

QUEEN NABO OF SWAZILAND.

One of the most interesting personages in South Africa just now is Nabo Tsebeni, queen of Swaziland, says the Post-Dispatch. Along with the war news from that part of the world have come recently many accounts of the high handed doings of the Swazi queen. Swaziland is an independent native kingdom under the protection of the South African republic. As the Boers have just now enough to do protecting themselves, Nabo Tsebeni is not interfered with in her little diversions.

The news which came the other day of the death of Nabo's son, King Bunu, and of the vigorous manner in which the queen had cleared the political atmosphere by a general elimination of objectionable persons, drew especial attention to her ebon majesty.

Compliments ought to be exchanged between the empress of China and the queen of Swaziland. These two royal ladies have peculiarities in common, the chief among which may be mentioned an amiable weakness for removing people who dispute their power. Their histories also have a striking likeness. Like her "great and good friend" of China, the queen of Swaziland was not torn to the purple, and, like her also, began to plan for power and sovereignty as soon as she took her place among her royal husband's wives.

In the days when the good king Umbandine reigned over the Swazis there was among his subjects a bold and fearless raider, named Matamini, who became known as the "Lion of Swaziland." He was of no family of importance, but by his deeds of valor he raised himself and his relatives to positions of prominence in the kingdom, and the king took for one of his wives, Matamini's sister, Nabo Tsebeni.

From the day she entered the royal harem Nabo exercised a remarkably great influence over the king. She was shrewd and tactful and her advice on matters of state was sound. She determined that her son should be king to succeed his father. All her rivals met with misfortune in one way or another, and finally she concentrated her efforts upon the chief wife of the king, Mapungula, who was of royal blood and whose son would naturally succeed to the throne upon the death of Umbandine.

As the old king drew near his death in 1859 the reins of government were more and more taken up by the strong hand of Nabo. She made a charge of witchcraft against Mapungula, and that unhappy woman to save her life fled from the country, thereby, according to Swazi law, disqualifying her son from any rights to the throne. Nabo won over to her side the commander-in-chief of the Swazi army, one Tikuba, and with him the old king's regiment, which was on duty about the royal kraal. That year the king died. Now, according to the law of Swaziland, the title of queen appertains, not to the wife of the king, but to his mother, and Umbandine had living an adopted mother, who was entitled, with the elders of the nation, to nominate the new king. But Nabo proclaimed her son, Umkwana, usually called Bunu, king, saying that just before he died the old king had stretched out his right hand, saying, "This is my right arm, and his name is Bunu." She herself took the title of queen and prepared to rule as regent during the minority of Bunu. The dead king's adopted mother made some faint attempt to assert her rights,

but Tikuba and his soldiers overawed all opposition and Nabo's mother-in-law retired to private life with celerity.

Bunu might have grown up to be a good king, but he got into bad company. He surrounded himself with a crowd of aristocratic young men of decidedly sporting proclivities, and, breaking away from his mother's control, proceeded to make the court of Swaziland almost as lively a place as the court of Serbia was under that royal blackie, Milan.

Bunu's sycophants poured flattery into his ears until he began to think that he was a very big man indeed. Things went from bad to worse with the young king, until one day a leading iduna was murdered. Bunu at first denied any knowledge of the affair, but the evidence against him was so strong that he fled the country. He remained away for some time, while his mother got things straightened out, and finally paved the way for her erring son's return. He came back, but did not reform, and so he was gathered to his fathers the other day. Just how the gathering was done does not appear, but it was done effectually, and it is thought with the sanction of the queen, who had got tired of trying to make a man out of Bunu, and has a younger son whom she intends to place on the throne in his stead.

The death of Bunu was followed by a thorough "house cleaning" on the part of Queen Nabo. Several persons who, in her royal wisdom, she considered dangerous to the welfare of the state were placed beyond the chance of making any more trouble, and she will hereafter look after affairs herself entirely, not delegating to any one even the slight power she allowed Bunu.

Queen Nabo is about 50 years old, and is not handsome according to the debased standards of white men, but in Swaziland she is accounted "a fine figure of a woman." When she married she was a slim young woman and was a great belle. She looks taller than she really is, owing to the method by which she, in common with the other women of her country, dresses her hair. By some mysterious process the royal tresses are made to grow, trellis fashion, over a wickerwork arrangement of circular shape. Round the forehead she wears the royal insignia, a band of wood possessing innumerable medicinal virtues, attached to which, in the center of the forehead, are a snake's bladder and a brilliant red feather of the laurie bird.

Like other monarchs, Queen Nabo can be very suave and nice when she pleases, and she can also be exceedingly haughty and frigid of demeanor. It is a harsh thing to say about a royal lady of Nabo's ability, but the truth is that next to power her majesty loves rum, or drinks that go under that generic term. She drinks no native distillation, but the white man's good imported liquor, and lots of it. In fact, Nabo Tsebeni is a great drunkard. Her enemies say she is "fuddled" most of the time. She does not seem to let her enemies interfere with business, however. Apart from the firewater, the queen has no particular regard for the products of civilization. She prefers the native rug or blanket as a costume to the finest creation of Worth, and her food and manner of living have never changed, but remain as they were in the days when Umbandine first took her, a slim young girl, for wife.

WHY HE GAVE UP DUCKS.

On the regular day of the week the customary rap was heard on the back door, and when it was opened the picturesque farmer, in bedtick trousers, tucked into rubber boots, stood on the sill smiling, and gently stroking the soot of chin whiskers that hung down and lightly swept his whiskers. When he had counted out the usual number of eggs with which he supplied us, and had put the money into the antique wallet which he held together and in shape with about a yard of cord and a safety pin, the small boy of the household said:

"Why don't you bring duck eggs for a change once in a while?"

The farmer's face took on a worried expression, such an expression of pain as a man wears when the postman hands him a letter which he confidently believes to contain a long looked for check but which he finds on opening to be the circular of a country bank inviting him to open an account when the only thing he has that could possibly offer to open anything with is a can opener. The farmer had taken a seat, according to custom, and was about to speak of the outrageous system of levying taxes in his particular locality, when the small boy of the household interrupted him with the question referring to the duck eggs.

After the expression of paid had left the farmer's face, that dignitary replied:

"I can't bring you duck eggs because I can't keep ducks."

When he paused the small boy aforesaid, who is simply a storehouse of questions, each of which is forever struggling to escape, asked, "Can't keep ducks; why not?"

"Because I have tried," replied the farmer. "I last year bought a lot of gins and muscