more and their black skins fairly shone. Most of them wore leopard-skins caught about the waist and on one shoulder.

[68]

My rapid inspection was broken by the king. He greeted us vociferously, and I immediately saw that he was on fire with the gin he had drunk. No sooner did he raise his hand in salutation than

the impis gave the royal salute. Their deep shout ended with the crash of twenty thousand feet brought down together. The earth fairly shook.

I realize now that this salute was a tribute to the cruelty of the ages. In just such a manner did the gladiators salute Nero with their "Morituri te salutamus!" A few moments after the salute I realized that these men were also about to die.

"Come on, Oom Tuys, come and let the king see how well you can shoot!" Buno shouted. "I have provided the only targets worthy of your skill—you who are noted for your shooting among a race of white men who have conquered all with their rifles! I will shoot first, and then you shall beat me!"

Then he turned suddenly to me.

"And you, too, Mzaan Bakoor, little induna! You, too, shall shoot against the king! First I will shoot, then Oom Tuys, and then you. Each will shoot this many shots," and he held out four clips of five cartridges each.

[69]



PRINCESSES AND THEIR MAID TAKING A MORNING BATH

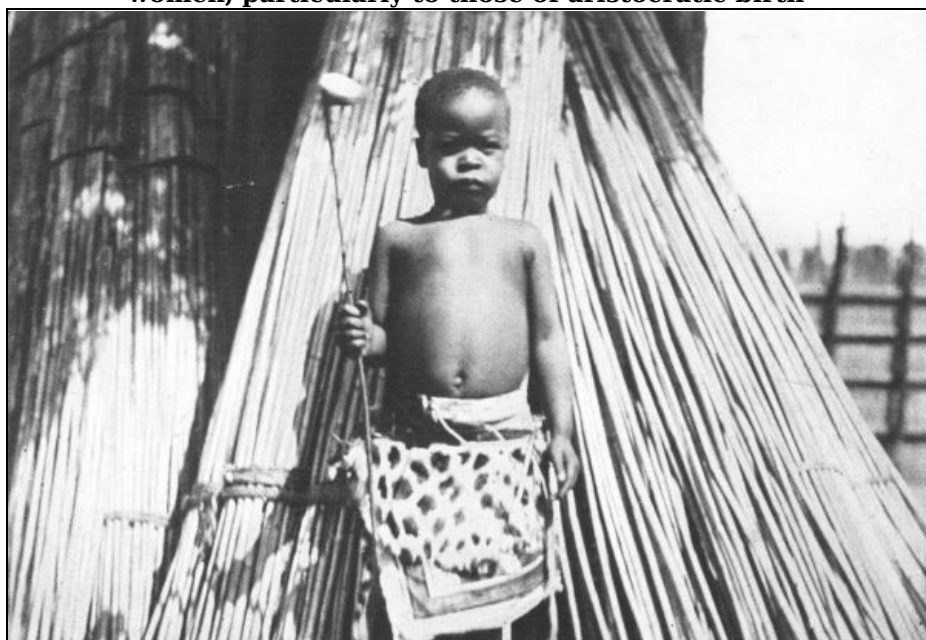


YOUNG PRINCESSES AMIABLY ENGAGED IN HAIR-DRESSING
These are of exceptionally high birth and of remarkable beauty. Either would probably be worth fifty head of cattle and could only be bought for that number. Women are the standard of currency among the Swazis, the average low-caste woman, if young and sound in limb, being worth five head of cattle. The price of women increases according to their birth and beauty



SWAZI GIRLS

This picture shows the large navel which is common to most women, particularly to those of aristocratic birth



PUDANA, FAVORITE TO THE OLD QUEEN LABOTSIBENI

He is a charming little fellow and the most privileged personality in all Swaziland, being the only male allowed to attend all interviews and conferences

The indunas gathered about and I could see the horror in their faces. They knew what was coming, but even then I did not suspect. Tuys looked startled and gazed at Buno as though he could not understand. Down the lines the plumed heads still nodded and after a moment there was silence.

The savage king slipped a clip into his Mauser, the metallic click intensified by the silence. He raised the rifle, sighting down first one line of warriors and then the other. The next instant a shot rang out and a plumed Swazi pitched forward and lay writhing in the sunlight. As Buno threw another cartridge into place, two warriors stepped out and stabbed the fallen warrior.

Four more shots rang out, and at each a plumed head came down, with shield and assegai crashing as they struck the ground. Each warrior was stabbed as he lay, the killers quietly stepping back into the ranks.

It was the most ghastly spectacle I had ever attended. We Boers have always had to fight for our lives and farms, so that sudden death was no novelty to me. But such a slaughter as this!

Buno completed his twenty shots and made three misses. These angered him and he shouted out the equivalent of "I'll get you next time!"

Then came Tuys's turn. He had been thinking rapidly and I had a faint hope that he would find some way out.

"O King, it is not fitting that your warriors should die by my rifle," he said hurriedly. "You are king and their lives are yours; I am but your guest and it is not right that brave men should be

killed by one who loves only peace. Let us shoot at other targets. Let us kill cattle so that there may be a feast to-night."

Buno's face darkened. His bloodshot eyes flashed and for a second I thought he would strike Tuys.

"The king commands! Buno, king of the Swazis, commands!" he shouted in a hoarse voice. "Shoot! Shoot and kill more than I did, if you can!"

I was holding Tuys's rifle and he came over to where I was standing. I was so sick with it all that I hardly heard him when he spoke to me hurriedly in Dutch.

"We must go through with it," he whispered. "Kill as few as you can. Shoot them in the head and they'll die quickly!"

A second later Tuys raised his rifle. Each shot that hit meant death; there was no need of stabbing when he shot. Buno taunted him at each shot, and in spite of being the best shot in the Transvaal Tuys was able to miss as many as possible without arousing the suspicions of the bloody king.

When he had finished my turn came. I could hardly hold the heavy rifle. Buno fairly abused me, for he was raging by this time. One taunt I well remember.

"O Mzaan Bakoor, you of the great ears!" he shouted, his voice now a hoarse growl. "Show the king that you can shoot as well as you hear. Oom Tuys cannot shoot. You beat him!" [71]

So unsteady was I that I could not have held the rifle firmly if I had wanted to. I shot, and never were twenty shot so many. My score was much worse than Tuys's, but the memory of that murder match will never die!

Buno was jubilant over his victory. He seemed to think that he had shamed the white men before his people and his indunas also gloried in his victory. I think they were rather glad that they had not been asked to serve as targets.

I thought we were done with killing for the time being and wanted to return to camp and rest. I was suffering from shock and felt that I must lie down. But this was not the end. Buno was not yet satisfied. He challenged Tuys to shoot at running targets! Tuys tried to talk him out of the idea and suggested that they had better go and get some gin. But Buno would not be put off.

He led the way to a point a short distance from the kraal, where there were clumps of bushes and long grass. Warriors were made to dodge in and out of these bushes while their king potted them. This required much better shooting, and the men turned and twisted in and out of the brush like mad things. Buno found that he could not kill enough to satisfy his brutish desire and soon tired of the "sport." Tuys, however, had to take his turn, and he was able to miss even more frequently than before. Sick as I felt, I was rather amused at Tuys missing these poor savages. I have often seen him stop an antelope in full flight, and we have a saying that "only a bullet travels faster than a springbok." [72]

CHAPTER VI

Tuys orders me to remain in camp during the celebration—I visit the royal kraal—Feasting, dancing, and combats to the death—Butchery of young women—Buno and Tuys wrestle for gold—How Tuys became rich—A "legal execution" in Swaziland—The unfaithful wife expiates her sin—How Tuys shoots—Father gathers information by mental suggestion. [73]

I finally returned to our camp much upset by the orgy of slaughter and sorry that I had forced Tuys to take me with him on this trip. He remained with Buno until time for supper and then came into camp to eat. I noticed that, although he was ordinarily a big eater, Tuys had little appetite that night. However, he drank quite heavily and left soon after dusk with a number of bottles of gin. As he went he advised me to remain in camp.

"You are not used to this country, lad," he said, roughly but kindly. "To-night there will be a big celebration and much drunkenness. When the king is drinking he is likely to be careless and things may happen that you would not like to remember. You stay in camp and I'll be back before long."

I promised Tuys to do as he asked, in spite of the fact that I was very curious to see what might take place. As night came on hundreds of fires were lighted and I could hear the Swazis beginning to sing. Every now and then shouts reached us, and there seemed to be every indication that it would be a wild night. Curiosity impelled me to send Sibijaan out on a scouting expedition. He was also eaten up with curiosity, but wanted me to come along. However, I still remembered my promise to Tuys and would not go. [74]

After a little Sibijaan returned, his eyes wide with excitement.

"Thousands and thousands of warriors are at the royal kraal," he announced. "There are great fires everywhere and every one is drinking tswala. The warriors are dancing and the king's fire is the biggest of all. The witch-doctors are there, too, and are going to make magic to-night!"

I was intensely interested in all this. It seemed a shame that I was going to miss it. On second thoughts I decided that I was foolish to have made the long trek into Zombode if I did not see the whole celebration. I wanted to be able to tell those at home all about it, so I decided to sneak out of camp and watch a while.

Playing at war had taught me to hide as much as possible, and soon I slipped out of the tent and started for the royal kraal. There seemed to be thousands of natives all about me, each band gathered around a fire. They were dancing and singing and eating, particularly eating. The Swazi always eats whenever possible, and a number of cattle had been slaughtered to provide a feast in honor of Oom Tuys.

I crept closer to the royal kraal and soon could see the glow from the king's fire. It was surrounded by hundreds of huts and many kraals, but I managed to get close enough to see the flames. A dense mass of warriors were on three sides of the fire, and on the other I could discern Buno and Tuys. All the warriors were dancing and chanting, and it was an awe-inspiring sight. In a little while the dancing stopped and two warriors sprang before the king and began to fight. I was close enough to see their actions and hear the blows when knob-kerrie struck shield with a hollow thump. [75]

The fight was short. One suddenly fell, struck down with a cunning blow from his opponent's knob-kerrie, and a second later I saw the winner stab the prostrate figure again and again with his assegai. A moment later another pair fought, and this battle ended as did the other with the death of the loser. There were several more fights, each ending fatally. At each victory wild shouts would go up from the bloodthirsty audience. For a small boy it was a thrilling show.

After the last combat there was a pause. Soon the murmuring of the expectant thousands died down and I felt that they were waiting for more excitement. A moment later a number of girls, all naked, were led out from behind the royal hut. They were lined up in front of Buno and Tuys, and I could see the witch-doctor talking to the king. This lasted a few minutes and then the former began to dance, doing what might be called the "Dance of Death."

Suddenly he halted, then dived at one of the girls and threw her roughly to her knees. The others fell back hurriedly and several warriors caught hold of the girl and stretched her on the ground. Another man joined the group and the girl began to shriek, her voice seeming to echo from hut to hut. It was a shriek of utter despair, and I could feel myself tremble. [76]

The man stood high above the girl and raised his right hand above his head. I could see the flash of steel, for he held a great curved knife. A moment he stood thus, the girl shrieking all the while. The crowd seemed to catch its breath and I felt as though I should choke. Down flashed the knife, and the victim shrieked louder and more shrilly than ever. It was enough! I turned and fled blindly. I don't know how I got there, but I blundered into camp shaking like a leaf and threw myself on my blankets.

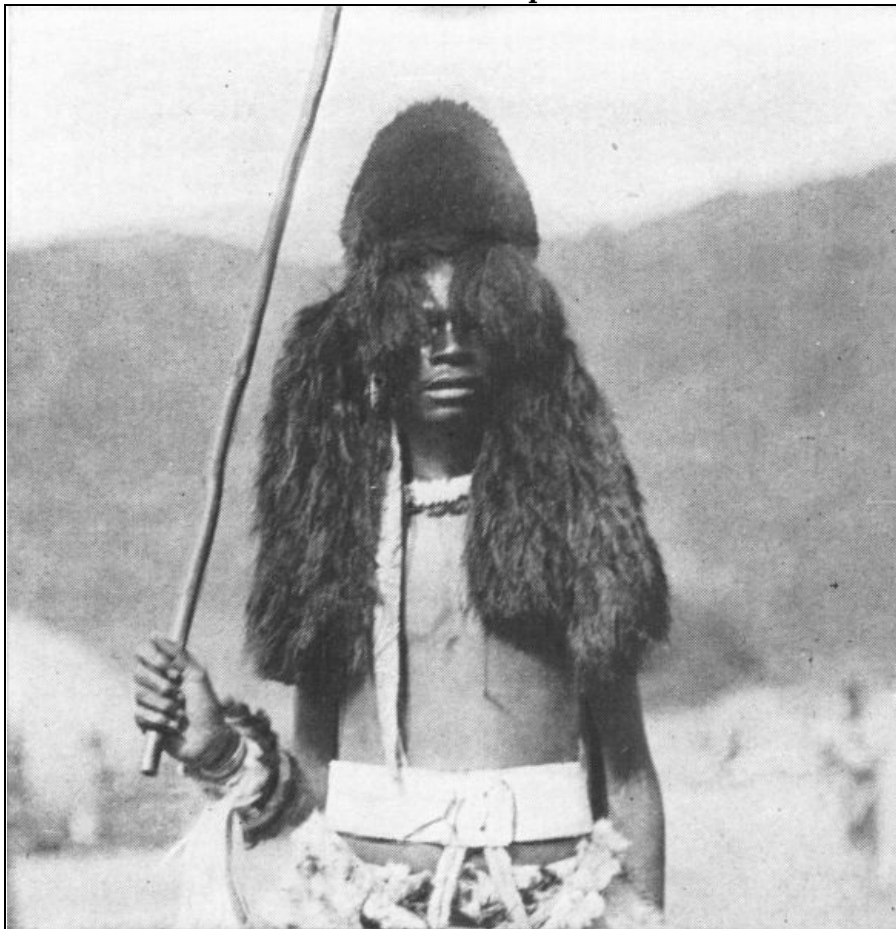
Next morning Tuys told me, quite casually, that Buno had entertained him by having some girls cut open while they still lived. I then knew that I had not been dreaming. Despite Tuys's advice, I had seen something I "would not like to remember." Tuys told me of other things that happened at the celebration, and I am thankful I did not see them. They cannot be told, but for utter cruelty, cruelty of the most depraved and bestial kind, they are without equal.

That day only the women were about until nearly noon. The king and his warriors were sleeping off the debauch of the night before. Shortly after midday Tuys took me with him to the royal kraal, where we found Buno showing little evil effects of the orgy. I noticed that Tuys wore his great leather hunting-coat with wide pockets, and I was surprised at this because it was a warm day. However, I soon learned the reason. [77]



**AN ACTUAL COMBAT IN WHICH THE MAN ON THE LEFT WAS
SLAIN**

In war the Swazis fight after a method all their own. The opposing impis, or regiments, draw up on either side of the battlefield and after much dancing, yelling of battle-cries, and other excitement, individual warriors dash into the middle-ground challenging individual opponents from the other side. These meet and fight it out to the death. The combats are divided into three phases. The first consists of fighting with the long knob-kerrie; the second, with the short knob-kerrie; and the final, which is the death blow, with the short spear



A TYPE OF DRESS WORN BY THE ROYAL EXECUTIONER



**LOMWAZI, SON AND PRIME MINISTER TO THE OLD QUEEN
He acted as Regent to the Swazi nation**

Buno was very agreeable and even joked with me about my poor shooting of the day before. He little knew how proud I was that I had shot badly. Tuys and he were on the best of terms and joked with one another, each boasting of his strength. Finally Buno ended the pleasantries with a challenge.

"Let us go to the rock, Oom Tuys," he said, "and we'll soon see who is the strongest man in Swaziland. This time I know I can throw you, and you will make small profit out of this trip."

"That remains to be seen, O King," Tuys warned him. "I feel stronger than ever to-day, but it seems to me that you are quite shaky. Don't you think you'd better wait a day or two before tackling me?"

"No, no! Now is the time!" declared Buno most emphatically. "If you cannot wrestle any better than you shot yesterday, I shall have little trouble in throwing you."

This was all very interesting to me. I felt that I would like to be big enough to wrestle Buno and break his neck. However, he and Tuys seemed to be very joyful over the coming match and there was no ill feeling between them.

After Tuys and Buno had had several drinks, we all started out for the rock. I had heard of this rock before. It was a great flat-topped slab on which Buno was accustomed to sleep during the hottest hours of the day. The Swazis call it "The King's Couch," and Buno would bask on it while the sun blazed down on his naked body with all the fire of mid-summer.

[78]

Tuys had several of his servants with him, each one carrying a small but very heavy canvas sack. I asked him what these were, but he told me to wait and I would see. The rock was about a quarter of a mile from the royal kraal, and we soon reached it.

Then came the unexpected, which invariably happened where Tuys was concerned. We climbed upon the rock and while Buno and the rest of us looked on, Oom Tuys slit the canvas sacks and poured two thousand sovereigns on the rock!

The gold made quite a large pile and shone brightly in the warm sun. Tuys counted it, with Buno seeming to keep careful check on him. Finally the count was finished and they agreed that it was all there—two thousand glittering gold pieces!

"Now we shall wrestle for it," said Buno, pointing to the gold. "We'll soon see who is the better man, who is the strongest man in Swaziland. Come on, Oom Tuys!"

Tuys waved to me to get off the rock, and we jumped down to the ground. It was, perhaps, the strangest sight I had yet seen. There stood those two great men, waiting for an opportunity to get a favorable grip. Presently they began to circle round and round, each trying to catch hold of the other. The pile of gold lay between them.

[79]

Suddenly Buno rushed at Tuys. Tuys stepped to one side and jostled him as he went by. Without changing position, Tuys reached down and grabbed up two handfuls of gold. He was shoving it into the pockets of his leather coat when Buno was upon him. Buno forced him back and grabbed up some of the gold, which he shoved into his loin-cloth.

They were very strong men and the wrestling was the roughest imaginable. Each time one gained an advantage he would grab for the gold. I soon saw that Tuys was getting the better of it. His pockets were sagging with gold, while Buno, being practically naked, had no place to store what he was able to seize. The contest finally ended with both flat on the rock, locked in each other's arms. They tussled for a time and, as neither could gain the advantage, decided to quit. Both were exhausted and hardly able to get to their feet. However, they were the best of friends, although Tuys had most of the gold.

Then I understood the saying among the Boers that Tuys would soon be a rich man if Oom Paul continued to send him with the monthly payments to King Buno.

There was only a small celebration that night, although Tuys spent the evening with the king and much gin was drunk. Tuys returned early to camp and told me that we would visit the Place of Execution the next day and then return to Rietvlei. I went to sleep full of anticipation. [80]

We broke camp early next morning. I had expected that we would accompany Buno to the cliff beyond Sheba's Breasts, but Tuys told me that the king and his impi had left during the night. All Swazis walk whenever they travel, keeping up a steady pace that covers much ground. When we started for the Place of Execution, Buno and his warriors were at least fifteen or twenty miles ahead of us.

Tuys gave orders that our party should camp in the Valley of Heaven while he and I pushed on and caught up with the king. It was nearly noon before we saw them climbing the slopes of Sheba's Breasts. There seemed to be several thousand in the king's party. In a little while, by hard riding, we caught up with them. There were two full impis, in their midst a number of naked savages without arms or headdresses. I asked Tuys about these men.

"They are prisoners," he informed me. "We are going to see them die. That is why we are climbing these infernal hills. Beyond Sheba's Breasts we have another mountain to climb and then we shall reach the Place of Execution. Let's hurry and catch Buno!"

We found the king at the head of his impis, accompanied by several of the indunas, striding along over ground that gave even our horses trouble. He greeted Tuys affectionately as usual and had a pleasant word for me.

Tuys asked him why the prisoners were going to be executed. [81]

"They have had their trial," he said, "and they are all guilty. They must die! I have said it!"

That seemed to settle the matter, and I asked Tuys about the trial and how it had taken place. From his long and intimate acquaintance with Swaziland and its customs he was able to tell me all I needed to know.

"Every moon there is a court at Zombode," he informed me. "The indunas are the jury and decide whether the prisoner is guilty or not. Prisoners are brought before them charged with stealing, non-payment of debts, disloyalty to the king, and countless other things, including witchcraft. When the indunas have heard a case they bring in a verdict of guilty or innocent, and then the king passes sentence. My friend, Buno, always decides that death is the proper punishment, and allows the person bringing the charge to take the possessions of the prisoner after he has had first pick. Many of those who will be executed to-day would only receive a whipping if they were in our country, instead of Swaziland. But Buno has no sympathy with law-breakers and I think he rather enjoys the executions."

After passing Sheba's Breasts we went down a steep trail to a little valley, and then climbed the sharp ascent to the Place of Execution. From the Breasts to the top of the cliff is almost a two-hour trek. On the top is a small plateau. From this to the bottom is a sheer drop of more than five hundred feet. At the bottom is a short slope of broken rock. [82]

The impis were drawn up in column facing the edge, with Buno and his indunas in front. We had left our horses at the top of the trail and now joined the king's party. After pacing up and down for a few moments Buno turned and addressed his warriors. He told them that the prisoners had forfeited their lives on account of their wickedness and it was only just that they should die. He ended in this fashion:

"But the king is merciful. These jackals ought to be killed by torture. Instead, I, Buno the King, have decreed that they shall die after the time-honored custom of our people!"

While he spoke I watched the prisoners. There were about forty of them, and every one held his head high, as though not afraid to die. Each bore himself proudly, more like a victor than one about to die a fearful death.

When Buno had finished there was a slight stir among them and one was left standing alone. With his eyes straight in front of him, his body erect, he walked swiftly forward. In a second he had reached the edge. Throwing up his arms, he leaped forward and was gone!

One after another the others followed. There was no hesitation, no drawing back. It was terrible,

yet glorious! These savages, with no promise of a here-after which included a Valhalla or Heaven, went to their death like heroes.

When the last one had gone the silent tension was broken by the rustling of shields and shuffling of feet. The king then felt impelled to make another address. He had got as far as, "Thus do I, the king, destroy the enemies of my people—" when there came a violent commotion and a woman's cry. [83]

Through the warriors dashed a young and handsome woman. She wore nothing, and in that brief moment I could see from the lines in her face that she had suffered much.

Tuys and the king leaped forward to intercept her, but were too late. She threw up her hands with a shriek and went over the edge!

Tuys and I were much excited by this, but Buno and his indunas seemed to be rather annoyed. Buno explained that women had done this before and seemed to regard their action as a desecration of the Place of Execution. After many questions Tuys found out all about it and explained to me.

"This was new to me," he said, as we climbed down from the cliff, "and I thought I knew all there was to know about the Swazis. But I never before heard about women throwing themselves off the Place of Execution.

"Mzaan Bakoor, this is how it is. You know the Swazis are very strict with their women. If a wife, no matter if she be one of thirty or forty wives, has anything to do with any man but her husband, her life is forfeited. Also the child, if there be one, must die. If there is no child, she dies alone. It is the husband's right to kill the unfaithful wife. If he does so, no one has anything to say and he is not held for murder. But he can do worse than kill his wife. He can refuse to kill her, and then she becomes an outcast and the prey of any one. She may even be killed by her people, for there have been cases where Swazi women have killed an unfaithful wife when the husband refused to slay her. [84]

"Always, if she can escape, the woman will take to the hills. There her condition is as bad as it can be. She has to live on berries and what game she can catch, and her life is miserable. She is an outcast, and men who are caught going to her in the hills share her degradation.

"This woman who died to-day was the youngest wife of a little chief who refused to kill her when he found that she was faithless. She escaped to the hills some weeks ago and lived the life of a hunted beast. Finally she must have made up her mind to end it all. It is fortunate for her that she had not been taught by the missionaries that she had a soul!"

That is the moral code of Swaziland. In all the years I have known the Swazis I have never heard of its being broken without the death penalty. However, civilization will some day reach into Swaziland and then this code will disappear. That will be the end of the Swazis.

We reached camp to find the long shadows of the setting sun dropping across the Valley of Heaven. Buno bade Tuys an affectionate farewell and the impis gave us the royal salute as they started up the hill for Lebombo.

This was the first time I saw King Buno, and he left me memories that nothing can ever efface. I saw him again next year and was in Lebombo when he died and Queen Labotsibeni was appointed regent. [85]

Nothing much happened on our return journey to the Valley of Reeds, except that Oom Tuys showed me how he could shoot. During the second day's trek we ran up on the high veldt for a space and jumped some springbok. They sprang up suddenly out of the brown grass, as they always do, and went off like a streak of light.

After one or two had escaped, Tuys told me to kill the next.

"Let's see if you can shoot like a Boer," he said, bantering me. "Let's see if you would starve to death if you were lost on the veldt!"

A few moments later I had my chance. My Mauser rested across my saddle when the antelope jumped, and a second later I blazed away. I made three perfectly clean misses. Looking back, I realize that the heavy military rifle was too much for me—it was too weighty.

Tuys said: "Poor Mzaan Bakoor, you will die hungry. Now watch me get the next!"

And he did. His rifle was in its sheath, barrel under his leg and stock alongside the pommel of the saddle. I never saw quicker action. The unlucky springbok seemed to rise with the motion of Tuys's arm as he snapped his Mauser out of its case to his shoulder, all in one motion. On its fourth or fifth jump the antelope met the dum-dum bullet and dropped. Its back was broken and the knife did the rest. [86]

"That is the way a Boer shoots!" Tuys boasted. "If you miss your meat, you go hungry. Your rifle must follow the springbok when he jumps, and you get him at the top of his leap. He cannot change direction in the air and you pull your trigger softly so that your aim is not broken. If you jerk, as you did a minute ago, you miss. Remember that, lad!"

As we rode into Rietvlei on the last day Tuys gave me a serious talking to. He was worried over what I had seen at Lebombo.

"You know that we have seen some things at Buno's kraal that must not be told," he cautioned me. "The British, and even our own people, would be much excited if they heard that you had given a rifle to Buno. They would hold you and me accountable for the men he killed in the shooting match. Also, they would ask many questions about the women who were killed that night I made you stay in camp. They would think that the gin we gave Buno made him do these things, and we would have much trouble.

"You must not know anything about these things. When you tell about your trip, you must only tell things that will not make trouble. If you don't, I will never take you with me again. What's more, I'll tell Buno, and he will kill you if you ever go to Swaziland again!

"Slim Gert will ask you questions, and your mother, too. If any of your brothers are at home, they will want to know about your trip. Now remember, you must only tell the things that are safe to tell." [87]

He also advised me to threaten Sibijaan with everything under the sun if he talked too much. His own servants he was not afraid of—they had been with him before and knew what would happen to them if they talked. I told Sibijaan what to expect if he talked, and he promised to tell nothing. He kept his promise about as well as might have been expected of a kaffir.

Mother and father were at home when we reached Rietvlei, and were very glad to see me back. I was glad to again look out on the peaceful green fields of our wonderful farm, but keenly disappointed that I dared not give a true account of our adventures. It was some story for a small boy to have to bottle up!

After supper my father sent for me, and I went to his office in the wing of the house which he used for administrative work. I had my doubts about the interview that I knew was about to take place, because my father has a way of getting the truth when he wants it. He is not known as "Slim Gert" for nothing.

On the top of his desk lay a sjambok, or rawhide whip. It caught my eye and he saw me look at it.

"Now, son, tell me about your trip," he said. "What did you see? What happened? Yesterday a Swazi came here and said that Buno had made a celebration for Tuys and you." As he asked the question his keen eyes searched my soul.

I was in an awful pickle. If I told the truth, Tuys would be my enemy for life. If I lied to my father, he would never forgive me and I'd hate myself forever! The cruel whip did not enter into my calculations, because my father never struck us. It could not concern me. [88]

I hesitated for a moment only and then sacrificed my further chances of going with Oom Tuys to Swaziland. I told the truth. Father listened and seemed to be checking up what I said. He asked one or two questions which refreshed my memory, and I told him everything.

"Thank you for so accurate an account, son," he said, when I had finished. "I wanted to be sure that what I had heard was so. Sibijaan was here a little while ago and—" He picked up the whip and tossed it into a drawer.

Next day I saw Sibijaan. I asked him why he had told father about the killings at Lebombo.

"Ou Baas holds the sjambok in his hand when he talks to me," he said quite simply. "He knew lots about Lebombo already. I'd sooner be killed by Oom Tuys some day than by your father now. I could not lie to Ou Baas."

Neither could I, but nevertheless I upbraided Sibijaan for breaking the promise he had made to me that he would not tell about our trip. In fact, I consoled myself for losing my further chances of visiting Swaziland with Oom Tuys by giving Sibijaan a good beating. He could fight, but was not as strong as I, and the thrashing made no difference in our friendship. Of course the fight took place in private; it would never have done to let our impi know that we had fallen out for even a moment. [89]

Later I found out that father had received some pointed enquiries from the government in regard to Oom Tuys's activities in Swaziland. He wanted to know first hand, if possible, what the "White King of Swaziland" really did when he made his periodical trips to Buno's kraal. The information, however, was only for his own benefit, since he would not betray one of our people.

A month later Oom Tuys stopped at Rietvlei as usual before making his regular trip to Lebombo. That night I was with father when he sat talking with him. I feared that father would ask questions about our trip, but he approached the subject in quite another way.

"I have heard from various kaffirs that your last trip to Swaziland was a bad business," he said to Tuys. "The government also has asked me about it. Of course I know nothing, since you have told me nothing," and he eyed Tuys keenly.

"They say it was a bad business?" Tuys remarked in a blustering way. "Well, they don't know what they're talking about! Buno was only happy to receive the tribute and he may have taken a little too much gin. That's about all there was to it. Who the devil are those busybodies who don't mind their own business?"

Then he looked at me, but I met him eye to eye. I had expected the encounter and was ready for him. Father, however, realizing the situation, began talking again. [90]

"Kaffirs will lie," he said, "and there have been a number of Swazis here during the last month. Of course I don't believe them, but some of the officials who have to create work to hold their jobs have been asking questions."

"Tell them to go to Swaziland and find out," said Tuys, laughing heartily. "They daren't go. If they did, they'd never come back. Buno would answer them, and they wouldn't worry about making any long-winded reports when he had done with them!"

Tuys knew that he was the only white man who dared enter Swaziland then. He also knew that the stories told by kaffirs did not carry much weight and would never be accepted for action by the government.

"It would be well, Tuys," father said at the end of the talk, "if you would induce Buno not to make so much noise when he gives his next party in your honor. His hospitality is too bloody to be healthy for either you or him."

Tuys did not question me about the matter when he saw me alone next morning. He evidently refused to entertain the thought that I might have betrayed him. If I had not met his eye the night before, however, he would have been sure I was guilty. He did not comment on the matter, and I know now that, in his daredevil way, he did not lose any sleep over it. In those days, too, it must be remembered that it did not cause much stir when a native chief killed a few of his followers. It was much more serious if he killed the men of another chief, since this might mean war and wars were always disturbing.

[91]

Tuys had nothing to say on his return from Swaziland, but it must have been a successful trip for I saw him hand my father a heavy canvas sack to put in his safe until morning. He must have done well in the royal wrestling match.

CHAPTER VII

[92]

I visit Swaziland again—Buno's illness—An appeal from the king—The race against death—Umzulek meets us—The dying king—Buno makes Tuys guardian of his people—The last royal salute of the impis—The death-dealing puff-adder—Buno dies like a true savage king—Tzaneen, the royal widow, suspects murder—The queens meet—Tuys escapes the funeral sacrifice.

It was about a year later that I made my second trip into Swaziland. Father was away in Pretoria on business when Tuys arrived at Rietvlei. Very recently we had heard a rumor that Buno was ill, and I was very keen to go with Tuys on this trip. I felt sure that my father would not allow me to, but I knew that my mother could be persuaded to let me go. I therefore asked Tuys to take me.

"I am almost a man now, Oom Tuys," I said, standing as erect as I could, "and I want to go with you on your visit to Lebombo. They say that Buno is sick, but that ought not to make any difference, ought it?"

"Yes, Owen, it makes all the difference in the world," he answered. "You know what the custom is; if Buno dies, his ten nearest friends will be sacrificed. I am regarded as his friend and they will want me to die. Much as I would appreciate the honor, I don't want to die just yet. If they killed me, they would kill you, too. Do you want to die?"

I frankly confessed that I did not. This explanation of the situation placed a very different light on it and I was curious to know what Tuys intended to do. He told me he would wait a day or two before making up his mind, and I had hopes that some way would be found out of the difficulty.

[93]

Now Buno knew that Oom Tuys would be at Rietvlei about this time. He nearly always was, as he seldom started his trip from any other place.

Just at sunset, two days later, one of our Mapors ran in and reported that a small impi of Swazis was coming down the valley.

"I'll wager that is a message from Buno," Tuys said, and we went indoors to await their arrival. It would not have done for us to be caught waiting for them. In a little while, when dusk was falling over the valley, we heard many feet come to a stop on the smooth roadway. Sibijaan ran in to say that the impi had arrived, and while he spoke we heard the cries and the thud of feet that marked the royal salute.

Tuys sent one of his bodyguard out to see what was wanted.

"It is a great induna from King Buno," the man reported a moment later. "He says he comes bearing a royal message to his white brother."

"Tell him that 'The White King' of his country will see him in a little while," Tuys ordered.

It was almost dark before Tuys decided the "great induna" had waited long enough to humble his pride. Then he went out; and, of course, I followed him. No sooner was he framed in the light of the doorway than the royal salute was repeated. He walked slowly to the gate. There was the

[94]

chief patiently waiting for him, his men drawn up behind him, like so many shapes of darkness barely visible in the night.

"Nkoos, White King of Swaziland," the induna began, "I am the messenger of King Buno. He sends a message to you."

Then he stopped, awaiting permission to go on.

"Speak!" ordered Tuys.

"Buno, our king, is sick unto death," the chief said, with dramatic gestures, "He desires that his white brother come to him. By me he sends word that your life is safe and that he must see you before he dies!"

Tuys knew that Buno's word was the word of a king and could be relied upon. He waited only a moment, therefore, and then said tersely:

"I will come. To-morrow's sun will see us on our way." With that he made the gesture of dismissal. The impi again gave the royal salute and a second later had departed, swallowed up by the night.

"Get ready, lad," Tuys directed as soon as we entered the house. "At sunrise to-morrow we start. We travel fast and light, for I must reach Lebombo before Buno dies!"

I was overjoyed, but immediately my joy was tempered by the thought that my mother would have to know and might object. Tuys, however, settled that question for me. He went to her and told her that he would be responsible for my return safe and sound. Tuys always had a way with him, and my mother sent for me to tell me that I had her permission to go. [95]

"However, you must obey Oom Tuys better this time," she warned me. "I know that you were disobedient on the trip last year and ran the risk of being killed. You may go only if you promise me that you will obey Tuys."

Naturally, I promised. I would have done more than that if it had been necessary, for I was wild to accompany Tuys this time. With Buno possibly dying there would be wonderful things to see, I felt sure. I was not disappointed, as it turned out.

At dawn the next morning we were on our way. We had about the same equipment as before, except that I rode a bigger and faster horse and four speedy mules were harnessed to our light wagon, instead of six. Sibijaan drove the mules and swung his sjambok without mercy. For once he was not called down for beating the mules.

As Tuys predicted, we traveled fast. The induna and his impi had left Rietvlei during the night and started back toward Lebombo. We caught up with them during the afternoon. They were hitting a smart pace, with the induna in the lead. His plumes appeared to mark the cadence of their steps and they must have been making better than six miles an hour.

"Is the way prepared for us?" Tuys asked the chief. "Does the king expect me? Are his men waiting for me?" [96]

"Nkoos, the king waits!" the induna replied most impressively. "He bade me to tell you to hurry. The king dies, and must see you before he goes to the caves."

This seemed to satisfy Oom Tuys, so that he sent home the spurs and we all broke into a new burst of speed. The road was rough, and I would look back now and then to see Sibijaan swaying to and fro as he jerked up the mules and cut them with his sjambok. Tuys's boys, or servants, with the exception of his bodyguard, ran beside the wagon, holding to it to help them over the ground.

Tuys seemed possessed with the idea that Buno was really dying, and our trip became a race with death. It was very exciting. Down through the Valley of Heaven we ran, past kraals from which the Swazis tumbled out to gaze in wonder at us. Several indunas, knowing that Tuys was due on his monthly trip, tried to halt us to offer tswala or food, but Tuys would throw them a word and press on. This was on our second day's trek. On the first night we had stopped shortly before midnight, and then only to give our horses and mules some much needed rest.

By the end of the second day both animals and men were pretty well exhausted, so we camped a little earlier. We were up at dawn, and Tuys estimated that we would reach Lebombo by noon. During that last night's camp a small band of witch-doctors stopped to talk to Tuys. It seemed that they had received word that Buno was dying and were going to Lebombo to be in at his death, so to speak. [97]

"Vultures! Carrion-eaters! That's what they are," Tuys remarked to me with disgust. "They are going to Lebombo so that they will be there to bury the king, if he dies. I wish Buno would fool them!"

As before, we passed Queen Labotsibeni's kraal at Zombode. This time there were only women and children there. All the indunas and warriors had gone on to Lebombo. Tuys asked a curious woman how this was.

"Yesterday, O Nkoos, the command came from the king that all warriors should go to Lebombo," she explained. "None but messengers remain, and these are now going on to tell that you are

near." While she spoke we saw a small band of warriors swiftly running up the trail ahead. In a moment they had passed the turn of the road and were gone. In the brief glimpse I had of them I saw that they wore the broad white band that denotes a "king's messenger" in Swaziland.

We pushed on. Tired as our animals were, we made good time, though not good enough to catch up with the messengers.

As our party came round the bend into sight of Lebombo, we found three indunas and more than a thousand warriors of the king's own impi waiting for us. They were lined up on either side of the road and gave us the royal salute as we passed between them. We did not halt, and these splendid warriors formed behind us and trotted along as our escort. It was a wonderful sight. Their nodding plumes and bizarre shields, with here and there the flash of sunlight from an assegai, made a stirring picture. [98]

While yet some distance away I could see that there was an army gathered about the royal kraal. There seemed to be tens of thousands of warriors, all more or less in formation. When we came closer, a number of indunas ran forward to meet us and Umzulek, a brother of Buno, led us to the king. On each side of the roadway where the infamous shooting match had taken place the year before were solid lines of warriors, three and even four deep. As we passed up the line, impi after impi gave the royal salute.

Except for the exclamations of the warriors and the stamp of their feet, there was a strange silence. There seemed to be an air of foreboding, as though all were waiting for something they dreaded.

We dismounted at the king's hut. Tuys motioned me to come with him, and we stooped and went in. For a moment we could see nothing in the dim light. My first impression was that the hut was filled with people and was stifling hot.

Then I saw the king stretched out on some mats, with his head propped up on a small block of wood. He was very changed. His great body was gaunt, his face haggard, and his eyes shone with the fire of fever.

Buno gazed fixedly at Tuys for a moment and then weakly raised his hands in salute. [99]

"Welcome, Nkoos, white brother of the king," he said in a thin old voice. "Welcome, white king of my people! I knew you would come. You are a true friend!"

Even in the dim light I could see that Tuys was moved. He fumbled his great beard and finally began to speak.

"Come closer, Nkoos," came the royal command. "Send my indunas away. I would speak with you alone."

Tuys motioned to the indunas to go, and they filed out. Then Buno saw me:

"Welcome, little induna," he said, his voice seeming even fainter. "Welcome, Mzaan Bakoor! You are my friend, too. You must remain with Oom Tuys and me, for I have a request to make that you shall inherit from him when he is gone."

Tuys and I sat close to Buno, and then I saw how little life was left in his once powerful body.

"Gin! Give me gin," Buno pleaded. "I must have strength to talk. Give me gin!"

Tuys poured out a large drink of the fiery liquid and the king choked it down. He gasped for a moment, and then went on in a stronger voice.

"Nkoos, my white brother," Buno said. "You are not of our people and therefore cannot die with me. You cannot have the joy and honor of joining the king in death. For I know now that I am dying. Perhaps I shall not live to see another sunrise." [100]

I felt that he was right. One so weak and emaciated could not live long. Undoubtedly Buno was dying.

"But you can serve my people when I am dead," he continued, "by continuing to be their true friend, just as you have been mine. I would have you make a paper which would tell all the world that you are the guardian of the people of Swaziland. When you die you can make Mzaan Bakoor the guardian. He will be a man then and will care for my poor people. Swaziland has many enemies—the Boers, the English, the Zulus, and others. All desire our land. You can prevent them from taking it. Will you be their guardian when I am gone?"

Tuys met the feverish eyes of the dying monarch and then his deep voice rumbled. I remember noting how different it was from that of Buno.

"O King, you have spoken!" he answered. "Your word is my command. So long as I live I shall guard your people and shall protect them from their enemies!"

"It is well, Nkoos," Buno said, his voice scarce above a whisper. Then he closed his eyes for a moment and rested. In a little while he asked for more gin, and then asked Tuys to call the indunas. They filed in and stood on each side of the recumbent king. There were ten or twelve of them, all the greatest chiefs in Swaziland. Umzulek, I remember, stood at Buno's feet.

After a brief silence Buno spoke.

"Indunas, I am dying," he said, his voice again quite clear. "Soon I shall leave you, never to return. I go to the caves from which none come back. Until now I have feared to die. I feared that enemies might bring evil days to Swaziland. Now, however, I go in peace. Oom Tuys, my friend, has promised to be the friend and guardian of our country when I am no longer here. He shall protect Swaziland from the whites and Zulus so long as he lives, and when he is gone, Mzaan Bakoor, who will be a man then and powerful, will act in his place. O indunas, you must look to my white brother for help when Swaziland needs it. This is my command!"

[101]

Then he stopped. When Buno said "This is my command!" his illness seemed to drop away from him and he became the great king again. The indunas raised their hands in token of acceptance of Buno's command and then all together said, "The king's word is law!"

For some reason or other I glanced at Umzulek. He made the same motion as the others, but there was an intangible suggestion of revolt in his acceptance. I had a sudden feeling that he would make trouble after Buno was gone.

"Once again I shall see my impis," said Buno, his voice again weakening. "Each day may be the last, but each day my warriors must salute their king once more!"

Next came an extraordinary exhibition. All but four of the indunas went out. Those remaining lifted Buno up—and I noted that they did it with ease—and half-carried, half-dragged him through the low opening of the hut to the clean air outside. There they laid him on a couch, facing the thousands of warriors.

[102]

The whole affair seemed rehearsed. No sooner was the king settled, his eyes sweeping the serried ranks of the impis, than an imposing induna stepped out and led them in the royal salute. Three times they gave it, with the sound of thunder in the mountains, and at each crash I could see a faint smile soften Buno's harsh features. He had lived a king and like a king would die!

Then followed a sort of march past. It seemed to me that untold thousands of these great warriors went by, each raising his arms above his head in salute as he passed. Before long Buno became faint again, and Tuys gave him a little more gin. How he was able to stick out this review was beyond me. I could not see where he got the strength.

Down in my heart I had a fear that something would go wrong and that Buno would show his savagery by having some poor warrior killed, partly to satisfy his blood-craving and partly to impress us. However, luck was with us. No one blundered, and when the impis had passed by they re-formed along the roadway and gave the triple royal salute. That was the end, and the indunas carried Buno back to his hut. He told Tuys that he wanted to sleep and would send for him when he awaked. This was our dismissal, and we went to our wagon, which was at the usual place.

I was very hungry and was glad to find that Tuys's servants had prepared food. Tuys was eating and remarking on the condition of the king when suddenly an induna came running in to us. He did not wait for any of the usual formalities, but dashed right up to where we sat on the ground, chewing our rusks and biltong.

[103]

"Come quick, come quick, Nkoos!" he gasped. "The king is dying! A puff-adder has bitten him. Come quick! He calls you!"

We dropped our food and followed the chief at a run. In a few seconds we threw ourselves into Buno's hut. A number of indunas were about him, all very excited. He was breathing heavily, his eyes fixed on the smoke-hole in the roof.

Tuys stood by his head and said, "I am here, O King!" This he repeated three or four times, the last time in a fair shout, before Buno looked at him. For a moment the king licked his lips and made as though to speak. Finally the words came:

"I am going now, Nkoos! I am as good as dead!" he cried, his voice shrill in its weakness. "The snake has done what the fever failed to do—the snake has given me release!"

Then he shook as though with a violent chill. His hands opened and shut convulsively and his head rolled from side to side. After a moment he became still and began speaking again. I could see that his body had begun to swell; he looked bloated.

"It is the end!" he croaked. "I die! I die!... The king dies! But the king will die like a man! The king will die on his feet, like a warrior!"

[104]

With superhuman strength he heaved himself up and sat bolt upright. Tuys and several of the indunas sprang to his aid, and in a moment they had him on his feet. His legs seemed perfectly stiff.

"Let go! Let go!" he cried. "I am a man and will meet death face to face!"

They took their hands off him, and he stood swaying back and forth, his mouth working as he tried to speak. The light from the smoke-hole struck him on the head and deepened the lines of his face, throwing heavy shadows under the eyes and chin. These shadows intensified the cruelty of his face, and I felt a cold shudder. Buno dying was even more terrible than Buno killing!

He must have stood for a moment only, but it seemed an age to me. His rolling eyes passed from chief to chief and his shaking right hand tore an assegai from the nearest. Then the end!

Raising himself on his toes, his body straight and head thrown back, he threw both hands up and brought the spear down with a vicious stabbing motion.

"Soukbulala! Soukbulala!" he shouted, and pitched forward dead. Tuys, I remember, almost caught him as he fell. Later I learned that his last cry was the war-shout of the Swazis. It means "I'll kill you!"

"He died as he lived," Tuys said to me in Dutch out of the corner of his mouth, while he leaned down and turned Buno over. Then he assisted the indunas in laying him out with his head on the block and a wonderful fur robe over his wasted body. [105]

When this was completed the indunas stepped back and gave their dead king the royal salute. A moment later one of them stepped out of the hut and raised his deep voice in a solemn shout.

"Nkoos ou pelela! E' Buno impela e baba amaswazi ou pelela guti!" he cried. This he repeated over and over until it became a sort of chant. It was the announcement of Buno's death and, translated, was about as follows, "The king is dead! Buno the Great, the father of his people, is dead!"

We got out of the hut as soon as we could, and found the natives running from all directions. Soon there was a great mob. They were quiet, but each seemed apprehensive. Their voices rose in a subdued murmur. As I watched, it occurred to me that I did not see Umzulek anywhere. It seemed queer that the king's brother should not be there.

Then came cries of "The queen! The queen! Tzaneen! Tzaneen!" and I could see the crowd split, leaving a wide passageway. Down the alley came a score of splendid warriors, in their midst the finest looking woman I had yet seen. She walked with head erect and steady tread, exactly as a queen should carry herself.

"It's Tzaneen, the queen," Tuys said, catching me by the arm. She is the queen, and her unborn child will be the ruler of Swaziland. Watch closely now." [106]

She stopped short in front of us and saluted Tuys. She was about six feet tall and was a most imposing figure.

"Nkoos, is it true that Buno is dead?" she asked in a level voice.

"Nkosikaas, the king is dead," Tuys replied. "His body lies within. A snake killed him."

"How did the snake come to his kraal?" Tzaneen asked, eyeing Tuys keenly. "Did that snake come on two feet?"

This was a new idea. It had not occurred to me to question the manner in which the snake had reached the hut. With all the warriors about, even though they may have been taking their midday sleep, it seemed very peculiar that the puff-adder should have been able to reach Buno without being seen and killed. Again I found myself asking for Umzulek.

"I cannot tell how the snake came to the king," Tuys said, in answer to Tzaneen's questions. "I was at my camp when word was brought that Buno was dying."

Tzaneen then stooped and entered the hut, followed by several other women whom I took to be her personal attendants or maids. We remained outside. It was not fitting that white men should see the Zulu princess, queen of Swaziland, with her dead king.

No sooner had she entered the hut than the voices of the crowd rose in expectancy. I looked around to see another party coming up the rapidly formed passageway. There were more warriors in this party than the other, and again I could see a woman at the head of several others. As she passed, the people saluted. They had not done so before, and this struck me as queer. [107]

When the party came closer I could see that it was Queen Labotsibeni, the mother of the dead king. At her right hand was the missing Umzulek. She seemed much agitated, but he strode along quite cheerfully.

Tuys stepped forward to meet the old queen. There was the usual salutation, and she asked, "My son, the king, is dead?"

"Yes, Nkosikaas, it is so," Tuys assured her.

They stood silent for a moment, and then quite suddenly Queen Tzaneen joined the group. I had been watching Labotsibeni so intently that I did not see her come out of the hut.

The two queens stood looking at one another, each waiting for the other to salute. Umzulek, behind the old queen, was watching Tzaneen, and I had a feeling that something was about to happen. I could see that Tuys was interested and saw him shift his feet, his right hand carelessly resting on the butt of his revolver. He, too, was watching Umzulek. Finally Tzaneen spoke.

"Queen Mother," she said, addressing Labotsibeni, "Our king is dead! You have lost your son and I my husband, the father of my unborn child, who is to be king of Swaziland."

"What if your child be a woman?" snapped back the old queen, who had evidently been thinking along practical lines. "Who is to rule Swaziland until your child is born?" [108]

"I am the queen!" said Tzaneen, drawing herself up until she looked it and gazing fixedly at the old queen.

Labotsibeni met her eyes without flinching, and then without another word pushed by her and entered the hut where her son's body lay. Tzaneen, calling her people to her, strode through the crowd. As she went, they gave her the royal salute. It looked as though the people were acknowledging her as their ruler.

Tuys and I stood back during the brief exchange between the queens. It was none of our business, of course, but he was keenly interested and did not miss a word. We decided that we were not wanted at the royal kraal about this time and went back to our camp. The day was dying, anyway, and Tuys said he thought it would be dangerous to be abroad that night.

"When the fires are lighted to-night," Tuys told me as soon as we reached camp, "the witch-doctors will kill the ten indunas chosen to die with the king. We shall not go and see this. When the council chose these men, I was to be the first man killed, because I was a friend of Buno. Umzulek was one of his council and I don't trust him. Buno ordered that I was not to be killed because I was white, but accidents happen in Swaziland, as you know, and I don't care to take any chances."

This seemed good sense to me. Now that Buno, our protector, was dead, I had begun to worry about our safety. The fact that Buno had appointed Tuys as "guardian" of his people might not carry as much weight as he thought. [109]

CHAPTER VIII

The royal funeral—The "thunder of the shields"—Not afraid to die—The witch-doctor's bloody work—What Labotsibeni wanted—The burial of the indunas—Rain-making and the "rain stone"—Buno's burial in the caves—Witch-doctors prevent our entering the caves—Labotsibeni sends for gin. [110]

We had not been in camp more than a few minutes when an induna came to see Tuys. He said he came from Queen Labotsibeni and that she wanted him to go and see her. Tuys did not like the idea.

"Tell Queen Labotsibeni that I am here," he said. "If she wants to see me, let her come to me here!"

As the fires were beginning to glow in the dusk, the old queen came. She was accompanied by only two or three warriors and several women. Tuys gave her a bottle of gin, and she took a very large drink before they started talking. Like all the Swazis, she was inordinately fond of spirits.

I sat close to Tuys, feeling sure that I would hear something interesting. Labotsibeni did not want to talk while I was there and suggested that I go and see the sacrifice. She said she would send her warriors with me and thus I could see the ten indunas killed. This did not appeal strongly to me, but Tuys seemed to think I ought not to miss it.

"Mzaan Bakoor, you won't get another chance soon to see a Swazi king's burial ceremonies," he said. "You had better go." Then he added in Dutch, "Don't be afraid, boy. You are perfectly safe with her men. No one dare touch them." [111]

So I reluctantly went. It was dark by this time, and it seemed as though all Swaziland was going to attend the sacrifice. We soon found ourselves in a great crowd, every one armed and in full war costume. There were no women, these being left behind to mind the fires.

The two warriors who acted as my escort were great grim-faced savages, both of them a head taller than me. They must have been well over six feet, and I had to almost trot to keep up with them. Both were indunas, and from what they said I gathered that a brother of one of them was to be killed at the sacrifice. Both spoke of his impending death as though it were a great honor. It was not until the actual ceremony that I was sure whose brother it was.

The fire in front of Buno's hut was a great blaze. It lighted up the scores of huts nearby and revealed thousands of warriors drawn up in rows, more than twenty deep, about it. By using Queen Labotsibeni's name, my escort forced our way through until we stood on the very edge of the fire. All about me I could hear the deep-throated voices of the warriors.

For fully fifteen minutes nothing happened, except that those behind seemed to press closer. Then suddenly a number of men dashed into the open space, each bearing a huge bundle of faggots. They waited, bundles on head, and an expectant hush succeeded the hum of voices. The only sound was the crackle of the fire. [112]

From where we stood we could see the entrance to Buno's hut, standing out like a black spot in the illumination. While we watched a strange figure came out. He was wearing furs and feathers and wore a hideous mask. It was the head witch-doctor! Behind him came six or seven lesser witch-doctors bearing the body of the king. They straightened up, and a second later lifted their

burden above their heads. At this the head witch-doctor threw up his hands and the entire multitude of warriors gave the triple royal salute. The earth fairly trembled when their feet came down. Then the faggot-men threw their loads into the fire and the flames leaped a score of feet into the air. The king's body was placed on the mats in front of his hut, the witch-doctors forming a guard on either side. This was the beginning of the real ceremony. Led by the chief witch-doctor, the dancing began.

Now the Swaziland idea of dancing consists of leaps into the air and incessant stamping of the feet. Soon thousands were dancing and the dust became a haze before the bright flames of the fire. I was probably the only person within sight of Buno's body who was not dancing. My two bodyguards were leaping wildly, and I noted that they were most earnest in their exercise.

The dance must have lasted five minutes. It was brought to a sudden stop by the chief witch-doctor, who threw up his arms and called a halt. In just as short a time as they had gone dance mad, the entire assemblage quieted down. The stirring ceased and I could feel the air of dread expectancy that showed the end of the drama was in sight.

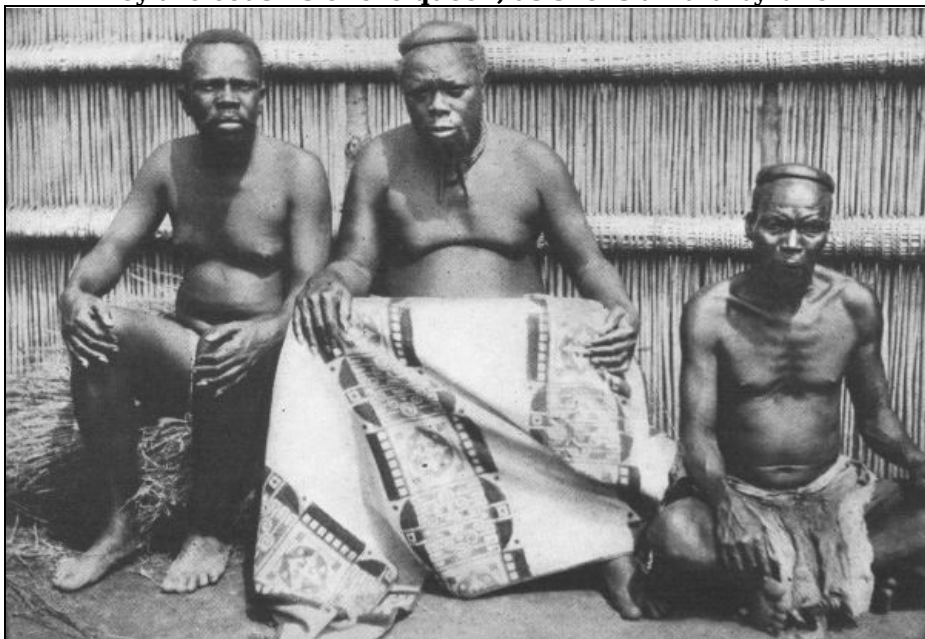
[113]



QUEEN TZANEEN, MOTHER OF THE CROWN PRINCE
She is wearing a silk wrap presented to her by Dr. O'Neil. Note the hair, which is worked up into this peculiar shape upon marriage



QUEEN TZANEEN WITH SOME ZULU PRINCESSES
They had arrived to present themselves in marriage to the prince.
They are cousins of the queen, as she is a Zulu by birth



UMZULEK, A RESOURCEFUL AND INFLUENTIAL EXILE
He is living in a territory set aside for him. On his right is Prince
Bilakzi, who is soliciting his assistance for Sebuza in obtaining his
throne

The witch-doctor gave some sort of a command, and from behind Buno's hut came ten of the most splendid savages I have ever seen. They were all indunas and wore the full costume of their rank. On their heads were great plumes and each carried his shield, knob-kerrie, and assegai. With steady tramp they passed by their dead king and lined up, facing his body, in front of the fire.

No sooner were they in place than they gave the royal salute. Then they did something I had not seen before. With steady rhythmic strokes they beat on their great shields with their knob-kerries. This lasted for only a moment, but it was like the throbbing of a heart—the heart of Swaziland, it seemed to me.

When the hollow roar died, the chief witch-doctor stepped out and made an oration. We could not hear him very plainly. However, I caught a few phrases.

"Indunas, great heroes of Swaziland," he shouted, illustrating his words with extravagant gestures and contortions, "You have been chosen of all our people to die with our king. There is not one present who does not envy you! Tens of thousands are here, and all covet the honor that is yours.

"Buno, our great king, the saviour of Swaziland, has gone! Great indunas, you would not want to live without your peerless leader—life would mean nothing!"

There was a lot more, but I did not get it. The oration must have lasted a good half hour, the condemned men standing like statues all the while. I did not understand the last remarks of the witch-doctor, but the instant he stopped the royal salute, repeated once, crashed out.

Then the first of the ten indunas stepped out. He raised his shield and knob-kerrie above his head and saluted the dead king. Immediately came the "thunder of the shields." Every warrior in the entire crowd began striking his shield with his knob-kerrie. There was no staccato to the blows—rather a rubbing, pulling stroke that brought each blow out with repeated vibrations. In a few moments a cadence was set up and the strokes came all together at equal intervals. The effect was terrific; the air seemed to pulsate with the vibrations and it seemed to catch me right in the pit of the stomach.

The steady drumming slowly rose in a crescendo, and then the induna turned from the king's body and with one far-flung motion threw his shield and arms into the fire. Next he turned, threw his head back, and faced the body. Slowly and firmly he stepped forward until he stood beside his dead king.

The chief witch-doctor stood a pace or two from him, his right hand holding a great curved knife which gleamed and shimmered in the bright light of the fire. There was a tense moment, made doubly painful by the steady roar of the beaten shields. I was fascinated. I knew what was coming and dreaded to see it. Yet I found myself powerless to look away; my eyes were riveted on that murderous knife!

[115]

Slowly the witch-doctor raised the knife above his head. Then one step forward, a lightning thrust, and the induna came down like a falling tree! He did not stir; there was no convulsive death struggle. The doctor was an efficient butcher.

Each of the others went to his death in exactly the same way. There was no flinching, no hesitation; open-eyed and unafraid these savages went like stoics to their death. The witch-doctor did not bungle; each stroke brought death and there was no need for the services of his assistants who stood ready with stabbing spears.

The next to the last man to die was the brother of the fiercest of my two bodyguards. This was evident from the new energy with which my man beat his shield. If I had not noticed this, his remark after the knife went home would have enlightened me.

"A man! A brave man! A warrior!" he said to his companion in a hoarse, dust-choked voice. "My brother is a brave induna. He is a true son of my mother!"

When the last man was sacrificed, the witch-doctor made another speech. It was about what heroes the ten indunas had been and what a great king they had lost. One sentence I remember.

"So long as warriors are willing to die for Swaziland," he shouted, "our country is safe! So long as our best face death without fear, we need not fear the Zulus, Boers, or British. The white men fear death. They can never stand against our impis if our warriors are led by such men as those who died to-night!"

[116]

The thought came to me that it was rather foolish to kill indunas, leaders of warriors, in this fashion, but it was the ancient custom and their brave death made for heroism among those who lived. Each kraal to which one of the sacrificed indunas belonged gloried in his death and it became a tradition for the younger warriors to live up to.

The doctor ceased speaking after a little and the crowd began to move away. The king's body was taken back to his hut and the fire allowed to burn low. When we left, which we did as soon as we could, the chief witch-doctor was marching up and down outside the hut and accompanying his steps with a sort of chant.

My most distinct memory of the sacrifice is the sensation I suffered when the drumming of the shields reached its height. I shall never forget this. Every time I hear the bass drum stroked, bringing out all its bass vibrations, memory jerks me back to the unerring slash of the sacrificial knife at Buno's kraal in Lebombo. I know that for months afterward I used to hear those shields in that brief moment between wakefulness and sleep.

Labotsibeni had gone when I reached camp. Oom Tuys was pacing up and down, smoking his great pipe and waiting for me. He gave me a hug when I reached the firelight and seemed quite relieved at seeing me.

"I was worried, you were so long," he said. "Buno's death means trouble in Swaziland, and I was afraid you might have been captured as a hostage or even killed. Tell me, what did you see?"

[117]

Then I told him all about the sacrifice. I found myself strangely tired and lay down while I talked. Tuys listened without interruption until I had finished. Then he asked, "Are you sure there were ten indunas sacrificed?"

I told him I was sure, because I had mechanically counted them when they stood before the fire.

"Then I am safe," he replied. "If ten have been killed, there will be no more. Ten is the royal number, and there must not be one more or less. Good!"

Then he told me about Queen Labotsibeni's visit. It seems she had called on "The White King of Swaziland" for his help in a matter of importance to the state. Buno's death had left the throne

vacant. Queen Tzaneen could not reign because she was not a native-born Swazi. Her child, if a man, could not become king until he became of age. Hence the throne was vacant, and Labotsibeni wanted Tuys to use his influence to have her recognized as queen by the British and Boers.

"The old lady is right," he said. "She is the only one able to rule Swaziland. Every one knows that she practically ruled as the royal queen of King Umbandine and during Buno's reign she was always the power behind the throne. Most of the time she was not very far behind, either!

"She is very keen. She demanded that I pay the tribute to her in place of Buno! I told her that she could have the gin, but that I could not give her the gold without permission from Oom Paul. She didn't like that very much, but I was able to make her see that I was right. To-morrow I shall take her the gin and she'll have to be satisfied with that. [118]

"I shall recommend that Labotsibeni be appointed regent until the right king is found. Umzulek, I hear, thinks that he ought to succeed Buno, and there is talk that he will take the throne by force. I shall have to prevent that."

Exhausted as I was, I found sleep difficult that night. For some time I lay there listening to Tuys's regular breathing and afraid that he might snore, as he did sometimes. If he had, I know I could not have stood it—each deep note would have started the shields drumming again.

We were up at dawn next morning and never did that first cup of coffee taste so good. Buno was to be buried that day and I hoped to see a ceremony. Before we had breakfasted a score of Labotsibeni's warriors, led by a lesser induna, arrived as our escort for the day. They brought word that Buno would be "taken to the caves when the shadows were least," or at noon. The indunas who had been sacrificed, however, were being buried during the morning. So we decided to attend the funerals.

I was much disappointed. There were no ceremonials. In fact, the most exciting thing that happened was that one of the junior witch-doctors was bitten by a snake and speedily died. The indunas were buried in a tangled patch of brush and tall grass, with a few trees breaking its monotony. This was set apart for indunas only, the plain people being buried anywhere they happened to die. All the important chiefs of Swaziland had been buried there ever since the days of King Umbandine, yet the place was absolutely unkempt and full of snakes. [119]

When we arrived at Buno's kraal, the bodies of the indunas were laid out in a row. Near each stood witch-doctors and warriors. Not far away were a number of women and children. These were the wives of the dead men.

As we came up an order was given and the warriors lifted up the bodies. Each band of pall-bearers was led by a witch-doctor, while the widows and children of each induna fell in behind. There was no wailing or mourning—the women seemed as stoical as their departed husbands had been when they faced the knife on the night before.

All the women had their heads shaved as a sign that their husbands were dead. This is their custom. From her earliest girlhood the Swazi woman trains her hair to grow in a sort of cone or pyramid. When her husband dies the hair is shaved right up to this mound, leaving much of the head bare. The daughters of these widows had their heads entirely shaved. This also is the custom, so it is quite possible to tell for whom the Swazi women mourn and also how recent is their loss. [120]

Tuys and I followed the procession to the burial ground—"The Place of Indunas," they call it—and saw the simple ceremonies. These only consisted of placing the body in a shallow hole, scratching the dirt over it, and then piling rocks on top.

Beside each grave was placed a pot of corn-meal and some uncooked meat, so that the induna might have food if he should come back. This was the only suggestion of future life. The Swazi is a very primitive savage; he has no hell or heaven and, under normal circumstances, no god. Their only supernatural belief is in a sort of evil spirit or devil. This devil, however, is under the control of the ruler and usually is most active in sending or holding back the rain so necessary to the scanty crops grown by the Swazis.

In connection with this devil it is important to know that Queen Labotsibeni was the "rain-maker" of Swaziland. This gave her great power, since the natives fully believed in her supernatural powers. How she gained this control over the devil is an interesting chapter in Swazi history.

In the old days the Zulu chiefs possessed this rain-making gift, which was supposed to be vested in a small round stone called the "rain stone." When Ama-Swazi led the rebellion against the Zulus and broke away from them, he captured this stone and took it with him. Much of his ascendancy was based on its possession.

Umbandine, his son, inherited the stone, and Queen Labotsibeni promptly annexed it on his death. King Buno never owned it, and during his entire reign his mother provided the rain for Swaziland. [121]

Labotsibeni was wise in her way and made the "rain stone" a source of revenue. Now and then dry spells strike Swaziland, and the hot sun burns up the crops and causes much suffering. At such a time the indunas came to the old queen and begged her to make rain. She always went through some incantation before assenting, and then announced her price. It was usually a

portion of corn from each kraal, the total amounting to many bushels. When this was paid, she agreed to make rain. It is peculiar that she was often successful and that rain followed shortly after her promise.

If, however, the rain did not come, she would announce that one of her chiefs was plotting against her and that she had surrendered the rule of the weather to the devil so that he might punish her people. On such occasions her wrath was terrible, and this is probably one of the reasons why she was so feared. Tuys told me that Labotsibeni in a rage was a "perfect she-devil" and that even her indunas would run to avoid her. She was a wise old queen; no matter how the weather acted, she had it arranged so that she could not lose!

On the way out of the indunas' burying-ground, the witch-doctor stepped on a snake. We came up to him as he sat waiting for death, the body of the adder beside him with its head crushed. He rocked slowly back and forth, looking straight ahead and making no sound. I wanted to do something for him. [122]

"What's the use, lad?" Tuys said. "There is no cure for the puff-adder's bite, unless you have a drug-shop along. He must die, and die soon, and he knows it. Come on, unless you want to see him go?"

I most certainly did not, so we went along, keeping our eyes on the ground lest we run afoul of a snake. I looked back a moment later and saw that the stricken man had laid down, and then I knew that his suffering would soon be over. None of the other natives seemed to give a second thought to him; under Buno's rule they had grown more callous than ever.

It was almost noon when we reached Buno's kraal, and there was a large gathering of witch-doctors about his hut. The witch-doctors of our burial-party joined them, and Tuys informed me that practically all the witch-doctors in Swaziland were there.

"Now would be a good time for some target practice," he said grimly. "In about five minutes a few quick shots could remove most of the sources of trouble in this country. If those witch-doctors were all killed, Swaziland would be a happier land."

Soon the head witch-doctor—the one who did the butchering so well the night before—detached himself from the group and began to look at the sun. He stood his wand on the ground and studied its shadow. After a time this seemed to satisfy him, and he sent two of the others out of the kraal on the run. Shortly after came the sound of many feet, and soon the royal impi filed into the enclosure. The warriors ranged themselves on either side of the pathway, just as I had so often seen them do before. [123]

When they were in place the chief doctor went into Buno's hut. Out he came a few minutes later, with six others carrying the body of the king. As they swung it to their shoulders the impi saluted. After the third thud of stamping feet the chief doctor started down the lane of warriors. Behind him came those bearing the body, with the other doctors following them. Last of all came a number of unarmed men carrying fresh-killed beef, corn, and pots of tswala.

This was the king's funeral cortège proper. When it reached the end of the impi, the warriors turned and followed in marching order, acting as escort. Tuys and I dropped in behind. I was very curious to see "the caves" where Buno was to be buried. As we followed the slow procession, Tuys told me about them.

"No white man has ever entered these caves," he said. "They are a little distance up the mountain and are said to be immense. The witch-doctors are the only natives who ever enter them, and they tell queer tales about what goes on. They say that there are rivers and smoke and bright lights in some of the caves. I don't believe this, of course, but they say it. I think that the mystery of the caves is part of the foolishness practiced by these witch-doctors and is only trumped up to keep the people away. Not long ago when I asked a witch-doctor if he would show me King Umbandine's grave in the caves, he pretended to be much frightened and told me that the devil lived in the caves and would be angry if a white man entered them. [124]

"Only the kings of Swaziland are buried in the caves. Ama-Swazi was the first. His body was brought up from his kraal in the low country. Umbandine is there, and now Buno is going to join them. I suppose Labotsibeni will have the honor when she dies, although it is quite likely that the witch-doctors will refuse to allow a woman to be buried there."

The caves were about four miles from the royal kraal at Lebombo and much of the trail was uphill. We reached them in about an hour, and I saw that there were a number of entrances, all fissures in the rocks.

The procession stopped and the bearers were relieved by six others. The change was made without laying the king's body on the ground. This was in accordance with the ancient customs—a king's body must not touch the ground from the time it starts on its last trek until it is laid at rest in the caves.

The new bearers faced about and raised the body high above their heads. While they held it there the royal impi gave their dead king his last salute. Then the witch-doctors took the food from the unarmed men and a moment later the entire band of "priests" disappeared among the rocks. That was the last of Buno, rightly called "The Terrible," the most powerful and cruel king Swaziland has ever had. The impi turned and started down the trail at a smart pace, leaving Tuys and me behind. These great warriors seemed glad that the funeral was over. They swung by us with light [125]

steps, many of them grinning at the white men as they went by.

Now I was very curious to know what was inside the caves. There was so much mystery about them that it fired my youthful imagination. I spoke of this to Tuys and was pleased to find that he also was curious.

"Yes, I'd like to have a look at them," he said. "Buno and Labotsibeni have told me some queer yarns about them, and they are the one thing in Swaziland that I am not familiar with. Let's see if we can't get into them."

The witch-doctors had not come out yet, and we decided to wait until they did. I suggested that they were engaged in some ceremony, but Tuys, knowing the native, would not agree with me.

"Those humbugs are probably eating the food and drinking the good beer," he said, with a snort of disgust. "I'd hate to believe that they'd let it go to waste. I'll bet that Buno will go hungry if he comes back!"

Expecting that they would soon come out, we hid behind some rocks, feeling sure that they would think we had gone back with the impi. Our guess was good. In a little while we saw them tramping down the trail. As soon as they passed the bend from beyond which the entrances to the caves could not be seen, we started on our exploration.

There seemed to be any number of ways into these mysterious caves. However, Tuys's training led him to follow the footprints of the witch-doctors. They must have come out by another route, for all the prints faced inward. [126]

Tuys led, and I noticed that he was carrying his revolver in his hand, ready for instant use. We passed between a number of great rocks, all of which seemed to be split by some terrific force. But we did not go far. There came a sharp turn to the right, and straight in front of us was the entrance to the caves. In front of it stood six witch-doctors with assegais drawn back, ready to strike!

Tuys did not hesitate long enough to take one breath. He wheeled in his tracks and we turned back. We did not run or make unseemly haste, but we certainly moved faster than we had come in. When we reached the outside, Tuys made but one remark.

"Serves us right!" he exclaimed. "I ought to have had sense enough to count those witch-doctors."

I remember that it was a hot walk back to our camp. Probably our chagrin added to the temperature.

To this day no white man has penetrated the caves. I hope to do so the next time I visit Swaziland. I never had a chance on my subsequent visits, but I shall certainly find a way the next time. The thought is fascinating, but I suppose I shall be disappointed if I ever do explore this royal burial-place. Like most things in life, it will fail to come up to expectations.

Not long after we reached our camp several indunas and a small band of warriors called on Tuys. They were part of the bodyguard of Labotsibeni and had come on a special errand. [127]

"Nkoos, White King," the chief induna began with much ceremony, "the great Queen Labotsibeni sends me to you with a message. Even now she, the mother of Buno, waits your answer."

I was interested to see that he spoke of Buno as though that cruel ruler still lived. The thought came to me that his infamy would keep him alive for some time, at least in the memories of those who had witnessed any of his bloody pastimes.

Tuys did not seem to understand what the induna was driving at, and he asked several questions. The chief said that the old queen had instructed him to ask Tuys if her "white brother" did not remember his promise. She was waiting for him to fulfil what he had said he would do. There was some more palaver, and then Tuys suddenly woke up.

"Why, the old girl wants her gin!" he said, laughing. Then he got out four small cases of it and presented them to the induna.

"I'd go along with him," Tuys said to me in Dutch, "if I was not afraid that I'd have to lie to the old queen. She wants the job of ruling Swaziland until the question of the new king is decided, and she expects me to get the British to acknowledge her as regent. I don't know what I'll be able to do, and if I promise that she will get the job, and she doesn't get it, I'll be in a fine pickle! I think I'll avoid her, and we'd better get going to-night and make a break for Rietvlei." [128]



SWAZI WARRIORS AND WOMEN DANCING

The ceremonies were held when Dr. O'Neil and his companions were inducted into the royal impi



PRINCESSES OF ROYAL BIRTH

The fourth from the left is a sister to Crown Prince Sebuza. They are all dressed up in gaudy colors—clothes which we had presented them

CHAPTER IX

[129]

Sibijaan's sportiveness almost costs his life—How Tuys became the friend of Buno—Labotsibeni endorsed as regent of Swaziland—Umzulek plots to seize the throne—The Boers invade Swaziland—Tuys dictates peace between the queens—Umzulek gets his lesson.

The midday siesta period was about over and the kraals were beginning to show signs of life again. The native women were going about their domestic duties and the men, as usual, were resting in the shade and furbishing their weapons. Our activity in breaking camp did not attract much attention, except on the part of the usual number of small boys, and before long we were on the trail to the Valley of Heaven. We only traveled about half as fast as we had come in and were constantly being held up by crowds going in the same direction. Thousands upon thousands had come to see the sacrifice of the ten indunas and were now returning to their homes.

Sibijaan nearly got us into a pretty row shortly before we struck the valley. He was driving the wagon with its four mules, and began to get impatient over the crowded roadway. He got careless with his sjambok and flicked a tall Swazi warrior on a naked but important part of his anatomy. Now the sjambok cuts like a knife, and the savage gave a tremendous jump. In fact, he

seemed to me to jump twice—once straight up in the air and the second time toward the wagon, brandishing his assegai and shouting. [130]

Sibijaan dived into the wagon under the cover, and the enraged induna dashed round to the rear of the vehicle in the hope that its driver was trying to escape that way. Then ensued a sort of merry-go-round, the induna dashing madly from front to back of the wagon and Sibijaan trying to keep one guess ahead of him. Both were yelling, and Tuys and I hurried to stop the trouble. However, we were too late! The induna suddenly stopped at the side of the wagon where he could watch the front, his spear poised for murder. He was the cat watching the rat-hole, the hunter awaiting his prey.

Tuys snatched his revolver from its holster and was just aiming at the savage when we saw the flap of the wagon-cover lifted just a little and a thin arm come out. In the hand was a short knobkerrie, and it caught the irate chief on the back of the head with one fell sweep. Down he came with a crash, his shield thudding as it hit the ground.

A second later Sibijaan hopped out of the wagon, knife in hand, evidently intending to finish the job. Tuys reached down from his horse and swung the little beggar up before him, where he gave him a good spanking. That was the end of the incident, since the induna found himself looking into the business end of Tuys's revolver when he woke up from his trance.

Late that evening we camped in the Valley of Heaven. We passed several kraals in our leisurely progress and talked with some of the indunas. None of them seemed very sorry that Buno was gone, but there was a general expression of anxiety concerning the next ruler. Most of them thought that Labotsibeni should get the job, but not a few favored Umzulek—in fact, there seemed to be quite a strong Umzulek sentiment. [131]

During our next day's trek I asked Oom Tuys how it happened that he and Buno were such good friends. Tuys explained that he had originally befriended Buno and the Swazis because the Boers wanted the Swazis as a sort of bulwark against the British. On several occasions Tuys had been able to save land for Buno when certain of the English had tried to get it away from him, and this had made the savage his good friend for life. Incidentally, it helped the Boer cause.

"The one great thing I did for Buno," Tuys went on, "was about two years ago when Oom Paul decided to discipline him. One of my bodyguard had talked too much in Pretoria and the President had learned about the bloody atrocities Buno was committing. It seems the story that really outraged Oom Paul's feelings was one about Buno having some young girls cut open.

"Oom Paul sent for me and asked me about this. Naturally, I knew nothing about it. How could I? If I'd seen it, it was my duty to report it, wasn't it? If I hadn't seen it, how could I know anything about it? Of course I couldn't tell Oom Paul that Buno and I had an important business deal on at that time, could I?

"Somehow or other I don't think Oom Paul believed me. He sent word to Buno that he must behave and stop killing people, and Buno sent word back that Paul had better mind his own business, or words to that general effect. The fool thought that I would protect him and that he could get cheeky with Oom Paul! [132]

"Well, the old man had had enough of Buno's nonsense and he sent a command of about five thousand men into Swaziland to smash him. Instead of leaving me out of it, our cunning President sent me along as second-in-command. I was the guide and all that sort of thing, and had to practically assure Buno's getting jolly well licked, if not killed. After some days we got to within twenty miles of Lebombo and planned to attack the royal kraal at dawn next morning.

"I did not like the idea of Buno being captured, because I knew that would be the end of him. Oom Paul was not in the mood to stand further nonsense. That night I was in command of the sentries, and shortly after dark I placed my sergeant in charge and sneaked off to the kraal of a chief who lived near where we were camped. He knew me, and from him I got a good horse. Then I rode like the devil to Lebombo and warned Buno what was going to happen.

"I got back to our camp just as the commando was saddling up to move to the attack. We rode hard and reached the kraal about four o'clock—to find the entire place empty. There wasn't a single Swazi there! The king and all his warriors had flown. So we were ordered to pursue him, and I led the way. Later I learned that we had gone in exactly the wrong direction, so Buno escaped. [133]

"Oom Paul decided that Buno had learned his lesson and would behave thereafter, since he had been shown that the Boers would come and get him if he did not. However, Buno felt that I would always pull him out of any hole he might get into, so the lesson was lost on him. One thing Oom Paul did accomplish, however, and that was to make Buno realize what a good friend I was!"

My mother was very glad to see us when we reached Rietvlei. Father had returned, and he spoke sharply to Tuys for taking me with him on so dangerous a trip. Tuys told him that he had Buno's word for our safety, but that did not much impress my father.

"The word of a kaffir is good so long as he remembers," he said, "but you know that the best of them are children, and children forget. It was lucky you came out as soon as you did. From what you have told me and from what I've heard conditions are likely to be bad in Swaziland until the government selects a ruler."

Tuys and he then began discussing what should be done about this. Father, I found, knew all about the politics of Swaziland, and he agreed with Tuys that the old queen was the right person to rule until a king was set up. Their talk ended with my father writing a letter for Tuys to take to Oom Paul. He recommended that Labotsibeni be recognized as regent for the time being, or until Queen Tzaneen's child was born. If the child was a boy, he would be the next king of Swaziland; if a girl, arrangements would have to be made for one of Buno's brothers to take the throne.

[134]

Buno had a number of brothers, among whom were Lomwazi, Umzulek, Debeseembie, and one other whose name I have forgotten but who was known as a drunkard and a generally disreputable character.

Oom Tuys left next morning to report conditions to Oom Paul, and we heard nothing for several months. Finally, on the new moon, about three months later, messengers came to Rietvlei from Queen Labotsibeni. Tuys was with us, having arrived several days before.

After the usual salutes and other ceremonial the head induna spoke:

"Nkoos, the queen mother sends to you in her trouble. Her son, the late King Buno, gave you guardianship over Swaziland and Queen Labotsibeni wants your counsel. Even now Queen Tzaneen, the royal widow, gives birth. We do not yet know whether it will be a man-child or not. Umzulek plots to take the throne by force and is mustering his impis. Thousands are flocking to his support and the impis of the queens are gathering at Zombode. If you do not come quickly, there will be war in our country. Queen Labotsibeni prays that you come and prevent war."

This was the situation that father and Tuys had feared. Tuys had his orders from Oom Paul and knew what he was to do. He told the induna what to expect.

[135]

"Tell your queen," he said, "that I am coming within three days with a great army of white men. Tell her that I shall see that the throne is preserved to the dynasty and that none except the one to whom it rightfully belongs shall become king of Swaziland."

With this message the induna withdrew, and we saw him and his men leaving at top speed to carry these words of cheer to Labotsibeni. Then came a hurried mobilization of all the fighting Boers within a day's ride of Rietvlei. Word was sent far and wide over the veldt—to the outlying farms, to the small towns, to Belfast, and to every place where men might be found.

Within three days the Valley of Reeds became an armed camp. There were more than a thousand well armed, hard-riding Boers waiting for the word to trek into Swaziland. These people of ours were a hardy lot. There were men of sixty and even seventy years, and mixed in with them were their sons and grandsons, many of the latter being boys of sixteen and seventeen. All, however, were well armed and serious. They were on a serious business and stood ready to die in the service of their great leader, Oom Paul.

At dawn on the fourth day we started. From the very beginning it was a hard ride. The burghers rode in what was practically military formation, two by two, with Tuys leading. I went along as his aide and rode as close to him as the trails would permit. I have often thought of that trek. The feeling between Boers and British was getting more bitter every day, and these Boer farmers were really taking a training march for the dark days that were to come so soon. It was a heartening sight to look back on our cavalcade and see the great hats bobbing up and down, the lean, wiry ponies, the ready rifles, and the grim faces, most of them bearded.

[136]

We took no natives with us. Our food was biltong and rusks, and each man carried enough to last him for two weeks. Every Boer took care of his own horse and did everything for himself. It was felt that there might be trouble, and Tuys never trusted the kaffirs in a tight place.

During the morning of the second day's trek, not long after we had passed the Vaal River, we were met by several indunas and a small impi. They stood in the middle of the roadway making peace signs, and Tuys brought our little army to a halt. Then he and I rode forward and waited.

The chief induna came to meet us. I recognized him as one of those whom I had seen in Queen Tzaneen's train and knew that he came from her.

"Nkoos, Queen Tzaneen sent me to you," he said to Tuys, with all humility. "Yesterday she gave birth to a prince, the rightful heir to the throne! She sends you the message that she is afraid that Umzulek will kill her son. Even now she is afraid to leave Lebombo. Also, Queen Tzaneen asks that you protect her from Queen Labotsibeni and prevent the queen mother from seizing the throne."

[137]

Tuys listened to his message and then asked what was really going on in Swaziland. The induna told him that Umzulek had gathered his impis together and it was rumored that he would take the throne by force. Queen Labotsibeni had gathered all her warriors, and it was understood that she would fight to keep Umzulek from becoming ruler. Queen Tzaneen, on her side, had mustered all the men who remained faithful to the memory of King Buno, and it was said that she would take the throne if she could muster enough force to do it. Taking it all in all, the stage was set for a bloody civil strife in Swaziland.

"It looks as though we had work ahead," Tuys said to me in Dutch, after the induna had related these events. "Well, we have our job to do and the sooner we get it over the better."

Then he turned to the induna.

"Tell your queen that we have heard the story and will take care of her," he directed him. Tuys then gave the word to continue our march.

Unlike all other armies, our little force was truly democratic and every man was entitled to know what our task was to be. Tuys sent for several of the leaders, men who headed the commandos of their districts, and told them about the political situation in Swaziland.

"Oom Paul's orders are that we must secure the throne for the rightful heir," he said. "Labotsibeni must be appointed regent until the new prince comes of age, and it is our job to pacify the people and prevent war. If, however, war there must be, we shall strike first and strike hard! We must remember that death is the only argument that a kaffir understands and must make a clean job of it." [138]

I understood what a "clean job" meant—that every native, chief or plain warrior, who did not like the conditions Tuys laid down was to be killed. It began to look as though we should have some hard fighting and our devoted band of about a thousand would find themselves pitted against great odds.

We pushed our horses to their limit and made splendid time. The Boer pony or veldt-bred horse is almost tireless, and our mounts were extended to the utmost. The result was that we reached Zombode early next morning.

When we came in sight of the kraals our cavalry was deployed in a double rank about five hundred horses wide. We trotted to the kraals in this formation, every man with his rifle on his hip, ready for anything. When we had halted, Tuys acknowledged the indunas that had come out to meet him. There was no formality about Tuys this time. He represented the Boer Government and was there as conqueror to lay down the law. The indunas noted the difference, and I could see the sullen glint in their eyes as they took their orders from him.

"Tell Queen Labotsibeni that I am here," Tuys directed. "I shall wait for her only a short time and she had better come as quickly as she can." [139]

Without a word the indunas hastened into the royal kraal, while we loosened up a bit and let our horses breathe. The Boer knows how to take care of his mount, and here and there could be seen men arranging their girths and making their ponies more comfortable.

In the very shortest time Queen Labotsibeni came out of her kraal, attended by Lomwazi, her indunas, and a number of warriors. The second they came in sight every man of our force was back again in his saddle, his rifle at the ready. The old queen walked slowly and seemingly with difficulty. She was very tall and quite fat, but carried herself with pride. As always, she was scrupulously clean, her black face shining in the early morning sun.

Labotsibeni came to a halt about twenty feet in front of Tuys and me, and her bodyguard ranged themselves on either side of her. They were picked men and as fine figures of savages as was their old queen. Tuys let her wait for a moment and then got off his horse, motioning to me to join him. We stepped forward, and this time Tuys did not shake hands when greeting her.

"Nkosikaas, I have heard what is going on in Swaziland," he said, simply but very severely, "and I have come with my army to see that justice is done. I come from Oom Paul, our great king, and he has authorized me to do as I see fit.

"My order to you is that to-morrow you meet me at the little river which lies between Zombode and Lebombo. You will be there as soon as the sun shines on the water. There will be a conference and the peace of Swaziland will be assured. I have spoken!" [140]

Labotsibeni was a proud old woman and did not seem to like to have to take orders in this fashion. She looked at Tuys for a moment in a very indignant way, but dropped her eyes when they met his. She started to speak, and I could see that she had a lot to say, too. Tuys's glance cowed her, however, and after a moment of ground-searching her eyes ran up and down the ranks of our determined army.

A moment later she gave in.

"Nkoos, I shall be there," she said, quite humbly. Then she gave a sign to her indunas and warriors, and all together they gave Tuys the royal salute. This ended the interview. Without another word Tuys shouted the command for us to march, and we started for Lebombo.

Our only stop was to water the horses at the little river Tuys had mentioned, and then we pressed on to Lebombo, arriving at the kraals in the same formation as before. Evidently the word had gone ahead that we were coming, for three full impis, or about three thousand warriors, were lined up waiting for us.

As soon as we came close they gave us the salute, showing that they were not arrayed for hostile purposes. Had they been, they would have stood a poor chance, for our little army would have wiped them out in short order. As before, a number of indunas came out to meet us and Tuys repeated his program. [141]

"I am the law and this is my order," he said. "Tell Queen Tzaneen I am here and wait for her to come to me."

There was no hesitation on the part of the indunas. The natives have an extraordinary method of

getting word to one another, and they knew that Tuys came on a far different mission than usual. The indunas bowed their heads submissively, and a short time after accompanied Tzaneen to our presence.

However, she was inclined to be a little haughty and carried herself proudly. Tuys hardly looked at her. She, like Labotsibeni, was a finely-built savage, but not so fat as the old queen. Her hair had grown out to quite a length, showing that Buno had been dead for some months.

Tuys gave her the same orders as he had given Labotsibeni, and she agreed to meet him at the river. Then Tuys asked for Umzulek.

"Umzulek is at his kraal half a day's trek from here," she informed him. "He has gathered his impis there and threatens to make war unless he is made king. Also, word has come that he will kill my child, the infant Prince Sebuza, so that none shall stand in his way."

"Your son, Nkosikaas, widow of Buno, shall be safe," Tuys assured her. "You will send a messenger to Umzulek bidding him to attend our conference at the little river. That is my order!"

And so Tuys arranged the conference at which the future peace of Swaziland was to be secured. [142] We rode easily back to the little stream and there made our camp. It was the middle of the day when we unsaddled and, except for those on guard, we all went to sleep.

Late that afternoon Tuys called a council of the commando leaders and prepared for next morning. That night we doubled our guards and I stood watch for several hours. It was the first time I had ever done this and it was a wonderful experience. The bright moon picked out every object on the little plateau and the stream seemed to be a streak of rippling silver. Our camp was on a small kopje, or hill, with the river at its base, and with the first streaks of dawn we awoke our men.

It was none too soon. By the time it was fully light we could see thousands of warriors coming from either direction. These were the impis of the two queens. Our men, mounted and ready, formed a double line around the top of the hill and waited. The impis came closer and stopped on either side of the stream. They were only about a hundred yards apart, and the thought came to me that here was the setting for a fine battle. This, however, it was our duty to prevent.

Soon Tuys sent me, with a bodyguard, to give his orders to the indunas who stood resting on their shields in front of each army. These orders were simple. I told them that their queen was to come to the conference immediately and that each should bring only her bodyguard with her. In a short time Tzaneen and Labotsibeni arrived and were seated facing Tuys and a number of the commando leaders. [143]

There was no formality about the business whatever. The first question Tuys asked was as to the whereabouts of Umzulek.

"He sent my messengers back in haste," Tzaneen reported, "to say that he was very sick and could not come. When my induna said to him that it was an order, he threatened to kill him, and so he came back without further delay."

I could see that this annoyed Tuys. He ran his hand through his beard in an aggravated fashion and then spoke:

"Umzulek lies," he said decisively, "but he also prophesies! He will be very sick. Perhaps he will be so sick that he will die, if I go to see him. He will find that I am a bad witch-doctor and will know that it is not good to refuse an order!"

Then Tuys delivered his ultimatum, and it was the arrangement by which peace was preserved in Swaziland for nearly a score of years. It was a striking scene. Each of the queens sat in front of her bodyguard, while behind Tuys stood the keen-eyed Boer leaders. Except for their plumes and colored trappings, the armies of the two queens almost blended into the barren brown veldt. Over all was the crystal-clear sky of South Africa, with the bright sun throwing clean-cut shadows. The rocky hills that surrounded the little plateau seemed to form the irregular walls of an amphitheater, with our council hill in the center. [144]

Tuys first addressed Queen Tzaneen.

"Nkosikaas, your son, the Prince Sebuza," he said, "is the son of Buno, the grandson of Umbandine and the lineal descendant of Ama-Swazi. Sebuza is the rightful heir to the throne and shall be king of Swaziland."

Tzaneen threw her head back and glanced triumphantly at the old queen, who was watching Tuys with deep concern.

"And you, Queen Labotsibeni, mother of Buno and grandmother of the infant Prince Sebuza," Tuys said, turning to her, "shall govern as queen regent until Sebuza is a man and fit to become king."

Labotsibeni straightened up and a smile lighted up her hard, old face. However, I noticed that she did not even look at Tzaneen.

"Those are the orders of him who Buno made guardian of Swaziland," Tuys said, talking to both, "and Oom Paul, the great induna of the Boers, has placed thousands of white warriors at his command to see that these orders are obeyed."

Tuys then asked each queen if she would obey, and both promised they would. He told them that he would come with a great army and take their country away from them if he heard that they had broken their promises in the slightest degree. This was the end of the conference.

In this way the Boer Government recognized Labotsibeni as the regent of Swaziland until the proper time for Sebuza to become king and thus showed the way for a peace which lasted nearly twenty years. Shortly afterward the British also agreed to this arrangement, and it is said that they did so after talking the matter over with Oom Paul and Tuys. [145]

However, this was not the end of our job. Umzulek had to be reckoned with. If he was not taught his lesson, it was quite likely that he would continue making trouble and sooner or later bring on a civil war. When the two queens had gone, Tuys called into conference the commando leaders and arranged a plan for Umzulek's benefit.

Because he knew that some of Umzulek's men were undoubtedly watching us, we made a feint of starting for home late that afternoon. We camped in the Valley of Heaven, as though intending to return to Rietvlei. The kaffirs at the kraal near which we camped were told that we expected to reach the Valley of Reeds in about three days, and they undoubtedly passed the information on to Umzulek's scouts.

Not long after midnight we were in the saddle and on our way to Umzulek's kraal. Tuys knows Swaziland as well as he knows the Transvaal, and we went by a route that did not take us near either Zombode or Lebombo.

When Umzulek's warriors came out of their kraals at Stegla shortly after dawn they rubbed their eyes in amazement to see us drawn up in battle array on two sides of their village. Our men were so posted that they could rake the kraals with rifle fire and not one kaffir would be able to escape. [146]

There was great activity in the kraals when Umzulek's men found out what had happened. In a little while several made attempts to get away in the direction of the hills, sneaking out from the unguarded sides of the kraals. They did not get far. Burghers on fleet ponies turned them back, and there were no further attempts to escape.

Tuys knows how to handle natives. He knows that they are more terrified when they do not know what is going to happen than they are of an actual calamity. For that reason he made no move to declare himself. All that Umzulek's warriors knew was that they were surrounded by a band of determined white horsemen with rifles ready for action. I saw hundreds watching us with apprehension, and there was almost a panic in the village.

Finally some indunas came forward, waving their shields and making all sorts of peaceful overtures. Tuys was rough with them. He commanded that Umzulek be brought before him without delay and said that his men would open fire within a few minutes if he did not come. The indunas fled into the main kraal with the orders, and Umzulek came out with almost unseemly haste.

He was a masterful-looking savage. Much like Buno in the face, he was not so tall, but seemed stouter. His body was huge, his legs massive, and his fine head and bulging forehead showed the cunning and brains for which he was noted. Except for a short assegai, Umzulek was unarmed and wore nothing, not even a loin-cloth or plumes. [147]

He came directly to Tuys and threw up his hands in salute. There was nothing cringing about him, in spite of the fact that he was trapped.

"Nkoos, you have sent for me?" he asked, his voice sonorous and heavy. I noticed that he looked into Tuys's eyes without flinching. He was not even nervous.

"I sent for you yesterday," Tuys answered slowly and severely, "and you sent back the foolish word that you were sick. You disobeyed my orders. For that your life is forfeited! Shall I give the word that means death, or will you listen and obey the order I now give?"

Umzulek showed no fear. He met Tuys's eyes without a tremor.

"Nkoos, white brother of my brother, Buno," he replied after a moment, "do your will! I am not afraid of death. If I live, however, I shall obey your orders."

Tuys then became very angry and talked to Umzulek as roughly as he could. In spite of this, the savage chief never lowered his eyes, although he promised obedience. Tuys ended by telling him what he must do to avoid trouble in the future. Previously he had informed him of the arrangement by which Swaziland was to be governed.

"You will remain here at your kraal from now on," Tuys told him, "and shall never go to Lebombo or Zombode without my permission. You must not concern yourself with the government of your country and must keep peace here in your own district. If I hear that you have broken your promise in the slightest degree, I shall come with a great army and kill you and all your people!" [148]

Umzulek admitted that he understood this plain speaking, and the interview ended with his curt dismissal. Even then, beaten as he was, he returned to his kraal with his head up and dignity unruffled. I had a feeling that he would keep his word, and he did until years later, when Tuys sent for him to assist in saving the throne for Sebuza, who, by the way, was his nephew.

The return trip to Rietvlei was made by easy stages. Our horses were pretty tired and they were allowed to rest as much as possible. There was a general feeling of relief among the burghers, although some of the younger ones did not hesitate to regret that there had been no fighting. They expressed the opinion that it would have taught the Swazis a lesson they would long remember if an impi or two had been wiped out. Tuys made one significant remark to me as we came in sight of Rietvlei.

"With Labotsibeni on the throne for the next twenty years," he said, "I'm afraid that the tribute will cease. Oom Paul will save two thousand pounds a month and I expect that I won't make so many visits to Lebombo. Labotsibeni must behave herself, and it looks to me as though I won't have so much business in Swaziland as I have had."

[149]

He was thinking of the wrestling matches with Buno and mentally regretting the fact that his big pockets would no longer bulge with gold. However, Tuys had done rather well; public report had it that these tussles gave him the start toward his fortune.

CHAPTER X

[150]

War with England—Siege of Belfast—Our boyish impi attacks the British—Ghosts defeat us—Jafta's friendship—English troopers do the "sporting thing"—Umzulek still planning deviltry—Death of Klaas, our jockey—Father sends me away to get an education.

As soon as we reached Rietvlei my father and Tuys closeted themselves in his office. Mother told me that there was trouble between the British and Boers and that my father had received certain orders from Oom Paul Kruger. None of our little army had left Rietvlei when Tuys came out of the house and summoned its leaders.

"You are all to go to your homes," he said, "and there wait for orders. There is serious trouble with the English and Oom Paul commands that all stand ready for whatever may come. God grant that this is not war."

There seemed to be a divided sentiment about this. Some of the leaders, particularly the younger ones, did not appear to dislike the thought of war, but the old men drew long faces and looked very grave. However, they all mounted and before long the last had left. I did not realize then that I would never see them all again. The shadow of war was over the land and many of our troop were later killed.

A short time after our return from Swaziland word reached my father from President Kruger that he was to visit the leading Boers of our district and get their opinion regarding the suggested war with England. War was practically inevitable at that time and my father found the sentiment almost overwhelmingly in favor of it. He counselled against fighting England, because he knew of the unlimited resources of the empire and how impossible it would be for us to win. Knowing my father's astuteness, the old Boers listened to him and were almost won over to peace, but just then word came that war had been declared.

[151]

Immediately the whole country blazed up. Every farm and settlement sent its men, all mounted and armed with the best Mausers and hunting rifles, and in a trice the Transvaal and Orange Free State were on the war-path.

It was our misfortune that the British broke into our part of the Transvaal first. When we heard they were coming, we took everything of value and moved to Belfast, which had been fortified and where we were prepared to stand a siege. I shall never forget the excitement of those days. My mother was in delicate condition and the whole thing was a terrible hardship for her. For me, and for the rest of us boys, it was a great and glorious lark!

The air was filled with stories of battles, and before long streams of wounded men were sent from our field forces to the improvised hospitals in Belfast. We boys used to watch these caravans with intense interest and would run errands for the wounded and bring them presents. These farmer-soldiers were our heroes, and we were proud of the saying, "For each Boer, five Englishmen," this being the ratio our fighters claimed was about right.

[152]

However, it was not long before we began to find the British could not be stopped and one morning, late in 1899, Belfast was besieged by forces under General Paul Carew. We suffered many hardships and I soon realized that war was a grim and earnest business. My mother would pray continually that our peril in Belfast be ended either by victory of our troops or their speedy surrender to the British. She made the vow that her unborn child should bear the name of the victorious general, and when, on the eve of the triumphant entry of the British into Belfast, a little daughter was born, she was given the name of Paul Carew, with the prefix "Impi," which, in addition to meaning a regiment, is also the Zulu word for war.

My sister, Impi, certainly lives up to her name. Determination and fighting spirit are her chief characteristics, and she is equally at home in handling wild horses or obstinate kaffirs. In addition, she is one of the best rifle shots in the Transvaal and can beat any one of her sex when

it comes to a race on foot.

General Carew constituted Belfast a British base, and the countryside was raided and ravaged by the troops making it their headquarters. Hardly a farm escaped, and even to-day there are ruins that recall those dark days. But two rooms of our home in Belfast were habitable and it was in these that we lived. The main British camp was directly in front of our house, and the situation galled me. I hated the British for driving us out of Rietvlei and for ruining our home, and before long I declared war on them on my own account. What happened is a good example of the way the English treated us. [153]

I gathered all the boys of the town, that is, the dozen white boys, and drilled them as my impi. Sibijaan, being black, was not allowed to take part in our war. I considered it beneath me to let him fight with me against other whites. We armed ourselves with stones and sticks and late at night made a concerted attack on the British headquarters, which had been established in the ruins of the local hotel.

We smashed all the windows, and the officers and orderlies came tumbling out in great haste. The sentries did not fire on us, but there was a general rush in our direction which resulted in our capture. When we were brought before General Carew, he asked what we thought we were doing. None of us could talk English and the questioning was done through an interpreter. I informed him that we were loyal Boers and had declared war on the English.

General Carew looked at me very severely and asked me if I was ready to be shot for a treacherous attack after the town had surrendered. This was a new thought for me, but I stood to my guns and defied him. However, I did not like the idea of being buried in the local cemetery where we boys had seen so many British and Boer soldiers already put away. [154]

After a few more questions, all of them with the most serious face and a gravity that could mean nothing but evil for us, the general delivered sentence. It was that we were to be taken to the improvised mess-room and fed all the jam, biscuits, tea, and sugar we could eat! I remember that I was very proud to be given a tin of jam for myself alone. My sister, Ellen, had been one of our attacking party and she shared equally in the spoils of our captivity.

But this treatment did not pacify us. Next night we made another attack, and this time we were really punished. We were captured and tied to the veranda posts of some houses nearby. Now this would not have been bad, if we had not been superstitious.

During the days following the victorious entry of General Carew into Belfast, we boys had been intensely interested in a number of wagons loaded with the bodies of British soldiers. These wagons were driven down the main street and the bodies buried in huge graves, oftentimes eight and twelve to a grave, in the local cemetery. The tale was soon started that the ghosts of these soldiers walked about the main street at night.

After we had been tied to the veranda posts it suddenly occurred to me that we would most likely see these ghosts, and I mentioned this pleasant thought to my fellow-prisoners. Immediately there arose a wailing and weeping; our brave little army cried to be allowed to turn tail and depart to its beds. [155]

Of course the British did not know what was the matter. Ellen, instead of being tied up like the rest of us, had been taken into the mess-room and given more crackers and jam. She came out in a hurry to see what was the matter with us. I told her between gasps of horror, and she ran in to the mess and through the interpreter told the colonel. She said later that he regarded it as a huge joke for a little while, but then, when she became anxious for us, gave orders that we were to be freed. We scurried home with all speed as soon as the hated "Tommies" turned us loose. This was the end of our little war against the British. We might fight *them*, but when it came to ghosts we lost our nerve.

In spite of stories that have been spread about the Boer War, there was always a fine sporting spirit between our people and the British. A good example of this was what happened to one of my older brothers. Jafta, the Mapor king, was concerned in this.

My father had prospered greatly in the Valley of Reeds, and when the war broke out owned immense herds of cattle, sheep, and horses. Soon after Belfast was taken he decided that it would be a good thing to move his stock into the northern and more remote parts of the Transvaal. One of my older brothers, two uncles, and a neighbor undertook the trek with the stock.

Such a trek is slow and tedious work, and shortly after they started out a galloping outpost of about thirty Britishers came upon them. The Boers fled. Their horses were tired and trail-weary and they had to leave the stock without a chance to obtain a remount from the horses they were driving. They broke for the mountains, and zigzagged about until they came to the kraal of Jafta, the Mapor king. [156]

They hoped to get fresh horses from him, but Jafta had already been terrified by the British and feared he would be shot if he helped or sheltered any Boers. He explained his position to my brother and begged that the party leave immediately. His horses had already been confiscated and he could give them no remounts.

But the Boers decided to rest awhile and off-saddled their worn horses, who soon found their way to the river bank where they could drink and graze on the tender grass. Jafta was very nervous and urged the party to saddle and get away.

His anxiety proved justified, for while they were arguing they saw the squadron of British horse coming at a gallop less than a quarter of a mile away. It seems that kaffirs had seen the Boers and betrayed them.

Jafta was in a quandary. The safe thing for him to do was to order his impi to seize the Boers and then turn them over to the English. While he was making up his mind one of my uncles ordered his companions to pick up their saddles, bridles, and rifles, and duck into Jafta's royal hut. As they were doing this he shouted some instructions to Jafta.

A moment later the Britishers reached the entrance to the kraal. Jafta, escorted by his indunas, went to meet them. Their officer was impressed with his regal air and recognized him as king of the Mapors. They shook hands, and then, through his interpreter, the officer asked about the four Boer fugitives. [157]

"Yes, Nkoos, they were here," Jafta admitted, "but I was afraid to give them any food or help. They were very tired and their horses were tired also. But they went on."

"How long ago was that?" the Englishman asked.

"When the sun was over there," said Jafta, pointing. He indicated a space of about an hour.

"Well, we must pursue them," said the officer.

"But you look tired," suggested the wily Jafta, "and your horses are over-taxed. Won't you rest a while and have some tswala and refresh yourselves? Already it is the hour when there are no shadows (midday) and it is time to sleep."

The Britisher let himself be lured from the stern path of warlike duty and accepted. The horses were turned loose to graze and drink, and the Englishmen partook heartily of tswala and soon dozed off to sleep. The Boers, inside the hot hut, could do nothing, so they too went to sleep. It was a funny situation, had it not been so serious. These enemies were peacefully asleep within a few feet of one another.

About three o'clock there was a general stirring and every one waked up. The British troopers had never seen the inside of a royal kraal before, and they asked Jafta if they might be shown about. The king immediately assented and appointed some of his indunas to act as guides. It was all new and interesting to the Englishmen and they were soon about fifty yards away from Jafta's hut. [158]

This was the chance the Boers were waiting for. They slipped out and gathered up the Britishers' equipment, including firearms, and stowed it in the hut. A pistol was poked into Jafta's belly and he was also put in his "palace." A few moments later the Englishmen returned and found themselves facing the Boer rifles. They surrendered.

Everything was well with our party and they could have made their escape, taking as many of the British as they wanted as prisoners. But they knew that the Mapor king would have to pay for his duplicity, and thus decided that he must be protected.

Whereupon they opened a discussion with the commander of the British party. They informed him that they would take all the Britishers as prisoners to their own headquarters unless he agreed to the proposition that they made. It was this: First, the English must swear not to give evidence against Jafta at their headquarters; second, they must allow the Boers to have four fresh horses; third, they must give the Boers a certain start before again taking up their pursuit. If the British would agree to these conditions, the Boers would call everything square and each party would forget that it had ever met the other.

This proposal struck the British as a good sporting chance, so they accepted it. Everything was agreed to as demanded. Since there was no reason for further hostility for the time being, the Boers returned their arms and equipment to the British and both had a merry feast that night, during which they consumed all of Jafta's tswala. [159]

Next morning the Boers left at dawn and did not see these Britishers for some time. Strange as it may appear, these same parties later met in a battle not far from Jafta's kraal and one of my uncles was shot. The same British officer was in command of the troops who captured him and saw that he was treated with every consideration, making him feel more like an honored guest than a wounded prisoner-of-war. This officer, by the way, remained in South Africa after the war, and he usually visits Rietvlei every Christmas and is regarded as one of the best friends the O'Neil family has.

During the Boer War, Oom Tuys was held accountable for the peace of Swaziland by both our people and the British. It was contrary to agreements to use kaffirs in the war, and Tuys made several trips to Zombode, the seat of Labotsibeni, to make sure that the Swazis were keeping out of the conflict. Later I heard him tell my father that he kept both Labotsibeni and Tzaneen quiet by pointing out to them that a word from him would bring the war to their country.

On one of his trips Tuys dropped in to see our old friend Umzulek and came back with the report that the kaffir chief was minding his own business and obeying orders. However, he made Tuys a proposition that showed him to be still willing to make trouble, if it were profitable. [160]

"The old rascal suggested that he make a demonstration with all his impis against our borders," my uncle reported. "If he made a great enough showing, he thought, and news of it reached Oom

Paul, our President would be willing to pay him tribute to keep the peace. It seems he has been thinking about Buno's monthly gift of two thousand pounds and the gin that went with it. He has a sort of feeling that it is a shame to let this money get out of the family! The crafty beggar only hinted at his scheme at first, but I finally smoked him out and he admitted what was in his mind."

"What did you tell him?" my father asked, glancing at Tuys keenly. Father remembered the days of Buno, when ugly rumors used to float out concerning Tuys's activities in Swaziland.

"I told him to go to hell," Tuys exclaimed, "or I would come with many rifles and send him there!"

Inasmuch as Umzulek could have no conception of what my uncle meant by "hell", since the Swazis have no such place in their daily thought, it is safe to assume that Tuys was using a figure of speech. Nevertheless, he gave Umzulek to understand that it would be unhealthy for him to start a row along the border.

We were still living in Belfast when the war came to an end. Our home at Rietvlei was in ruins and it was almost a year before my father was able to get a portion of it rebuilt. However, before returning there we lived for a time in Potchefstroom, where my father had interested himself in some gold properties. Prospecting was always fascinating to him and he was usually successful in these ventures. [161]

His English secretary remained in Belfast, safe-guarding his interests there and making frequent visits to the homestead in the Valley of Reeds. Our kaffir farmers and servants had been widely scattered by the war, but soon began to drift back. Each told a different tale of his wanderings, and many of these were quite harrowing. A number of our people had escaped to Jafta's kraal and not a few had gone into Swaziland until the war ended.

Klaas, our old jockey and one of my dearest playmates, had disappeared during the second year of the war, but one day my father told me that he had returned to Rietvlei. Father was about to make one of his periodical trips to Belfast and the Valley of Reeds, and he promised to bring Klaas back with him to Potchefstroom.

He drove out to Rietvlei from Belfast and found Klaas very glad to see him. The little fellow was thin and worn-looking, but scrupulously clean. Father installed him again as his driver and next day started back for Potchefstroom. A mile or so from the old house father got out of the wagon to inspect a plantation. He was about seventy-five yards from the wagon when a threatening thunder-storm broke and a single bolt of lightning killed Klaas and both horses! This was a great blow to all of us, because we had come to regard the little black boy with genuine affection. [162]

Not long after we returned to Rietvlei—such a happy homecoming as it was!—my father decided the time had come for me to get an education. Many of the old Boers frowned upon the thought of sending their sons abroad to be educated, feeling that they would never care to return to the farms their ancestors had founded in the wilderness with such bravery and determination. My father, however, was different. He believed that his sons should be abreast of the times, and he sent me to boarding-school and later to universities in Scotland and America, where I received my training as a physician.

CHAPTER XI

Back to Rietvlei from Harvard—I locate in Ermelo—Tuys brings news that Sebuza is to be crowned king of Swaziland—I decide to make a picture record of the coronation—The trek to Zombode to get the royal permission—Snyman plays ghost and almost gets killed—Visit to Mbabane, capital of Swaziland. [163]

Soon after my graduation from Harvard University I returned to the Transvaal. I had been away for years and it was good to get back to the Valley of Reeds. Years in Scotland and the United States had left their stamp on me, and my family and old friends chaffed me about being an "outlander," telling me that now I was an American. I may have had some of the externals, such as the clothing I had had made in Cambridge, but my heart was still the heart of a Boer and I was glad to get back to my own people.

Father was proud to have a son who was a physician and arranged a reception at Rietvlei to which all his friends and acquaintances came. I was the hero of the hour, and it seemed strange when Tuys and some of the old men who had known me as a boy called me "Mzaan Bakoor." I had not heard my native name for years, and it brought back my boyhood and the little playmates of the toy-factory days.

Sibijaan was a grown man and a fine figure of a savage. He greeted me with effusiveness and saluted me native-fashion as soon as we had shaken hands. Father told me that he had been very useful about the house and was well trained. Then he told me that Sibijaan belonged to me and was to go with me wherever I went. When I spoke of this to my old playmate, he was surprised that I should mention it. [164]

"Nkoos, what the ou baas says is so," he said. "I have never thought it would be otherwise. When

we were children your mother gave you into my charge. Now that you are a man and I am a man, again I take up the trust!"

This suited me. I realized I would have to have some dependable boys and I knew that Sibijaan was faithful, honest, and more intelligent than any kaffir I had ever met.

Meeting Tuys again brought back the several visits we had made to Swaziland, and I asked him how things had gone with our friends, the royal family. He said that the old arrangement was still in effect and that Umzulek had settled down for good and was behaving himself.

"Queen Labotsibeni is blind now, but she still rules as regent," he said, "and Tzaneen is taking good care that no harm comes to her son, Sebuza. This young savage is growing into a man and already has gathered about him several impis. He is an insolent cub and will be hard to manage when he becomes king. As the crown prince he is running wild, and it seems he has been impertinent to the British Resident at Mbabane."

Tuys then told me that he expected to make a short trip to Lebombo and Zombode and asked me if I wanted to go along. My father, however, seemed to think I had "better get over that foolishness" and settle down, so I told Tuys I would go with him some other time. [165]

Next came the question where I was to practice medicine. There was a good doctor in Belfast, who was a friend of our family, and it was suggested that I join him. This, however, did not please me. I wanted to be "on my own" and make my own career. This delighted my father, and after some discussion we decided that I should locate in Ermelo.

This was a little town of about fifteen hundred whites and several thousand kaffirs, in the heart of a fine farming and grazing section in the southeast section of the Transvaal. It has an elevation of about a mile and is a delightful spot. However, I must admit that the fact that Ermelo is only a little more than fifty miles from the border of Swaziland finally decided my choice.

After a few weeks with my family I started for Ermelo. Instead of making an attempt to get there by rail, Sibijaan, Tuys, and I trekked overland and had a most delightful trip. Seldom a night but we met with friends of my father, and they always gave a warm welcome to "the O'Neil from overseas." It seems that these simple people had wondered over my absence, feeling that I would be too learned to ever want to associate with them again. They were intensely interested in the United States, and many an hour I spent telling them about its wonders. I happened to have pictures of New York among my dunnage, and I dug these out and showed them. Naturally, the towering "skyscrapers" were a most wonderful thing to these Boers, many of whom had never seen a building of more than two stories. I always remember the remark made by one bearded patriarch when he looked at the photograph of the Flatiron Building. [166]

"This is a modern Tower of Babel," he said, pointing at the structure with a stubby forefinger. "These Americans must be good and religious people or God would throw down such a tower!"

When I explained to him that it was built of steel covered with stone and told him that there were many other greater buildings, he was impressed, but not astonished.

"If it is God's will, these Americans will conquer the world," he concluded.

I then told him that war had been forced on America and her armies were even then in France fighting the Germans. He knew a good deal about the war and was naturally an enemy of England, which meant that he was friendly to the Germans. The fact that America had been forced into the conflict carried great weight with him, however, and I had a feeling that his pro-Germanism was much weakened by this knowledge.

I quickly found a home in Ermelo and settled down to practice medicine. My work there was hard but interesting. Its chief delight was the fact that I spent most of my time outdoors. A round of visits soon meant that I would be gone several days, spending most of the time in the saddle. Many trips could be made by motor, particularly the periodical ones to the mines, but most of my Boer patients lived where motors could not travel. Except for the mining companies which had appointed me their resident physician, my patients were all white people. The Boers are a hardy lot and hate to admit that they are ill. Hence, when I received a call to a Boer farm, I always expected the worst and was seldom disappointed. [167]

Bit by bit my practice increased, and I began to regard Ermelo as my permanent home. There were a number of pleasant people there, both English and Boers, and we lived a very contented busy life. Sibijaan turned out to be a valuable servant and did everything for me that he could. Of course I made him head boy about my place, and he kept the other servants in good order and saw that all things went right.

Oom Tuys stayed with me frequently, and his visits were always welcome. He wandered about the Transvaal a great deal and was a source of information of all sorts. It was in December, 1918, that he brought me news that interested me deeply.

"I have come from Zombode," he said, "and there is hell to pay in Swaziland. Old Labotsibeni tells me that Tzaneen and her right-hand man, Lochien, are plotting to have Sebuza made king and are making preparations for his coronation. Lomwazi, who is a son of the old queen and acts for her, tells me that Labotsibeni will not give up the throne. She will have to die if she does. As you know, it is the Swazi custom to sacrifice any ruler who loses the throne, and the old girl doesn't want to be killed. [168]

"It looks to me as if there is going to be trouble. I talked to Lomwazi and his mother and told them it was the agreement that she was to remain regent until Sebuza came of age, and that the Boers and British both would protect her when the young man was made king. This seemed to reassure them, but I don't think Labotsibeni and her crowd want to lose control. Yes, Owen, I think there is going to be trouble in Swaziland."

We talked the matter over, and I agreed with him that things were going to happen soon in Swaziland. The Swazis had been at peace too long a time for such a warlike nation and it would not take much to start a war of some sort. The fact that Prince Sebuza was to be made king stood out above everything else, and I made up my mind to see the ceremonies.

About this time I had become interested in the cinematograph. Moving-pictures were a hobby of mine, and it suddenly occurred to me that it would be a fine thing from an historic and educational standpoint to take some reels of Sebuza's coronation. Tuys told me that this would probably be the last affair of its kind, and it seemed to me that a cinematograph record of it would be most valuable and instructive.

I suggested this to Oom Tuys, and he agreed with me.

"But you'd better arrange to take the pictures," he cautioned me. "It would be just a waste of time to rush into Swaziland with a camera and take a chance. We don't know when the coronation is going to take place, and what's more, we don't know that the Swazis would stand for your taking pictures of it. The witch-doctors might tell them that you were putting some sort of a curse on them, and then where would you be?" [169]

This put another light on the matter, and Tuys finally advised me to see Labotsibeni and get her permission to film the ceremonies when Sebuza was made king. I was afraid that I might not be able to get what I wanted from Labotsibeni, so I asked Tuys to help me. This he agreed to do, arranging to meet me in Zombode. This meant quite a trip for him, because the British objected to his going into Swaziland, owing to certain activities there in the past, and he had to go in through Portuguese territory. I have forgotten what reasons the government had for not wanting Tuys to visit Swaziland, but the officials evidently had not forgotten—Britishers seldom do, particularly when the matter affects one of their principalities.

So it was arranged that Tuys should slip into Swaziland through Komatipoort, a town on the border between Portuguese East Africa and Labotsibeni's country. I was to leave as soon as I could, and we would meet at Zombode and there transact our business with Lomwazi and the old queen.

I arranged for another doctor to handle my patients while I was away and then set about making preparations for the trip. News of my venture soon got about, and I was deluged with requests to take friends along. If I had given in to them all, I would have invaded Swaziland with an impi. As it was, I took Laurie Snyman, a cousin of mine, and Joel Biddy, the accountant of the little bank in Ermelo. Snyman had some years before been postmaster at Mbabane, the government seat of Swaziland, while Biddy had been a useful friend on many occasions. [170]

We had some interesting adventures on the trip, but suffered intensely from the weather. Heavy storms dogged us all the way and made life miserable. We traveled light, but the rains prevented us making good time. Our outfit consisted of a wagonette, drawn by mules, in which we had intended to ride. Sibijaan was our cook and general handy man, while the mules and wagonette were in charge of Tuis, a half-breed Basuto bushman.

The rains made the roads so heavy that it was all the mules could do to drag the wagonette. Hence we had to walk practically the entire way, and it was "foot-slogging" of the hardest. Tuis was a very obstinate kaffir and made a nuisance of himself on every opportunity. If we had not needed him so badly, I would have either killed him or sent him back.

One of the features of the trip was the fact that both Sibijaan and Tuis were constantly ill. That is, they said they were. The only medicine which seemed to help them was gin, and they would frequently feign illness to get some. Now and then I would refuse, and then Tuis would give an exhibition of sulking that was wonderful. Of course it is strictly against the law to give alcohol to kaffirs in the Transvaal, but the fact that it was administered as "muti," or medicine, made the act less criminal. Those boys of mine, however, needed "muti" frequently, but the rain was a sort of justification, for I know that we white men were only able to keep going by using it. [171]

On the second day out of Ermelo we ran into the Scottish section of our country. The little villages there have such names as Lochiel and New Scotland, and the people are quite as Scottish as these names. In fact, we were able to get some oat cakes at one of the farm-houses. These would have been rusks, had the people been Boers.

Although our trek had been miserable enough so far, we did not have any real trouble until we reached the Masuto River. It was swollen by the heavy rains and the ford was washed out. Instead of the usual clear rivulet, it had become a raging torrent of muddy water. We had to cross it or go back, so we made camp on its bank and held a council of war. All our blankets and supplies were soaked through, and a fire could not be started. We were just about as uncomfortable as we could be.

Just when we were beginning to despair, a Scotch civil engineer showed up. He was building a bridge over the Masuto, his entire working force consisting of kaffirs. He proved a cheerful [172]

person and made light of our troubles. This was well enough for him, since he had a good camp a short distance away, while we were marooned on a desert of dampness. I suggested to him that we would appreciate some hot tea or coffee, but he carefully refrained from inviting us to his camp to have some. Instead, he told us that we could get what we wanted from Oom Van der Merwe, who had a farm not far distant. The Scotch are a careful and canny people!

We trudged over to the Boer farm and received a cordial welcome. They received us with open arms and insisted that we remain there for a few days, or at least until the rain stopped. This we could not do, since I had made the Zombode appointment with Tuys and did not want him to have to wait so long that he would give us up and leave Swaziland.

The farmer's womenfolk gave us all the hot coffee we would drink, and then supplied us with bread, butter, milk, and the hind quarter of a sheep. We returned to our thoroughly soaked camp very reluctantly and passed a most miserable night.

Next morning we tackled the problem of getting across the Masuto, which had risen further during the night. The Scotch engineer came to our assistance with good advice, and this is all he would have offered had I not discovered that he had several cables stretched across the river. After much argument he agreed to let us use one of the cables to get the wagonette and supplies across. This was done, although with great difficulty. [173]

Knowing we would have to swim for it, we white men had put our clothes in the wagonette. The kaffir boys did not wear enough to matter. The Scotchman consoled us by telling us that we were a ludicrous sight, and we must have been! There we stood, naked, cold, and disgusted, our entire possessions on the far bank and facing the prospect of swimming the turbulent river, driving the mules across at the same time. However, it had to be done, so we plunged in. The current was strong and we crawled ashore a full half mile below the wagonette.

True to his bastard breed, one of the mules turned back in midstream and proceeded calmly to the take-off bank of the river. We had to swim back and get him, but it was adding insult to injury when he tried to run away and we had to chase him through the long grass and undergrowth of the river's edge. Finally we captured the brute and then swam the river for the third time as his watchful escort.

We were dead tired when we reached the wagonette and faced the stiff climb to the top of a little mountain. The road was in the worst possible condition, so we decided to camp for a day or two until the weather became better. As things were, we could not have gone on, anyway.

As soon as camp was pitched, we looked about a bit and discovered the ruins of an old Boer farmhouse a little way up the river. There was a trickle of smoke coming out of the chimney and this encouraged us to visit the place as soon as possible. The thought of fire was heartening; it meant hot things to drink and possibly warm food. When I came close to it I saw that there were two rooms, badly roofed over, but the blackened walls showed that the old house had been quite an imposing building. [174]

My knock was answered by a young Boer with wild, hunted eyes. He looked us over as we stood there in the pouring rain, and a moment later smiled graciously and invited us in. When the door closed he ceremoniously extended his hand and we shook hands all around.

"Strangers seldom come during the storms," he said, "and I was surprised to hear your knock. I was cooking some coffee in the back room and now I shall add enough for all of us."

This was a welcome thought to us, and in a little while our drooping spirits were revived by the hot drink. Then we cooked the food we had brought with us and had a merry party. It seems the young fellow was quite bucked up over having visitors and he did well by the gin we had brought with us.

But still it rained outside! It came down as it only can in the Transvaal, and that means a steady, relentless downpour which looked as though it would last for days. We decided to make ourselves as comfortable as possible, and our host insisted that we take over his house. He was a very pleasant fellow and before long we were good friends. [175]

It seems that the old house had been the home of his parents and grandparents. It was a pioneer homestead and had been burned by the British during the Boer War. Both his parents had died there and the place had never been rebuilt. He had been born in the room in which we rested and he told us that he hoped some day to rebuild and make his thousands of acres profitable.

Bit by bit we got the story of the place from him. It had been destroyed in retaliation for some act of treachery, for which, he assured us, his parents were not responsible. I asked him if he did not get lonesome living there by himself and suggested that he ought to get a wife to keep him company. My question opened up a queer side of his character, and then we understood the hunted look in his eyes.

"By day," he said slowly, "I don't mind being here alone. In good weather people cross the river and come to me to buy things. I have a store, you know, and sometimes as many as five or six come each week."

This was news to us. We did not see any evidence of a store, but this probably explained the small boxes and bundles in the back room.

"It is the night that is terrible," he went on, lowering his voice as though afraid of being overheard. "Those who died here come back and look into the windows and cry out with awful voices. They cannot rest, and must come back to this place where they were killed. Some of them are our people and others the British, and sometimes they fight the battle over again!"

[176]

For a moment I thought he was guying us, but a glance at his eyes told me that he was in deadly earnest. Snyman and Bidy caught his spirit and egged him on to tell more ghost stories. Now the ignorant Boer is very superstitious, so that it was not long before we had all kinds of ghosts loose about the place. The young Boer took the stories seriously, and those two rascals soon had him quite terrified. A sudden burst of thunder made him jump as though he had been shot.

Well, we told ghost stories and tales of other supernatural visitations for some time. Then, the rain letting up a bit, we went back to our camp, to find that Sibijaan had finally succeeded in getting a fairly decent fire going. Before leaving we had bought the store out. It only contained quantities of "flag" cigarettes, coffee, and yellow sugar, but we took all we could get. The Boer assured us that he had sent to Ermelo for a large stock of goods which would be at our disposal as soon as the roads allowed it to be brought in.

Late that afternoon it looked as though the stormy weather was breaking away, and this cheered us up. We planned to start at dawn next morning and make up for lost time by forced marches. Shortly after dark Snyman announced that he was going to visit the young Boer again. He went out, leaving Bidy and me smoking our pipes in the tent.

Snyman had been gone for about half an hour when the stillness of the night was shattered by a succession of rifle shots. They came from the direction of the ruined house. We could hear some one shouting, also, and each outburst was followed by more shots.

[177]

With one motion I snuffed our candle and dived to the wet floor of the tent. Bidy was almost as quick, and swore softly when his face hit my heels. We neither of us could imagine what was taking place, but our training taught us that the ground was the safest place when people began shooting wildly.

We had hardly got our breath when Snyman dashed into the tent, falling over us and almost pulling it down. He had been running hard and was fairly gasping for breath. Presently he recovered sufficiently to loose a volley of profanity in Dutch and English. When he calmed down a little—the shooting had stopped by this time—we asked him what all the shooting was about and why he had returned in such haste.

"Why, that poor ignorant fool thought he could shoot a ghost!" he said, beginning to laugh. "I went to see if there were any ghosts around his old house, and when I didn't find any, I felt that he ought not to be disappointed, so I played ghost for him. I sneaked about the house and hid in the old ruins, making all sorts of creepy noises, I must have scared him until he went crazy.

"I was just beginning to enjoy myself when his light went out. Then I thought I had scared him off the map. But I was wrong, very wrong! He must have opened the door quietly, for when I started out of the ruins he opened up with his Mauser. I dropped flat, but it seemed to me that a volley of bullets crawled down my back. A moment later he started shooting in another direction, and then I got up and ran. I'll bet the springbok doesn't live that could have caught me!"

[178]

So this was the explanation of the sudden firing. We examined Snyman and found that two bullets had gone through his coat, showing that even in his fear the young fellow had shot like a true Boer. Snyman did not seem much upset over being shot at, but was quite indignant at the fact that the "ghost hunter" had used a rifle.

"It just shows the ignorance of these back-country Boers," he said, ruefully examining his torn coat. "This damned fool spends his nights quaking because he thinks his old farm is full of ghosts, and then he takes down the ancestral rifle and goes out and tries to kill them. As though he could shoot a ghost!"

Before dawn the next morning the young Boer arrived at our camp. While he was taking coffee with us he related his adventure of the night before. He seemed to have no suspicion of Snyman, who must have done a wonderful job. According to his story a whole battalion of British ghosts had attacked his stronghold. He described their wailing and threatening cries, and then told how he had finally driven them off with his father's rifle.

[179]

He was so earnest and pathetic that we all felt sorry for him. His ignorance was extraordinary, even when his isolation was considered. We were sorry to leave him, and I remember looking back as we climbed the hill road to see him looking wistfully after us.

The roads were so bad that we had to walk, and it was not until the third day that we reached Mbabane, the official capital of Swaziland. This is about fifteen miles over the border, and the village is on the top of a low mountain. Mbabane is the new capital of Swaziland and was founded in 1904. The old capital, Bremersdorp, was destroyed by our people during the Boer War.

The long slopes leading up to the village are nearly all covered with plantations, which have been laid out by Robert L. Dickson, head of the Swaziland Trading Company. The settlement is a most picturesque and charming place, and there are a number of pleasant English people dwelling there. These white families live very well, and I can safely say that Mbabane is the most delightful place in that whole section of the Transvaal.

Mr. Dickson is a remarkable character who has lived in South Africa practically all his life. He is now about sixty-five years old, and no visit to Mbabane is complete without at least one cup of tea with him and his wife. Mrs. Dickson is a lovable old lady whose chief worries seem to consist of guarding her vegetable plantation and finding her glasses.

[180]

The morning we called on Mr. Dickson, she came in and asked if he had seen those errant glasses. His eyes twinkled when he answered, "No, my dear, but I'm sure you'll find them in the cabbage patch!" She had been there during the morning and his guess was correct, for one of the black boys found the glasses draped over a young and hopeful cabbage.

Of course Mr. Dickson invited us to dinner, and this led to a typical and amusing incident. Mrs. Dickson ordered her cook to prepare some chickens for the meal, and the cook sent some of the Swazi servants to get the fowls.

Now a friend of mine, John Pythian, engineer at the tin mines nearby, lived next door to the Dicksons. He was a chicken fancier and had some very fine birds. As luck or indolence would have it, Mrs. Dickson's servants caught some of his chickens instead of her own. Pythian's servant reported this to him—he was still in bed at the time—and he instructed his boy to tell Mrs. Dickson's Swazis to return the chickens.

Stronger in courage than judgment, the boy attacked the enemy and there was a battle. It was short, however, because Mrs. Dickson heard the row and chased Pythian's boy away. By the time he reported to his master, the chickens were slain. Pythian then sent his boy to get the native police, and these soon arrived.

Mrs. Dickson protested and argued that her boys were innocent, but about this time, Mr. Honey, British Royal Commissioner for Swaziland, came on the scene in all his majesty. He held an impromptu court and heard both sides of the case. After deliberation, in which we all tried to assist him, he delivered his verdict.

[181]

"From the evidence I judge that Mrs. Dickson's boys are innocent in that they did not realize they were killing Mr. Pythian's chickens," he said. "However, the chickens have been killed on the order of Mrs. Dickson, so I think the only thing to do is to arrest Mrs. Dickson!"

Whereupon Mrs. Dickson became indignant and demanded that the commissioner carry out his sentence.

"If he does," she said threateningly, "I can guarantee that the High Commissioner for Swaziland is going to feel very low in his mind before I invite him to dinner again!"

Thus the chicken-stealing ended in a joke, and Pythian was one of the gayest at dinner that night. He remarked, however, that it was no wonder that the roast chicken was so choice, since the birds had been imported all the way from some place in India!

During the meal I sat next to the Commissioner and brought up the question of the crowning of the new Swazi king. I wanted to find out what the government thought about it before I made final arrangements at Zombode.

"There seems to be a difference of opinion regarding this pup, Sebuza," he said. "It looks as though there might be a row either before or soon after he is made king. Of course he is the heir to the job, so there can be no good reason for keeping him out. However, Labotsibeni has been a steady old girl and has kept fairly good order around Zombode, and it's a shame we can't keep her. But she's over one hundred years old, and now Lomwazi seems to be fairly running Swaziland. Sebuza will have to be king some day, but it will be good policy to maintain present conditions as long as possible. We have peace now, and I'd dislike to see anything happen that might start a war."

[182]

I could see that the Commissioner was none too anxious to have Sebuza take over the throne. This suited me, for I knew that it would be some time before I was equipped with the right outfit to take the pictures I was after. If Sebuza's coronation could be put off for a year, it would suit me even better.

All the white residents of Mbabane treated us with the greatest kindness and hospitality. They could not do too much for us. There are a number of interesting things about the settlement. It is essentially a little English village set down in the heart of the most primitive and savage principality of the empire. Like all the rest of the English who exile themselves from home, these people had brought a little bit of the motherland with them.

The jail, or "gaol," as they insist on writing it, is an institution in Mbabane, but I must say there is not much punishment about it. The prisoners wear the convict garb, but you meet them all over the village. They are usually working in the gardens, and I have often run across them three and four miles from their penitential abode. No prisoner has ever been known to escape; perhaps the regular food has something to do with this.

[183]

There are a number of interesting characters who live in Mbabane year in and year out. One of these is Allister Miller, a man of remarkable personality, energy, and business ability. He has several immense ranches and owns more than fifty thousand head of fine cattle. His bulls have been imported from all over the world and his cattle have made him a very rich man. Swaziland is an ideal stock-raising country and it is estimated that the Swazis themselves own more than three hundred thousand head of cattle.

Probably the most interesting character in Mbabane is known to every one as "Matt." He is an accountant by profession. His nose has made him famous, and I am sure there is not another like it in the whole world. It is immense in size and has all the vivid tints of the "rum-nose" that distinguishes the confirmed tippler. All strangers are advised to see Matt's nose or count their visit to Mbabane a rank failure.

There are a number of stories about him, one of the best being about his experience as an inmate of the gaol. It seems that he was accountant for a trading company and had made a mess of its books. Money was missing and he could not account for it. Although it was felt that he had not taken it, yet he was responsible and was sentenced to gaol for six months. Now the warden of the gaol trusted Matt and put him to work on the books. In addition, he used to loan Matt to do little jobs of carpentering and painting at houses in the village. This led to trouble. The little tin shanty, by courtesy "The Hotel," was much like some of the saloons in the "cow towns" of the old West in the United States. Ranchers, traders, and adventurers would congregate there and tell stories while they drank gin, whiskey, and combinations of the same. Matt was in the habit of passing the "hotel" each evening on his return to the gaol, and soon the roisterers began inviting him in to have a drink or two. [184]

One night there was a particularly joyous party, and Matt drank so much that he forgot to return to the gaol on time. It was midnight before he got there, and the jailer had already gone to bed. Matt went to his house and woke him, and this annoyed the official very much. So much so, in fact, that he refused to get up and let Matt into the gaol. Matt was reduced to the ignominy of returning to the hotel and bunking there. Next morning he made a charge against the jailer for not allowing him to serve out his sentence! Commissioner Honey discharged him and reprimanded the jailer for neglect of duty.

Some years before Snyman had been postmaster at Mbabane and had made many friends, with the result that he had a most enjoyable visit. The morning we left to continue our trek to Zombode he was approached by Manaana, an old Swazi chief, who wanted to shake hands with him. Manaana was a typical kaffir, and Snyman told me a story about him which well illustrates the characteristics of the breed. [185]

"When I was at the post-office here," Snyman said, "Manaana and some of his sons went to the Transvaal to work in the gold mines. According to the law, their money was deposited for them in the savings-bank at Johannesburg, and the whole amount was put in the name of the old chief. I was still postmaster when Manaana and his sons returned to Swaziland.

"One morning I was very busy when I saw Manaana standing at the door. Of course he would not enter until I spoke to him. I grunted at the old boy and he came in, with the usual 'Nkoos!' and his hands flung up. He stood at the counter for a while, waiting for me to speak to him.

"Finally I asked, 'Ou funaan?' which means 'What do you want?'

"'Ou funa mali!' he answered, meaning 'I want some money.'

"Then the old boy walked over to the corner of the room and sat down. From the top of his majuba, or loin-cloth, he produced a little bundle wrapped in an abundance of dirty rags and tied with some leather thongs. Then he knelt down, as is the custom of the Swazis, and proceeded to spread out the contents of the bundle.

"When he unwrapped the outer cover there was another and yet another, the last covering being the hide of some small animal. After this was undone there was a paper wrapping, and inside this was his savings account deposit book! This he presented to me with pride. [186]

"'Ou shiai intzinga; ou funa mali,' he said, which meant 'Telegraph to the place where this money is deposited; I want to draw it.'

"'Lunglli,' I replied; 'wati nalie e'lali bapa ou buia mfigo uti zouk mali,' which meant, 'When the sun is over there come back and I will give you the money.'

"I thought I would get a reply by sunset, and Manaana arrived promptly after I had heard from Johannesburg. He entered on my recognition, stacked his knob-kerrie, shield, and assegai in the corner, and came up to the counter.

"I counted out the money to him. There were twenty-four pounds, and ten shillings for interest. This I had to explain to him, and when he understood that it was a gift he spent the next ten minutes in praising the white men. He was so accustomed to being taxed and paying for everything that to get these extra ten shillings was a shock.

"Manaana then went over to his corner, knelt down, and counted the money over six or seven times. He would take it up, examine it, and put it down again and again. He seemed fascinated by the sovereigns. Finally he gathered it up and walked over to the counter. Piling it up in front of me, he said: [187]

"'E'musla implea mene bonela e'begga panzi!' which means 'Very nice indeed! I have had a look at it; it is wonderful! Now please put it away again!'

"I felt like a fool. I had cancelled his account, and now the old nuisance wanted to re-open it and put his money in the bank again. But of course I did it. All Manaana wanted was to see and feel his money, so that he would be sure it was still there!"

I meet Labotsibeni again—Flattering a savage queen—Explaining the "little black magic box"—Curing rheumatism with tooth-paste, vaseline, and hair oil—Women as currency—Gin, gold, and cows pay for the picture rights—The "flu" strikes—Jennie, the "blaau app", and the peacocks' tails.

From Mbabane it is only a short distance to the top of the mountain from which the descent is made into Ezulweni, the beautiful Valley of Heaven. As we reached the top I pointed out Sheba's Breasts and the Place of Execution to my companions. These peaks could be seen far off to the right, where the sun picked them out in the early morning mist.

Coming down the mountain was hard work, the grade being one in four at many places. We walked, because it would only have made it harder for the mules if we had kept our seats in the wagonette. At the bottom of the steep trail stands the place of Harry Niles, an old-time trader who has settled down there. He has a picturesque little home and has surrounded the house with banana trees, papayas, and semi-tropical fruits. Niles is a charming old man who retired from active business to live out his remaining years in this garden spot. He has no interest in outside affairs and lives an ideal existence, if one likes that sort of thing. His likes and dislikes are quickly expressed, and this is probably one of the reasons that make him contented with his life of isolation. If he likes you, however, he can be more hospitable than any one I know. He will feed you with the most delicious salads, fresh meat, and other delicacies, and there is always something rare to drink. His salads are famous, so that his few friends in Mbabane often make the hard trek to his little home to share one of them.

[189]

Coming into the Valley of Heaven from Mbabane, instead of from Rietvlei, made it a much shorter distance to Zombode. We wanted to get there as soon as possible, since we had already been delayed by the wretched weather, so we only had a drink with Niles and then pushed on. He told me that he had heard that the Swazis were getting ready to acknowledge Sebuza as king, but he had no definite information about it.

"What's more," he added, "I don't give a damn! Just so long as these royal niggers keep out of my way I'll keep out of theirs. They know better than to bother me, and it makes no difference to me who is king!"

Shortly before we came in sight of Zombode, Oom Tuys came riding down the trail. A Swazi runner had brought word that we were coming, and my uncle had come out to meet me. I was very glad to see him and he was as cheerful as ever. He told me that he had had no difficulty in getting into Swaziland, as he had come in through Komatipoort, but he understood that word had gone to Mbabane that he was at Zombode and he wanted to cut his stay as short as possible.

"It is a shame that the great British Empire should hound one poor lone Boer trader," he said, his eyes twinkling, "and I feel very much afraid. I hate to disturb the peace of mind of the High Commissioner, so I don't want to stay here any longer than necessary."

[190]

Then he began to plan with me how to get our business over as quickly as possible. I had not been to Swaziland since my youth, and things were different now. Instead of our being met by a welcoming party of indunas, only a few curious savages and a horde of children came out to watch us arrive. The former proud formality of the royal kraal seemed lacking, and when I asked Tuys about it he explained that since Queen Labotsibeni had become blind "the old customs had gone to seed."

There was still one formality about seeing her, however. This consisted of announcing your presence by sending her a bottle of gin and then waiting until she sent for you. Tuys explained to me that the old queen was terribly vain and desired, above all things, to be flattered. She liked to pretend that she could still see, and Tuys warned me under no circumstances to admit that I thought she could not.

"You want to look out for Lomwazi, my boy," he added. "He has more brains than all the rest put together and is a very wily devil. He never leaves the side of the old queen, and she can't say a word that he doesn't hear. Look out for him!"

He also advised me to keep my eye on Debeseembie, a brother of Lomwazi and the favorite son of the old queen. Debeseembie was another faithful watchdog of the royal hut and was always somewhere around.

[191]

This was the first time I had seen Labotsibeni since I was a little boy, hence I was keenly interested in her apart from the fact that I hoped to obtain her permission to take pictures of Sebuza's coronation. It is well to observe here that I use the word "coronation" for lack of a better term. The Swazi king wears no crown, and I suppose the right but awkward phrase would be to speak of Sebuza's "induction as king."

Lomwazi came out to meet us as we entered the royal kraal and readily agreed to convey the gin-present to his royal mistress. When I slipped him a bottle for himself, his haughty expression immediately became one of joy. A little gin goes a long way with the Swazis.

In a very short time he returned and said that the queen would see us. In addition to the present sent ahead when an interview is desired with the queen, it is also proper etiquette to leave a present when the interview is over. Knowing this, I took along a present—that is, another bottle of gin.

Now the royal kraal at Zombode was built with a little kraal inside the main one, and in the middle of that was Labotsibeni's reception hall or audience chamber. This was the most unusual building in Swaziland. It had brick walls about four feet high and was about ten by fifteen feet in size. The arched grass roof was about head high in the middle, but one had to stoop low to enter, because the three openings were only the height of the brick wall. No one has ever explained how these bricks came to Zombode. There are no bricks in Swaziland and it struck me as extraordinary that I should see them there. [192]

Lomwazi led us to the reception hut and we waited for him to announce us. I could see Labotsibeni lying on a mat in the center of the floor with a number of her women and warriors about her. She seemed very fat and huge, and very very old.

"Nkosikaas! All powerful Queen of Swaziland," Lomwazi chanted. "Oom Tuys and Mzaan Bakoor, great white indunas, have come to see you. They bring presents and would be overjoyed forever if you would look upon them and accept their great tribute!"

Some of this was true, but all of it was the proper sort of thing at Zombode. Labotsibeni listened intently, and when her vizier finished she spoke in her old cracked voice:

"Tell my white sons that I am proud to welcome them to Swaziland and will grant them an audience."

Thereupon we entered the hut. There were at least a dozen maids-of-honor attending the old queen, and several of these spread mats for us to sit on. Some of these women were working on freshly tanned hides from which they were fashioning skirts, and the odor of the skins tainted the air of the hut. I am accustomed to this smell and do not find it unpleasant, but both Snyman and Bidy soon had all of it they could stand.

The old queen lay on her stomach with her head propped up by her hands. Within easy reach was a pile of leaves, and at intervals she would take one of these, wipe her lips and fingers with it, and thrust it through the open doorway. Her hands were small and beautifully shaped and her nails were spotlessly clean and perfectly manicured. Later I learned that her maids spent hours taking care of her hands, their only tools for manicuring the royal nails being bits of broken bottle-glass. [193]

Remembering Tuys's warning, I complimented her on her looks, beautiful hands, and the cleanliness of her hut and kraal. I told her that her royal abode was an example for all the other native kings of the Transvaal and generally explained to her what a superior person she was. She listened intently to my flattery and appreciated it greatly.

Near her was the bottle of gin we had sent ahead. It was more than half finished and she took a drink while I was delivering my flattering oration. She reached for the bottle and Debeseembie assisted her to get the drink by pouring out more than half an earthen mug full of the fiery liquid. With one swallow she gulped it down, and then almost choked. This gave me my cue, and I told her how moderate she was and how refined in her way of drinking gin.

"Why, Nkosikaas, if I were to give Jafta, king of the Mapors, a bottle of gin," I said, "he wouldn't stop drinking until he had finished it, and then he would soon become drunk. Whereas, you, with your royal daintiness and delicacy, drink your gin like a queen!" [194]

This thought pleased her much and she thereupon took another drink, which practically emptied the bottle. Of course I do not know that she had consumed the first half of that bottle, but she certainly drank enough in our presence to intoxicate any normal person. It was strange, but it did not seem to have much effect on her. When she spoke and drank, I noticed that her teeth were perfect. This, at the age of more than one hundred years, is a great tribute to the Swazi custom of cleaning the teeth with charcoal or sand after each meal.

There was nothing private about our interview. While we talked indunas came and went and the women were always in the hut. In addition, both Lomwazi and Debeseembie were on hand all the time. After we had exhausted all our compliments and small talk, Tuys broached the subject of permission to take pictures of Sebuza's coronation.

Here we ran against what seemed to be an insuperable obstacle. It was impossible to make either the queen or Lomwazi understand what I wanted. They had no conception whatever of what a photograph meant and motion-pictures were entirely beyond their comprehension. Both Tuys and I tried in every way to make them understand, but it was hopeless. Finally I decided that the only thing to do would be to take a picture of Lomwazi or the old queen and show Lomwazi what I was talking about.

I persuaded him to get Labotsibeni to allow herself to be carried outside the hut into the sunlight, and there I took a picture of her. Then I photographed Lomwazi, Debeseembie, and a group of others. I explained to them that I would show them the pictures the next day, as I hoped to have them developed and printed by that time. After the picture-taking we went back inside the hut, and then the old queen became more friendly and told me her troubles. It seems she suffered with rheumatism in the shoulders and back. This was due to the fact that her upper body was [195]

usually bare and that she laid in the draught between the openings of the hut. When cold, she would cover herself with a magnificent fur rug, but this did not help her rheumatism much.

On hearing of her aches and pains, Tuys's evil genius gave him an inspiration and he proceeded to get me into a pretty pickle.

"Nkosikaas, you are in great good luck that we came to see you," he told her. "Mzaan Bakoor is a great white witch-doctor and makes the muti (medicine) that cures such pains as you have. He will make the muti for you and will cure you!"

Labotsibeni appeared much cheered by this suggestion. I was not, however. I had no medicines with me and would gladly have kicked Tuys for making the offer. Shortly after this we left the queen, with the understanding that I was going to make the medicine that would cure her rheumatism and would bring it to her as soon as it was ready. [196]

When we got back to our camp I blessed Tuys with a real Boer outburst of profanity.

"Why, Tuys, we'll make the old lady think that we are the worst sort of fakirs," I told him. "She won't grant me the right to take the pictures when she finds out that we have fooled her. You have made a fine mess of things!"

But Tuys laughed and laughed and laughed. He thought it was one of the funniest situations he had ever seen. Looking back at it, I can see the humor of it, but at that time I did not find it amusing. Tuys told me I would have to go through with it and produce medicine that would at least make his word good. So I went to work. All I had with me were some toilet necessities. The "muti" was compounded at length, and this is the way the prescription read: Two ounces each of tooth-paste, vaseline, and hair-tonic. These I beat up until they were a loose paste and then placed them in a glass jar bearing a very vivid label. This jar had held my photographic chemicals.

With impressive solemnity we returned and presented the muti to the queen. Then I explained the treatment. Her maids were to take cloth soaked in hot water and apply it to the aching parts until she could stand it no longer. Then small portions of the muti were to be thoroughly rubbed in until the pains departed.



QUEEN LABOTSIBENI, MOTHER OF KING BUNO

During Sebuza's infancy and boyhood, the throne receded to Queen Labotsibeni, his grandmother. She was blind and more than one hundred years old



LOMWAZI AND HIS COUNCIL OF INDUNAS, OR WAR CHIEFS

All this impressed Labotsibeni, but she insisted that the "great white witch-doctor" apply the treatment. I had to do it—that is, if I wanted to keep her favor. For an hour I massaged the old woman, and when the last of the muti was rubbed in she announced that her pains were gone and promptly fell asleep. The hot cloth, as I had guessed, took the aches out of her shoulders and back and the villainous muti bluffed her into a cure, which was good for the time being at least. It was a fine piece of chicanery for a graduate of two of the greatest medical colleges to have to practice, but it did the trick!

[197]

Next morning we went to the royal hut as soon as we were sent for. The same gin ritual had to be followed, and we found the old queen quite happy and a trifle under the influence of the liquor. The pictures had turned out well, and Lomwazi was amazed to see himself in all his barbaric beauty. He is one of the strongest men in Swaziland and is very vain concerning his athletic prowess. One of his greatest sports is to wrestle with any one who will stand up to him, and he seldom loses. Hence, when he saw himself in the pictures, he felt very proud. Immediately he christened the camera "the white man's magic" and told Labotsibeni all about it. I watched this talk, and it was pathetic. Lomwazi explained as best he could what we had done and then handed his mother the picture of herself, telling her to look at it. She held it close to her eyes, and then said:

"The white man's little black box is very wonderful! It must be a good magic or my son would not recommend it so highly."

[198]

If she had been able to see, she might have remarked that the picture was a remarkably good likeness. It was the only time she was ever photographed, and it seemed a shame that the old queen could not appreciate it.

Again we brought up the question of permission to take the coronation pictures. I explained that we wanted to do the same with Sebuza as we had done with them. This seemed to be all right, and we were getting nearer our goal when Lomwazi brought up the question of paying for the royal permission. He knew that the white man was not asking this favor for fun, and it came to him that we ought to be made to pay for it.

"Nkoos, you have come far to ask this permission," he said. "You have trekked through the rain and sun and it has cost you time and money to get here. You would not have done this if the queen's permission was not of great value to you, would you?"

I had to admit that I was not there entirely for my health, but minimized the importance of the pictures to myself personally.

"These pictures will show the glory of Swaziland to the whole world," I protested. "I shall carry them over the great waters to all the countries and there show the people what a wonderful land this is. I will show the English, the Boers, and all others that Sebuza is a real king. I will show the entire world that the son of Buno and the grandson of Queen Labotsibeni rules one of the greatest nations in the whole of Africa!"

[199]

This oration flattered the vanity of the old queen and practically settled the question. Even the primitive Swazi values publicity. Labotsibeni agreed that we should have the royal permit to take the coronation pictures, and the next question was what I would pay. This was debated for some time. I tried to make Lomwazi set a price for the permission, while he, cunning beggar, tried to get me to make an offer.

Now the Swazi has only a few standards of value. He recognizes the fact that women, gold, gin, and cattle have values that are stable everywhere. These values are about as follows:

One gold pound buys one cow;

Five cows buy one woman;

One quart of gin buys whatever it will, according to the degree with which it is desired by a Swazi.

Five cows, however, are not a standard price for all women. Only the women of the plain people are valued at so low a figure. If the women to be bought are of good family, that is, if they are the daughters of indunas, they are worth more than five cows. I have known princesses to be bought for as much as fifty cows. These were the exception, however, since these girls were the daughters of a high chief.

I was prepared to offer cattle, gin, and money, and had brought along a certain amount of the latter. Lomwazi, however, started the deal with women as his counters. [200]

"How many young women, all maidens, are you prepared to give?" he asked.

"It would take too long a time to get the women," I objected, "and I don't wish to trade women for the permission. I am ready to pay a small amount of gin and money, and perhaps some cows, but I cannot get women now."

"Can't you get ten or fifteen women, Nkoos?" Labotsibeni asked in her husky voice. "My son, Lomwazi, has but few wives and I have so few maids. It would be very agreeable if you could get a small number of women."

Lomwazi agreed with her in this, and I had to argue for some time to get out of the woman phase of the bargaining. Oom Tuys, although he knew it was against the law for white men to buy and sell women, pooh-poohed my scruples and told me to turn him loose and he would get me all the women I wanted. However, I remained firm in my refusal and the dickering took another tack.

"Well then, we'll buy the women we need," Lomwazi said. "Mzaan Bakoor, you will have to give much gin and money, and also cows. The queen has decided that one thousand pounds, one thousand quarts of gin, and one thousand cows shall be the price."

The old queen nodded her approval. I had not seen her confer with her vizier and realized that he was acting on his own authority. This showed me his power and how much the old lady trusted him. I then set out to get the price down to where we could really talk business. I had an idea that Lomwazi did not know how many there were in a thousand, but had used that figure as a basis for the deal. [201]

When I suggested that the thousand figure was preposterous, he reminded me that it was only as many as there were men in the royal impi, thus proving that he actually knew what "one thousand" meant.

We talked back and forth, Labotsibeni every now and then putting in a word. The upshot of it all was that I agreed to pay five hundred gallons of gin, five hundred gold pounds or sovereigns, and five hundred cows for the right to take the pictures.

Oom Tuys thought I was a fool to give them so much.

"That is a tremendous price to pay for a few reels of these savages," he said; "particularly, when there is a good chance that you will not be ready to take the pictures before the coronation takes place. To protect you, I shall make them promise to keep you informed as to when the show will take place, so that you can get on the job."

He then pinned down the old queen, Lomwazi, and Debeseembie to a solemn promise that they would send me word as soon as preparations were under way to make Sebuza king. It is a point of honor among the royalty and high chiefs of the Swazis that their word is good, and this promise assured me that I would not lose my opportunity. [202]

Next came the problem of paying for the rights to take the pictures. Money I had with me, and I was soon able to buy enough cows to make up the required number. The gin, however, was not so easy. It is against the law to bring gin into Swaziland, although the authorities did not object to a few bottles being brought to the old queen. On Tuys's advice, I arranged that the five hundred gallons be brought in through Komatipoort, from Portuguese territory. This confession, I suppose, will make me liable to arrest when I return to the Transvaal. To avoid detection, the gallon jugs were each packed in bags of straw surrounded by chaff, being carried over the border by native women. They looked as though they were carrying corn, and the government officials let them pass without suspicion.

After making the payment we set out for Ermelo. We had been about a fortnight on our trip, and both Snyman and Bidy were anxious to get back. We took the short-cut by way of Mbabane and made good time, the roads being fairly hard.

We had one shock, however. When we reached the Masuto River we found that the "flu" had visited there during our absence. First the Scotch engineer had died and been buried by the Boer farmer who had given us food; then the farmer had died and been put away by the young storekeeper with the hunted eyes; and finally he had died and been hidden in a shallow grave near his store by some passing strangers. All three were gone, and this cast a gloom over our party, so that we were glad to leave the spot. [203]

The river had gone down and we were able to ford it without much trouble, although Snyman had

hard luck and fell out of the wagonette into the only deep spot.

I remembered that there were several women at the house of the dead farmer, so we went there to pay our respects and offer them any assistance we could. The house was closed and they were all gone, evidently to some of their relatives near Ermelo. We were about to return to the wagonette when I thought I saw something stirring near an orange-tree back of the house.

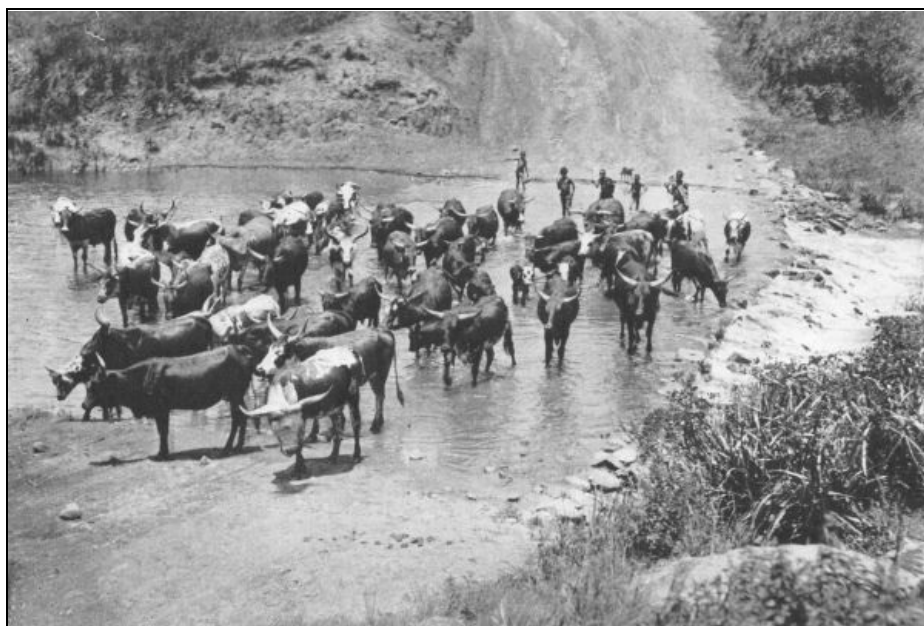
It was a "blaau app," or blue monkey, which was tied to the tree. The farmer's women had forgotten the poor beast when they went away and it was pathetically glad to see me. It must have been very hungry, for it had been eating oranges, as the skins strewn on the ground showed. It was the first time I had ever heard of a monkey eating such food. When I cut it loose, the poor thing jumped into my arms and I took it back to the wagonette, where we fed it. Bidy and Snyman soon started an argument as to what its name should be. The first wanted to call it "Labotsibeni," but the other thought "Victoria," in memory of a late-lamented Queen of England, would be a nice name. So, since it was my monkey, I called her "Jennie," whereat the others upbraided me for my lack of inspiration. To add to their iniquity, no sooner did we unpack in Ermelo than they started a preposterous yarn about how I had stolen "Jennie" from old Queen Labotsibeni. They said that the monkey was her consolation in old age and that I had decoyed it away, thus breaking the aged queen's heart.

[204]

This was not the last of "Jennie," however. The young doctor who had taken over my practice was carrying on well, and he adopted the monkey. She had the run of the place and was quite contented in her new home until one morning we were awakened by a fearful row. The peacocks next door were screeching at the top of their lungs and their owner, a gruff old Englishman, was out on the lawn using very bad language.

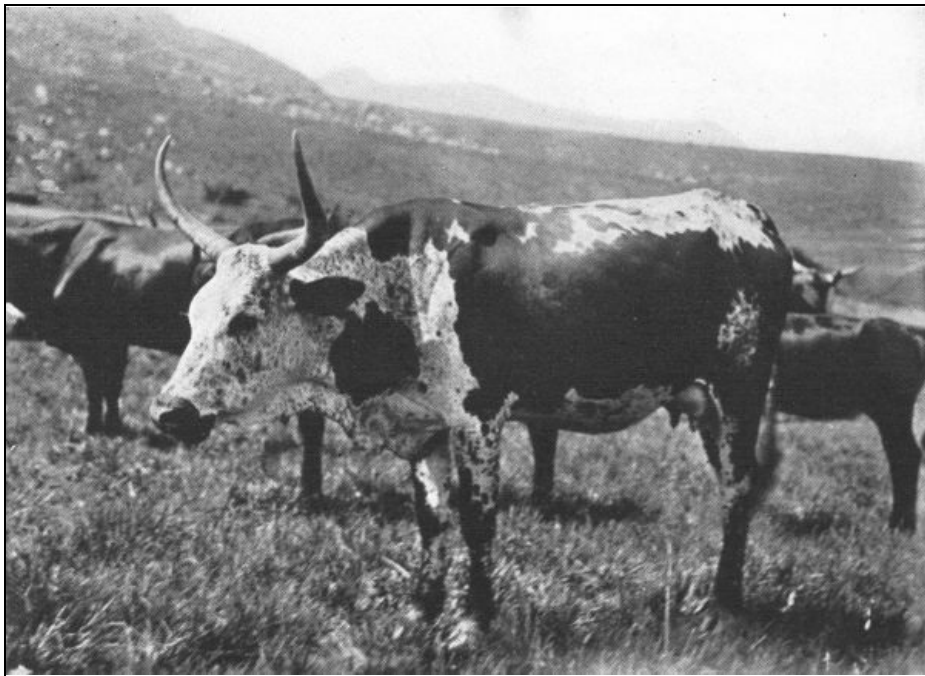
I ran out—and found "Jennie" up a tree with her hands full of the long tail-feathers from several of the proudest peacocks! It took me some time to pacify the Englishman, who demanded her life and was calling for his shotgun. Finally I smoothed the troubled waters, but "Jennie" was not allowed to run loose after that.

Having obtained the picture rights, I was anxious to have them taken properly. I scouted about, but could not find the equipment or camera-men I needed, so I decided to go to New York and get them. Oom Tuys agreed to watch things in Swaziland and delay the coronation until I could get back. I felt I could trust him to protect me, so I started to make arrangements for my overseas trip.



THE STREAM THAT DIVIDES THE ROYAL FROM THE COMMON GROUND

It was on the banks of this stream that we camped awaiting permission to enter the royal territory. This herd of cattle is being sent to the royal kraal as payment for two Princesses whom a chief has purchased as wives



TYPE OF AFRIKANDER CATTLE

These cattle are the unit of value among the Swazis and enter into every business transaction



SWAZI WOMEN AT HOME

Fashion is as inflexible in Swaziland as anywhere, but the styles do not change

This was not any too easy, because the war had disarranged sailings and there were not many ships touching at Cape Town. However, I soon saw in the paper that there was a freight steamer in port which was to sail direct to New York. I knew the skipper and telegraphed him that there was an emergency that required my sailing with him. [205]

"If you care to take a chance," he wired back, "join the ship as soon as you can."

Just as I was leaving, Tuys reached Ermelo with a message from Lomwazi that Sebuza would be crowned within the next two months. This made me all the more anxious to be gone, and I left Tuys with the understanding that he would do his best to delay the coronation until I got back from New York.

CHAPTER XIII

[206]

I start for New York—The religious atmosphere on shipboard—"Flu" attacks the Javanese—The missionaries refuse to help—Sharks as scavengers—The little mother's end—Evils of liquor—Assembling my party in New York—Passage as freight—St. Lucia

and a little excitement—The thin magistrate—Released on bail.

When I reached the ship I found the reason for the captain's peculiar telegram. He had more than three thousand Javanese on board whom he was taking from the East Indies to Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana. From there he would go on to New York. These people were practically deck cargo, since there were no accommodations for them inside the ship.

While making arrangements for my cabin, I found that there was a woman who also had to go to New York. Although my friend, the captain, objected, I gave up my cabin to her and agreed to share the cabin of an old Javanese gentleman who was supposed to be in charge of the others. He was very primitive and ignorant, but spoke Dutch fluently, and I learned a great deal about Java and the East Indies—that is, while he lived, which was not long.

The first night out of Cape Town there were twenty-four of us at the long table in the saloon. All the officers ate with us, and there must have been sixteen or seventeen passengers all told.

Most important of the passengers were seven American missionaries returning from their godly work in the waste places of Africa and the East Indies. They were most conspicuous at all times and did everything possible to keep table conversation confined to religious topics. I chummed with a Canadian who represented an American agricultural firm in South Africa, and we soon became weary of religion at all meals. [207]

"There's a place for everything in this world," he said one morning after breakfast, "but I'll be damned if I want to combine kippered herrings with my soul's salvation!"

It was not long before both of us were in the bad graces of the missionaries, who did not hesitate to murmur that "it was no wonder that the savages did not heed the call of Christ when the white men of their country were so irreligious!"

About the third day both the Canadian and I had had our fill of the missionaries. We were thinking of asking the captain to allow us to eat at another hour when something happened that changed the whole aspect of the ship. I had gone to my cabin to get some "smokes" when the little old Javanese crept in. He answered my cheerful greeting very quietly and then shut the door. I could see that something had hit him and that he wanted to talk. So I sat down on my bunk, wondering what the trouble was.

"Doctor, there is great trouble among my people," he said in a low voice. "Last night eleven of them died, and now they are dying all the time. Some terrible plague is among them and they die, they die!" [208]

This startled me. I had not noticed that there was anything amiss forward, but then I remembered I had spent practically all my time aft. Instantly there came to me the recollection of the sudden deaths of my friends at the ford of the Masuto River. I asked him what form the disease seemed to take and he gave me a lot of rambling details, none of which made much sense. He was plainly in a blue funk. I told him to stay where he was and then went to the captain's cabin.

"I was just about to send for you, Doctor O'Neil," he said in greeting. "Something has broken loose among those Java coolies and they are dying like flies. As you know, we have no doctor on board. Will you go and see what's the matter?"

Then he told me that the first officer had buried more than a dozen the first thing that morning and that he would have to throw another lot overboard by noon.

"Why, they're dying like flies," he continued, "and we've got to do something to stop it. I shipped a full three thousand of them, but at the rate they're going I won't have a thousand left when I reach Paramaribo!"

So the captain and I went into the fore-castle, taking with us the little Javanese head man. It took me about five minutes to find out what was the trouble.

"They've got the 'flu' and got it bad," I told the skipper. "It looks as though we are in for a bad time."

I was right. Here we were in the midst of nearly three thousand ignorant people who had no idea of what was the matter. All they knew was that the man who was sick now would be dead in a short time. They sat about, perfectly quiet, waiting for death. I have never seen such resignation. In the scuppers there were six or seven bodies waiting for the first officer and his burial crew. No one paid any attention to the dead; they just sat about as though stupefied by what was happening. [209]

"There's just one thing to do," I told the captain when we got back to his cabin, "and that's to organize a life-saving corps and get to work. Let's get all the medicine you have and as much brandy as there is on board and make a fight."

He agreed with me, and we overhauled the medical stores, finding little of any use in the present crisis. I have forgotten now what there was, but I remember thinking that we would have to put our trust in God and alcohol. I told the captain how inadequate his medicines were and he threw up his hands.

"Who'd ever expect to get the 'flu' on board, anyway," he asked, as though it were my fault. "I've

got all the medicines I need for the usual ailments and brandy will cure most of the sicknesses that occur on this ship. I'll give you all the brandy, rum, and gin there is, and then you go to it!"

He was panic-stricken and practically told me I was to take command of his ship, except that he would take care of the navigation and discipline. I told him the first thing I wanted was assistants, and asked him to summon all the passengers to the saloon. When they were assembled, I got up and told them what it was all about. [210]

"These poor devils of Javanese are dying like rats in a hole," I said, "and I want volunteers to help me save them. There isn't much we can do, and every time you go among them you stand a chance of catching the 'flu.' They may not be good Christians, but they are certainly our fellow men and it is our duty to help them! I want volunteers and want them now. Who will join my life-saving crew?"

Instantly the lady to whom I had given my cabin and my Canadian friend volunteered. The others followed one by one, with the prominent exception of the missionaries. I was astounded that they were not among the first, and turned to them.

"What's the matter?" I asked, by that time annoyed at their holding back. "Don't you want to practice a little practical Christianity? Are none of you going to give us a hand in this fight?"

They did not deign to answer. Instead, they looked at their leader, a tall gentleman with lean jowls, and he calmly turned and left the saloon. They trooped after him, and then our captain exploded.

"Of all the yellow dogs!" he exclaimed. "So that's the sort of people they send out as missionaries! I'd like to throw them all overboard! Why, they'll hoodoo my ship! I was brought up to believe a parson put a curse on a ship, and now I know it's so!"

Well, we pitched in and laid out our fight. It was a seemingly hopeless job. These Javanese did not appear to want to help themselves. Their only idea was to die, if they were called, and there was never a peep out of any of them. [211]

Men died and were sent to the sharks, leaving their women mute in their agony; wives and mothers died, and their men never turned a hair; children died in their mother's arms and were cast into the sea without the least outward sign.

I mention the sharks, but even now I hate to think of them. They loafed along beside the ship, their great bodies slipping easily through the water, with now and then the flash of a white belly as they turned to meet the falling body. The Javanese were dying at a rate of between fifteen and twenty a day, and we soon ran out of weights for their bodies. The sharks increased in number until it seemed as though word had been sent out that there was a "death ship" on the sea. Before long they were fighting for the bodies. I watched one such conflict, but one was quite enough.

My volunteers and I worked day and night to stem the tide of the "flu," and through it all the ship plugged along across a sea that was more like beaten brass than copper. It was hot, very hot, and at night the decks seemed to steam. Always the impi of sharks kept pace with us, their bodies throwing up streaks of phosphorescence as they lunged for their food. The whole thing was like a living nightmare and it seemed as though it would never end. [212]

Out of the haze of those ghastly days there comes to me one vivid incident. One of the Javanese women, a mother of seventeen or thereabouts, had a child of less than a year in her arms. I first noticed her when she held up her baby to me as I was going among the sufferers. The look in her eyes was so pleading, so trusting, that I took the little boy from her and examined him. The baby was as good as dead already. I gave it a sip of the stuff I was carrying, and the poor little thing opened its eyes and looked at me. I knew it could not live, but smiled encouragement as I gave it back to the outstretched arms.

It was about sunset that night when the little mother realized that her son, her first-born, had gone. I was standing on the companionway, looking down on the fore-deck and wondering how long the plague would last, when some of the crew began picking bodies out of the scuppers and throwing them overboard. The glory of the sunset seemed a mockery and the thought came to me that I would be fortunate if I saw many more such sights. Slowly the young Javanese mother got to her feet and stood swaying as she wrapped her baby in a gay shawl. This done, she pressed it to her breast and began to walk to the rail.

"She is going to bury her son herself," I thought, and I was partly right.

She stood at the rail for a moment and then, the dying sun bright on her wistful face, turned and smiled at me. I smiled back, but the smile died aborning, for with one motion she rolled over the rail and was gone! [213]

I rushed to the place and looked over. The shadow of the ship was broken by some swirling streaks of phosphorescence, and that was all. There was no sign of the little Java wife who could not live without her baby.

That night I asked the old Javanese chief about her. In his clear Dutch he told me that she was the wife of a Javanese who had gone to Guiana some months before. She was to join him and bring his son, of whom he was very proud, when he had established their home in the new land.

"Now, how can I tell him about this?" the old fellow asked. "He will want his wife and child, and I

will only have a sad story for him."

But he was spared this. Early the next morning I noticed that he was ill, and in spite of all I could do he passed away before noon. Shortly before he lapsed into unconsciousness he sent for me.

"I must go with those who have already gone," he said. "They need me and have sent for me. I can only go if I know that you, the great white doctor, will guard and care for those whom I leave behind. Will you do this?"

Naturally, I promised, and that was the last I saw of him. He was a kindly, simple, old soul and the misfortune of his people would have broken his heart, had he lived. [214]

In a little while the "flu" began to lose its grip. Fewer and fewer died each day, and I had begun to think that the end was in sight when the white lady who was going to America came down with it. She had been tireless in her efforts to help in caring for the Javanese and I was not surprised when she fell ill. She was the only white person aboard to catch the "flu." We did everything possible for her, but she died on the second day.

As her body went overboard the captain read aloud from the Bible, choosing the passage, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This struck me as particularly appropriate, since she had truly given her life for those Javanese. After her death the "flu" devil seemed satisfied and abandoned us. Before the end, however, we had lost more than twelve hundred of the Javanese!

The missionaries kept close to their cabins during the whole "flu" visitation, only appearing now and then on the afterdeck. They even gave this up as soon as the captain suggested that the wind might carry "flu" germs to them. In spite of their protestations, they had to eat with the rest of us or go hungry. The captain insisted on this point, since he felt that they deserved no consideration and it was also highly entertaining to watch their indignation when we all took a stiff nip of brandy with our meals. They spoke of what a great thing prohibition was for the United States, and every time they said it they would look meaningfully at the Canadian and me. In fact, after the "flu" left us the missionaries varied their religious conversations by giving table-talks on the evils of liquor. I remember how shocked they professed to be when I told them how much old Labotsibeni liked her toddy and how we always brought it to her when we visited Swaziland. [215]

When we reached Free Town, in the Barbadoes, an incident happened which was very amusing, but which these fanatics used to point out the evils of liquor. I knew some people there, and the Canadian and I went ashore and called on them. Of course there was "a party," and we enjoyed ourselves in free and easy fashion.

Now the ship lay about a mile off port, because there was not sufficient water to allow her to dock. We went ashore in rowboats and came back in the same way. The deck was reached by a thirty-foot ladder, which is not the safest sort of footing at best. On our return from the party my friend missed his step at the top of the ladder and fell plump into the sea. There were a number of boats about and he was fished out without difficulty. The captain and I regarded the mishap as a good joke on the Canadian, but at dinner that night the missionaries used it as the text for an extended discourse on the evils of strong drink.

One female missionary told us a story which led to a retort that is worth repeating.

"Forty-odd years ago three prominent Philadelphia doctors decided that drink and tobacco were the two great evils of the world," she said, "so they agreed never to touch either as long as they lived. They agreed that they would all meet after forty years and see how they compared with their drinking, smoking, dissipating friends. All lived up to the agreement faithfully. Then they met in Philadelphia as before, and were amazed to see how energetic, health-perfect, and generally superior they were to those who remained of their friends. They were now between seventy and eighty years old and yet were as active as men scores of years younger. [216]

"This proves conclusively," she concluded, "that all the ills of old age are directly due to drink and tobacco."

Naturally, we agreed with her. This, of course, we should not have done, since the fanatic gets no pleasure unless able to argue for his creed. My Canadian friend, however, could not contain himself.

"Dr. O'Neil told me a similar case this morning," he said quite seriously. "It was about his uncle. This uncle is now one hundred and five years old and is beginning to worry about his health. Not long ago he was talking about drink and tobacco and told the doctor here that he had smoked steadily since he was seven years old; also that since he was fourteen he had drunk like a fish. 'And look at me,' he concluded; 'look at me! I know this whiskey will get me in the end!'"

There was a roar of laughter about the table, but the seven missionaries did not join in it. Instead, we went out of their lives forever, and in the long days that followed, the skipper, the Canadian, and I spent most of our time together. [217]

The remainder of our voyage was uneventful and we finally reached New York. Here I found a cable from Oom Tuys saying that the coronation was to be held soon and advising me to return as quickly possible.

I realized that no time could be lost and rushed about the city getting my equipment and party

together. I engaged Dr. Leonard Sugden, the arctic explorer, as art and field director, William T. Crespinell as technical expert, and Earl Rossman as camera-man. Since they were to do the work, I had them buy the equipment. A feature of this was the manner in which the reels of film were packed. Knowing the difficulties of the Transvaal climate, Crespinell had them soldered in tins which were again placed in other tins. These were also soldered and the air exhausted between the outer and inner tins, so that the films practically traveled in a thermos bottle.

After assembling my party and equipment, the next step was to get the whole outfit to Swaziland. This was a terrific undertaking. The war had so disarranged the world's shipping that I spent days on the docks of Staten Island and South Brooklyn trying to find a ship that would take us to Cape Town. Finally, after almost despairing, I was able to book passage for Crespinell and Rossman on the steamer "City of Buenos Aires," which went direct to Cape Town. A day later the captain of a freighter for the same port was induced to include Dr. Sugden and myself in his cargo. He did not know when he would start, but assured me that it would be soon. [218]

This was on a Saturday, and I told Sugden to stand by and wait for word to go on board. I saw that our equipment was stowed in the forward hold of the ship, and then went up to Fairfield, Connecticut, where some friends of my Harvard days were living. They invited me to stay until I had to sail, and I settled down to have a pleasant visit. They have a fine farm and a barbecue was arranged in my honor. This barbecue was held in the woods, and we were in the midst of it when a servant came from the house with a telegram from the captain of the ship. He said that he would sail at eleven o'clock the next morning!

At once commenced a mad rush. I got Sugden's hotel on the long distance telephone, but they only knew that he had gone somewhere in the country to spend the week-end. I hurried back to New York and looked up every address where I might get information about him, but was unable to locate him. I kept trying up to the last moment, but finally could only leave word at his hotel that I was sailing. I went aboard very low in mind because his duties with my proposed expedition were of great importance.

But Sugden is one of those mortals who seldom gets left. As we swung down the bay past the Statue of Liberty, I spied a tug coming after us with great speed. In addition, she was whistling and generally acting as though she was trying to catch our freighter. We were going slowly, so that in a short time the little craft fussed up alongside—and there was Sugden waving his hand from her forward deck! A rope-ladder was lowered, and a moment later I was gleefully shaking hands with him. [219]

Now this was to be one of the most memorable voyages of my life—and I have traveled a good deal. To begin with, we had the worst accommodations I have ever endured on any vessel. Our ship was only a cargo boat and there were no passenger-cabins whatever. We slept in a sort of steerage in the hold, in company with twelve of the crew. It was the most filthy hole I was ever in and reeked with vermin, including rats of the largest and most ferocious kind. The crew were the usual scum found on such boats and were the dirtiest human beings I have ever seen. They disapproved of us—and we of them—to such a degree that I often expected they would try to do us harm. Sugden, however, took all this as part of the game, and his sporting spirit made it possible for us to exist. His experiences in the Far North had made him familiar with all sorts of white men, but I had never seen such as these. People now and then speak slightly of the kaffir, but the Swazi, with his daily ablutions, is a very superior person when compared with these so-called "white men."

When our ship reached the warmer latitudes our hole became unbearable and we moved our pallets to the poop-deck, where we managed to get some sleep in spite of the terrific rainstorms we ran into. We felt that it was better to be drowned by clean rainwater than to suffocate and die slowly in our steerage bunks. However, our miserable existence used to get on our nerves now and then and we would drown our sorrows with whatever liquor we could obtain. [220]

There was one other passenger on the boat. He was a typical American of the western type who had lived in South Africa for years. Every year he made a trip to the United States and brought back blooded stock of various kinds. He was the slap-dash, breezy kind of big-hearted soul and soon became chummy with us. Owing to the fact that he was a regular tripper on this boat, he was able to share accommodations with one of the officers.

It soon became his custom to visit us. He would sing out, "Look out below!" and then would creep down the shaky ladder which was the only means of entry to our place of misery. Always he brought a bottle, and the excellent "hootch," as he called it, did much to make our lives bearable. He was a good story-teller and would always introduce a preposterous yarn with the preface, "Now this *is* true!" We gave him quite a run for his money when it came to yarning, as both of us had been about a bit, Sugden in the north and I in the south of the world.

The first break in the monotony of this dreadful voyage came when we reached St. Lucia, in the British West Indies. This is a gorgeous bit of the tropics set in an opal sea, with cloud-covered mountain-tops that seem to rake the sky. [221]

When the ship tied up in the roadstead, Sugden and I felt that we were due to go on the loose a bit and went ashore with the express purpose of forgetting our troubles. We certainly succeeded in doing so, but ended by jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. Several of the ship's officers went with us, as they felt there were events at hand which they must not miss. Our "party" started at the first hotel we entered. This, it seems, was exclusively for the colored section of the

population, for the place fairly reeked with blacks.

After we had had several drinks, Sugden turned to me and asked:

"Well, what are we here for? What do we want?"

"Excitement!" was my answer, and we proceeded to get it.

There was a billiard-table in the room, and this, with its torn green baize, suggested a battleground. We started a series of fights between the blacks, with a prize of five shillings to each winner. The conditions of the battles were that the two blacks should fight on the billiard-table, the loser being the one knocked off. There were some gallant battles, and every winner fairly earned his crown.

The noise of the cheering drew a crowd, and soon the large bare bar-room was jammed with black boys and a sprinkling of whites. We whetted our interest by betting on the combatants, and I was doing quite nicely when the police broke in and stopped the fun. [222]

There was a squad of these funny black policemen, led by what I took to be a sergeant. They carried authority, and the blacks seemed to regard them with a great deal of respect.

The sergeant wanted to know what I was doing. I told him that I was conducting a boxing tournament for the benefit of something or other. He asked if I had "official permission," and I admitted that I had overlooked this formality.

"Then you are inciting riot and rebellion," he said in his clipped English. "I arrest you in the name of the King!"

At this, Sugden commenced to laugh. This was a great mistake, since the black sergeant seemed to think that we were scoffing at the king. Without more ado, he invited us to accompany him to the court.

"This, my dear sirs," he said severely, "is a very serious matter. It is not allowed to stir up strife in His Majesty's colonies."

The court was in an old-style Spanish house, and the room was vacant except for buzzing flies. These zoomed like infant meteors through the narrow streaks of sunlight from the long windows. The benches were worn and comfortable, and I remember dropping off to sleep with the thought that even these flies had more luck than we did, since they had sunlight and fresh air, while our home was that dreadful steerage hole.

I was awakened by Sugden's elbow. There on the high bench sat a thin old gentleman all in white. He had a thin hooked nose much like an eagle's beak, and his eyes were of the well-known gimlet type. As I took him in, the sergeant was reciting the charge against us. [223]

"These are desperate men," I heard him say, "from the ship now in the harbor. They were in the St. Lucia Hotel and were—"

"Yes! Yes!" interrupted the thin magistrate in a voice as sharp as his nose. "But what is the charge? What have they done? Never mind the oration; get to the charge!"

By this time I was wide awake. I suddenly came to a full realization that I was one of those "desperate men" and found myself deeply interested.

"They were inciting riot and rebellion," the sergeant went on, undaunted by the magistrate's impatience. "A boy ran to the police-station and said murders were being done at the hotel. I called out all the police and went there as fast as we could run. Inside the billiard-room were hundreds of whites and blacks, all shouting with their desire for blood. On the billiard-table were two black men trying to kill one another. As I watched, one struck the other. He fell from the table and the crowd cheered.

"Then this man," he went on, pointing at me, "hands money to the man on the table and says, 'You win!' After this he takes money from the other white man"—pointing at Sugden—"and tells him that he is rotten at picking fighters." [224]

"What next? What next?" the magistrate snapped.

"Then the first man demands that more men come and fight," continued the sergeant, "and there was a rush by the blacks to see who could get on the table. Then I brought my men in and arrested them both. Entirely unashamed at being arrested, this man"—again indicating Sugden—"laughs out loud when I say the name of the king!"

It seemed that we were guilty of disturbing the peace and quiet of His Majesty's island of St. Lucia and were very reprehensible characters. The lean magistrate regarded us with severe eye, and I am not surprised that he looked at us with suspicion. The voyage had not improved our looks much and we had come ashore in much-worn "ducks." In fact, we must have looked like a couple of beach-combers.

"You have heard the charge?" he snapped at us. "Guilty or not guilty?"

We were as guilty as could be, of course. Therefore we answered in one voice:

"Not guilty!"

The magistrate raised his eyebrows at our effrontery and then cleared his throat again.

"Then you'll have to stand trial," he said. "I shall admit you to bail. Five pounds each!"

We promptly produced the bail, and I think the "thin dash of vinegar," as Sugden christened him, was surprised that we had it. Certainly we did not look as though we had a shilling between us. After our pedigrees were taken, we were informed that we would be tried at "ten o'clock next Thursday morning."

[225]

Outside the court-room we found one of the ship's officers in a state of frenzy. It seems that he had been sent to get us, as the ship ought to have sailed several hours before.

"She's been blowing and blowing and blowing for you!" he informed us in an aggrieved tone, "The old man is fair beside himself with rage."

"Oh, that's what all the noise is about," Sugden innocently remarked.

Then he suggested that we take our time and stop at several places. He argued that so long as we kept the officer with us the captain would not dare to sail. But I vetoed this proposition, feeling that we had already run afoul of "His Majesty the King" and not caring to take another chance.

CHAPTER XIV

[226]

Obstinate stowaways—Free Town and a fight—Bay rum as a beverage—Sugden lets off smoke-bombs—Cape Town, a party, and some Anzacs—Oom Tuys advises haste—Through South Africa—Americans and Boers in Ermelo—Hurried visit to Swaziland for information—Mystery over the coronation—Royal gin for Labotsibeni—Debeseemie drinks and talks.

We were certainly unpopular with the skipper when we got back on board. The officers who had attended our fistic tournament had returned slightly the worse for wear, and, of course, their condition was laid at our door. In fact, we retired to our pallets on the poop-deck feeling that we had not one friend on the ship, outside of the gunner, who was heavily subsidized. It was his job to feed us, and we tipped him liberally to get us the best there was. He earned his money, however.

At dawn the next morning there was a fine explosion—the captain fairly blew up. The chief officer had discovered two stowaways, and we were wakened by his marching them up to the captain's cabin. It seems it was the duty of the commanding officer of the ship to return these stowaways to the port where they slipped on board, and the rules made him responsible for their cost until he did so. This annoyed our worthy captain exceedingly and his language was more sultry than the weather, and that is saying a great deal. In his torrent of profanity the skipper included Dr. Sugden and myself, for it seems that he held us responsible for the stowaways getting aboard the ship.

[227]

While he relieved himself of all that bad language, the two stowaways, both negroes, stood silent, although there was a baleful gleam in their eyes. They were finally told off to do some work, but flatly refused to lift a finger. Then food was denied them until they did work, and the matter reached a deadlock. The captain finally decided to put into Free Town, in the Barbadoes, and turn them over to the authorities there after making arrangements for their return to St. Lucia.

When the ship reached Free Town the captain gave strict orders that no one should be allowed ashore, adding, "particularly those two doctors!" We did not like this, as Free Town is a pleasant place and we could have found relaxation there that would have broken the tedium of the voyage. We needed the break, too, for the captain had ordered that we should not be allowed to buy any more liquor after the events at St. Lucia.

However, we had commissioned the gunner to see what he could do for us and he had gone ashore with "the old man." In a little while a busy motor-launch, with the Union Jack flying free, came chugging alongside with our worthy captain and six of the Free Town police.

They tumbled on board and announced to the stowaways that they were under arrest.

"We are, are we?" these worthies asked. "Well then, come and get us!"

[228]

They tore off their coats and shirts and waited for the attack. The police made no move, and I did not blame them. These two outcasts were the finest specimens of "fighting niggers" I have ever seen. Their torsos were ribbed with muscle and they looked fit to fight for their lives. What was more, they seemed anxious to begin!

The police shuffled their feet, and I saw that they were afraid to tackle them. The stowaways saw it, too, and became cocky. They turned on the captain and officers of the ship and let loose a flood of damaging language quite as strong as their splendid bodies. Expurgated, it ran something like this:

"You white folks think 'cause you've got some gol' braid on yer coats that yu' kin run over us!

Come on an' get us! If yu' wanter arrest us, come an' do it! Yu' aint got th' nerve! Yu're afraid, that's wot yu' are! Come on an' fight, white men, come on!"

Not one of the officers or police moved. The stowaways were right; they were afraid. Then Sugden and I broke the tension by cheering the stowaways. Like us, they were the under dogs and we were for them. We cheered and applauded their defiance, and this proved too much for the forces of law and order.

There was a wild rush, and after a few sturdy blows the stowaways were overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers. When the flailing arms stopped, they were flat on the deck with about six men sitting on each. The irons were brought and clapped on them, and the last we saw of them was when they were hustled on board the launch. [229]

While this party was going on the gunner had been busy on our behalf. He had been unable to sneak away from the captain's gig when ashore, but made up for it by doing business with the bumboat men who came alongside. From one of these he bought two cases of bay rum, paying twenty cents a quart for it. This he smuggled down into our steerage and told us about it as soon as the smoke of battle had cleared away.

Now this bay rum is not meant for drinking, although the blacks of that part of the world consume great quantities of it. I have heard that it makes them wild, and I am not surprised. It did worse than that to Sugden and me.

We started drinking it as soon as we could, and before long we reached the semi-conscious state that made life bearable. From this we went into the second stage—that of hallucinations. We went practically crazy. Sugden insisted that he was a red squirrel and I believed that I was a wild cat. We became violent and were locked in the steerage. However, they did not take our bay rum away.

Now the captain never visited our quarters, so he did not know of our plight until the end of the second day. Then he ordered that we be released. No sooner was the hatch taken off than Sugden tore up the ladder, crying out that "the wild cat" was after him. I was! Believing his assertion that he was a red squirrel, I chased him all over the boat, intent on killing him. [230]

We dashed through the officers' quarters, the captain's cabin, across the decks, up on the bridge and down again, and even got into the engine-room in our mad chase. Every one on the ship followed us, roaring with laughter. It was the funniest thing they had ever seen. Finally they captured us and brought us back to earth with buckets of sea-water.

The captain was so amused that he forgave our previous sins and became our friend. He confiscated the balance of the bay rum and put us on an allowance of one stiff drink of whiskey each evening. This helped, but it was not very much under the circumstances.

The next afternoon Sugden made a hit with the captain. The World War was not long over and the ship had a number of smoke-bombs which were supposed to be used in foiling U-boats. The gunner was in charge of them. Since they were no longer needed, the captain gave orders that they be thrown overboard.

The gunner, however, proved inept. He lighted several, and then dropped them over the stern so quickly that the fuse was extinguished without the bomb exploding. Sugden watched these manœuvres with extreme disgust. At each failure his remarks became more insulting. Finally he could stand it no longer—he had not yet fully recovered from the bay rum—and staggered up to the gunner.

"You're a fine gunner," he snorted. "Who ever heard of a gunner who couldn't make a smoke! Stand back and let an expert let 'em off!" [231]

I was deathly afraid that he might have an accident, that one of the bombs would explode and kill him. The gunner had the same idea and hurriedly withdrew. The captain called to Sugden, but he paid no attention. He lighted the first bomb, held it for an interminable time, and dropped it over. It "boomed" as it struck the water and threw out the smoke-screen in most approved navy fashion. We all cheered, partly from relief that there had been no accident. Then Sugden let off all the rest of the bombs without a failure.

"Well, you're a little bit of all right, after all," the captain said. "Come down to my cabin and I'll give you a real drink!"

From then on we had a pleasant trip. Our captain let bygones be bygones and we enjoyed the few remaining days enough to partly make up for the misery that had preceded them.

Crespinell and Rossman had arrived in Cape Town when we reached there, and came out in a motor-boat to meet us. We introduced them to our new friend, the captain, and he gave them a brief résumé of our activities during the thirty-odd days of the voyage. He gave us credit for being two of the "rarest specimens" he had ever encountered.

"The next time I ship two such wild men as these," he said, "I'll move into the fore-castle and give 'em my cabin! What's more, from now on I'm going to limit myself to one doctor a trip, and he won't be a Boer, either. These two devils did everything from start a menagerie on one case of bay rum to instigate a mutiny when we had some fighting stowaways on board." [232]

Then he gave a romantic and none too flattering account of how we had been arrested in St.

Lucia, and ended by informing my men that we were "fugitives from justice." This had not occurred to me; perhaps it is so and I shall find the funny black policeman waiting for me the next time I visit the island.

We were glad to get ashore. It is one thing to race across the Atlantic in five days on a floating palace and quite another and none-too-pleasant experience to spend more than a month on a freighter in the warmer latitudes. The solid earth welcomed our feet and we found Cape Town very gay.

After getting settled at the hotel, we started out to enjoy ourselves. Of course we chartered a motor, and our trail could easily be followed by the familiar fumes of gasoline and alcohol. The town was full of "Anzacs," Australian and New Zealand soldiers, returning from the war. They were great big reckless devils, glad to be going home and glorying in the fact that they had won the war. This led to an argument and to my taking a short and sad cruise in the "Mayflower," this being the highflown name of a typical Cape Town hack.

In one of the many places we visited during the course of our rambles, we ran into a number of "Aussies" celebrating the downfall of the Boche. They immediately noted Dr. Sugden's sombrero and greeted him as a "Yank." This was all right, but soon they added a familiar remark, "The Yanks won the war; oh yes, they did!" and Sugden became indignant. The usual argument ensued. Words ceased when Sugden slammed his hat on the ground and offered to lick them all. A second later we were in the center of a fine mêlée, which was ended by the military police breaking in. [233]

Sugden was badly used up and some of the rest of us were severely bruised. The nearest vehicle was the "Mayflower," so we piled the "fighting Yank" into it and took him back to the hotel. He had been badly damaged, so that it was a week before we were able to travel.

In the meantime Oom Tuys had sent me several telegrams in which he urged me to hurry. In one there was the phrase, "Tzaneen making trouble; maybe war," and this sounded as if we were in for an interesting time when we reached Swaziland. I did not understand how she could do anything unless she tried to take the throne for Sebuza by force, but the situation looked as though there was some excitement ahead.

Sugden was still recuperating from his battle with the Australians and expected to remain in bed for a few days more when this wire reached me. I showed it to him and he immediately became excited.

"Come on, let's go" he said, getting out of bed. "We're wasting time here. Let's get into Swaziland and see what's doing." [234]

We left next day for the Transvaal. It is a long journey, but to one who has not made it before there is much of interest.

After leaving the coast there come the beautiful mountain passes of the Cape Colony. Then the train drops to the Karoo Desert, with its endless brown stretches broken only by dry rivers, near which can be seen great herds of sheep. Kimberley, with its barrenness and huge dumps of dark, diamond-washed soil comes next, and finally the Great Fish River is crossed to the grassy plains of the Orange Free State. Across these plains the train runs for hundreds of miles, and then comes the Vaal River, after which the veldt of the Transvaal is reached. After a while the huge smoke-stacks and great white ore-dumps of Johannesburg loom, and the journey is practically ended.

My companions were keen to hear all about this country, so new to them, and I was kept busy running from side to side of the car supplying their thirst for information. Dr. Sugden, I found, was well up on the history of the country and would often supply a missing date when I related the romantic story of the Boer and British conquest of South Africa.

We spent several days in Johannesburg, and my companions were delighted with it. They frequently commented on its being like an up-to-date American city, as they found practically everything there that they would expect in the United States. In fact, Sugden was loud in his praises of the telephone service, which he insisted was "almost as good as that at home." The city has developed extensively during the last twenty years and now has buildings, hotels, and streets of the most modern type. The great contrast lies in the character of the street traffic. There are hundreds of motors of all kinds, but there are also innumerable rickshaws drawn by Zulus, thousands of kaffirs, and not a few horse-cabs. [235]

Then, of course, the huge mine-dumps right in the heart of the city struck my companions as extraordinary, but it must be remembered that the city grew up after the mines were sunk. There are miles and miles of smoke-stacks, and the crushing of the ore mills can always be heard. My party was much impressed by Parktown, the millionaires' suburb to the north of the city. Here there are libraries, a zoological garden, and all things essential to a thoroughly equipped and prosperous city. I have many friends in Johannesburg and my companions had a pleasant time visiting them with me.

They had their first view of a real Boer village when we landed in Ermelo a few days later. The morning we reached there we saw several score of Cape carts loaded with farmers and their wives coming to town to shop. Then there were several of those great canvas-topped freight wagons, drawn by seven or eight span of wide-horned oxen and driven by a number of kaffir [236]

boys. These walk alongside with their long goads, and the entire progress of the caravan is one long shout. With the yelling of the kaffirs, the creaking of the great wagon, and the frequent lowing of the oxen, the noise of such an outfit is as striking as is its picturesque appearance.

Sugden was intensely interested in these great freight trains, and reminded me of their similarity to those which made the overland trail in the States during the days of the forty-niners. The heavy-set men riding beside the wagons particularly impressed him.

"Why, they are the same men that settled the West of my country," he exclaimed. "Their steady eyes and great beards remind me of the days of Crockett and Boone. Their rifles, ready for instant use, carry out the picture. Fred Remington would have been crazy over these ox-teams!"

I noted that the interest was not all on our side; these farmer Boers were quite as curious about us as we were about them. They called each other's attention to our strange clothes, and not a few looked with envy at Dr. Sugden's sombrero. He was right about these men. They are the true pioneer breed, the men who found and make empires!

Oom Tuys was not in Ermelo. One of his boys was waiting for me, however, with a message that preparations were being made for the coronation at Lebombo, but that Labotsibeni had made no sign as yet. He assured me that I need not worry and that he would join me at Ermelo in a day or two. [237]

I commenced assembling our expedition, and while I was so occupied my companions visited about and made many friends among the Boers. None of them had ever seen any Americans, although they had heard much of the United States, and they were greatly interested in everything the latter said and did. In fact, word reached the outlying districts that some Americans were in Ermelo and several hundred Boers trekked in to see them. Of course my companions could not talk Dutch and it was seldom that an interpreter could be found. It was no unusual thing for several great, bearded Boers to shake hands with them and say, "Hello, America!" this being the extent of their English. Sometimes conversations would take place in very broken English, the Boers always wishing to get news from the outer world.

I remember one such talk. The Boer was a sort of preacher and was fairly well read. He spoke English of a kind—that is, it was understandable. He caught Sugden and me when we were returning from looking over some oxen and asked us a question that had been perplexing him. I translate his words into ordinary language, as otherwise they would be difficult to understand.

"The war is over, yes?" he asked. "And America sent more than two million men and spent hundreds of millions of pounds. England, France, and the others will take much from Germany and Austria, but America says she will take nothing. Is this so?" [238]

"Yes, that's right," Sugden answered.

"Why is America so foolish?" he asked in a puzzled way. "She loses thousands of men and millions of money, and yet wants nothing from Germany! Why did she go into the war?"

This question was not asked so often in those days, and I was curious to hear Sugden's reply.

"America went into the war to save herself," the doctor answered positively. "If Germany had won, she would have had to fight her alone, so she went in to avoid such a war."

This satisfied the greybeard, but he went off muttering, "America wants nothing! America wants nothing! Such a foolishness!"

Naturally, he could not understand this. Every time the Boers made war they gained territory, as did the British, and he judged from his own experience. I was glad that Sugden had stated the facts, instead of the old cant about America fighting to "save civilization." I know the old Boer would not have understood that and would have regarded it as what Sugden called "bunk."

I had about finished assembling our outfit when Tuys came. He brought word that the coronation was indefinitely postponed, so we settled down to wait a bit before starting for the wilds of Swaziland. As usual, the unexpected happened. One of Tuys's men came to Ermelo in hot haste, bearing word that the coronation was to take place as soon as possible. [239]

This was disconcerting information, and Tuys and I held a council of war.

"I don't believe that they intend having the coronation right away," he said. "I don't think that Sebuza has been properly consecrated yet."

"Well, you know what we've just heard," I said. "I wish we could get some first-hand information about it. I'd hate to lose out after all the trouble I've taken."

"Owen, lad, there's just one thing to do—let us make a quick trip to Zombode and find out about it," my uncle advised.

We talked the matter over for some time, and that seemed to be the only solution. There were still a few details of our expedition to be attended to, but I turned these over to Sugden and made up my mind to leave next morning.

Dawn saw Oom Tuys and me on the trail. We rode fast ponies and went unattended. What food we needed we carried in saddle-bags, and the most weighty part of our load consisted of several bottles of gin. These, of course, were a necessity.

The trip proved uneventful. The weather was good and we were able to sleep out comfortably. We skirted around Mbabane, since it would not do for Mr. Commissioner Dickson to know that Tuys was going into Swaziland.

When we reached Zombode we found Lomwazi on guard at the royal kraal. He came out to meet us and received our gift of gin with rather poor grace. He seemed uneasy and not at all glad to see us. We asked to see Queen Labotsibeni. [240]

"Nkoos, the queen is not well and cannot see you," he answered, lying badly.

"But she sent for me," Tuys said, catching his eye and meeting lie with lie. With the assured air of the white man, he was able to tell his lie convincingly.

We knew that we would be caught if we allowed Lomwazi to return to the old queen alone, so we dogged his footsteps and arrived at her hut with him. Tuys fairly pushed in ahead of Lomwazi, and a moment later was talking to Labotsibeni.

"Nkosikaas, mother of Buno the Great," he said, "I, the White King of Swaziland, am here to do your bidding. Your son, Lomwazi, told me that you are not well and I have brought Mzaan Bakoor, the great doctor, to cure you."

I could see the old woman seemed very feeble. She nodded approval as Tuys finished and answered by asking for gin. Lomwazi pulled out the glass stopper and a moment later held the earthenware cup to his mother's lips. She gulped and choked, then repeated her action, and finally finished the drink, gasping for breath.

We sat and watched and saw a transformation. As the alcohol went down we saw her strength return. In a few minutes she was the same old queen I had known before. Lomwazi squatted behind her with sullen look. When he glanced our way there was murder in his eyes, and I did not like it. Tuys, always reckless and utterly fearless, gave him glance for glance, and the black man's eyes always fell. [241]

"I am cured, Nkoos," Labotsibeni began in quite a strong voice. "I am well. The 'muti' of the white man cures all ills of the body, even when it numbers the years as the leaves of the trees. Why have you come to see me?"

"I wish to know when you plan to make your grandson, Sebuza, the son of Buno, king of Swaziland," Tuys answered without fencin. He thought that a direct answer might get the truth.

"When all is ready Sebuza will be made king," she answered without hesitation, and it seemed to me there was the ghost of a smile on her lips.

Tuys then asked her how soon that would be, but she said she did not know. This time I was sure she smiled. I had a feeling that we would get no information out of her and that Zombode was not any too anxious for the coronation.

Tuys then asked for Sebuza and wanted to know where he was. The blind old queen let Lomwazi answer us, and the wily vizier said he did not know, but that he thought the crown prince was in the mountains being consecrated.

According to the ancient customs, before the new king takes office he must go through a lengthy ceremonial in the mountains. This usually lasts for two months, or "two moons," and the priests, or witch-doctors, are in charge of the rites. In the case of Sebuza the sanctification was also the celebration of his attaining manhood. [242]

After Lomwazi's evasive reply—for I felt that he was lying—Labotsibeni began to ask questions. I knew that we must answer them in detail if we wished to get any further information, so we did so. She became quite peevish when the effect of the gin wore off and was nothing but a querulous old woman. But she asked the most extraordinary questions! I realized more than ever that she had brains, for she went from one end of the world to the other. Of course she had no education as we know it, but she asked about the Boers and British and how they were getting along together, "lying in the same bed," as she put it.

She had heard that all the white men were at war with one another, and she asked question after question about the world conflict. It seems that aéroplanes had flown over parts of Swaziland during the war, and she was curious about these. They had been described to her as great birds carrying men and guns, and she wanted to know how it was done.

Tuys and I kept our patience and answered everything we could, always trying to get a stray bit of information concerning Sebuza's coronation. She had several drinks of gin during the talk, which ended after about three hours with our being no wiser than when we came. Once or twice we thought the news was coming, but each time the watchful Lomwazi stepped into the breach and turned the subject. We were completely baffled. [243]

Finally we gave it up. As we made our farewell speech, in which we wished the old queen "long life and good health," I offered her the "going-away present." Then ensued an incident that showed how keen she was in spite of her great age and lack of sight.

The gin bottle was an unusual shape; that is, it was long and tall, instead of being squat and square. When I handed it to her she passed her hands over it with rapidity and then asked what it was, for she had never had a bottle like it before.

"It is royal gin," I assured her. "It is gin that is made only for kings and queens. It is the gin that the queen of the English drinks. It is the only gin worthy of you, Nkosikaas!"

This satisfied her and she accepted our farewell, so we went back to our horses. Tuys was amused at the old queen's keenness and told me I had committed treason by making the Queen of England drink gin to placate a Swazi potentate. Lomwazi came with us to do the honors, though really he wanted to make sure we did not talk to any one and get information. He was still sullen and suspicious, and we pointedly did not present him with the gin he hoped for, although he saw that we had several bottles left.

"It's no use, Owen," Tuys said, as we rode down the trail to the Valley of Heaven. "They are planning something, and I fear it means trouble for that cub, Sebuza. I have a feeling that we ought to get our outfit here and sit tight and watch events. Something is going to happen. It may be a new king or a dead crown prince. I can't tell which." [244]

That night we camped near a kraal of one of the minor indunas and noted that there was less cordiality than usual. Tuys strolled over to the great fire and talked for some time with the warriors. In a little while he came back quite excited.

"Debeseembie, Lomwazi's brother, is over there," he said. "He is inside the kraal, but some of his men let out the fact that he was there. I wonder what he is doing? Suppose we try and find out."

This seemed a good idea, and Tuys went about it in his own cunning way. He strolled over to the fire and told one of the warriors that he had a bottle of gin for Debeseembie, but that he would only deliver it to him personally. Then he came back to where I was stretched on my blankets.

Now a Swazi, like all other kaffirs, will do anything for alcohol, even to the sacrifice of his royal dignity. Debeseembie was the son of a queen and the brother of the late King Buno; nevertheless, he was standing respectfully nearby within a few minutes.

"Nkoos, you have a present for me?" he asked, and I could see his eyes flash in anticipation.

"Yes, if you will sit and talk a while," I told him, and then produced a bottle. Tuys poured out a generous drink and gave it to him. Debeseembie choked it down, just as the kaffirs always do, and then gasped for breath for a moment. [245]

Then Tuys began talking about many things, none of them with much bearing on the information we wanted. In a little while Debeseembie had another drink. He is the most sincere of all the royal family and I have always found him to be very trustworthy. He is not a good liar and seems to know it.

Gradually we led the conversation to the coming coronation and finally asked him the leading question: How soon will it be? He was not angered and gave us the first direct intimation of the trouble we had suspected.

"My brother, Lomwazi, doesn't want it to take place," he said; "and he has great power over our mother. He frightens her by telling her that she will have to die when Sebuza is crowned. All the people of Swaziland want to have a king and are tired of Labotsibeni and Lomwazi, and Tzaneen is working for her son's coronation. No one can tell when Sebuza will be made king. It may be never!"

That was what we wanted to know. Debeseembie, always at the old queen's elbow, ought to know what he was talking about and we felt that he had told the truth. A few moments later I gave him our last bottle of gin and he stumbled back to his kraal.

Next morning we were up at dawn, striking back to Ermelo as fast as we could go. Again we skirted Mbabane, but nevertheless made good time. Tuys was very thoughtful during most of the trip, and I cannot remember that he had anything to say until we came in sight of Ermelo. [246]

"Well, it looks as if our friends in Swaziland need some one to make up their minds for them," he said in a musing way. "However, I don't want to have to do it!"

I glanced at the cunning old man, but he was looking into the dust ahead and did not amplify his remark. It was an interesting thought, however, and it did offer one way out of our difficulties.

CHAPTER XV

Outfitting for Swaziland—Our cook becomes "Gunga Din"—Lomwazi's messenger—Off for Zombode—Rossman goes hunting—Too much rain—The oxen die and are replaced by donkeys—Sneaking liquor through Mbabane—Ezulweni mosquitoes rival New Jersey's—We are very unpopular in Zombode—Manaan's damage suit and settlement. [247]

Dr. Sugden and the others were waiting for me at the house. They were all ready to start and impatient to be off. The novelty of Boer life in Ermelo had worn away and they now were keen to be out among the Swazis.

"Let's go!" was Sugden's chant. "Come on, let's start! All the things are packed, the wagon's set, and the oxen are eating their heads off. Come on, let's go!"

I assured him that we would be off as soon as possible, and added that he would find plenty of hard walking to use up his surplus energy once we started trekking. Tuys and I, as the old-timers of the party, made a thorough inspection of the wagon and outfit. We had trekked practically all over the Transvaal and Orange Free State at various times and our equipment was all that could be needed for the job in hand.

The wagon was one of the great freight-carriers used so extensively in South Africa. It was along the lines of the old American "prairie schooner," except that it was much bigger and heavier in every way. It was about eighteen feet long by ten wide and could safely be loaded up to three or three and a half tons. Its wheels were squat and heavy, with broad tires built to prevent their cutting into soft roadways and to roll over the dust of dry weather without sinking into it. The rear half of the wagon was covered with a top, or tent, under which a permanent bed was built. This bed was of the primitive plain-board kind, but saved us from having to sleep on the wet earth on many occasions. When we started out the wagon was drawn by eleven span, or twenty-two oxen. Three Swazi boys were in charge of it and were responsible for its animals. [248]

Then, chiefly for our personal convenience, I had pressed the wagonette into service, and this was drawn by six mules. Sibijaan and Tuis were in charge of this part of the outfit.

I must not forget our cook. He was a most important member of the expedition and came through it in a most remarkable manner—always on the job and always ready to work a little harder. He was an Indian, that is, a native of India who had come to the Transvaal as servant to a British officer during the World War. His right name became lost early in our association. It was a long, three-barreled sort of name, quite melodious, but not handy for trek use. When I was inspecting our equipment I asked him his name again, and he calmly answered, "Gunga Din, Sahib."

"Since when? When did you change your name?" I asked, surprised that he had relinquished his proud paternal patronymic.

"Yesterday, Sahib. The sahib with the large hat says that he can't remember my name and tells me that from now on I shall be known as 'Gunga Din.'" [249]

Investigation showed that Sugden became fed up on the long, beautiful name of our cook and had firmly given him one that was easy to remember.

"Gunga Din's easy to remember," he explained. "Gunga Din and Rudyard Kipling go together, and you surely can't forget them both. G. Din made R. K. famous, and it's a cinch to remember the cook's name that way. Anyhow, we'll be calling him 'Din' as soon as we get going!"

And he was right. The chef with a name like a great poet became "Din" and remained "Din" until we returned from Swaziland.

The great wagon was heavily loaded with all the dunnage and impedimenta needed for our expedition, among which were gin and a number of mysterious cases I had personally seen packed in New York. My companions did not know what was in them until late in our expedition, but when they found that I had nearly one hundred pounds of glorious five-and-ten-cent-store jewelry they realized that I knew a bit about the kaffir character.

Of course we had all the weapons we could use. The best sporting rifles and revolvers were part of the equipment, though I hoped that we should not have occasion to use them except for pot-hunting. Things will happen in Swaziland, however, and Tuys was a great believer in foresight. [250]

After our rigid inspection of the outfit we returned from the kraal to the house, where the whole party assembled for dinner. During the meal a discussion arose as to whether it would not be a good idea to start immediately and work our way into Swaziland on the chance of being able to get action. Tuys maintained that we ought to start at once and hinted mysteriously that the coronation might be arranged whether Labotsibeni liked it or not. Knowing his propensity for taking chances and his liking for trouble, I hesitated to encourage this idea. Sugden, of course, wanted action and rather welcomed the thought of trouble. Crespinnell was neutral, taking the stand that anything was better than "sticking around Ermelo," while Rossman said he did not care whether he took pictures of peace or war. But the matter was taken out of our hands.

At about dawn next morning Sibijaan came hammering on the door of my room. I jumped up and let him in.

"Mzaan Bakoor, there is a messenger outside from Zombode," he announced. "He came in the night and would not wait any longer. He says he must see you now."

I had the man in. He was one of the old "king's messengers," but without his distinguishing sign. His lean, hard body and muscular legs would have singled him out, though.

"Nkoos, Lomwazi sends me to bring you a message," he said, with his hands outstretched in salute. "He says that Sebuza will be made king at the next new moon." [251]

Looking back, it seems to me that we must have made a peculiar tableau there in the bedroom dimly lighted by the coming sunrise. The savage, with his great shield, knob-kerrie, and assegai, and the white man in his pajamas! I will admit that the white man had his finger on the trigger of a little 44-caliber bulldog revolver during the first part of this interview. One does not take

foolish chances in South Africa.

I asked the messenger for further details about the coronation, but all I could learn was that Sebuza had been in the mountains undergoing sanctification for the last six weeks and would return to Lebombo before the new moon.

Sibijaan took care of the Swazi and saw that he was fed and given a little drink. After which he took to the trail again, and I saw him fade into the distance at a dog-trot just about the time we were finishing breakfast.

His news decided the argument of the night before. The oxen were inspanned, the mules also, and about noon we started off on our trek for Zombode. The expedition had been the talk of Ermelo for some time, and practically every white man and most of the kaffirs were on hand to cheer and give us a rousing send-off. Many of our friends walked with us until we crossed the little bridge and were lost in the willow-groves along the river trail.

This first day the roads were excellent and we made the best speed of any day of the trip. Before night we had gone a full twenty miles, stopping at the fine farm of an old-fashioned Boer. Instead of camping in the open, as we had to do for practically all the rest of the expedition, we stopped with the farmer. I did this because I wanted my American associates to see how real Boers live. We had a regular Boer supper, consisting of grilled meats, such as chops, hearts, liver, kidneys, and Boer bacon; crushed mealies, rye bread, and coffee. There was an abundance of all this and it was cooked to the queen's taste. The twenty-mile trek, during which we walked every foot of the way, had given us wonderful appetites and we were able to do more than justice to the quantities of food set out. [252]

Following supper the old Boer became solemn, as is the custom after the evening meal, and led us in religious services. No matter how poor or how humble, the true Boer never forgets his "night prayers." This is his heritage from those Huguenot ancestors. It was impressive to see my American companions bow their heads silently as the old farmer recited his devotions.

Prayers over, we went to the "parlor," whose chief ornaments were almost priceless relics and skins, and staged an amateur musicale. There was a good piano and we had our ukelele. What more could be desired? All the kaffirs in the neighborhood gathered outside and fairly wept for joy. It was a splendid concert, considering the talent, and made a great hit with the farmer and his wife. [253]

Next morning we were inspanned and on our way by dawn. It was raining, and this made it look like bad going all day. The farmer and his wife were up as soon as we, and had rusks and hot, strong coffee for us. It was chilly, and the coffee was a good "pick-me-up" before a day's trek. Before we left the Boer made us promise to stay a week with him on our return from Swaziland. He said he would arrange a feast for us and we would be able to play our "hand-fiddle" for all his neighbors.

By ten o'clock we had made about seven miles, and camped for breakfast on the shores of a small lake. Our progress had been much delayed by the rain, and this made the walking disagreeable as well. We were very hungry for breakfast and Din performed wonders, considering that the rain continued until an hour after we had finished. After a short rest we started on again, and by four o'clock we had reached the banks of the Masuto River. Here we made a good camp, pitching two additional tents, so that we would have a mess-room and cook-house with which the rain could not interfere. This camp was chiefly memorable for the fact that Rossman almost had an "adventure." While Din was getting supper ready the camera-man took a rifle and went along the river with the intention of shooting something. He had been gone only a few minutes when we heard a shout, followed by a shot. Sugden and Crespinnell rushed to Rossman's assistance, each with a rifle. They reached his side to find him gazing fearsomely at a large snake whose back had been severed by his bullet. It was a dramatic moment—especially when Sugden picked up the snake and pointed out the fact that it must have been dead for a week or more! [254]

That night we were all very tired and went to sleep as early as possible. Next morning, true to my Boer upbringing, I was up and about before dawn. Coffee and rusks were ready soon after, and my companions were awakened to face their third day's trek. Of course we could walk faster than the oxen, so I pushed ahead as I knew that there was a Mapor kraal a short distance away. We reached the kraal about five miles ahead of the wagons, and this gave me time to show the others their first native settlement.

All the men were away, only women and children being at home. These all seemed to belong to a small chief of the tribe, and they informed me that he was away on a hunting trip. Sugden and the others were intensely interested in everything they saw and I arranged for them to inspect the interior of a number of the huts.

I soon noticed that all the women were much taken with Rossman; in fact, they could hardly keep their eyes off him. I found by questions that they were fascinated by his great horn-rimmed glasses. The upshot was that we allowed a certain few of these dusky Eves to try the glasses on, and they were much amused thereat. We distributed about five shillings among them and they treated us to tswala and brought us a number of fresh eggs. [255]

In a little while the wagons hove in sight and camped near the kraal for breakfast. Scraps of wood and "buffalo chips" made our fire, and presently Din had a good "feed" ready. While the cooking was going on the little kaffirs gathered about the camp in numbers. Some of them even

drove their goats close so that they might see the white men eat. By the time we began breakfast there were more than forty of these little beggars squatting on their haunches near the table. They watched every motion most intently and followed each morsel to its destination. Every now and then I would take a piece of lump sugar and, without looking, throw it in their direction. Instantly there would be the fiercest sort of a scramble for the tidbit. They were rough beyond reason, and every now and then one of them would be hurt and crawl away for a few minutes until he had recovered. Never, however, would he cry out or show that he felt the pain. No sooner did our wagons leave the spot than there was a wild rush to where we had been. They fought furiously over every scrap in the hope of finding food that the white men had thrown away.

We kept steadily on until five o'clock that night, and then made camp. When Din gave the supper-call at about eight o'clock, Sugden and I went to the mess-tent to find Crespinnell and Rossman sound asleep on the floor. They were worn out by the steady walking and I did not blame them for taking it easy. After a "shot" of Picardy brandy, we all sat down to the best supper Gunga Din had yet given us. There was soup, chicken curry, rice, vanilla pudding, canned fruits, and coffee. Truly, a feast for a trek supper!

[256]

That night Sugden and the others were kept awake for some time by the howling of several jackals. They suggested that they take their rifles and go out and "get some of those infernal beasts!" I had to explain to them that it would be exactly like trying to shoot the shadow of a ghost, and they went back to bed grumbling heartily.

The next day was a bad one, rain making our progress slow and miserable. I wanted to reach a certain point, and we forced the oxen until noon before stopping. This trek had been too long and hurt the brutes so that their spirit seemed broken. We camped among some very rugged hills, and here Dr. Sugden showed us all how to handle tents and ropes in wet weather. The ease with which he tied and untied knots in the ropes astounded our kaffirs and filled the rest of us with envy.

The rain increased, and soon everything became soaked. It was such a downpour that we decided to wait for it to slacken and ended by remaining in this camp for two days. Our only amusement was to watch Tuis, the Basuto-Bushman kaffir, in his perpetual conflict with the other boys. Being of a different breed, he did everything in a way all his own and, in addition, was naturally antagonistic and sulky.

[257]



**ON THE WAY TO THE ROYAL KRAAL AT ZOMBODE
Dr. O'Neil and party going through the Valley of Heaven. The
barren mountains in the distance show the rugged nature of the
country**



THE SECOND TRIP INTO SWAZILAND
The O'Neil caravan shortly after the draft-oxen had died and were replaced by mules and donkeys



MOTHER FEEDING HER BABY



MAIDEN SINGING TO THE CROWN PRINCE SEBUZA
She is playing on the native instrument which consists of a bow

and one string

In spite of the picturesqueness of this camp, we were very glad to leave it. We were now in the wild country, with no farms, and the only break in the monotony was a little wild goose shooting shortly before we reached the Swaziland border. Our real troubles began about this time. The oxen began to die, and it was not long before we were absolutely stalled. We were then in camp on the border, and it looked as though we would stay there unless I was able to get some other animals to pull the wagon.

Finding further progress impossible, I scouted about and ran into a kaffir living on the border who had a horse. I hired this steed—a sorry one it was—and, following a tip given me by its owner, rode twelve miles to see if I could talk business with a small Swazi chief who was said to have a number of donkeys.

At first this old chief did not want to talk about donkeys at all, and it was not until I began to talk payment first and donkeys last that he consented to get down to business. We finally made a deal, and it was this: I was to pay him the equivalent of one pound sterling in gin for every day I used his donkeys. This was not such a bad bargain because I had to have about forty of the little animals to make up for the oxen I had lost.

The most interesting part of this transaction was to see the chief's men harness the donkeys to our big wagon. They used bits of weed-rope, rawhide, and a stout grass rope that they make themselves. The harnessing took a long time and we were delayed until I began to grow impatient, but there was nothing else to do but wait. Finally we were off, but it was a funny looking caravan. It had been raining hard for some days and we presently came to a little stream which was much swollen. Here we had a terrible time. The "harness" kept breaking, and the way the natives thrashed those poor donkeys was frightful. It seemed to be the only method, though, and eventually we took a hand in the punishment ourselves. [258]

The night of the second day saw us camped at the foot of the mountain that leads to the village of Mbabane. We found several other transport wagons there, with three white traders whose occupation was to carry goods from Ermelo and Carolina, the two rail stations, to Mbabane and vice versa. These traders were much interested in our outfit, and by treating them to drinks, fresh food, and the payment of one pound sterling I was able to hire twelve donkeys from their caravans to assist us to the top of the mountain. We started at dawn next day, and by noon had reached the summit. There we rested for the balance of the day.

My object in delaying there all the afternoon was mainly on account of the great load of liquor in the big wagon. I did not want to bring this through Mbabane in daylight because I had no permit to bring it into Swaziland and I did not want to get caught doing so. I thought that I could get by practically unobserved if I waited until after dark and then went through the village with other wagons. Our camp at the top of the hill was about three miles from Mbabane, and I ordered Sibijaan to inspan and start on again at five o'clock. This would bring him to the village at about eight o'clock, or shortly after dark. [259]

We went ahead and called on Mr. and Mrs. Dickson, who gave us tea. It was real English tea and we enjoyed it immensely. The Dicksons had heard of our expedition and were much interested. Mrs. Dickson, however, was greatly amused at our capacity for tea, since we each drank between five and six cups. But we were dead tired and it was wonderful to shut out the whole of Swaziland and sit down in this cozy English home to drink decent tea poured by a white woman!

After thanking the Dicksons, I went to the little store and bought some supplies. I also went to the hotel and bought some liquor, this being merely for camouflage, as I wished them to think I needed it. The supplies and liquor I gave to a native carrier, telling him to take it to the place where we expected to camp for the night. There were six packages in all, weighing about forty-five pounds, and it was amusing to see this kaffir summon five others to help him. Each Swazi, carrying his shield, knob-kerrie, and assegai, started for our camp with a little parcel on his head.

The wagon was late. I began to be worried, for I had estimated that it would arrive in the village about eight o'clock. I spent a nervous hour or so waiting for it to show up, but it did not do so till about 9:30. I told Sibijaan to proceed to the camping place about two miles further on, and we pushed ahead to be on hand when it arrived. [260]

Soon we ran into a typical wonder-sight of that part of the country. I had noticed a red glow in the sky off to the left, and on turning a little hill we saw that the whole side of a mountain was one tremendous fire. While this was at its worst, or most glorious, height, the great red African moon came up over the mountain like a huge ball of flame. The whole scene was so striking that Sugden insisted we ought to take a picture of it. We hurried back to the wagon and found a number of Swazis trailing it out of curiosity. With the aid of a box of cigarettes, I pressed twelve of them into service and got the cameras to the spot from which we wanted to take the picture. While we were doing this little Swazis seemed to spring up out of the ground, and before we had finished there must have been at least four score of them wondering what the white men were trying to do.

Sibijaan saw a chance to air his superior knowledge and I heard him telling these little fellows a preposterous yarn.

"You see those black boxes?" he said, pointing to the cameras. "Well, those are the magic boxes of Nkoos Mzaan Bakoor, the great white witch-doctor. He will look at the fire through them and

soon it will go out. If he is offended, he can make the fire burn up the whole country and kill all the Swazis!" [261]

I was afraid to look back and note the effect of this beautiful lie, but I heard the kaffir exclamation of wonder—"Ou! Ou!"—from a dozen throats and decided that my trusty henchman had gotten away with it.

By the time we had packed our cameras again the wagons had caught up with us and we went on. The spot I had picked for the camp was under a small grove of palm trees across a little stream, and we arrived there to find that the six carriers had started a fire. It was about midnight when our wagons reached camp, and soon after we rolled up in our blankets and dropped off to sleep just where we stood.

Next morning we started down the steep slopes into the Valley of Heaven. This was a very dangerous descent for the wagons, so that it was after midday before we reached the floor of the valley. The poor donkeys were completely exhausted, and we camped there until next day.

The Valley of Heaven was certainly living up to its name. It was never so lovely, and my companions were enthusiastic in its praise. I pointed out to them the Place of Execution and Sheba's Breasts as we came down the mountain, and they immediately decided they would visit both before returning to Ermelo.

Although I remember the beauties of the Valley of Heaven as though it were yesterday, still the difficulties that befell us there made me at that time regard it as the "Valley of Hell." We had come down about two thousand feet and the climate was hot, moist, and uncomfortable. Our energy was sapped, the donkeys were worn out, and our kaffir boys were lazy beyond all use. [262]

The trail ahead consisted of a succession of low hills cut by little streams. Many of the inclines were steep, and I estimated that we would be lucky if we made five or six miles a day. It was practically impossible to judge distance, and this led me into error. I had picked out a camping spot seemingly about six miles away, and Sugden and I started to walk to it. The grass was six feet high in most places and full of deadly snakes. Few of the little streams were fit to drink, and the farther we walked the farther the chosen spot seemed to recede. Finally we saw a fair-sized stream which we thought was two miles away, but which turned out to be nearer four. When we reached it we drank, after straining the water through our handkerchiefs. We were very hot and uncomfortable, and were made supremely unhappy by the realization that the wagon could not reach us for at least two days.

There was nothing to do but go back, and we finally reached the outfit at sunset. The donkeys were completely exhausted, so we camped right there. I realized that for the last thirty miles before reaching the royal kraal at Zombode we would be lucky if we made three or four miles a day.

Because of this experience I changed our trek time. Instead of trying to make it in daylight, we did most of our traveling by dark. This helped a little, but we failed to make more than a mile every two hours, even when the going was good. To add to the misery of the trek, the mosquitoes tormented us continually. However, these pests introduced a little comedy into our suffering, for my companions would recall the mosquitoes of New Jersey, U. S. A. and compare them with those of South Africa. [263]

Crespinell summed up the comparison when he said:

"For brutality and ruthlessness these 'skeeters take the biscuit, but the New Jersey breed have got 'em skinned a mile when it comes to technique!"

At the end of five days of untold hardships we climbed out of the Valley of Heaven and reached the stream that divides the royal from the common ground at Zombode. We arrived there at about nine o'clock at night.

Fires were burning in front of many of the huts and there was a hum of life in the air. The sounds were all the more noticeable because no one appeared to have any intention of meeting us or giving us a welcome. We pitched camp and Din prepared the evening meal. By this time we had a score of little visitors, all Swazi children of about ten or twelve years of age. Usually these little beggars are in bed at this time of night, but the noise of our wagons had aroused them and they had sneaked out of the huts to investigate.

None of the indunas, warriors, or women came near us, and I soon realized that we were in disfavor for some reason or other. Only a direct command from Lomwazi or the old queen would have made the people avoid us in this manner. However, it was not fitting that I should visit the royal kraal without invitation, so I did not stir from our camp that night. In the morning I announced my arrival to Labotsibeni without the indignity of supplicating an interview. This came about in a peculiar manner. [264]

Shortly after dawn I was awakened by the deep bass of a native who seemingly was greatly annoyed. The voice was strangely familiar, but I could not place it for the moment. In a little while Sibijaan came into the tent with my coffee and announced that I had a visitor.

"Ou Baas, there is a great induna outside," he said, "and he wants to see you. He says he is very angry. Shall I tell him to go to hell?"

Thirsting for information regarding things at the royal kraal, I bade Sibijaan send him in. This my old playmate did with poor grace, since he would have preferred to be cheeky to the chief.

To my surprise, Manaana—he of the savings-bank account—strode in. He was carrying his war tools and stood facing me for an instant in quite a belligerent attitude. I was wearing only a thin bathrobe and for a second or two the angry black man faced the white. Then the age-old supremacy of race asserted itself and Manaana dropped his eyes with the familiar "Nkoos!"

"What the devil is the matter with you?" I demanded angrily. "Why do you make all this row so early in the morning?"

"Peace, Nkoos, peace!" the old induna answered. "I did not know that it was you. I would not have made talk if I had known." [265]

Then he went on to explain that our donkeys had strayed across the stream during the night and had ruined his corn patch. He insisted that the poor beasts had eaten all the young corn and that he and all his wives faced starvation during the coming year. What he really was worried about, it developed, was that there would be no corn to make tswala and in consequence he would have to go without his beer until a new crop came in.

I sympathized with him and told him that I would go over and see the damage as soon as I was up and about, agreeing to pay him for it. I felt sure that he was lying, but did not want to make an enemy of him, since I knew that he was said to be close to Labotsibeni. In the olden days he was leader of one of Buno's crack impis and was a noted warrior.

In a little while I accompanied him to look at the ruined crop, and, as I suspected, found he had lied like a kaffir. The damage was about three shillings worth, and I told him so and offered to pay him the money. He became very indignant.

"This is not right, Nkoos!" he almost shouted. "I am a great induna and cannot be treated in this way. I am one of the queen's most important chiefs and I shall report this injustice to her."

Now this threat suited me. If the old fool reported that I was robbing him, he would also be notifying Labotsibeni that I was in the neighborhood. [266]

"I am willing to abide by what the queen decides," I said. "You tell her that I await her word. I shall state my side to her, and you can state yours!"

This was what I really wanted. It would bring me before the old queen and allow me to ask her about the coronation. With this understanding Manaana left for the royal kraal, while I went to breakfast. Shortly after we had finished, Manaana returned.

"I have seen the queen," he announced in an important manner, "and she is much offended because you have treated Manaana so unjustly. She says that you must pay me five shillings and a bottle of gin, and then the debt will be satisfied."

To make the payment seem greater I protested for a moment and then gave it to the old fellow. I asked him how the queen was, but he answered evasively. This brought the suspicion that he had not seen Labotsibeni at all and had concocted the story about her decision as to the payment. Manaana would have been quite capable of this because he had lived for some time among the whites in Johannesburg and had been schooled in guile.

Nevertheless, I was satisfied that he had brought word to the royal kraal that I was there, and I expected that I would soon receive a message from the queen to come and see her. When the sun showed that it was nearly noon I decided to force her hand and sent Sibijaan with presents, which means gin, to the royal kraal. He returned presently, saying that Lomwazi had taken them from him and that they had been accepted by the queen. [267]

Sunset came and yet there was no word from the old lady, and I began to grow anxious. I sent for Manaana and cultivated him in an attempt to get some information. He soon became drunk and told me many little things, none of which threw much light on my problem. One statement, however, was important.

"All the people, except Lomwazi and a few of those close to the queen, want Sebuza to be king," he said. "They are tired of being ruled by a queen, and Lomwazi asks too much. He always wants more cattle and corn from each kraal, and the people are dissatisfied. Even now they are waiting for Sebuza to come down out of the mountains and it is said they will demand that he be made king then!"

Part of this was very interesting. I was glad to know that the people wanted Sebuza, but I doubted that they would dare to ask for him to be appointed king. The Swazis are subservient to their rulers and it was unthinkable that they would assume to ask Labotsibeni to abdicate. They were very afraid of the old queen; she seemed to exert some sort of extraordinary influence over them. It was cheering, however, to know that I had public opinion on my side.

Labotsibeni refuses to see me—Sugden and my men escape assassination—A fruitless conference—We flee to Lebombo—Oom Tuys turns up—We confer with Queen Tzaneen and Lochien—Five-and-ten-cent-store jewelry has persuasive powers—Sugden falls ill—We build his coffin—Sebuza returns from his sanctification.

Next morning I got up, pocketed my pride, and decided to call on Queen Labotsibeni. When I reached the entrance of the royal kraal I was met by Lomwazi. He was furtive in manner and did not look me in the eyes. His voice, as usual, was quite low, and for once his dramatic gestures were lacking.

I demanded to be allowed to see Labotsibeni. Lomwazi shook his head and spread out his hands deprecatingly.

"The queen will not see you, Nkoos," he said, "and she sends word that you are not to camp on the royal ground."

"But why won't she see me? I bring her presents and much gin," I protested. "She promised that I should attend the coronation of Prince Sebuza!"

"She is very, very old, but still she doesn't want to die," added the wily Lomwazi, glancing at me out of the corner of his eye.

At last I understood. Lomwazi had let the cat out of the bag and the delay in the coronation of Sebuza explained itself. Tempted by the great price I had offered for the picture rights—five hundred cattle, five hundred gallons of gin, and five hundred pounds in gold—the old queen had overlooked the fact that Sebuza's accession to the throne meant her death. At the time I made the bargain with her, or with Lomwazi as her agent, she had consoled herself with the thought that the British Government would be able to save her life. Now she was afraid that the government might not be able to do so and wanted the coronation delayed indefinitely, or put off for good. [269]

Labotsibeni and Lomwazi were in an uncomfortable position. They faced either the certainty of being sacrificed when Sebuza mounted the throne or the breaking of their contract with me. In addition, the sentiment of the people of Swaziland was against the old ruler and Lomwazi must have known it. Under Labotsibeni there had been more than twenty years of peace, and there had grown up a feeling that the nation was becoming decadent without a war, if only a little one against some inferior tribe. The British had backed the old queen in all her moves toward keeping peace within her borders, and the fighting men of Swaziland were unhappy at not having any opportunities to show their mettle. From the days of Ama-Swazi the Swazis had been a warlike people, and the bloodthirsty Buno had developed their ferocity by frequent raids and forays on neighboring tribes. The accession of Sebuza, young and warlike, made the Swazis feel that they would have a real leader again, and the fact that the crown prince was the son of Buno added to their desire for him to reign. [270]

I had left Oom Tuys in Ermelo with the understanding that he would join us in Zombode. I began to wish he would show up, since I seemed to be butting my stubborn Boer head against a brick wall and my uncle was the one white man in all the Transvaal in whom old Labotsibeni placed her trust. I knew that she would not refuse to see him and there was a chance of his getting her to agree to the coronation.

Realizing that we were in for a delay that might last several months, Dr. Sugden and his companions decided to study the Swazis at close range and compile data concerning the tribe. To me was left the politics and "wangling" of the expedition, while they started out blithely one morning to catch Swazis.

Their expedition was abortive, to put it mildly. Of course Sugden would only be content with Swazi life as exhibited in the royal kraal, and it was there that he decided to begin. I did not know this, and thought that he was going to visit some of the little kraals where the indunas lived.

I was sitting in my tent thinking about sending a man to find Tuys, when Sibijaan came running in very much excited.

"Ou Baas, Mlung Emantzi Eenui, Makofa, and the other white man are going to be killed at the royal kraal!" he cried.

Now Sugden was called Mlung Emantzi Eenui—"The Man of Living and Burning Words"—by the kaffirs, and Crespinnell was given the name of Makofa, which means "The Small Alert One." The other white man was Rossman, of course. [271]

I sprang out of the tent, across the little stream, and ran to the royal kraal. There I found my companions surrounded by a full impi of warriors who had hemmed them in with their assegais. The white men had drawn their revolvers and were ready to use them. It only remained for some one to make a sudden break and there would be a killing.

"Make way! Make way!" I yelled, diving through the throng.

In a second or two I reached Sugden, who had the grim look that means fight. He had Lomwazi covered with his revolver and I could see that the induna would be the first to go if the shooting started.

"What's all this trouble?" I demanded, as though I were the chief of all. "Why are these warlike

manœuvres? Why have these warriors stopped my men?"

Lomwazi hesitated for a moment, during which I could see the tension relax and the Swazis begin to drop their spear-points.

"It is forbidden that white men enter the royal kraal," the chief said. "These men tried to force their way in. They said they wanted to see all things in the kraal. The queen sent her own impi to stop them and gave orders that they were to be killed if they did not go away!"

[272]

Sugden was much disgusted, and gave his side of the affair.

"I only wanted to take a look around," he said. "We were just inside the kraal when these men came running from every direction and surrounded us. I thought we would have to fight our way out and would have popped some of them off if Lomwazi had not come up. He told us to get out, and here we are!"

That seemed to be all there was to it. However, it was a bad affair, as it put me in the position of trying to break into the queen's kraal without permission. Later I realized that it did not make much difference, since we were out of favor at Zombode anyway.

I was well nigh desperate now. It seemed as though nothing could be accomplished through Labotsibeni or Lomwazi, but I decided to make one last appeal to him. I sent him a present by Sibijaan and asked that he come and see me at my camp.

My boy brought back word that Lomwazi would see me next morning, but would meet me at the crossing of the little stream. "When the sun reaches the royal kraal" was the time set, which must have been about seven or seven-fifteen o'clock.

The stream was only a short distance from our camp, and I watched until I saw Lomwazi coming to the rendezvous. I had expected that he would arrive with four or five of his indunas, and I had arranged that all my white companions should accompany me to the interview. Instead, Lomwazi brought practically the whole royal impi with him. The savages were in full war costume and made a splendid picture as they marched, the sun reflecting from their black shoulders and assegais. It was the first time that Sugden and the others had seen a whole impi in all its glory and they were much impressed. The warriors were drawn up in a sort of regimental formation at the meeting-place, with Lomwazi waiting in front, by the time I decided we should leave our tents.

[273]

Since they had come armed to the conference, my companions and I shouldered our rifles—we always wore revolvers—and walked in a leisurely manner toward the little stream. As we came close Lomwazi raised his arms in greeting and the impi gave us the royal salute. It was the first time in some years that I had been thus honored. The shrill whistle following the heavy stamp of the thousand feet gave the Americans a real thrill.

Lomwazi and I shook hands in a formal way and then sat down to talk things over. I little thought that this would be the last friendly conference I would have with him. Behind me sat my three companions, while behind the vizier sat four or five of his high men, all lesser indunas and leaders of warriors. It was an imposing gathering, much like many out of which peace has come during the various savage wars between the whites and kaffirs in the Transvaal.

After the necessary conventional amenities, which have to do with health and the condition of wives, I came to the main question, but from a widely different angle.

[274]

"Lomwazi, you and Queen Labotsibeni made a paper with me that shows I gave you five hundred cows, five hundred gallons of gin, and five hundred pounds in gold for the right to take pictures of the coronation of Sebuza," I began. "Now the queen will not see me and you will not tell me the truth when I want to know about the coronation. Other indunas have told me that you and the queen have plotted to prevent Sebuza becoming king—"

"Nkoos, that is not so!" Lomwazi returned hotly, interrupting me. "We wish Sebuza to become king and will do nothing to prevent it. It is the government that does not wish him to become king; it is the government, and not my mother, Labotsibeni!"

This I knew to be partly true, but I felt sure that the government would be willing that Sebuza should reign if the change in rulers was accomplished without bloodshed.

"Then if the government refuses to let Sebuza be king," I went on, "you and the queen have obtained much wealth from me for something you knew you could not give. There is only one thing for me to do—that is, to hold you and the queen liable for the price of the rights she granted me. I shall notify the government at Mbabane and ask that it collect the money value of what you received from me. I am a friend of the government and close to the Commissioner, and he will send to Johannesburg for troops who will come and collect from you. If you do not care to have me do this, you can make restitution now by giving me the price in cows."

[275]

Now this meant that Lomwazi would have to round up at least two thousand head of cattle and turn them over to me. This I knew he could do, but I also knew that he would not do it without such compulsion as I was unable to bring.

He glanced keenly at me while I laid down the terms of my ultimatum and saw that I was in dead earnest. With his great cunning, Lomwazi is a keen judge of human nature, and he watched me to see if I was bluffing or not. He decided that I was not and listened in silence to the end. Then he

raised his eyes and spoke in the same low, level tone he always used.

"Nkoos, what you ask is unjust," he said. "Labotsibeni gave the word of a Swazi queen and her word cannot be broken. You will have the opportunity you have bought and I shall see that it is so!"

"Yes? Then how soon will Sebuza be crowned?" I asked.

"When Queen Labotsibeni, mother of Buno, gives the word the ceremonies will take place," he said, and this ended the interview.

Lomwazi threw his leopardskin cloak about his shoulders and rose, and I got to my feet also, feeling that I had gone as far as I could, but had gained nothing. The indunas shook hands and the impi gave their salute as he raised his arms with the salutation, "Nkoos!" Then he turned and went back to the royal kraal followed by the great warriors, their plumes nodding in the sunlight. [276]

I realized that I had come to the end of my string at Zombode. The old queen would not give the word for the coronation to take place and undoubtedly Lomwazi was behind her refusal. Looking back, I do not blame them very much; the coronation would be their death warrant and the government was not prepared to send troops to protect them.

That night I had a little talk with Sugden, who was feeling ill, explaining to him what we were up against.

"It looks as if we are out of luck," was his comment, "but there must be some way to beat the game. I'd hate to lose out, now that we're here. It seems to me that you ought to be able to find a way to prevent Lomwazi from sitting on the lid much longer. Let's see if we can't get action by talking to the other indunas."

This did not seem a good plan to me. Sugden did not know these people and underestimated the power of the old queen. She represented the established order of things, and the government always objected to anything new, particularly in the way of rulers.

"No, I can't agree to that scheme," I told him; "but I believe I will have a look at the other side of this game. Queen Tzaneen is reported to be much incensed because Labotsibeni doesn't allow the coronation and I think I will have an interview with her." [277]

Having taken this decision, I made arrangements to start for Lebombo, the royal kraal of Queen Tzaneen and her son, the next morning as soon as it was light enough to trek. That night the donkeys were all driven in, so that they would be ready when wanted. During the weeks we had spent at Zombode these poor animals had greatly improved. There was good feed and water there, and they looked sleek and fresh again.

Dawn saw us on the road to Lebombo. Camp for breakfast was made on the bank of the little river that separates the land belonging to the two villages, and we came in sight of the kraals after about two hours.

Our reception here was very different. Lochien, who was the vizier, or secretary of state, of Queen Tzaneen, and one of the sons of King Buno, her late husband, came out to meet us. He had a number of indunas with him and was most cordial. His first words gave me great pleasure.

"Welcome, Nkoos," he said. "Welcome to Lebombo! Last night the White King of Swaziland came to Lebombo and waits for you at the royal kraal."

This was good news, indeed. Oom Tuys had arrived and was waiting for me! I thanked my stars that he had not gone to Zombode and thus missed me. At last it began to look as though we would get some action.

A few minutes later, our great wagon creaking and the boys shouting to the donkeys, we approached the kraals and I saw a solitary figure coming out to meet us. It was a tall heavy white man, long bearded and wide-hatted, with the rolling gait of one whose only home is the saddle—Oom Tuys Grobler, my uncle, the "White King of Swaziland." [278]

He threw his great arms about me and gave me a "bear hug," and then held me at arms' length and looked me over.

"So you are all right, Mzaan Bakoor?" he asked in his gruff voice. "This morning a kaffir came and said that last night a plan was made to stop you from coming here, and I was anxious. I only heard about it a few minutes ago, and was on the point of starting for Zombode when the runners came and said you were near."

This was news to me. I did not know that Lomwazi had decided to prevent me from going to Lebombo. It showed that he was afraid to have me learn the truth from Tzaneen and Lochein. I was thankful that we had not had trouble, for our patience was well nigh exhausted and there would have been a battle if Labotsibeni's men had tried to bar our path.

I asked Tuys about the lay of the land at Tzaneen's kraal, and he told me that she was very much excited over the situation.

"The queen mother is very angry at Labotsibeni," he said. "It is another case of the mother-in-law over again. Tzaneen feels that the old lady will hang on to the throne as long as she lives, and as she is now in her second hundred years that is likely to be a long time. Only last night Tzaneen [279]

reminded me of the Swazi saying, 'If you live to be a hundred, you live forever,' and she spoke of Labotsibeni with bitterness.

"Sebuza will soon return from the mountains and it will be a national scandal for him to have to wait for his kingdom. His mother is frantic over the situation and even talks of taking the throne by force. Of course such things have been done,"—and he smiled—"but I told her that the government would not stand for such action."

Lochien then told us that the sanctification ceremonies were about ended and Sebuza would return within the next week. As these ceremonies also included the coming of age of the young crown prince, he was attended by the chief witch-doctors and made to undergo scarification and circumcision. He had to live on the barren slopes of the mountains, his only food being wild berries and the game he killed himself. Only the witch-doctors could visit him, and their visits were official and hedged about with much flummery and hocus-pocus.

Tzaneen was waiting to see us when we reached the royal kraal, and I immediately sent her the regulation presents. A little while later Lochien ushered Tuys and me into her presence. She is a remarkable woman and has a very sweet and charming personality. Tall and splendidly formed, she is an ideal Swazi queen, just as she was the pick of the Zulu princesses at the time she became the royal wife of Buno. Her head is large and well shaped, and she has an active brain. With education, Tzaneen would have been a leader anywhere in the world. [280]

Her greeting to us was gracious and cordial. She asked if we had brought our wagons and camp outfit, and said she would send an impi to get them and bring them to Lebombo from Zombode if we had not. This gave me a clue to the feeling between the two queens, because I knew that Labotsibeni must have been annoyed when she learned that our entire outfit had left for the rival camp. After I had assured Tzaneen that we had arrived bag and baggage, Lochien introduced the subject of our mission to Swaziland. In this he seemed to have the approval of Tzaneen, who listened closely to my answers.

I told them that I intended staying in the country until I had seen Sebuza crowned, and this statement met their approval. But there was a fly in the ointment, I found.

"Queen Tzaneen is the rightful ruler of Swaziland," Lochien announced, "because she is the royal widow of King Buno. She is the mother of Prince Sebuza, who will soon be king. You want to see Sebuza made king and wish to look at the ceremonies with the black boxes on legs that you have with you. Is this not so?"

Evidently he had heard about the cameras we had brought with us.

"Yes, that is so," I assured him. "These black boxes make all things live again so that everybody may see them, and we want to show all people that Swaziland has a son of Buno for king." [281]

"Then, Nkoos, why did you pay Lomwazi and Queen Labotsibeni all the money, cows, and gin for the right to use the black boxes?" Lochien asked.

The truth was out. They were jealous because Labotsibeni and Lomwazi had received the purchase price of the picture rights, while they had been ignored. I was thinking quickly and was about to smooth matters over, when Oom Tuys broke in.

"Mzaan Bakoor has not yet paid you for your permission to do this thing he desires," he assured them. "He could not come to Lebombo before, but now he is ready to pay you even more than he gave Labotsibeni and Lomwazi."

"The white king speaks truly," I added. "Even now I have in my wagons more precious and more beautiful presents than I gave to them. These presents I brought from America, across the great water of which you have heard. I bought them in the greatest city of the world and have carried them here for you, Nkosikaas!"

This was a tall statement, but I knew that I could make good on it. Tzaneen was much interested and her curiosity was whetted. We dickered a little more, and I agreed to pay them a large amount of gin and a certain sum of money. Then, to avoid any further demands, I ended by going to the wagon and getting one of the mysterious packing-cases. This I opened before Queen Tzaneen. Very slowly I began taking from it quantities of the five-and-ten-cent-store jewelry. It fascinated her beyond words. She put it on, draping the tawdry necklaces about her full throat and loading her fingers with the gaudy rings. She was completely won over, and Lochien also was deeply impressed. So peace was restored on the subject of the price of the picture rights. Now the road was clear for taking the pictures, that is, if we could find the place of coronation of the savage king. [282]

Tuys motioned to me to leave soon after the jewelry episode, and we went back to our wagons.

"One thing at a time, Owen," he said. "You wanted to ask about the coronation, I know, but we'd better wait until to-morrow. I want to see how the land lies and find out what is going on before we force that issue. To-morrow we'll see Tzaneen again and find out what she plans to do about Sebuza."

Lochien soon came to the wagons and told us that it was the queen's pleasure that we camp a few hundred yards from Sebuza's kraal, which adjoined that of his mother. The spot chosen was in a small grove of tall trees among which were buried indunas who had died at Lebombo ever

since the village was founded. This was a great honor to us, since it was sacred ground, the most sacred in the land with the exception of "The Caves" near Zombode, where only kings and queens are buried.



DR. O'NEIL AND COMPANIONS ARE RECEIVED BY QUEEN TZANEEN

They had come to discuss the possibility of ceasing hostilities. As is the custom, she treated them to tswala and drank first from the calabash to show that it contained no poison

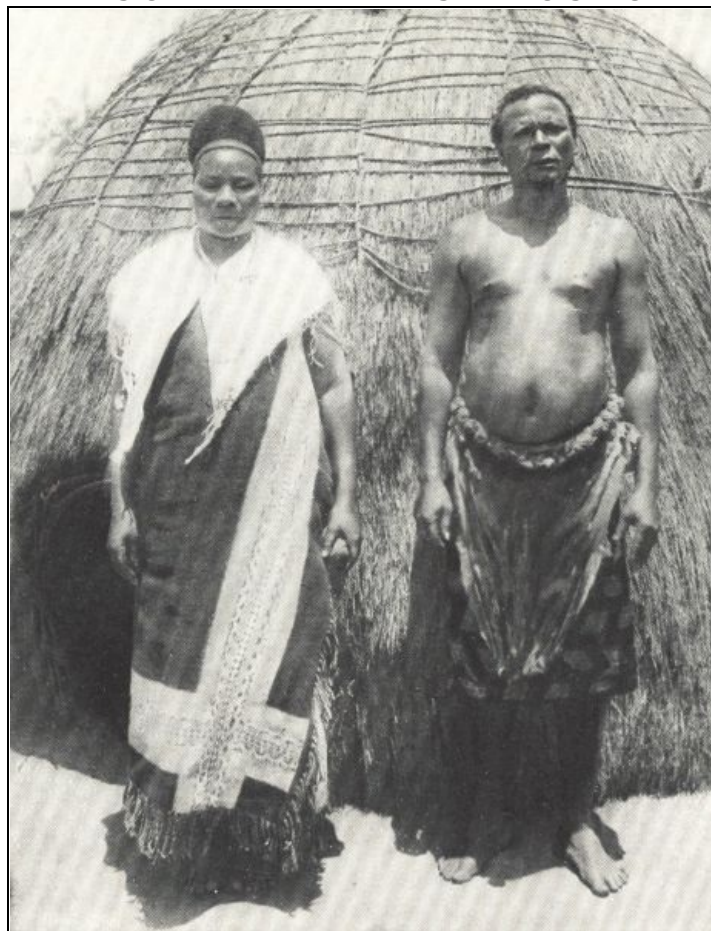


DR. O'NEIL, QUEEN TZANEEN, DR. SUGDEN, AND MR. CRISPINELL

While Sebuza the crown prince was still in the mountains conforming with the religious rites on attaining his manhood Dr. O'Neil realized that both the British Government and Queen Labotsibeni were antagonistic to Sebuza and wished to repudiate his right to the throne



WIVES OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEBUZA



QUEEN TZANEEN AND LOCHIEN

She was a Zulu Princess and is the only royal widow of the famous King Buno who had, in all, twenty-six wives. She is the mother of Crown Prince Sebuza. Lochien is her adviser in addition to being Sebuza's chargé d'affaires and commander-in-chief of all his impis

That night I became greatly worried over Dr. Sugden's condition. The water he drank in the Valley of Heaven had caused fever and violent dysentery, and he had rapidly grown worse during

the last forty-eight hours. The heat during the day was severe, and it seemed to affect him so that he was hardly able to recover at night. I had given him medicine and done everything I could for him, but nothing seemed to help much. It was very discouraging to have him ill, because his unfailing optimism and ready wit had helped us over many a hard place.

Next day Tuys and I called on the queen, and were received as cordially as before. As usual, she was surrounded by maids and other women of her kraal, and it was interesting to note how affectionate they were toward her. She is the best liked woman in Swaziland without a doubt, and this is strange, since it is seldom that these savage women display any affection for one another.

We asked her how soon Sebuza would be made king. Her face darkened at the question and I could see that it touched a sore spot.

"Until my son, Sebuza, returns from the mountains this matter is in the hands of Queen Labotsibeni, whom the government recognizes as regent," she answered. "But when the prince is a man and is ready for the throne, perhaps there will be a change!"

I asked her what she meant, but she refused to be drawn out. Instead, she told us about her last attempt to arrange for the coronation.

"Only seven days ago," she said, "I sent men to see the old queen and ask her how soon she would be ready to surrender the throne. She refused to see them, so they gave their message to Lomwazi. He told them that Labotsibeni would let them know when she was ready, and then dismissed them." [284]

"When they left the royal kraal at Zombode many of the warriors made menacing gestures toward them, and they came back glad to escape with their lives. That is Labotsibeni's answer to the mother of the rightful king of Swaziland and the royal widow of King Buno!"

She was very indignant. After a little conversation, during which we complimented her, as was proper, we withdrew. I noticed that there was a gin-bottle in the corner of the royal hut and realized that Tzaneen was not different from other kaffir royalty.

Sugden was very low when we returned. He was the finest sort of patient, however, for the worse became his physical condition, the more determined he was that he would live. He kept murmuring, "Don't give up the ship!" but I could see that he would hardly last until morning.

I called Crespinell and Rossman into my tent and explained how sick the doctor was, telling them that I feared he did not have a chance. His cheery way of looking at things had fooled them, and they were shocked when I told them that I did not expect we would have him with us much longer.

"I've done everything for him that I can," I explained, "but I can't get his fever down or stop his dysentery. He is so weak now that it is only a question of hours before he leaves Swaziland for good." [285]

"There is something I want you fellows to do, however. I shall remain with him all night and will call you if he wants to make a will or say anything. We've got to bury him like a white man, and I want you to knock a coffin together. Take some of the boards from the packing-cases and the big wagon and fix a decent sort of box. Don't do any hammering where he might hear you, because he's keyed up and might suspect what you were doing."

A few minutes later I saw them sneaking off among the trees, with several of the black boys loaded down with boards. We were all blue over Sugden's illness and the thought that he was dying cast a gloom over the party that nothing could lift.

That was a bad night. Sugden seemed to get weaker and weaker, and soon I was keeping him alive with brandy. Tuys and I sat beside him in turn, and the old Boer was as distressed as the rest of us.

"He is such a fighting devil," he said in a whisper, when I came to relieve him shortly before dawn. "A few moments ago he opened his eyes and croaked that he was going back to New York when this expedition was over and have 'one hell of a time.' I told him that I'd go with him, and he began to tell me what we'd do. Right in the middle of a sentence he fainted through weakness. When I brought him to with brandy, he opened his eyes and smiled at me!"

Dawn found Sugden still hanging on. I marveled at the vitality of the man. His body was wasted to a mere shell, but his courage burned bright and undiminished. Shortly after sun-up I realized that he was likely to live another day, but that seemed the most we could hope for. [286]

While I was at breakfast an induna came from Lochien with word that Sebuza had left the mountains and was on his way to Lebombo. This was exciting news, and I went over to the royal kraal to get details. Lochien told me that the sanctification ceremonies were over and that the crown prince was to arrive that morning.

"We are almost afraid to see him, Nkoos," he said. "He is now ready for the coronation and will expect us to have all things waiting for him."

I could see that Tzaneen and her trusted vizier were in a nervous condition. Sebuza was a reckless, impatient young savage and would be much put out at any delay. The royal kraal was in a ferment of excitement, and the warriors in Sebuza's kraal were chanting and dancing in

preparation for the welcome to their commander.

I returned to the wagons, realizing that, being a white man and an outsider, I was not wanted at the royal kraal when Sebuza arrived. I would see him when he sent for me, but until then I must remain quiet and control my impatience.

Shortly before noon I saw the impis of both Tzaneen and Sebuza forming in lines outside the kraals. They were dressed in their most gorgeous costumes. The indunas and leaders wore the leopardskin cloaks, and all had on their great plumed headdresses. I felt that Sebuza must be close at hand, and it was not more than fifteen minutes before both impis began to dance. This they continued for a short time, and then came to a sudden stop. There was utter silence and at length I saw the crown prince striding down the road, followed by at least a dozen witch-doctors. These halted some distance behind. [287]

Sebuza came to a stop in front of his impi and raised his hands. Instantly the thousand warriors raised their shields and war-clubs above their heads and the deep-throated shout "Nkoos!" rang out. This was followed by the thunder of their feet and then the air was split by the shrill whistle. Three times they gave the royal salute, Sebuza standing like a statue.

Then, strutting like a turkey-cock, the young prince passed through his men into his kraal. The witch-doctors followed, and then the indunas went in. Finally his warriors broke ranks and this concluded the homecoming of the son of Buno.

The impi of Tzaneen still remained on duty in front of the royal kraal, and I waited to see what they would do. In a little while I saw Lochien go into the prince's kraal, and shortly after he and Sebuza came out together. Sebuza pointed to our wagons, and I could see Lochien telling him about us. Then they went to the queen's kraal and her warriors gave Sebuza the royal salute, which he received in the same manner as before, standing motionless before them. [288]

After Sebuza had entered the kraal the impi dispersed. I returned to Sugden's side, to find him wide awake and talking faintly. He seemed weaker than before, and I expected he would cease speaking forever any moment. Crespinnell and Rossman were with him, and he was trying to tell them some of the stories of the Far North which he had seen acted out when he was a surgeon in the Northwest Mounted Police. His grip on life was extraordinary. Here he was living over in spirit the wild days in the frozen North, while his body was practically dead and his coffin lay behind the wagon!

I was standing thus, quite overcome by the situation, when Sibijaan pulled my sleeve.

"Ou Baas, Lochien is here and wants to talk to you," he said. "He has a message from the queen."

Outside I found the induna dressed up in his war costume and carrying his arms. He greeted me very formally and then told me that Tzaneen wished me to attend a conference between Sebuza and herself, asking me to bring Oom Tuys along. After delivering his message Lochien unbent and we had a few words together concerning Sebuza. He informed me that the prince was much annoyed that his throne was not ready and was eager to pay an armed visit to Labotsibeni.

Tuys and I were received with royal honors when we reached the queen's kraal. There was the usual delay in observing the proper formalities, and then we entered the royal hut, to find Sebuza sitting by his mother. Tzaneen was as cordial as usual and seemed proud to have the future king by her side. [289]

Sebuza, whom Tuys told me later was the perfect picture of Buno in his youth, was haughty and seemed suffering acutely from a sense of his own importance. He was wearing a peculiar headdress and several strings of the five-and-ten-cent store beads I had given his mother.

Since we were in the presence of royalty, it was not fitting that we begin conversation, except to receive and give the usual greetings. Tzaneen started the ball rolling.

"My noble son," she said, turning to the prince, "these are the white men who were the friends of your father, the great King Buno. The big one with a beard is Oom Tuys, whom Buno called 'The White King of Swaziland' and whom your father made the guide and guardian of our people when he died. The other, he of the shaven face, is Mzaan Bakoor, who makes wonderful magic with little black boxes on thin legs. The white men are our friends and come to Lebombo to assist in your coronation."

During this introduction Sebuza regarded us keenly, and his scrutiny seemed to satisfy him. When Tzaneen had finished Oom Tuys made a little speech.

"Sebuza, son of Buno and of Tzaneen, rightful Queen of Swaziland," he said impressively, "your father at his death made me your guardian, and I promised him that I would watch over and protect you. I am 'The White King of Swaziland' and the government holds me responsible for all that takes place here. With my nephew, Mzaan Bakoor, I have come to see you placed on the throne of your father. We have pledged ourselves to assist you in every way, except to provoke war. We shall remain here until you have been made king." [290]

Tuys said much more than this, but what I have translated is about the sense of all of it. Sebuza thawed quickly, once he had found out what we were in Lebombo for, and then we all had a pleasant talk. He asked innumerable questions and was much interested in what had happened at Zombode.

His answer to one of my questions was very typical. I had asked him how many people were his subjects in Swaziland. He thought for a moment, and then answered, "Mzaan Bakoor, can you count the blades of grass in a field?"

The interview ended immediately after we informed Sebuza that we had presents for him in our wagons. He said that he wanted to see our outfit and would go with us, and a few moments later we all left for the camp.

Several indunas accompanied us, and the stately head witch-doctor, L'Tunga, also went with us. I regarded this as rather impertinent, but was very glad of his presence shortly.

Crespinell and Rossman were much interested in Sebuza and were only too willing to gratify his curiosity concerning the "little black magic boxes on thin legs." They took a number of pictures of him, some of which filled him with awe when they were given to him next day. I produced a box of the "jewelry" and presented it to him with a great flourish. He was fairly overcome by its gorgeousness. Soon he had bedecked himself much after the fashion of a Christmas tree and strutted about like a peacock. Tuys told me to "go slow with the gin," so I only gave him a few bottles. Strange as it may appear, Sebuza was not enthusiastic about the liquor, and later I found that L'Tunga had taught him that it was a kind of "white man's poison."

[291]

CHAPTER XVII

[292]

L'Tunga's "muti" cures the sick white man—Sebuza chooses his wives—I receive a message from His Majesty's High Commissioner for Swaziland—A flying trip to Mbabane—The Government refuses sanction to Sebuza's coronation—How witch-doctors smoke dagga weed.

Sugden was wide awake when we reached the camp and despite his condition was overcome with curiosity. He could see nothing, being shut in by the tent-walls, and was too weak to get up and look out. Suddenly, while we were watching Sebuza enjoy his ornaments, I saw the side of the tent being feebly punched from within. I raised the flap, and there was Sugden regarding us with his fever-bright eyes. He hated to be left out of the party and had signaled for me to count him in. I went to him, but my heart sank. He was the sickest man I have ever seen. Except for his blazing eyes, he had all the look of a dead man.

Every one looked at us, and a second later L'Tunga leaned over me and asked what was the matter with the "sick white man." I held Sugden's poor head in my arms as I told him. The witch-doctor nodded and then straightened up.

"Nkoos, I will cure him!" he said. "I will make a magic that will make him well. I go, but I will come back soon and bring the muti."

He left, and I laid Sugden down and pulled the tent flap. He was exhausted by his effort to join the party and was nodding with the sleep that was nigh unto death.

[293]

Now I was very curious about the "muti" of the witch-doctor. I knew that their rites and rituals were all humbug dressed up in feathers, but every now and then they did something that was quite amazing. It was certain that they knew things about the herbs of their country that we white men did not, and I never felt sure that they were the fakirs we thought them to be.

In a few minutes L'Tunga returned, and this time he carried a wand tipped with feathers. He stood for a moment regarding us, and then went to the side of the tent and drew up the flap, showing poor old Sugden asleep but barely alive. Then L'Tunga motioned me to help him move the cot out into the sunlight.

Carefully, for this savage was as gentle as a woman, we placed Sugden with his head facing the sun, and then L'Tunga got busy. We stood back to give him room, and he certainly needed it. He started to dance and chant, circling the sick bed and waving his wand round and round. I could not understand what he chanted, but it seemed to be something about it being time for the "devil" to leave the sick white man, since he, L'Tunga, had come.

This ceremony must have lasted fully fifteen minutes, and Sugden slept through it all. I watched his breathing, for I was afraid that he would not live. The show ended with the witch-doctor picking up a handful of dust and holding it to Sugden's nostrils. After a moment he threw the dust to the winds and then drew from his loin-cloth a small package wrapped in skin. This he undid, and then asked for "emantzi, emantzi," meaning water. Crespinell brought him a little mug full of it, and he poured all but a few tablespoonfuls on the ground. Then he took some of the contents of the little package and mixed it with the water in the mug.

[294]

I had been thinking rapidly. He could not hurt Sugden, since the white man was beyond all human aid, and was only living through sheer will power. There was a faint chance that he might do him good, and I made up my mind to let the witch-doctor alone.

A moment later L'Tunga had forced Sugden to drink the contents of the mug. Immediately he

dropped off to sleep, as though drugged. After watching him a moment L'Tunga turned to me and said:

"At sunrise to-morrow I will come and give him more muti. In three or four days he will be well!"

Then, with all the dignity of a great civilized specialist, he shouldered his magic wand and withdrew.

Sebuza and the rest of us had watched his operations with great interest, and the young prince left shortly after, his indunas carrying the "jewelry" and gin.

We were all curious to see the effect of the witch-doctor's prescription, and had quite an argument about it. I found that Tuys was sure that it would cure Sugden, and both Crespinnell and Rossman were inclined to agree with him. I remained skeptical and sent for Sibijaan to ask him what he thought. I knew that my old playmate was in touch with many things that a white man could not know and I asked him about the "muti" that L'Tunga had given Sugden. [295]

"Ou Baas, it is a magic leaf," he told me, "and only the head witch-doctor knows where it grows. They say it is found in only one place, and that is near Sheba's Breasts. He gets it when the moon dies, and always goes alone. But it will cure 'Mlung Emantzi Eenui. The 'muti' is only for royalty and some of the great indunas. L'Tunga would not give it to the common people."

He was so certain that the medicine would save Sugden that I began to find myself half-believing that it would. That night I sat by the latter's bedside for many hours. He never stirred. All night long he slept as though heavily drugged, never once making a move. Next morning the fever had much abated and his pulse was nearly normal. He did not awake, however, and when L'Tunga arrived to give him another dose, he only came to enough to swallow it. I noted, though, that the dysentery had stopped.

Four days later Sugden was well. He was weak as a cat, but food soon remedied that, and within ten days he was on the job and as cheerful as ever. I made up my mind from that time on not to scoff at witch-doctors. I tried to get L'Tunga to give me a little of his "muti," but this he resolutely refused to do, even when I offered to buy it with all sorts of things dear to the savage heart. Some day I am going to get some of that "muti" and have it analyzed; it may be a drug that will be of value to all of us who live in that section of South Africa. [296]

During Sugden's recuperation Tuys and I had visited the royal kraal every day and had always had pleasant talks with both Sebuza and his mother. But we did not succeed in getting any nearer to the coronation. The queen was entirely at a loss what to do and Sebuza kept growing more impatient every day. As he was a man now, he felt entitled to start housekeeping, and his mother set about procuring wives for him. Lochien assisted in this delicate operation, and it was rather an interesting event. The Swazis follow about the same procedure in this business as their civilized white brethren. The only difference is that the Swazi method does not employ so much camouflage.

The fact that Sebuza had reached manhood and would soon become king was known throughout practically all the savage tribes of South Africa, though it naturally was of paramount interest in his own country. All the indunas and his relations, such as Umzulek, Debeseembie, Vilakazi, and others, knew that he would have to have wives. Their children were logical candidates for this honor, so that there were many conferences at Lebombo between Tzaneen and those who had daughters to sell.

Now the Swazi, from the highest to the lowest, sells his women. Women are the "pound sterling" among all the savage tribes, and the unit of value is five cows for an average maid who is young, sound in limb and wind, and trained to the primitive duties of her race. These consist chiefly in ability to do a decent day's work in the fields, the making of tswala, and the cleaning of a hut or kraal. Of course the care of children is considered important. [297]

A Swazi's wealth is measured by the number of wives he has. The number of his cows and other livestock is secondary. For instance, Umzulek is regarded as a millionaire because he has sixty wives and more than two hundred and forty children. The average Swazi induna has five or more wives, and some have many more.

The price of a woman depends greatly on her birth and beauty. All the Swazi women have fine bodies, and many are very handsome, according to the native standard. Princesses sell for as much as fifty cows apiece, and a wife is always proud if she brings more than the market price. In fact, her importance as a wife is usually based on her purchase price.

When the time arrived for Sebuza to choose some wives, there were quite a number awaiting his inspection. The morning that he looked them over they were assembled in the "Sacred Bathing Pool," a sort of market-place. Their owners, mostly parents, stood beside the crown prince and extolled the virtues of their offspring. The maidens were lined up along the banks of the pool and the prince examined them most minutely.

It was almost pathetic to see how these dusky belles bore up under his inspection. Each looked appealingly at Sebuza, much after the fashion of a dog that hopes to be petted, and almost quivered with the hope that she would be selected. The thought came to me that the rejected ones must face a hard life when they were brought back to their home kraals. [298]

Sebuza chose five of the girls, and they were straightway sent to his kraal. The rejected ones

were immediately clothed and their owners took them away. Later in the day Lochien told me that all the girls selected by Sebuza were exceptionally high caste and that between forty and fifty cows had been paid for each.

My companions were sadly disappointed over Sebuza's wholesale marriage. They had expected a wild ceremony and much savage celebration, but I explained to them that the Swazis did not go in for that sort of thing. There are no marriage ceremonies whatever—the man pays for his wife and she belongs to him from that hour until he dies. He may accumulate other wives, and this custom is so old that all the wives live together in peace, such a thing as jealousy of the white kind being unknown. From what I have seen of the toilsome lives of these wives, it would seem to me that their contentment is based on the old saw which sagely observes that "misery loves company." Another advantage of plural wives is that each additional wife lessens the labors of the others.

Although there are no marriage rites beyond payment for the wife, there are very strict customs in regard to widows. If the deceased husband is an induna of importance or a connection of the royal family, it is customary for the king to take his pick of the widows. If, however, he has no interest in them, the nearest male relation who can afford to keep them inherits as many as he wishes. Of course, when a husband dies all his wives shave their heads in token of mourning. As they have trained their hair to grow in a sort of pyramid, the hair is shaved clean up to this structure. Daughters of the dead man have their hair shaved right off; if they are already wives, this does not apply, since the claim of the husband is greater than that of any other relative.

[299]

We did not pay our usual visit to Tzaneen the day Sebuza married his first installment of wives. Instead, Tuys and I remained in camp planning some way to accomplish our mission and my companions made good their threat to learn something first-hand about Swazi life.

Next morning trouble of another kind occurred. A government messenger arrived with a communication for me. He had located me at Zombode, where they told him that I had gone on to Lebombo. This messenger was a Swazi induna with six warriors, and he carried himself with a good deal of swank. Evidently he was impressed with his importance. I know he snubbed Sibijaan, and my boy was breathing fire when he came to announce this arrival.

The messenger waited for me in front of the tent, with his warriors drawn up behind him. It was quite a military turnout, and he saluted me with gravity and impressiveness. Across one shoulder he had a small despatch-case on which were the arms of Great Britain in well-polished brass. From this he took an official looking envelope and handed it to me with a flourish.

[300]

It was a communication from His Majesty's High Commissioner for Swaziland, and it "begged most respectfully to call to your attention" the fact that I had passed through Mbabane without acquainting the government officials with the details of my expedition into British territory. At once I realized my mistake, and could have kicked myself for not calling on the Commissioner and telling him about my project. I knew how these British officials work. First they are punctiliously polite and request information. If they do not get it speedily, they remain polite but make certain definite demands. If still unsatisfied, they become annoyed in a polite manner and take "proper measures." These latter oftentimes consist of a "flying column," which makes it decidedly uncomfortable for the object of their well-bred attentions.

I read the missive from the Commissioner and for a moment intended replying to it. Then I realized that any reply would seem impolite and possibly evasive, so I decided to make a quick trip to Mbabane and make the laggard call on the Honorable Mr. Honey. I gave directions that the messenger and his men should be fed, and then had Sibijaan inspan the six mules and prepare the wagonette for the trip.

Oom Tuys was missing and I suspected that he had gone to the royal kraal. I went over there and found him sitting with Lochien outside the royal hut. The queen was asleep inside and several of her maids were busily engaged in hairdressing, a most important function among high class Swazi women.

[301]

I told Tuys what I intended doing and he agreed that it was the right and proper thing. One caution he gave me, however.

"Forget I am here, Owen," he admonished. "The British don't like it, as you know. If Honey asks about me, you will have to lie. I am not here!"

We talked in Dutch, and he told me that he would keep the kettle boiling while I was away and try to gain a step or two in my absence. He seemed quite happy and enjoying himself with Lochien, so I left him after he had reminded me that it would be a good thing to get the messenger and his men out of the camp as soon as possible.

We all started together for Mbabane. I had practically nothing in the wagonette and the mules were in fine fettle after their long rest. Sibijaan drove, and it was not long before we left the messenger and his escort far behind. The Valley of Heaven was as beautiful as ever and the trip a pleasant one. We arrived at Mbabane on the evening of the second day, having made better than twenty miles a day.

I stopped at the little hotel and the mules were turned into the kraal of the livery-stable across the way. After washing the travel stains away, I reported to the Commissioner's office. Owing to the midday rest, or siesta, he usually remained at his desk until about seven o'clock, and I caught

[302]

him shortly before he closed up shop.

The interview was typical of governmental business as conducted by such officials. My name was taken in by his clerk and shortly after I entered the comfortable office with its large screened Windows. Mr. Commissioner Honey sat at his English desk writing with a scratchy pen. After a moment he looked up.

"Well, Doctor O'Neil?" he said with a rising inflection.

It was just as though he had reminded me that I was guilty and was waiting to hear me plead. There were a dozen other meanings, all unpleasant, in that little word "well." I never realized before that one monosyllable could mean so much. I knew that he had me right, as it were, and I decided to act as innocent as possible.

"Mr. Commissioner, I received your letter," I said, "and I considered it would be best and more polite to reply to it in person than to send an answer by your messenger."

"Very good, Doctor, very good," he answered. "Now will you be so kind as to tell me what you are doing at Zombode?"

I did so. I told him all about the plan to take pictures of the coronation of Sebuza and how I was meeting obstacles which appeared insuperable. I told him that I had moved my outfit to Lebombo and gave him satisfactory reasons for the change. I could see that my candor impressed him favorably. There was no reason why it should not. What I told him was the truth. Of course I related how L'Tunga had saved Dr. Sugden's life, and this impressed him deeply. He let me talk for some twenty minutes, and then leaned back in his chair and gave me some advice.

[303]

"If I were you, Doctor," he said, "I would not waste more time waiting for Sebuza's coronation. It is my opinion that this will not take place for some time, possibly a year or so. You may not know it, but the young gentleman is not in the best graces of His Majesty's Government and it may mean a long delay before official permission is granted for him to reign.

"Your expedition is costing you a lot of money and it seems a shame for you to remain in Swaziland with no chance of fulfilling your mission. If you will take my advice, you will return to Ermelo and wait until I send you word that the coronation has received the official sanction of our government."

This was a blow to my hopes. I had no idea that Sebuza would not be recognized by the authorities and it began to look as though my expedition were a wild goose chase after all. We talked a little while longer, but I was not able to find any specific reason for the government's dislike of Sebuza. Apparently there was a general feeling that he would try to follow in the footsteps of his father, Buno the Terrible, and the government regarded Swaziland as a sleeping dog that it would be unwise to awaken.

[304]

Our talk ended when Mr. Honey rose to his feet with the remark, "Of course you are dining with me tonight?"

I assured him that I would be most pleased, and he told me that eight o'clock was the hour. This barely gave me time to get back to my hotel and dress, but I made it. I got into my dinner-coat and fresh linen while I cursed the habits of the English. They will take civilization—particularly of the "dinner" kind—with them no matter where they go!

Dinner proved a delightful affair. There were half a dozen people there, including several of the minor officials and their wives. It was a gay party and the food was excellent, being served in London fashion by several silent-footed Indians. The thought came to me that British officials certainly "do themselves well." We talked about many things, none of them concerning Swaziland or its coronations, and it was a pleasure to have my worries banished for a few hours.

After dinner we played "bridge," and then I went back to my hotel feeling as if I had stepped out of an English drawing-room into the heart of Swaziland. At his door the Commissioner shook hands and gave me a parting word.

"Better come back and avoid trouble, Doctor," he said. "There isn't likely to be any coronation this year and you always run the change of getting into a fight. If you stay, be careful! His Majesty's Government is interested in the peace of Swaziland. Goodnight and cheerio!"

[305]



PRINCESSES AT THE SACRED BATHING POOL
Previous to being offered for the choice of Crown Prince Sebuza of the Swazis



A SCENE AT THE ROYAL BATHING POOL

I was rather blue that night as I went to sleep. It looked as though my voyages, privations, and trouble had all been for nothing.

Next morning Sibijaan and I set off bright and early. He told me that a kaffir had chummed with him at the kraal and had enquired whether Oom Tuys was with my expedition. Sibijaan had lied, as he knew he must, and then I understood why the Commissioner had carefully refrained from making me perjure myself. My only hope was that Sibijaan had been a convincing liar. Otherwise, the fact that Tuys was with me would make the Commissioner watchful of my activities.

On the way back through the Valley of Heaven I came to the conclusion that something had to be done, and done quickly, if Sebuza was to be made king. What this something was, however, I only had a vague idea. I wanted to talk it over with Tuys before taking any action, since his help would be necessary.

My uncle was waiting for me when I reached camp and seemed anxious to know what the Commissioner had said about him. When I told him that he had not mentioned his name, his pride seemed hurt, but he cheered up when I related how the kaffir spy had tried to pump Sibijaan.

"I would hate to think that the British have ceased to worry about me," he said. "I have had a good deal of fun by teasing them, and I'm not ready yet to settle down and become a farmer all the time!"

[306]

There was not much harm in Tuys, but he was Boer enough to enjoy worrying the British and the fact that he was not wanted in Swaziland made his sojourns there all the more enjoyable.

Next day we visited Tzaneen, and I found that she was much interested in my sudden trip to Mbabane. Her indunas had told her that I had received a summons to visit the Commissioner and she was curious to know all about it. I told her why Mr. Honey wanted to know about me and then repeated his advice.

"Yes, Mzaan Bakoor, I know all about the government opposition to my son becoming king," she said. "He has so many followers that they are afraid of him. The British fear Sebuza because they would sooner have a weak old woman like Labotsibeni in Swaziland than a strong man and a son of Buno."

"How many followers has Sebuza, Nkosikaas?" I asked, for this was part of what I was thinking.

"Mzaan Bakoor, you of great magic, can you count the blades of grass in the field?" she replied.

Then she assured me that all Swaziland was behind the young prince. She further told me that this was the chief reason why Sebuza was disliked by the government and added that he had been impudent to some British officials. I had heard rumors of this, but had placed small weight in them. Now, it seemed, Sebuza must have overstepped the mark and no reconciliation was possible for some time. This, added to what I had heard in Mbabane, made me despair of accomplishing the object for which I had come to Lebombo. There was more talk along the same line and we treated the queen to a bottle of gin. This led to a peculiar incident. [307]

That night Sebuza came to our camp and asked to see me. I thought he might have something of importance to communicate, but all he asked was that I stop giving gin to his mother! This, of course, was impossible. She was in authority until he became king and her request for liquor was a command we dared not disobey.

Sugden had spent the afternoon with L'Tunga and had watched the witch-doctors smoke dagga weed. I had forgotten to tell him about this and he was much excited over the discovery. With his faculty for observation, he had made a serious study of how the Swazi uses the weed and was much interested in its effects.

"L'Tunga took me to his witch-doctors' school," he told me, "and I watched them smoke dagga. It is a small leaf that must be something like tea before it is dried. Believe me, it has a 'kick.' There were about twenty of these witch-doctors sitting in a circle in their kraal, all hitting the pipe. They have a crazy way of smoking it, too. You've seen the pipe, haven't you? It's a great long thing, very badly made, and it takes a strong man to make it draw.

"The way they smoke is this. The first man takes a calabash of water and then drops a coal into the pipe, thus lighting it. He next sucks on the pipe until he gets his mouth full of smoke. Then he attempts to fill his mouth with water, all the while trying to prevent any of the smoke from escaping. When he can no longer hold the smoke and water in his mouth, he blows them out together. It is a sort of smoky shower-bath! [308]

"Most of them could only do it once. Almost before they could pass the pipe on to the next doctor, they would keel over and go sound asleep. For some reason or other the smoke did not affect them all in the same way. Some of them became happy and began to chant, but they, too, soon grew drowsy. For plain unadulterated 'kick,' the dagga weed has it over anything I've ever seen, though it resembles hemp in its action."

It seems that L'Tunga did not join this smoke-party, but took Sugden to where he could see the common Swazis indulge in the same pastime. Not being allowed the great pipe of the witch-doctors, they had a method of their own.

First they dig a little hole in the ground. Next a narrow trench is scraped out of the earth leading from this hole to another of about the same size. At the bottom of this trench is placed a freshly cut stick, and this is buried in the hard soil by covering it with wet clay. When the clay is firmly packed the stick is drawn out, leaving a little tunnel. Then clay is used to build a small mound over the second hole, through which an opening is made which connects it with the little tunnel. This is the mouthpiece of the pipe, the tunnel is the stem, and the first hole is the bowl. [309]

"The Swazis filled the hole with dagga weed and lighted it with a hot cinder from the fire in front of the kraal," Sugden concluded. "Then, one by one, they sucked the smoke through the mouthpiece. They used the water method, also. It was an amazing sight! One after another they would fall over, the next man at the pipe usually having to drag the body of the last one out of the way."

I had seen these dagga orgies before and knew what they were like. Sugden, however, thought it a most unusual spectacle and would have taken a whiff of the dagga himself if he had been urged. His interest was purely scientific, of course, and he succeeded in obtaining a few leaves of the plant which he proposed to have analyzed when we reached civilization again.

CHAPTER XVIII

Witch-doctors of Swaziland—How they brought a famine—L'Tunga's school of witch-doctoring—The "Poison Test" to settle ownership—The professional witch-doctor's equipment—L'Tunga decides a murder case—Some genuine cures.

Dagga weed was Sugden's most interesting discovery up to that time and it whetted his appetite.

[307]

[308]

[309]

[310]

I pointed out to him that the witch-doctors' craft would be a good thing to investigate and he went after this like a bloodhound on a hot scent. We all became interested, and I soon found myself whiling away the tedium of waiting for the coronation by running down evidence of the art of "witch-doctoring."

What we discovered made me realize the wisdom of the government, which had recently passed strict laws against the witch-doctors. For a time L'Tunga regarded our curiosity as a great impertinence and did everything possible to prevent our getting more information than was readily available. Finally, one night, he grew confidential and told us why the government had set its foot down on his brothers of the craft. He did this chiefly because Dr. Sugden and I had shown him that we were "white witch-doctors" and thus had established a sort of fraternity among fellow practitioners.

"The bad witch-doctors caused all the trouble," he said, "and it was their own fault that the government made laws against them. None of the doctors in my 'lodge' were guilty of these offenses, but we have to suffer with the rest. Like you white doctors, I cure the sick and drive out evil spirits." [311]

I had not claimed to drive out spirits, but I am not sure that Sugden had not made such a statement. He always did things in a thorough manner and L'Tunga might have misunderstood him when he told him what healers we were.

"The trouble began a little while ago," the witch-doctor went on, "when a number of strange doctors came among us. They were from the gold country to the west and they had many queer tales to tell. They told our people that they were fools to work for the white men and that they ought to rise up and drive them out of the country."

"I do not know where they received their learning, but they said that our people were as good as the white men and told them that they were fools to let white men govern them. Our people listened and became much excited. They talked of making war and there was much unrest. The warriors began to gather, and the Boers and other white men sent messengers and spies to find out what was going on."

"However, these strange witch-doctors talked too much and made too many promises. Soon they began to tell our people that they need not grow any more corn nor breed any more cattle. They promised that there would be a great rain of corn and that millions of cows would come into the country for any one who wanted them. The people were convinced and sat about in idleness, waiting for the free food. The end of this was that there was much hunger in our land and many of the people starved to death." [312]

"I went about when these strange witch-doctors told these lies and warned our people that starvation would come. But they scoffed at me and would not even bow to my most sacred charms. They said I belonged to the old order and that the new witch-doctors were the only ones worth following. For some time—too long a time—I had no honor and it was not until starvation came that the people again listened to me."

"Then the government learned of all these things and sent food to the people, so that not so many died. Some of the strange witch-doctors were caught and killed, but most of them escaped."

"Making starvation was not the only crime they did. So foolish were the people that they believed in them and for a time would do anything they said. Some of the doctors told them to commit murders and sold them charms that were to prevent them from getting caught. A number of killings took place and many women were stolen. When the murderers were caught and brought to court, they told how the doctors had advised them to kill and even named the number of cows they had paid for the charms that were supposed to protect them. When the government heard of this they became very angry and passed laws against witch-doctors."

L'Tunga was full of this invasion of Swaziland by these strange witch-doctors and told us stories about it for several hours. One was as amusing as it was illuminating. It seemed that two young indunas had a difference of opinion over a woman. They both tried to buy her and bid against each other, so that the successful one had to pay three or four times her market value. This hurt the purchaser's feelings, while the loser was angry because he had been outbid. The result was that the latter went to one of the witch-doctors and bought a charm to protect him while he unostentatiously murdered his rival. At about the same time the other induna bought a charm from another of these witch-doctors and started out to slay his enemy. Before they could meet the two witch-doctors compared notes and decided it would be a bad thing for them if there was a killing. The doctor whose charm proved valueless would lose prestige in the villages he was plundering. So they agreed to prevent bloodshed, and did so by proving that the woman in question was bewitched and thus only fit to serve them! One of them took her, and the indunas decided to forget their differences. However, when the crash came, after the starvation episode, they hunted up these witch-doctors and promptly killed them." [313]

"I have never heard what became of the woman," concluded L'Tunga, "but I fear she is no longer in danger of being bewitched."

Before leaving us that night L'Tunga agreed to tell us everything about his profession—with reservations, I suspected. He invited us to visit his school where he trained the young witch-doctors, and we decided to do so next day. His invitation, he explained, included only Sugden and myself, as he knew that none of the rest of my party were "white witch-doctors." He was [314]

extending to us a sort of "professional courtesy," as it were.

We learned more about witch-doctoring at the school in a short hour than we had during all the weeks we had been in its proximity. The school was in a small kraal set apart from the others, and we found about a score of would-be "doctors" in attendance. We must have arrived at a slack moment, for they were all smoking dagga weed and enjoying it to the full. L'Tunga, nevertheless, showed us all over the place and painstakingly explained everything of interest. One small hut, however, was forbidden to us. He explained that it was the sanctuary where the charms were kept, and that if white men entered it, none of the charms would ever be of any use. "We'd put a curse on 'em!" Sugden tersely put it.

It was at the end of this tour of inspection that we received a practical demonstration of how a regular witch-doctor works. We were beginning to examine L'Tunga's professional equipment when one of the neophytes approached and with the utmost respect informed him that he was wanted. Of course we went along, and found quite a gathering at the gate of the kraal. In the center were two large and indignant warriors. They were all chattering away at a great rate, but all talk ceased immediately when L'Tunga stepped out of the gate. He was absolute master of the situation, and the deference with which these common people treated him showed that they knew it. [315]

"Why do you disturb L'Tunga and his white friends?" he demanded. "Do you not know that these are white witch-doctors of great magic and are too great to even look on such lowly people as you?"

Properly rebuked, the crowd dropped its eyes, and then L'Tunga quickly found out what was wanted. It seemed that the two warriors each claimed to own a certain cow. Instead of fighting over its possession, they had decided to ask L'Tunga to find the rightful owner by means of the "Poison Test." I had often heard rumors of this test, but had never seen it performed. L'Tunga talked with them a little while and arranged that the loser was to pay him one cow for his services in determining the ownership of the animal. After this was decided, each of the warriors sent one of his people to get a cow. While these cows were being brought L'Tunga prepared himself for the test.

We went to his hut and he allowed us to squat nearby and watch him dress. Two of the would-be witch-doctors acted as valets for him, and when he had finished he was certainly a striking and awesome figure. First, he was plentifully smeared on the forehead, face, and body with a sort of red-and-white clay pigment. With his black skin, this gave him a weird appearance. When sufficiently painted, he put on a magnificent headdress consisting chiefly of porcupine quills some fourteen inches long. This headdress is known as the "ekufue" and is only worn by witch-doctors who are masters of the craft. The white pigment is known as "ocikela," while the red is called "onongo." Both have other uses which we were soon to learn. [316]

To complete his costume L'Tunga wound a wide strip of antelope skin about his middle. This contains a large pouch and is known as the "uya." In it are carried a number of medicines and some charms. When fully dressed for his work our friend looked every inch a leader of his profession.

On our return to the kraal gate we found the two cows waiting. L'Tunga looked them over and said they would do, although he was far from enthusiastic. Sugden and I thought they were fine beasts, but it would not have done for the witch-doctor to have admitted this.

Then came the test. The warriors were told to stand together in front of L'Tunga, who knelt on several small but fine skins which his assistants had placed on the ground. When all were in place an assistant handed L'Tunga a small hollow gourd, or "okapo," partly filled with water. In this he mixed several drugs the nature of which we learned later. First came a form of "ombambu," which is said to be so deadly that birds die when they light on the limbs of the tree from which it is obtained. Then came another drug of the same nature, said to be obtained from the roots of the tree. Lastly L'Tunga dumped "onsunga"—a mixture of powdered herbs the ingredients of which we were never able to ascertain—into the gourd. Then he stirred the mess with the foot of an antelope. While he stirred it he chanted in a low voice. [317]

During all this performance the crowd remained absolutely silent, as were we. The only noise was the lowing of one of the cows who seemed to disapprove of the proceedings.

When the "hellish brew," as Sugden called it afterward, was thoroughly mixed, L'Tunga handed it to one of the warriors and told him to drink it. Without hesitation the man did so, and it seemed to me he took a good half of the mixture. L'Tunga then retrieved the gourd and passed it to the other warrior, who drank the remainder.

Next came the climax of the test. Both warriors appeared to grow violently ill. L'Tunga chanted in a louder tone, while the crowd pressed close. Sugden and I did not know what was going to happen and watched anxiously. The warriors swayed back and forth and there was an air of tense expectation that became constantly more acute. Suddenly Sugden caught my arm.

"Look, look! He's going to vomit!" he said, pointing at one of the warriors. He was right. A second later the man retched and vomited. As he did so, the crowd cried out so loudly that I caught the words, "He is the loser! It is not his cow!"

L'Tunga immediately stepped to the man and smeared him with red pigment, placing it mainly on [318]

his forehead and arms. Next he turned quickly to the other and smeared him in similar manner with the white pigment. Then with all haste L'Tunga mixed "asangu" and gave some to each man. This, we learned later, was a powerful emetic and it certainly acted without delay.

When the warriors had calmed down they were rather weak and weary. L'Tunga directed an assistant to take the cow of the man who became sick, and we thus understood that he had lost in the "Poison Test." While L'Tunga was divesting himself of his ceremonial trappings he explained to us that there was no doubt that this man was wrong about the ownership of the cow over which the dispute began—if he had owned the animal, he would not have vomited!

"This is no country for a man with a weak stomach," Sugden remarked to me. "It looks as if a strong constitution counts even more here than in the U. S. A."

L'Tunga also explained that both warriors would have died forthwith, had he not given them the emetic. The mixture he had compounded caused sure death after a short time. He told us that he considered the cow he had received in payment not much of an animal and adopted the pose that his talents had been poorly remunerated.

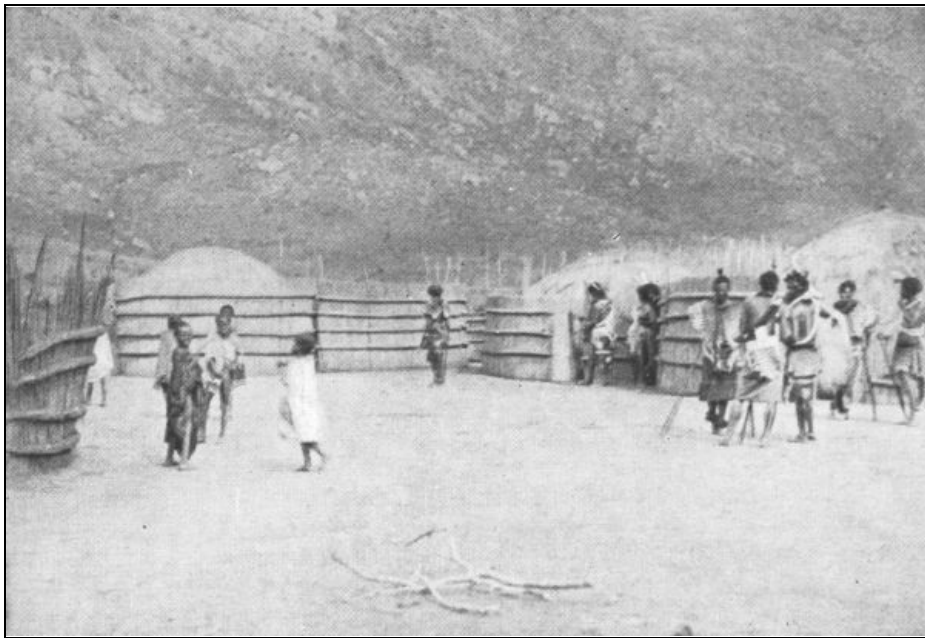
By sympathizing with him in these complaints we made L'Tunga feel that there was a further professional bond between us, and he became even more willing to assist us in our study of witch-doctoring. When he had removed his paint and other marks of his profession, he offered to show us the stock-in-trade of a real witch-doctor. [319]

"We must use many wonderful and powerful charms in our work among the poor and ignorant people," he said. "Many of them have come down to us from the old witch-doctors who knew much more than I do, and I know more than any other in the whole of South Africa. My father was a witch-doctor, and his father was one, too. He was the head witch-doctor for King Ama-Swazi, and his word was law with the king as well as the people. In his day there was much honor for a real witch-doctor and he had many wives. He was very, very rich. He was also very powerful, so that the king was glad to have him with him when he made war and governed his people."

I had already heard tales of his respected ancestor, but I regret to say that few of these reflected credit on him. It seems that Ama-Swazi allowed him the right to inflict the death penalty, and it was his habit to remove any induna whose wives he coveted or who might possess anything else he could use. In addition to these civic activities, this old devil added a number of new charms to the outfit carried by a professional witch-doctor and L'Tunga was proud of the fact that he had some of the original ones his ancestor had invented.

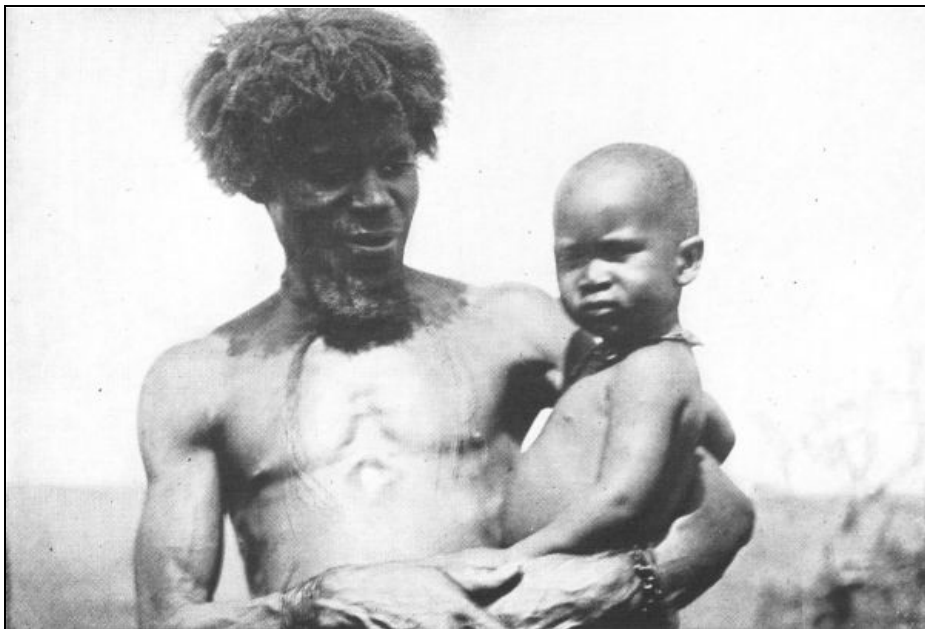
One of the most interesting things that L'Tunga showed us was his charm-case, or "uhamba," which all properly accredited witch-doctors carry. This corresponds to the familiar little black bag carried by white physicians when making their calls. The "uhamba" he used was a tightly woven basket, roughly one foot broad, two feet long, and perhaps ten inches high. In this was a queer collection of charms. The chief thing, however, was the "ongombo", or small gourd used in divination. This was very sacred and L'Tunga would not allow us to touch it. In it were the most potent charms, and he exhibited these to us one by one. [320]

There were a few rough images of wood, very crudely made but yet unmistakably representing human beings. They were both male and female, and were used to symbolize persons who were doing business with the witch-doctor. Then there was a lion's tooth, a horn of a goat, some chicken-bones, a pig's foot, and the hoof of an ox. More interesting than these were a chicken's head dried with the mouth open, which was used to symbolize a gossip, and the dried nose of a hyena, which L'Tunga used when he "smelled out" crime. There were a number of other odds and ends, but they had no special significance. All these charms played a part in various rituals, and L'Tunga told us that none of the would-be witch-doctors in his school were allowed to practice until they were able to use each and every one correctly.



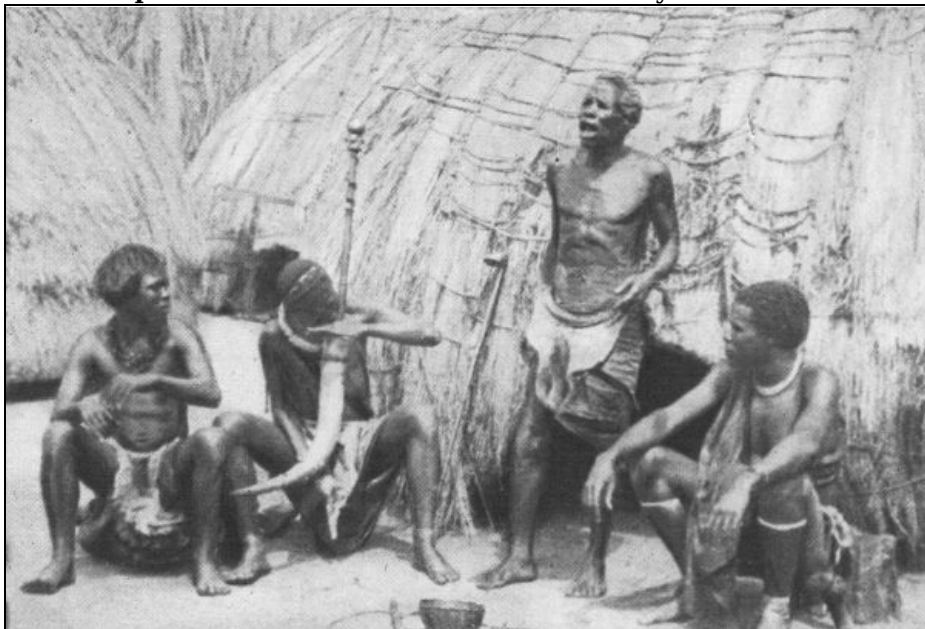
INTERIOR OF THE ROYAL KRAAL

This shows the details of its construction, and also warriors and children



CHIEF WITCH-DOCTOR OF SWAZILAND

He is holding the latest addition to his family. He is a very influential man and is the personal doctor to the queen and the prince. He has thirteen wives and sixty children



A SCHOOL OF WITCH-DOCTORS



A SWAZI SEMINARY OR SCHOOL FOR YOUNG WITCH-DOCTORS
These are being taught the secrets of their profession, one of
them being in the act of smoking a Swazi pipe

Next he showed us a number of other charms of a different character. One of these was the "ombinga," which was the horn of an ox, full of medicines, herbs, and drugs. This was a very valuable and potent charm, and only kings and great indunas were allowed to possess it. It was supposed to prevent lightning or disease from striking the owner, and its wonderful power also extended to his family and possessions. In addition, it was supposed to prevent wild animals from attacking those under its protection.

[321]

"That is some charm, believe me," Sugden said, when L'Tunga had reverently explained it. "It is a combined lightning-rod and accident policy, and must cost a lot."

L'Tunga assured us that the "ombinga" cost many cows, and this was the reason why only kings and chiefs could afford to own it. Following this, he showed us a rain wand, but refrained from demonstrating its power. This he called an "ocifungo." It was made of the tail of an ox, with two small deer horns inserted in the end. There were some magic oils in the tail, also, and he explained that he could drive rain away by blowing the little horns and waving the tail at the rain. Sugden asked him in all solemnness if the wand worked, and L'Tunga assured him that it was infallible, provided the right payment had been made. The payment, it seems, consisted of a number of cows, and young women would not be refused. Sugden remarked that we ought to get one of these rain-dispellers and have it around all the time so that we would not have any further trouble with wet weather.

Last of all, L'Tunga unwrapped a bundle of skins and produced a number of neck-charms, known in the singular as an "umbanda." These were for the use of any one willing to buy them, and were most potent as a protection against injury in battle. The "umbanda" consists of two bottle-shaped objects about four inches long and is made of woven grass-string. From the end of each there protrudes a tuft of feathers about two or three inches long, and each one contains magic medicines. The Swazi warriors wear the "umbanda" around the neck and believe that they stand a poor chance in battle unless they do so. However, I had seen natives wearing them at times when there was no war, and this prompted me to ask L'Tunga about it.

[322]

"There is always a reason, Mzaan Bakoor," he said. "When a warrior puts on his 'umbanda,' he fears that he may meet the assegai of an enemy. Then again, he may be going to destroy an enemy and wishes to be protected."

Further development of his explanation showed that when a Swazi appeared wearing his "umbanda," it was generally understood that he was off to a killing. They always go armed, so that weapons mean nothing, but when they put on this charm there is bloody work afoot.

After inspecting L'Tunga's equipment we strolled over to the school, where a class was in session. The details of this we missed, however, as the instruction halted as soon as we came in sight. L'Tunga talked for a moment with the "professor" and then told us that the fact that we were white men would prevent us from seeing the novices receive their instruction.

"But it would not be worth your time to see these young men at work," he added to console us. "They are only learning certain rituals. First the instructor explains the charm to be used, and then he shows them how it is done. They try to do as he does, and when they have learned he explains another charm."

[323]

Sugden and I were sorry not to see this class at work. It would have been entertaining to watch them, and I wondered how they would have compared with my classes in the Harvard Medical School. Of one thing I felt certain—these savages were just as much in earnest as any of us back

there in Cambridge.

It appears to take a long time to make a bona-fide witch-doctor. The course given in L'Tunga's school is most thorough—at least, that is what he said—and no candidate receives his "uhamba" until he knows all the tricks of the trade. It astonished us to find this intelligent savage taking his profession so seriously; it all seemed such frightful nonsense to us. Still, the thought came to me that L'Tunga might think the same about some of our most sacred medical practices. When we left him he promised that he would send for us the next time he was to work.

Three days later he did so. One of his students came to tell us that his chief was about to make a divination and that we could witness it if we wished. Naturally, we accepted. We had been eager to see a divination, which we understood to be a ceremony where the witch-doctor really went through his paces.

L'Tunga was waiting for us in his hut. He was cordial, but very solemn.

[324]

"This is a serious case," he said. "I am about to ask the spirits to decide the life or death of an induna. He is accused of murdering another induna, and there is no way of proving his guilt or innocence except through the spirits who work for me. To-day you shall see the most important work I do!"

We were properly impressed. Sugden, in fact, was so interested that he forgot to make his usual caustic comment. It struck me as the most barbaric thing we had yet encountered that this witch-doctor with his foolish bag of tricks should be called upon to decide the fate of a fellow-being.

L'Tunga dressed himself as before, the only difference being that he put on his paint and ornaments with more care. When he was dressed he called out, and several of the young witch-doctors entered. These he loaded with various queer things the nature of which developed at the ceremony. When we were all ready, our party solemnly marched out to the entrance of the kraal.

There we found a large crowd of people, the great majority being warriors and indunas. Standing apart from the rest, facing the gate, was the induna whose fate was to be decided. He was a tall, heavy-set man of middle age, and his face was that of a killer. He looked as if he might be accused of a dozen murders, instead of only one.

"If looks count for anything, that gentleman ought to be shot on sight!" was Sugden's remark.

[325]

L'Tunga halted just outside the entrance of the kraal, and an old witch-doctor stepped out of the crowd and addressed him.

"O L'Tunga, greatest of witch-doctors," he began, "you are called upon to decide the guilt or innocence of Makeza, this induna, the owner of many cows and women. Three days ago an induna was found dead with many wounds. Makeza was his enemy, and the people of their village say that Makeza killed him in the night. Oktela was his name, and now Makeza has taken his wives and there is much outcry in the village. Makeza says that he knows nothing about Oktela's death, but you, L'Tunga the Great, can decide!"

While he stated the case against Makeza the induna stood gazing defiantly at L'Tunga, and I had a feeling that he was not helping his case.

"My spirits will decide whether Makeza is guilty or not!" L'Tunga announced in a loud voice.

The witch-doctor waited while the little skins were placed and then knelt down facing Makeza, who also knelt at a sign from L'Tunga. Next the assistants placed two roughly carved wooden figures, about a foot high, in front of the witch-doctor. These are known as "ovitakas" and are supposed to represent the spirits that are to be invoked for the divination. It was plain to see that the figures were male and female. L'Tunga then put on a necklace which was handed him by an assistant. This seemed to be made of teeth of various wild animals, those of the lion being most noticeable. He next picked up a gourd and handed it to Makeza, who immediately commenced to shake it. It was full of seeds of some kind and made a loud rattle. L'Tunga produced a similar gourd and also started to shake it.

[326]

This rattling was really the beginning of the ceremony. After a short time L'Tunga commenced blowing on a whistle, which gave a loud shrill sound. It was a horn of a small deer set in the end of an ox-tail which was wrapped with broad bands of red, black, and white beads. The whistle was to call the spirits and we noted that the people seemed to get much excited when they heard it. After a few moments L'Tunga began to vary the whistling with a sort of chant in a minor key. The sound of his voice struck terror into the audience, and I could see that they were terribly afraid. Makeza showed his fear by rattling his gourd with what almost amounted to frenzy.

The whistling, rattling, and chanting went on and on, all the time rising in a crescendo. The excitement of the crowd became more and more intense, until it seemed to me that something must happen soon. L'Tunga appeared to be quite mad, and Makeza shook his gourd as though his life depended on the noise he made.

At the exact moment when the situation became unbearable, and when I felt as though I would go mad also, L'Tunga stopped his noise. A second later there was silence, broken only by the deep breaths of the audience. The sudden silence came with such a shock that it quite unnerved one.

[327]

Presently L'Tunga raised his empty hands above his head and slowly brought them down over his

"uhamba," which lay on the ground in front of him. He held his position for a moment, Makeza's eyes riveted on him. Then L'Tunga slowly waved his hands back and forth, and I could see Makeza following their every movement.

This must have lasted for a few moments only, but it seemed an age. Suddenly the hands stopped, remained still for the space of a breath, and then swooped down on the "uhamba." With one motion L'Tunga picked up the charm-case and shook it above his head. Three shakes, and he held it motionless!

Slowly, very slowly, he brought it down and laid it on the ground. Makeza watched, his eyes bright and big with dread. L'Tunga looked at him fixedly for a brief space, and then slowly lifted the top of the "uhamba" and glanced into it.

"Guilty! Guilty!" he shouted in a ringing voice. "The red horn stands! The spirits have decided! Makeza is guilty!"

The induna seemed stunned for a second, and for about the same space the crowd remained quiet. Then everything broke loose at once. Excited cries rose from the warriors; Makeza sprang to his feet; L'Tunga jumped up and back to where we stood. The condemned man looked wildly about and then, snatching up his knob-kerrie, assegais, and shield, made a wild dash to escape. [328]

It was all over much more quickly than it can be told. The thud of knob-kerrie on shield, the flash of steel, and Makeza lay there in the bright sun, a bleeding, mangled thing!

L'Tunga was the least excited of all of us; he seemed to take the killing as a matter of course.

"Makeza had killed," he said later, when we returned to his hut, "and his life was forfeit. He knew that he would have to die, so he attempted to escape. I understand that he would have been joined by a number of warriors if he had been able to get into the hills."

Sugden and I were curious to know about the "red horn," and L'Tunga removed the top of his "uhamba" and showed it to us. The horn was a short piece of one from an antelope, with the top painted red. In the basket, also, was a small figure of about the same size as the horn, on the head of which was a cowry shell.

"If the spirits had decided that Makeza was innocent," L'Tunga explained, "the figure would have been standing when I took the top off the 'uhamba.' But they knew that he was guilty, so the red horn stood at their command."

This seemed a poor way to determine a case of life or death, but Makeza was the only one who had any objections. It was the custom, and thus was quite all right in the eyes of Swaziland. On theory, Makeza had an even chance, which is a good deal more than he would have had before any civilized jury. His appearance alone would have convicted him. I had about convinced myself that the induna had received a fair deal, when Sugden insisted that the bottom of the little image of innocence was round, so that it could not stand. [329]

"Makeza never had a chance!" he exclaimed. "The cards were stacked against him. The poor devil!" Immediately Sugden became sorry for the induna, although he agreed with me that he could not have been anything but a murderer.

Before we returned to camp L'Tunga explained some of the work an accredited witch-doctor is supposed to be able to perform. He said he could do all the things he talked about. According to him, a real witch-doctor can recover stolen goods; he can read the past and future; he can cast out spells and provide charms against them, and can "smell out" the witches that cause other than violent deaths. The genuine witch-doctor can cause the corn to grow; he can make or stop rain and can cause the cows to give milk when they have been bewitched and their milk dries up too soon. This last is accomplished by boiling some of the affected cow's milk and whipping the animal severely with a sjambok while the milk boils.

Among the hocus-pocus and humbuggery of the witch-doctor's trade we found several genuine "cures" which they used to alleviate suffering among their people. I do not know the nature of these "cures," but they are all drugs. As an emetic, and a most efficient one, L'Tunga gives his patient "asangu"; for rheumatism he prescribes "amatoli" and sometimes "ovihata," and the distress of a mother in labor is greatly lessened by giving her "oluvanga" to chew. This is a leaf, while the rheumatism "cures" are both powders, as is the emetic. [330]

One stock remedy of which L'Tunga was very proud greatly amused us both, but we concealed our amusement lest he think we were making fun of him. This was "ekulo," a love medicine which he said was most potent.

"When a wife wishes to be preferred above all other wives of an induna," he explained, in telling of its use, "she comes to me and I give her 'ekulo.' This she mixes with the food of her husband, and from that time on he cannot resist her and she becomes his favorite wife and is mistress of all the others."

L'Tunga explained other uses of "ekulo," but these are "too intimate," as Sugden said, to be set forth here.

After our investigation of witch-doctoring as it is practiced in Swaziland, Sugden and I came to the conclusion that the British knew what they were doing when they placed a ban on it. Even L'Tunga, kindly soul that he was, ought to be suppressed.

Wearisome delay in coronation—War suggestions from Umzulek—My plan to bluff Labotsibeni—The bluff is called—A ticklish situation—Labotsibeni refuses to surrender the throne—Our demonstration fails—Night murders provoke war.

During the next two months Tuys and I had almost daily interviews with Tzaneen and Sebuza, but we got no nearer the coronation. The situation was becoming a scandal in Swaziland and was hurting the prestige of the royal family at Lebombo. Indunas kept coming in from the outlying districts and asking how soon the coronation would take place. With them came their warriors, and there was much murmuring because of the delay.

We, too, were growing more and more impatient, and to add to our distress Rossman, my camera-man, became ill. I could do little for him, and he was thoroughly disgusted with the lack of action. Finally, on his urgent request, I sent him out through Portuguese territory to Delagoa Bay, where he caught a steamer for his home in America. Oom Tuys took him to the coast and was gone nearly two weeks. He returned to find us just where we had been when he left, except that the population of Lebombo was increased by several hundred more expectant warriors. These had all come for the coronation and were unable to understand why Tzaneen did not go ahead with it. [332]

Tuys brought word from some one he had talked to at Delagoa Bay that there was a general understanding among the Portuguese that Sebuza intended taking the throne by force. In fact, traders were warned not to go into Swaziland for fear that they might get mixed up in the impending civil war. Rumors of war always lead to "gun-running" in South Africa, just as they did in Cuba in the old days, and I asked Tuys if he had heard whether anything of this nature was taking place.

"The authorities there are not taking any chances," he said. "They are not anxious to become embroiled with the British and have posted extra guards at many places along the border. If anyone tries to get guns to the Swazis, he will have to be very clever or he'll be caught."

It is absolutely forbidden to sell guns to the kaffirs anywhere in the Transvaal, but there are always venturesome traders who find it impossible to overlook the chance of making a big profit, for a gun is worth more than its weight in silver to any native able to pay for it. I remembered my experience with King Buno years before, when Oom Tuys allowed me to present him with a Mauser rifle.

The monotony of the delay in the coronation was hard to bear. As already stated, we visited Tzaneen and Sebuza nearly every day, but it was weeks before anything happened.

It was about four months after we came to Lebombo that Tzaneen sent for us one day. We found her surrounded by a number of strange indunas who seemed to be friendly with Vilakazi, one of the sons of Buno and therefore an uncle of Sebuza. It seemed that we had been summoned to attend an important conference. I was glad of this, for it might mean that some action was about to be taken. We entered the royal hut with the usual formalities, and the strange indunas saluted respectfully. [333]

"Nkoos, these great chiefs have come from Stegea," the queen said. "They have been sent with a message from Umzulek. They are the leaders of his impis and he has directed them to counsel with me for the purpose of taking the throne by force. Umzulek has talked much with Vilakazi, who has explained to him all the difficulties that surround us. Umzulek declares he will send all his warriors to our assistance, if we will drive Labotsibeni from the throne and make my son king."

During this speech Tuys watched me keenly. I could feel that there was war in the air. The people of Swaziland had come to the end of their patience and were determined to set up their king whether Labotsibeni and Lomwazi liked it or not. On my part, I was practically pledged to keep peace in Swaziland and could not be party to a war, even if it meant the success of my enterprise. Keeping this thought in mind, I addressed the queen before Tuys could reply.

"Nkosikaas, Mother of the King," I said as impressively as I could, "this is talk of war! We must not have killing. Your son must not gain his throne through bloodshed. [334]

"This would be a poor business, Nkosikaas. The government would not sanction his taking the throne by force and he would be driven out by the rifles of the English. War must be avoided at all costs, since Sebuza would lose, even if he won!"

I went on at length, pointing out the foolishness of war and trying to get the queen and the indunas to change their minds. I could see that the indunas were set on war, and they had convinced Tzaneen that it was the only way. Down in my heart I had a sort of feeling that they were right.

Tuys also backed me up and talked of the mistakes made by the Swazis when he was young. He explained that they must obey the government and told them how impossible it would be for them to wage war against Labotsibeni without its consent. He made a good argument against killing

and practically converted the queen.

Then Sebuza came in! With him was Lochien and a number of the younger indunas. Immediately the debate became heated. Lochien took our side, but Sebuza and his men sided with the indunas from Stegea. The queen remained neutral, though I felt she would have liked to come out for war. It was Sebuza who made the deciding speech.

"Who am I that I am kept out of my kingdom?" he almost shouted. "I, the son of Buno and grandson of Umbandine! I have thousands and thousands of warriors, and all the people of my country wait for me to become king. All my indunas and warriors wait for me to give the word, when they will sweep over the land and crush Labotsibeni and Lomwazi!" [335]

"I call for war! I call to my people to come to me and destroy those who hold the throne from Sebuza, son of Buno!"

With this kindly thought the prince sat down, and I could see that practically all the indunas were in favor of his suggestions. It looked as though we were to have a civil war whether we wanted it or not. But I thought of Commissioner Honey's remarks and decided to make another effort to avoid a conflict.

I suggested to the queen that the indunas be dismissed and that we hold a conference to decide the question of whether or not there should be war. When the indunas had gone, there was a sort of "executive session" attended by the queen, Sebuza, Lochien, Vilakazi, Oom Tuys, and myself.

Tuys and I brought up the question of what would happen to all present if the indunas of Tzaneen and Sebuza were allowed to precipitate war. We told them of the misery it would cause their people, and finally reminded them that the British Government would take a hand and that they would either be driven out of their country or executed. This last thought struck home. Nevertheless, they were so exasperated at the state of affairs that it looked as though they were almost willing to take a chance. [336]

"But we have more than five thousand warriors here now," Sebuza objected. "These brave men are loyal to me and came here to see me crowned. They are willing to die for me, and I dare not send them home to their kraals to say that I, the son of Buno, am afraid to take my throne. Labotsibeni has few warriors, and I have heard that these will desert her if there is a war. We could seize the throne with little killing. Only Lomwazi, perhaps, need be killed!"

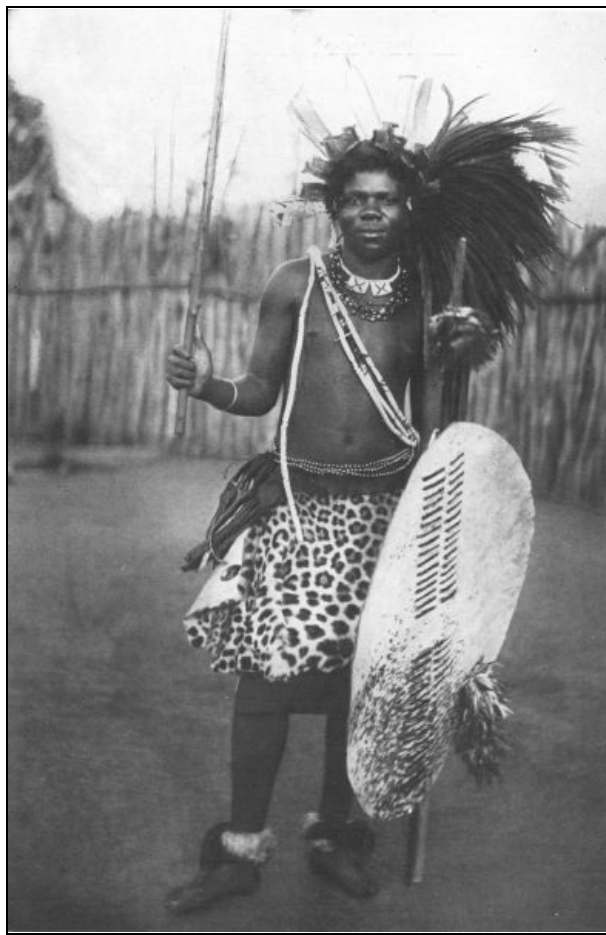
That last statement came from the heart. I could see that Sebuza had hard feelings for his uncle and he looked as if he would enjoy the job of removing Labotsibeni's able counsellor.

His remark about there being so many warriors at Lebombo gave me an idea. It flashed through my troubled head that it might be a good idea to "pull a bluff" on Labotsibeni, as the Americans say.

"You say you have more than five thousand warriors here waiting for you to give the word for war," I said, turning to Sebuza. "Are you sure that Labotsibeni has few warriors and that these will not remain faithful?"

Sebuza repeated his statement, and both Lochien and Vilakazi agreed with him.

"Then let us make a demonstration on Zombode," I went on. "Let us get all the warriors of Sebuza and the queen, and also those of Umzulek, and march on the royal kraal of Labotsibeni. When we arrive there, let the impis deploy so that their number is so many that it cannot be counted." [337]



CROWN PRINCE SEBUZA IN FESTIVAL DRESS

The headdress consists of anything that is colored, perhaps a few colored feathers or colored paper (probably removed from a jam-tin). The necklace consists of beads worked into various ornaments and patterns. The anklets are made from the hides of wild beasts



CROWN PRINCE SEBUZA

This picture was taken immediately after his return from the mountains where he attained his manhood. During the space of two moons, or two months, he lived in complete isolation among the barren mountains. He was later subjected to various religious rites, including circumcision, and went through all the ceremonies incidental to his sanctification for the throne

"When all is ready, the warriors will dance as though for war. After a little we shall send messengers to Labotsibeni and demand that she abdicate. Lomwazi will see that we have an overwhelming force and will advise her to do so, and thus Sebuza will receive the throne of his

father!"

My suggestion met with the unqualified approval of all the Swazis, particularly Sebuza and his mother. Oom Tuys, however, spoke quickly to me in Dutch.

"Remind them that this is only a demonstration, Owen, and that there must be no killing," he said.

I turned to the others again.

"Nkosikaas, you must instruct your indunas that this is to be only a peaceful demonstration," I told the queen. "You must tell them that the warrior who makes an attempt to kill will be executed. There must be no mistake about this. Prince Sebuza must also tell his indunas this, and they must understand fully that this is not war—it is only make-believe."

All promised to see that these instructions were carried out, and then we arranged the details of the demonstration. It was set for the day after the next new moon, or about ten days hence. In the meantime all the warriors that could be notified were to be rallied at Lebombo, so that the impis of the queen and Sebuza would be as large and imposing as possible. At the time I did not realize that this last suggestion was a mistake. I ought to have remembered that it would be impossible to muster the warriors loyal to our faction without those of the opposite persuasion knowing about it. [338]

The day of the demonstration dawned bright and fair. It was also very hot. Tuys and the rest of our party were up early, and even then the kraals of Lebombo seemed alive with fighting men. Lochien came over before breakfast and said that they would set out so as to reach Zombode before noon. This meant about half-past nine, since Labotsibeni's kraal was about a two hours' march distant.

It was an imposing spectacle to see the various impis assemble in such formation as they knew. Tzaneen and Sebuza each had their own impis, wearing a distinguishing headdress. In addition, the men from Stegea wore plumes that showed they were the "household troops" of Umzulek. The other impis were more or less nondescript, but their warriors were picked men. Every man had on his full war costume and they made a brave array. The indunas could be distinguished by their more splendid regalia and bearing, and even I was surprised to see what fine types of savages these were.

Sugden, Crespinnell, Tuys, and I bore our rifles and side-arms so as to carry out the semblance of war, and we four marched at the head of the army. The impis were strung out along the roadway, and when I looked back I felt certain that we had many more than five thousand fighting men behind us. With us at the head of the troops went L'Tunga, Vilkazi, Lochien, and Makets, the latter the head induna of Umzulek's impi. [339]

We halted at the little stream that marks the dividing line between Zombode and Lebombo and I took occasion to again impress on the indunas the fact that we were about to make a peaceful demonstration. I knew that word must have reached Lomwazi that we were coming, and I hoped his spies had exaggerated our numbers so that he would realize how hopeless it was to resist.

Sebuza had remained with his mother at Lebombo. This was to show that he had nothing to do with our warlike strategy. He was to stay there until sent for by his people to take over the throne.

I had one bad moment when we deployed in front of Zombode. We were stretched out for more than a quarter of a mile—it must have been nearer a half—and the formation was made while we were at least five or six hundred yards from the kraals. With my field-glasses I could see great numbers of warriors lying or sitting in front of the village. The grass was high, so that I could make no actual estimate of how many there were. I could glimpse thousands of headdresses above the grass, however, and there appeared to be a bank of men on the ground surrounding the kraals.

Now it had been planned that our army should advance in solid formation right across the little plain until it came within about two hundred yards of the huts. When it halted a signal was to be given, and then the war dancing would begin.

We went forward, our little party between the impis of Tzaneen and the prince, and I could feel the excitement growing. On both sides of me grim warriors fingered their weapons and their eyes flashed. I had the feeling that I was on top of a powder-magazine with lightning striking all around. [340]

Lochien was several paces in the lead, and it was he who was to give the signal. On we went, until I began to think he had lost his head and forgotten the orders. Suddenly he threw up his hands, his shield gleaming dully in the sun, and halted. Instantly the whole army stopped—and then came my bad moment!

Diamond-points of sunlight flashed from a thousand spearheads as impi after impi rose from the ground around Zombode. In that brief moment there seemed to be countless warriors, fully armed, standing guard at the old queen's kraal.

We fairly gasped with astonishment. Tuys threw his rifle forward and I heard the breech-lock click. He was as amazed as the rest of us, and his instinct warned of trouble.

"What a surprise!" he said, turning quickly to me. "Now we're in for it! Keep close, lad, and we'll win through!"

Before I could reply, Lochien began dancing. In another moment our entire army was chanting and springing up and down like madmen.

"Soukbulala! Soukbulala!—I will kill you! I will kill you!" they shouted. From individual shouts this quickly fell into a sort of rude rhythm, its heavy bass rolling away across the plain. [341]

Immediately the warriors at the kraals commenced their dance, and their shouts reached us with the snap of gunshots. Our men waved their knob-kerries, assegais, and shields in the air, and Labotsibeni's home guard did the same. The air was full of murderous tools and we were surrounded by giant savages who seemed to have suddenly gone mad.

This awful bedlam lasted for some time. Actually, it was six minutes by my watch, but such a six minutes! Every second I expected to see some of our warriors dash forward and attack the enemy.

L'Tunga came to himself first. He sprang out to Lochien, who still danced in front of us all, and caught him by the arms. Lochien stopped dancing, and a second later he turned to our army and threw up his arms. Like a statue he held the great shield above his head, standing there as though suddenly turned to bronze.

This was a signal for the dance to cease. In a little time our warriors saw him and quieted down, only their agitated plumes showing that their excitement was not wholly dead. Labotsibeni's warriors caught the change, and soon they, too, became quiet. They swayed to and fro in front of the kraals, but remained as silent as our impis.

L'Tunga and Lochien came back hurriedly to us for a conference.

"Nkoos, this is not what we expected," Lochien said to me in an anxious tone. "We didn't believe Labotsibeni could muster so many men. What shall we do now? Shall we go through with the plan, or fight? Perhaps it is better to fight. We have more than five thousand warriors, and they cannot have more than about three thousand. Shall we fight?" [342]

"No! No!" I replied most emphatically. "Go through with the plan as arranged. Tell Labotsibeni that you have many more warriors than she has. Tell her that you don't want to have any killing, but that she must surrender the throne."

"Wouldn't it be better to fight?" Lochien insisted, and I could see that the blood-lust had him.

I threw my rifle to my shoulder with the muzzle dangerously close to his head.

"I shall kill the first man who tries to fight," I said. "If he is a warrior, I'll shoot him once; if an induna, twice; and if he is one of the royal blood, I'll fill him full of holes!"

This settled the question. Lochien thought my threat was real—and he was not fooling himself much, either.

L'Tunga, who had a wide reputation throughout Swaziland as a witch-doctor, then went forward, accompanied by Lochien, Makets, and several others. They made the peace sign and went halfway across the debatable ground between the two armies. Here they waited for a few moments only, and then Lomwazi and half a dozen indunas came to meet them. I would have given much to have heard that conversation. After a short talk Lomwazi led our envoys into the village. [343]

No sooner were they out of sight than Labotsibeni's men again began dancing and shouting their war-cries. I could feel our warriors tightening up, and shouted for Vilakazi. I told him to watch closely and prevent any warrior from breaking ranks, and demanded that he stop them from dancing. He went along the ranks and spoke to the indunas, who turned and yelled at their men. In spite of this, I could see the plumes beginning to sway and felt that it would not be long before they were at it again. This time I doubted whether we could stop them if the "enemy" began taunting them.

Labotsibeni's men shouted and jumped, and presently one or two began running forward a short distance. A warrior would seemingly be overcome by his emotions and would make a quick dash into the "No Man's Land" between the forces, using up his energy by a particularly violent fit of dancing. When this was spent he would hop back to his place near the kraal, yelling all the while.

I realized the danger of this sort of thing. If these enthusiastic savages came far enough, they would tempt some of our men to dance out and meet them. This would mean a killing. There would be some rapid blows with the knob-kerries, accompanied by the hollow thud when the shields caught the strokes, and finally one blow would go home and the victim would drop. Like a flash would come the stab of the assegai and there would be a dead man on the ground!

Our indunas knew this better than I did, and they walked up and down before their excited warriors watching for the first man to break ranks. Tuys and I held our rifles ready, fully intending to shoot the first warrior who started for the middle ground. It was a ticklish position and my white companions stood nervously waiting for the break they felt was coming. [344]

At the moment when it seemed as though the dam must burst and our men get beyond control, a sudden silence came over the shouting lunatics at the kraals. I understood the reason when I saw

our envoys coming out of the royal kraal, still escorted by Lomwazi and his indunas. Amid deep silence they walked slowly to the spot where they had met before and stopped long enough to ceremoniously salute each other. Then Lomwazi and his bodyguard returned to the village and L'Tunga and the others came to where we stood.

They appeared angry and worried. Lochien also looked dejected, and Tuys and I listened while L'Tunga made his report.

"Queen Labotsibeni sends word that she will not surrender the throne, Nkoos," he said. "She told me to tell our queen that she must die before the throne passed to Sebuza, and not after."

Evidently the old queen had made up her mind that the government could not protect her from the sacrifice if she allowed Sebuza to become king.

"When I told her that we had many more warriors than she had," the witch-doctor went on, "she declared that her indunas would fight to the death, that so long as she held Zombode she was Queen of Swaziland!" [345]

I could picture the old queen when she delivered this defiance. Blind, too weak to stand, and more than one hundred years old, her spirit was still unbroken, her courage undiminished! She had lived like a queen and evidently had made up her mind to die like one.

Both armies remained quiet while we held a council of war. Makets insisted that we attack Zombode; he thought we could rush the village and take it. I could see that he was carrying out instructions that Umzulek had given him when he sent him to Lebombo. His advice was given in a torrent of words that I had difficulty in stopping. He had the attack all planned.

"Attack with fire!" he almost yelled, for he was much excited and in deadly earnest. "First the impis of Tzaneen, Sebuza, and Umzulek will attack those on guard. After them will come the others, carrying fire. While we fight, the torch-bearers will break through and burn the kraals!"

He had it all planned out and I could perceive the cunning mind of his chief at work. Makets wanted a bloody holocaust that would bring back the old days with a vengeance. I had heard of such attacks when the Boers and British wiped out offending tribes, and I knew what such a thing meant—a massacre, with the women and children burned to death!

I finally silenced Makets, but barely in time. He had almost fired the others with his bloodthirstiness, and for a moment I was afraid they would bolt and start the carnage. L'Tunga came to my assistance, and a moment later Lochien joined the anti-war party which Tuys and I headed. Our argument lasted a long time, but finally we prevailed. [346]

"Indunas and leaders of the true king's impis," I said at the conclusion of our council. "We have shown Queen Labotsibeni and Lomwazi that their nonsense must end. They know now that a majority of the loyal warriors of Swaziland are behind the son of Buno and they are afraid! Let us take our impis back to Lebombo, and to-morrow we will send to Labotsibeni and demand that she give up the throne. She is afraid that she will be killed, according to the ancient custom, and for that reason refuses to abdicate. We white men will pledge ourselves to guard her and escort her to Portugese territory, where she will be safe. When she hears this, she will have no hesitation in permitting Sebuza to be crowned."

This reasoning seemed good to Lochien, L'Tunga, and the others, except Makets, who grumbled a bit and still wanted to end the business then and there. I suspect that he hated the thought that he would have to report to Umzulek that there had been no fighting and that Lomwazi had escaped.

Our warriors were squatting on the ground when the command was given for the return to Lebombo. They rose at once, and Labotsibeni's watch-dogs also sprang to their feet. These expected that we were about to attack, and so were greatly puzzled when our army turned about and started off slowly for Lebombo. Their silence lasted only a few minutes, however. Then they broke out into revilings and taunts that would have made a saint fight. Our impis grew more and more sullen under this volley of insults, and went away from Zombode with murder in their hearts and the feeling that they would have many explanations to make when they returned to the home kraals. [347]

I was sorry that our bluff had failed, but very thankful that we had pulled through without bloodshed. Tuys walked along beside me, silent and thoughtful. When Lebombo's kraals came in sight he told me what was on his mind.

"Owen, my lad, I know these people," he said, "and I'm afraid that your peaceful ruse will cause trouble. The Swazi warrior is a proud man and does not like to be called names. I pray that we may get through the next few days without an explosion."

I made light of his forebodings, though probably my attitude was due to our having withdrawn without a battle. Had I known what was going to happen, I would not have been so lighthearted.

Tzaneen and Sebuza were angry at our failure. The prince, of course, was indignant that we had accepted the insults of Labotsibeni's troops and was quite rude to Oom Tuys and me for preventing the capture of Zombode.

"It would have all been over by this time," he said, "and I would be king! My impis have lost faith in me for permitting you white men to do this thing. I shall lose my warriors. They will go over to [348]

Labotsibeni and Lomwazi because they are not afraid."

Then I explained to him and his mother about our plan to send a message to Labotsibeni on the following day. When they heard that we white men would guard the old queen and escort her to safety, they thought that it might succeed. Sebuza, though, very pointedly mentioned the fact that according to custom the old queen ought to die. I protested that she was too old and feeble to do him any harm after he became king, and he agreed that I was right.

He was insistent, however, that Lomwazi should die. He felt that Lomwazi would be a menace to the throne and, it seems, had some old scores he wanted to pay off. We argued over this for some time, and Sebuza, on the urging of his mother, finally came around to our point of view. Yet I had the feeling that we would have to move fast to prevent an accident happening to Lomwazi.

I little realized that all this talk was for nothing. My nice little plan, which sounded so simple, would never even be tried!

That night Tuys and I arranged the details of the next day. We planned to take the wagonette and use it to transport Labotsibeni and Lomwazi to Portuguese territory. We would walk beside it with our rifles ready and protect the old queen with our lives. We both felt that the safest thing to do with Lomwazi would be to hide him inside and we spent some time arranging the vehicle so that he could be concealed within. Of course he would be found easily if the wagonette was searched, but we intended to prevent that, even if we had to fight off curious kaffirs.

[349]

In high hopes that we had reached the end of the trail and that the coronation was at last in sight, we went to bed. Sugden and Crespinnell were glad, too, since they had had their fill of Swaziland and wanted to go home.

But our real troubles were only beginning.

Tuys waked me roughly next morning before day-break. He was much excited, and I could see that he was fully dressed and had his rifle in his hand.

"Get up! Get up at once, Owen!" he said hoarsely. "There is the devil to pay! War has broken out and there has been killing already!"

I jumped out of bed and into my clothes in one motion. While I pulled them on he told me what had happened.

"Some of Sebuza's indunas started for their kraals last night," he said. "They went by way of Zombode, and when they passed the little hill just before you reach the plain they were attacked by several score of Labotsibeni's warriors and every one of them was killed! It was cold-blooded murder. They must have been outnumbered about ten to one!"

It seems that an induna and his men had lagged behind the others and had seen the ambush. From their description it was a most unexpected and brutal attack. Sebuza's indunas tried to put up a fight and resisted for a short time. Then the enemy overpowered them and stabbed them to death.

[350]

So it was war after all! In spite of my efforts to prevent it, the question of who should be ruler of Swaziland was to be settled in the old-fashioned way.

Tuys and I went to the royal kraal and found Tzaneen and Lochien already up. Thousands of warriors and scores of indunas were on guard and the whole place was in whirl of excitement. As we forced our way to the royal hut, Sebuza came marching in surrounded by his young indunas, all of whom were officers in his impis. The prince pushed by us into his mother's hut and a second later Lochien came out and beckoned us to enter.

As soon as she saw us, Queen Tzaneen motioned us to her side.

"It is war now," she said decisively. "There is no other way! Our indunas have been murdered and my warriors cannot be restrained. You white men did everything you could to keep peace, but Labotsibeni makes war against us and we cannot help ourselves. It is war!"

The others echoed the word "war," and I could see that they were all pleased at the prospect. Even Lochien, peace-loving though he was, realized that there was no help for it and counselled quick action to secure the capture of Zombode. Makets was in his glory and I knew that the smell of blood was already in his nostrils.

[351]

But I would not give up. I could not see these people go to war and I made one last attempt to prevent it.

"The government will avenge the murder of your indunas, Nkosikaas," I declared. "The government will send rifles to Zombode and will hang all those who did the killing. There is no need for you to meet murder with murder—then you will be also punished by the government's rifles! Thousands will be killed, and needlessly, for those at Mbabane will send white troops to catch the murderers and hang them."

They listened while I spoke, but I could feel that I was talking against a flood that was irresistible. Tzaneen answered me, and her words met the hearty approval of all the others.

"We do not need the government to avenge our dead," she said, holding her head erect with pride. "Our dead are our own and their blood cries to us for revenge!"

That seemed to settle it. They asked us to take part in the war, but we flatly refused. We told them that it was not a "white man's war" and that we would have nothing to do with it. Then Sebuza, with his customary impudence, asked me to lend him my rifle. I refused, and he grew quite huffy about it.

"You gave my father, King Buno, a rifle," he retorted. "I shall soon be as great a king and then you will be sorry you refused!"

I realized he might be speaking the truth, but nevertheless would not let him have the gun. I would have felt guilty of any killing he did with it and I know the government would have taken the same view. [352]

When Tuys and I got back to our camp we immediately held a council of war. Our position was dangerous. If Labotsibeni's men attacked Lebombo, we might have to fight for our lives. We were known as friends of Tzaneen and Sebuza, and our taking part in the "demonstration" of the day before had shown all Swaziland that we were not friendly to Labotsibeni and Lomwazi. Realizing that we might have to fight and not caring to take advantage of the slim protection of the kraals, we built up the sides of the great wagon so that it became more like a fort than anything else. In addition, we arranged for night watches, so that there would always be at least one white man on guard, with several of the black boys to assist him. Of course I had Sibijaan assigned to my watch, while Tuis was to watch with Oom Tuys, with whom he had become a favorite. Crespinell and Sugden each had their boys, and we felt that there would be little chance for a surprise attack on the wagon, if matters worked out as planned.

An interesting development in our preparations for defense was the sudden discovery that "Gunga Din" was a soldier. He came to me, asked for one of the spare rifles, and handled it like a veteran. Like all Indians, he had a great contempt for negroes, and he seemed delighted over the prospect that he might have a chance to shoot a few Swazis. Instead of being worried about the turn of affairs, Din was bucked up by it and produced a large crooked knife from among his effects, sticking in his belt where it could be readily reached. It developed that our chef was a fighting man, after all. [353]

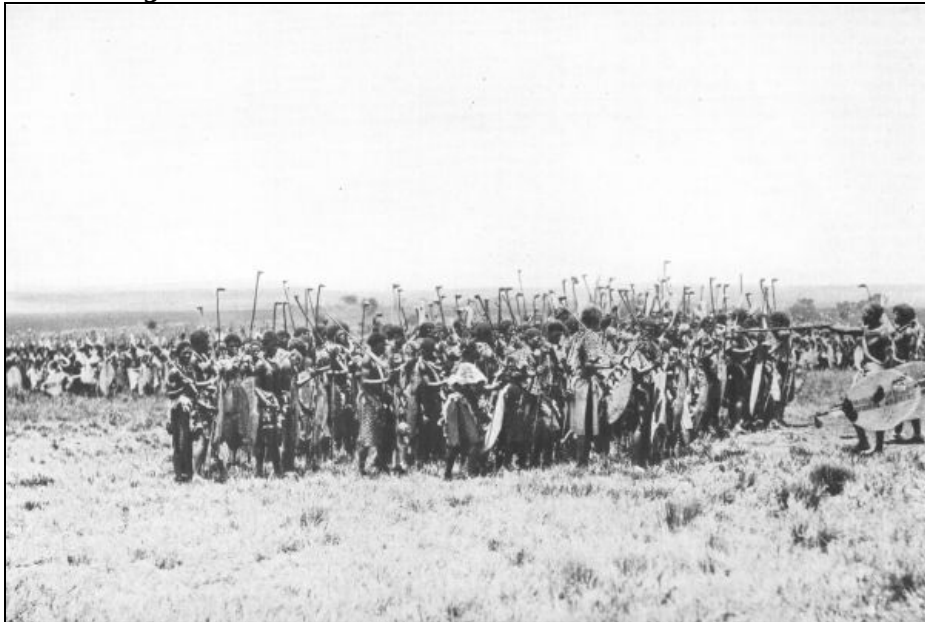


LOCHIEN, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF PRINCE SEBUZA'S IMPIS
On either side stand two of his indunas, or captains



**WARRIORS OF PRINCE SEBUZA'S IMPIS STARTING OUT TO
BATTLE**

The enemy was but a short distance away and his warriors were coming forward in like manner to meet those of the Prince



ONE OF THE ROYAL IMPIS

These regiments of about one thousand men are led by indunas, or captains. These soldiers are preparing to go into battle. They are beginning the excitement-producing dance, to be followed by a succession of single combats which are always fought to the death

All that morning excitement prevailed at the kraals. There was much dancing, and the chanting was continuous. I could see thousands of warriors on hand and during the afternoon a fresh impi arrived from the direction of Stegea. These, however, did not look like Umzulek's men, for they wore no distinguishing mark.

We were all curious to know what was going to happen. I made another visit to the royal kraal late that afternoon and was met by Vilakazi. He was friendly enough, but professed to be ignorant of what was planned and ended by advising me to return to my camp. He gave me to understand, politely but firmly, that only those who intended fighting were desired at the royal kraal. Finding that I was not wanted, I took his advice and returned to camp to tell Tuys about it.

"Vilakazi has more sense than you have, Owen," he commented. "You said that this was not a white man's war and you'd better live up to that. Don't worry about what's going to happen; it will be bad enough when it gets here."

So I decided to mind my own business and try to meet whatever trouble was coming our way when it arrived. It was as well that I did. I could do nothing except hope that the conflict would be as short and bloodless as possible. I had done everything possible to keep peace.

Late that afternoon I saw a number of small impis—bands of warriors numbering about one

hundred and fifty men—leave the kraals and take to the hills in the general direction of Zombode. These, Tuys explained to me, were ambush parties whose work it was to lie in wait for warriors who might be rallying to the assistance of the old queen.

"They are murder parties," he repeated, calling them by their right name, "and they will also act as scouts and spies. If they can waylay parties of inferior numbers, they will do so and kill every one of them. Of course there are undoubtedly a number of such parties abroad now who belong in Zombode. There will be a carnival of murder and assassination until one side gets up nerve enough to attack the headquarters of the other. All I hope is that Tzaneen's indunas screw their courage to the attacking point first. I'd prefer to have this war fought out at Zombode, and not here!"

We all agreed with him and turned in that night "all standing." I did not go to sleep until very late, and it seemed only a few minutes before Tuys roused me out to take my watch. I was on duty from about midnight until dawn, but nothing disturbed us.

CHAPTER XX

[355]

Lebombo threatened with attack—Tzaneen flies to us for protection—Victory for Sebuza—Labotsibeni's mysterious death—Lomwazi spared for execution later—Funeral sacrifice of the old queen—Queen Tzaneen in state—We are forced to join the royal impi.

There must have been important developments during the night. Shortly before sun-up I saw several thousand warriors leaving Lebombo in the direction of the enemy. They marched swiftly and silently, and when they had gone the kraals appeared deserted. I wanted to send Sibijaan over to find out what this movement meant, but was afraid to do so for fear that he might be mistaken for an enemy.

When Tuys waked, I told him about the impis leaving for Zombode. At once he became intensely interested.

"That is the end!" he declared. "We'll know who wins the war by noon. Tzaneen's impis have gone to attack Zombode, and I hope they take it. The sooner this business is ended, the better for all of us."

Shortly before noon a kaffir came out of the royal kraal and shouted in our direction. He waved his shield, and I sent Sibijaan to see what he wanted. Through my glasses I recognized him as one of the few old indunas I had seen in Swaziland. There are practically no old men or women in the country. This is due to the rigid belief in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, the old ones usually being removed when unable to protect themselves. This old induna was some sort of an officer for the queen and acted as a tutor for Sebuza. His age prevented him from taking part in active warfare.

[356]

Sibijaan talked with him for a few minutes, and then turned and raced back to me. He was terribly excited and could hardly deliver the message.

"Ou Baas, there is great danger!" he gasped. "Queen Tzaneen sends to you for help. She has received word that the impis of Labotsibeni are coming to attack Lebombo. Thousands of warriors are now in the hills and will soon attack!"

Tuys and I were puzzled what to do. Sugden decided for us. With his ready Yankee wit, he hit upon the solution.

"You haven't any chips in this game," he said, "and you've got to keep out of this war. But there's nothing to prevent you from offering sanctuary to a fugitive king, queen, ace, or jack! Send to Tzaneen and tell her to come over here, and we'll take care of her if the enemy comes! We'll have to fight for our own lives anyway, and it won't matter much if we add her to our responsibility."

I sent Sibijaan running with this message, and it was only a short time before Queen Tzaneen arrived with quite unseemly haste at our camp. In spite of her precarious position she kept her dignity, and we helped her up into the big wagon, where she hid under the cover with four of her maids-of-honor. To calm her nerves we gave her a bottle of gin.

[357]

Then followed one of those periods of suspense that seem as though they would never end. I searched the hills with my glasses, scanning every tree and boulder for the oncoming enemy. Every now and then I would start when I saw a movement, but invariably it turned out to be caused by either a cow or a sheep. We practically held our breath for about four hours, waiting for an enemy which might wipe us out. That was a long long afternoon!

About the time the shadow from the barren mountain fell across the royal kraal, which means shortly after five o'clock, our suspense came to an end. It ended with a shock that I will never forget.

Tuys and I were still searching the hills when Sibijaan suddenly gripped my arm, his hand

trembling so that I almost dropped my field-glasses.

"Look! Look, Mzaan Bakoor!" he cried, pointing down the road which led to Zombode. "There they come! Shoot quick! Shoot!"

Through the glasses I could see what looked like several impis straggling up the road. They marched fast, but without much attempt at formation. As I watched I could see that many of the warriors were dancing.

I felt myself grow cold and hot by turns. Our time had come! It was the army of Labotsibeni advancing to attack Lebombo and kill Tzaneen and her white friends. Tuys had the same thought, and he lowered his glasses and looked at me. A veteran campaigner, nothing flustered him, but he wanted to see how it affected me. A second later he put out his great hard hand and I shook it solemnly. [358]

"Well, Owen, we'll show them how white men can fight—and die, if need be," he said gruffly. "It has been a good game and we have done our best!"

Sugden and Crespinnell were watching the oncoming impis and coolly comparing the sights on their rifles, trying to agree on the proper distance to set them. This spoke for their courage, and I turned my glasses on the impis again. Tuys was studying them, and suddenly he began to laugh in that deep bass way he has when he is highly amused.

"We're damn fools, Owen, damn fools!" he rumbled, with a chuckle. "Those niggers are the impis of Tzaneen and Sebuza. The war is over! They are dancing with joy! They must have taken Zombode and are coming home to tell us about it!"

My glasses told me that he was right. My eyes are not so good as his or I would have known this before. Now I could see that the warriors were drunk with triumph and were dancing to celebrate their victory. As they drew closer I could distinguish Lochien and Makets at their head.

I called to Queen Tzaneen to come out, and informed her that her army was victorious and approaching. She climbed down from the wagon, and a moment later we all went forward to meet the impis. We reached the royal kraal shortly before Lochien and Makets, and we white men stood back while she received them. [359]

Seeing the queen awaiting them, the indunas halted the warriors and they fell into formation. Lochien paused until all were in place and then raised his arms in salute. The impis followed his lead and three times the royal salute was given, with the shrill whistle at its conclusion. Tzaneen acknowledged the salute, and then Lochien and Makets stepped forward.

"Nkosikaas, Zombode is ours! Labotsibeni is dead and the war is won!" Lochien cried. "Even now Sebuza is king in Zombode and throughout all Swaziland. King Buno's son is king and our work is over!"

"Lochien, faithful induna and counsellor," Tzaneen replied, "Is my son, the king, wounded or hurt in any way? And did he carry himself in battle as should the son of Buno?"

Lochien's answer satisfied her and she beamed with pride and joy. There were a few more leading questions and presently we went into the kraal. It was only then that I noted Makets closely. He staggered as he walked and I was startled to see that he was bleeding from several wounds in the breast. I turned to help him, but he would have none of it.

"Nkoos, I am a warrior! I am an induna and a leader of warriors!" he boasted in a tired voice. "These wounds are nothing! To-day I have won seven scars of honor. Seven of Labotsibeni's warriors, great fighting men, fell before me!" [360]

He seemed much pleased with himself and had not fully recovered from his slaughter madness. I knew that he could take care of himself and paid no more attention to him. There were important things to be learned. I wanted to know how Labotsibeni came to be killed and what had happened to Lomwazi.

Tzaneen was almost beside herself with curiosity and began questioning Lochien as soon as we were seated.

"How was Labotsibeni killed?" was her first question.

"Nkosakaas, I cannot answer that," Lochien replied, and I could see that he was telling the truth. "Strict orders were given that she be spared, so that the government might not hold King Sebuza to account for her death. Sebuza told the indunas that the man who harmed the old queen would die! All our warriors understood this.

"When we came to her hut, however, she was dead. I think that some enemy in her own kraal stabbed her when we broke in and they all fled. Perhaps some woman she had offended did it. Labotsibeni was helpless and could be easily killed."

It seemed a pitiful thing to me that Labotsibeni, after ruling Swaziland for so many years, should be murdered in this way. I was thinking about her when Tzaneen asked about Lomwazi.



PRIESTS BUILDING THE SACRED FIRE

On this pyre the body of Queen Labotsibeni was burned after Sebuza seized the throne. This is the Swazi custom and strictly adhered to. It is the Swazi belief that those surrendering power should be done away with in this manner, since if they continued to live they might still retain a certain amount of influence which would be antagonistic and detrimental to the new ruler



A VIEW OF THE KRAAL

Awaiting the arrival of the white men for their initiation ceremonies. The latter are returning from their sanctification ordeal in the mountains prior to their induction into the royal impi

"Lomwazi is a prisoner, Nkosikaas," Lochien answered. "He will be killed after he has officially surrendered the throne. These are King Sebuza's orders, and Lomwazi is under guard in Zombode until the coronation celebration is held." [361]

That settled the cunning Lomwazi. Clever as he was reputed to be, he had not been able to escape his fate. It later transpired that it was Lomwazi who had sent the false alarm that Lebombo was to be attacked. Evidently he thought that the impis of the enemy would be kept on guard there and that he would be able to increase his army by delaying the attack he knew would be made on Zombode. However, his word reached Tzaneen too late, as the impis were already on the warpath.

Lochien next gave us an account of the taking of Zombode. The old queen's opinion concerning the fighting quality of her impis was not far wrong. It seems there had been several hundred single combats, after the custom of the Swazi warriors, and finally a rush upon the kraal. Of course Lochien exaggerated a great deal—no kaffir can tell the exact truth—but there must have been between four and five hundred killed. There were practically no wounded; there never are when Swazis fight. As soon as a warrior wounds his enemy so that he is unable to fight back, he kills him.

It developed that there had been an attempt to burn the kraals, but Sebuza stopped it. It was he, also, who intervened to save Lomwazi's life after that good fighter had killed several of Sebuza's own men. Lomwazi was not spared, however, through any mistaken sense of mercy; he was kept to be executed as part of the coronation ceremonies. When I heard this I made up my mind to save him if I could. If there was no other way, I would buy his life. This is often done, and it might be possible in Lomwazi's case.

[362]

Lochien gave us many other details of the fight, remarking that there were many women in Zombode and much loot. Sebuza was to decide on the disposition of all enemy property and would have his hands full for some time to come. When Lochien had finished Queen Tzaneen praised him highly for his loyalty and generalship, and, realizing that the story was told, we went back to our camp. I felt thankful that the war was over so quickly, and said as much to Oom Tuys. He quickly undeceived me.

"Maybe it is over in Zombode and Lebombo," he said, "but it is only beginning in the outlying districts. It won't be over for some time, perhaps for months. The news of this war will not reach lots of places for days, and when it does the factions will clash. Wherever there are any indunas or warriors who are loyal to Labotsibeni, there will be killing. It will be bad killing, too,—mostly murders done at night. It takes a long time to end a war in Swaziland; that's one reason why the government is so set against it. By the way, I wonder what His Majesty's Royal High Commissioner for Swaziland thinks of things now?"

This idea had occurred to me several times, but I always put it away because I had a feeling that the Commissioner would place much of the blame for the war on my shoulders. Tuys prediction about war continuing proved only too true. For weeks after the fall of Zombode there were killings in the neighboring districts. The only battle of any importance took place at Stegea, the kraal of Umzulek. Needless to say, the forces of that much-married potentate were victorious. Of course many of these killings were due to personal feuds, the war being only an excuse for them. It is safe to say that Swaziland was in a ferment for some time after Sebuza seized the throne, and this came to the notice of the authorities in Mbabane and Johannesburg.

[363]

The following day we went to Zombode. Word had come that the body of the old queen was to be burned on the sacrificial pyre and we wanted to witness the ceremony.

There was not much to it. The burning took place shortly after dark and L'Tunga arranged the ceremony. During the day we saw the huge pyre of dry wood on which the body was to be laid and the witch-doctors were still adding to it late in the afternoon.

Soon after sunset the impis of the king and his mother gathered about the great pile, which had been built up in a regular pattern. We were with Lochien and Vilakazi and were beginning to get bored when there came a commotion and King Sebuza arrived with his bodyguard. There were a number of fires near the kraals and these were beginning to light up the darkness.

After standing about a little longer it was dark enough to suit Sebuza and he sent one of his indunas away in the direction of Labotsibeni's brick-walled hut. Shortly after there arose the cry "Make way! Make way!" and I saw the warriors draw back and leave a lane to the pyre.

[364]

A moment later six witch-doctors arrived, two and two, bearing a rude stretcher on their shoulders. On this was a large bundle roughly resembling a body. It was the remains of Queen Labotsibeni, the most extraordinary native ruler South Africa ever knew.

L'Tunga was waiting at the pyre and directed the witch-doctors how to place the body on its summit. When this was done, he stepped back and moved to the nearby fire, where he picked up a flaming brand in each hand. These he raised above his head with wide sweep and held them steady for a moment. Then swiftly he brought the torches down and the warriors gave the royal salute—the last tribute to the murdered queen! This salute was repeated three times, and then L'Tunga, assisted by the other witch-doctors, lighted the funeral pyre. The wood was dry and burned fiercely, and soon the leaping flames met over the body of the queen.

That was the last of Labotsibeni.

Next day we tried to have a talk with Sebuza, with the idea of finding out how soon he planned to be officially installed as king. This was very important to me, since his coronation would mean the attainment of the object for which I had come to Swaziland. I would be able to make an historical record of ceremonies which would be valuable as a vivid page out of the life of old South Africa—the life that is passing so quickly now that white men are coming into the country in such numbers.

[365]

Sebuza sent word to us that he would see us in Lebombo in two days, and we went back there to our camp. While we were finishing lunch Lochien came with a request from Queen Tzaneen that we visit her. Thinking that she was probably more interested in a bottle of gin than in us, I gave Lochien one for her. He caught my thought and explained that the queen really wanted to see "all the white men."

"She has important business to talk over with you, Nkoos," he said, "and desires that you come to her at once."

Tuys thought it would be a good thing to do, since we were so near the coronation ceremonies, so we all put on our hats and followed Lochien to the royal kraal. There was a noticeable change in manners there since Sebuza had become king. Instead of the former informality, we had to go

through the salute and all the other ritual. Tzaneen had revived the formal glories of old Labotsibeni and I was amused to see how she enjoyed being kowtowed to. She had at least fifteen maids-in-waiting about her and had set up quite a court. Even Lochien was on his best behavior and went through the ceremony of presenting us to her with a neat little speech in which he made it appear that we had come as suppliants for her favor. I caught Tuys's eye while this was going on and there was an amused twinkle in it. The wise old burgher had seen savages of all sorts and nothing they did astonished him so long as they continued to behave like grown-up children.

[366]

When we were finally seated Tzaneen explained the "important business." After we heard it we realized that Lochien had spoken truly.

"Mzaan Bakoor, 'Mlung 'Emantzi Eenui, and Makofa," she said, addressing me, Sugden, and Crespinnell by our native names, "you have seen a queen die and a king made in Swaziland. You know much about how these things are done. You know many things about the war that Lobotsibini made against me and of which you were a part, for did you not carry out the demonstration that led to the killing?"

I attempted to take her up on this statement, but Tuys signaled me to keep quiet. Nevertheless, I maintain that she was not just in blaming the first killings on us.

"Now you know that the government has set its face against my son, King Sebuza," she went on, "and it may be some time before it will recognize him as the rightful king. When the news reaches Mbabane that Sebuza has seized the throne, the white chief there, who belongs to the government, will ask many questions. He will want to know much!

"When you go to Mbabane, or to your own home, the government will question you and ask how Labotsibeni came to be killed. Perhaps the government will want the truth, when a little lie would work much less harm here in Swaziland. Is it not so?"

[367]

I began to see what she was driving at. Tzaneen was afraid that the government would get after Sebuza for taking the throne by force and she wished to make sure that we would protect her son as much as possible. She had been talking at me, but now she turned to Tuys.

"Nkoos Tuys, you are the brother of Buno," she said, "and Buno gave his people into your care. You are the white king of my country and you will protect us from the government if need be. I need not ask you to be careful when they question you. I only ask that you advise Mzaan Bakoor and his men how to avoid rousing the government against us."

"Nkosikaas, I will answer for Mzaan Bakoor and his men with my life," Tuys answered. "Mzaan Bakoor is blood of my blood and inherits my trust as guardian of the Swazis when I die. Buno decreed this as he died."

Tzaneen nodded her approval at this brave speech of Oom Tuys and then was thoughtful for a time. I could see that she was still doubtful and that the fear of the long, slow, but dreadfully sure arm of the government was still upon her. Presently she raised her head and looked at me, and her eyes flashed a sudden resolve.

"There is one way that I can be certain of your loyalty, Mzaan Bakoor," she said, without mincing words, "and that is by making you an induna of the Swazis. You and your two men shall become indunas in the royal impi. Never before has a white man been worthy to be taken into a Swazi impi, and you shall be the first!"

[368]

This was a decided shock. I had never thought I would like to be a Swazi, even if I were an induna. In fact, I would not have enjoyed being King of Swaziland, with all the power that Buno had. But here we were face to face with the proposition of being forced to become indunas in the crack impi of the new King of Swaziland. Even the distinction of being the first white men to be admitted did not lessen the blow.

I was at a loss what to say to Tzaneen. She had the air of having conferred the highest possible honor on us, but I sat there speechless, wondering how to avoid becoming a Boer-Swazi. It was good old reliable Tuys who saved the situation, but ruined us.

"Nkosikaas, you have done Mzaan Bakoor and his men the greatest honor," he said, "and they will gladly become indunas of your impi. They will go to their homes proud to say that they are your indunas!"

Then the wily old Boer poured out a lot more flattery which Tzaneen swallowed without blinking an eye. While he talked I thought the matter over. It looked like a hopeless case; I could see no way out of it. If we wished to see Sebuza crowned, we would have to go through with this induna business.

"Oom Tuys has spoken for us," I told Tzaneen, after Tuys had finished complimenting her. "For the rest of our lives we shall be proud to say that we are indunas of your impi. Our children will also be proud of it and will tell their children!"

[369]

Tzaneen appreciated this, too, and liked it. Then I asked a question that was close to my heart.

"When is it planned to hold the formal ceremonies of making Sebuza king of Swaziland?"

"In about fourteen days," she answered. "The celebration of his coronation will take place at the

same time that you are made indunas. You will return from the mountains after ten days, and by that time all the people of Swaziland will have come to Lebombo and there will be the greatest celebration any one has ever seen."

So this had all been planned, I thought, and then it came over me with a jolt that we must go into exile in the mountains for a "puclandi," or space of ten days, before we would be sufficiently sanctified to become indunas.

"L'Tunga will take charge of you until you return from the mountains," the queen added, "and he will prepare you for your indunaship."

This ended our chat, and we went back to camp most unhappy in mind. Sugden was furious and so was I, but Crespinnell regarded it as rather a joke. Tuys declared we would have to go through with it and had better make the best of it. That night he cheered us up by telling us how we would have to live, what we would have to eat, and what L'Tunga would do to us. I think the old fellow had more fun chaffing us about our becoming "white Swazis" than he had had in a long time. Some of his remarks were pointed, and Sugden promised him that he would set his impi after him just as soon as he became a "sanctified induna."

[370]

CHAPTER XXI

[371]

Our sanctification in exile—Hardships in the hills—Oom Tuys saves Lomwazi's life—The celebration—Lomwazi formally surrenders the throne—Sebuza acknowledged as king—We are inducted into the royal impi—Mbabane sends for information—We escape through Portuguese territory to America.

There was even less humor about the induna business next morning. Bright and early L'Tunga arrived at our camp with a solemn expression on his face and a corps of assistant witch-doctors. We had eaten the largest breakfast possible, because Tuys had advised us to eat one more white man's meal "before you go into the mountains and fight the goats for their food." I remember thinking that there were times when the rough and ready humor of this burgher was in very bad taste.

L'Tunga had little to say. He told us to follow him, and we three white men meekly did so. On either side of us was our escort of witch-doctors, and I had all the sensations of being marched to my execution. We were taken to L'Tunga's kraal and into a large hut, where we were ordered to take off all our clothes. I thought Sugden would explode, but he shut his mouth and took it out in murderous looks. Crespinnell, being a modest soul, was unhappy about removing his garments, but there was nothing to do except to follow instructions.

I tried to cheer Sugden by remarking in English to him that he would soon be an induna if his luck held. His only reply was, "Induna? Hell!" Crespinnell was too far gone for words. When we had stripped L'Tunga presented each of us with a full Swazi warrior's costume, telling us to put this on. Thankful for anything to cover our nakedness, we did so as quickly as we could. Then our witch-doctor friend ordered us to come out of the hut, and we did. We certainly were the handsomest white Swazis that ever carried a shield!

[372]

Tuys was hanging around the kraal, and the twinkle in his eyes when he saw us marched out to start on our long walk to the hills was worth seeing. We did not appreciate it, however, for the hot earth hurt our feet.

It would be impossible to detail our experiences during this exile. I am sure no white men ever suffered more than we did. We were bitten by insects, scratched by a million thorns, scorched by the sun during the day and nearly frozen at night, and our feet were in constant agony. In spite of L'Tunga's tutoring, we could not find enough food, so that we nearly starved.

There was only one bright spot. Some young women traveling across the mountains ran across us and gave us food. Except for this aid, I feel sure we would never have survived the ordeal. After the first day or two the only fun we got out of it was enjoyment of each other's misery. In addition to our actual physical suffering, we were in constant dread lest we be bitten by some poisonous snake, of which there are many in these hills.

[373]

But such suffering must have an end. On the appointed morning L'Tunga and his assistants arrived and escorted us back to Lebombo. How we ever got there I cannot understand. Our feet were practically useless, and we must have walked on sheer nerve. No sooner did we arrive at Lebombo than we were ushered into the presence of the queen.

We were a sorry looking group. Each had a ten days' growth of beard and a famished look in his eyes. Tzaneen was very cordial and assured us that we had come through our sanctification with flying colors. She congratulated us on our hardihood and said we would make brave indunas. When I interpreted to Sugden later the "brave indunas" part of her speech, I thought he would have a fit.

"If I get through this alive," he exclaimed, "I'll never see a Pullman porter without wanting to kill

him! I don't care how soon the British send a flying column and wipe out all the Swazis. I hope they start with L'Tunga, and make Tzaneen and Sebuza close seconds!"

Tzaneen had been right when she told us that all Swaziland would come to see Sebuza made king. All the kraals at Lebombo were crowded, and there were thousands of people camped out around the village. Tuys estimated that there must have been nearly thirty thousand Swazis there, a good half of whom were warriors. During our exile in the hills word had gone throughout the land that the celebration would take place at the end of ten days, and the people had flocked in from all directions. [374]

The celebration began the day after our return from the hills. Tuys had learned that the first event would be the official turning over of the throne by Lomwazi, who had been brought from Lebombo for that purpose. Following this, there would be a giant reception to Sebuza, during which all the warriors would acknowledge him as king.

I was curious about Lomwazi. If Sebuza ran true to heredity, his life was not worth much.

"What will happen to Lomwazi when he has turned over the kingdom to Sebuza?" I asked Tuys. "Sebuza was very anxious to kill him a little while ago. Is Lomwazi going to be executed as part of the festivities?"

"While you were away I made up my mind to try and save Lomwazi's life," Tuys said; "not from any love for him, but because he is the ablest Swazi I know and may be useful to me some day. I have worked on Tzaneen and Sebuza until they have agreed to spare his life. To tell the truth, I frightened them into it. I told them that the news of Lomwazi's death would surely bring the government rifles into Swaziland and that the first targets they would seek would be Sebuza and his mother. It took a long time, but they finally agreed to turn Lomwazi over to me. I am to be responsible for him and see that he makes no trouble for Sebuza or his mother. Lomwazi does not know about this, and he won't until after he has turned over the throne." [375]

When the ceremonies started Sebuza stood on a small mound of the little plain in front of the kraals, with his "cabinet" behind him. L'Tunga was there and all the principal indunas, among whom were Lochien, Vilakazi, and a number of those who had taken part in the capture of Zombode. Grouped in a tremendous semi-circle about them were thousands of the Swazi people. They were waiting patiently for the affair to begin.

We white men remained a little to one side, and soon we saw a small body of men coming from the kraals. When they drew closer we could discern Lomwazi in their midst. He was not bound, but carried no arms and wore no ornaments. All the men guarding him were indunas. They marched their prisoner in front of Sebuza, and we came nearer so that we might hear.

"Lomwazi, brother of Buno and traitor to his son," Sebuza began. "You have lost in the war you started against me and now your life is mine. Labotsibeni is dead and I have sent for you to surrender the throne to me so that the people of Swaziland may know who is king. Do you give up the throne?"

Lomwazi was game. He knew that he faced death, but he never dropped his eyes or lowered his head. He looked straight at Sebuza and squared his shoulders.

"Now that Queen Labotsibeni has been murdered, the son of Buno is the rightful heir to the throne," he replied in his deep voice. "Nkoos, you are that son and the throne is yours!" [376]

That was all he would say, and I saw Sebuza catch Tuys's eye. He seemed to change his mind suddenly, and then spoke to Lomwazi again.

"Your life is mine," he said, with a certain amount of petty triumph, "and I can do with it as I please. I have given it to Oom Tuys, the White King of Swaziland, the friend of my father, who will do with you as he desires."

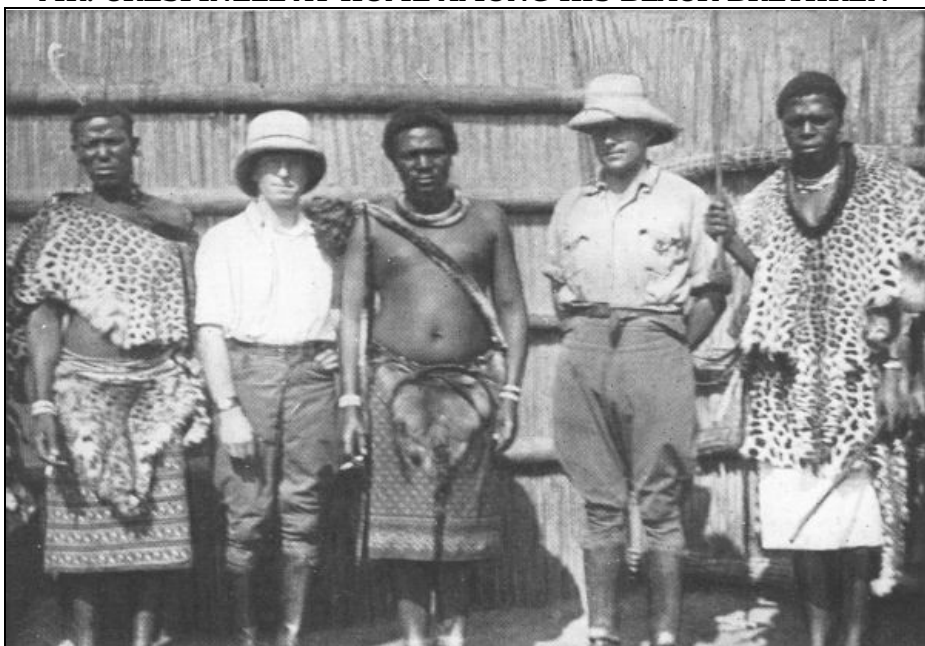
Tuys then stepped forward and motioned the indunas to move away from Lomwazi. The savage regarded him fixedly for a moment, and Tuys stretched out his hand. Lomwazi was stunned by the change in his fortunes, but a second later gripped the hand and followed Tuys as he retreated into the group behind the mound on which Sebuza stood.

Next the warriors formed into impi and, led by their indunas in all their savage trappings, began marching past the young king. Each impi would halt in front of him and give the royal salute, thus acknowledging him as their ruler. It seemed to me that there was an endless procession of these savages, all of them fully costumed and armed for battle.

When this march past was over and Sebuza had thus been officially recognized as king by the Swazis, the royal impi was sent for and lined up in front of the "reviewing stand." We were in the background, waiting at the appointed place, and L'Tunga came and beckoned us to follow him. I remember how my feet still hurt as we swung in behind him, carrying our shields like real warriors and trying to step out as though we were kin to these savages. [377]



MR. CRESPINELL AT HOME AMONG HIS BLACK BRETHREN



DR. SUGDEN, PRINCE LOMWAZI, AND DR. O'NEIL



DR. O'NEIL, MR. CRESPINELL, AND DR. SUGDEN AFTER THEIR INDUCTION INTO THE ROYAL IMPI

This was one of the conditions insisted upon by Queen Tzaneen to prove their allegiance to her. Clad in this fashion, the three white men lived in the mountains for ten days, their only food consisting

**of what they could gather or kill in the wilderness. They are the
only white men who have ever been accepted officially into a
Swazi impi**

We halted in front of Sebuza and there followed a moment's silence. I could see the thousands upon thousands of Swazis watching us, and it gave me a peculiar, isolated feeling. Sugden and Crespinnell kept their eyes on Sebuza, and I knew exactly what the doctor was thinking. If his wishes had come true, Sebuza would have choked right there.

Then Sebuza made a speech.

"White indunas of the royal impi," he said, addressing us in a loud, clear voice. "You have proved worthy to be blood brothers of the warriors who guard the king. You have been sanctified and have borne the ordeal without flinching. From now on you are Swazis and entitled to all the privileges of my chosen indunas."

There was a good deal more, for Sebuza liked to hear himself talk. As he rambled on I heard Sugden make a remark out of the corner of his mouth to Crespinnell, which brought a blush to that young induna's tanned cheek.

"He's going to tell how many wives we can have in a minute," he whispered. "I hope you get nice fat ones!"

When Sebuza finally finished, he motioned to me to come forward. I did so and stood just below him on the mound. An induna handed him a plumed headdress and he placed it on my head. It was much as though he were conferring a decoration. I stepped back, and Sugden took my place and received his headdress. Crespinnell followed, and then we turned and faced the royal impi. Sebuza gave a sign and the impi saluted us. Then we stepped into its ranks and we all saluted the king. [378]

That was the end of the ceremony that made us the only white men to hold commissions in the royal impi of Swaziland. After leaving the "parade ground" we were only too thankful to hobble back to camp and minister to our numerous scratches, cuts, and abrasions. But we had not yet come to the end of our torture! Din, however, practically saved our lives by rubbing some concoction he made on our abused feet. It eased them wonderfully and made it possible for us to get through the rest of that day.

The same afternoon the real celebration started. Every one had been drinking tswala, some of which runs as high as twelve per cent. in alcohol, and this seemed to add to their desire to dance. The warriors danced before the royal kraal, and we had to perform with our impi. In spite of Din's treatment, it was agony. The ground was hard and blistering hot. Sugden's remark that "the hobs of hell have nothing on this" was fully justified.

But we went through with it somehow. In addition, we were able to get many pictures of the dancing, and Crespinnell even took some of Sugden and myself doing our best to be true Swazi indunas.

The dancing continued all that afternoon and late into the night. As soon as it became dark hundreds of great fires were lighted, and it was a weird sight to see these thousands of savages leaping and prancing in their light. [379]

The celebration lasted for three full days and nights and on the morning of the fourth the visiting tribesmen set off for their homes. There was a general exodus, so that by nightfall Lebombo had returned to its wonted calm. When I saw how empty it was, I realized that Tuys's estimate of the number of people who attended the celebration was very conservative.

We were resting and recuperating after the ordeal of becoming "white Swazis" when Lochien came in haste to see us. We were about packed up and expected to leave Lebombo within a few days. Lochien was troubled and wanted our advice.

"A messenger has come from Mbabane," he said. "He says that the government will not allow Sebuza to be king. The government chief has heard that Labotsibeni is dead and wants to know how she died. Tzaneen wishes you would tell her what to say to the messenger."

This was unpleasant news. I had not believed that the government would interfere when it heard that Sebuza had actually been made king and that all Swaziland was rejoicing over it. There was only one thing to tell the messenger.

"Tell Tzaneen to speak the truth to the messenger," I directed. "Tell her to say that she does not know how Labotsibeni was killed. If the messenger asks about the war, tell the queen to explain how Labotsibeni's warriors attacked her indunas and killed them, and that she made war only to protect her people." [380]

Lochien took these instructions to Tzaneen, but the event gave me food for serious thought. If the government was sending messengers to ask questions, it would soon send white investigators—and then would come trouble.

That night I called on the queen and informed her that I intended leaving Swaziland as quickly as possible. She seemed much upset at this and besought me to stay for several moons more. I gathered that she was afraid to face the authorities alone. I pointed out to her that my return to my own world was imperative, and finally she agreed to let me go.

"Nkoos, you will always remember that you are a Swazi induna," she said, in parting. "Now you are one of my people and must always remain loyal to me!"

I promised. I shall always remember her last words. She drew herself up to her full height and threw out her arms in an eloquent gesture.

"When you go, Mzaan Bakoor, all the sunshine goes out of my life!" she said, and then turned to enter her hut.

Sunrise next morning saw us trekking for Delagoa Bay. Oom Tuys brought Lomwazi with us, and it was understood that he would return to his kraal, far removed from Lebombo, as soon as it was safe for him to re-enter Swaziland. [381]

Ten days later we reached Delagoa Bay, where we were lucky enough to find a steamer on which I engaged passage for our party to New York.

THE END

Transcriber's Note:

Some illustrations were originally located in the middle of paragraphs. These have been adjusted to not interrupt the flow of reading. In some cases this means that the page number that the illustration was originally on is not visible.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ADVENTURES IN SWAZILAND: THE STORY OF A SOUTH AFRICAN BOER ***

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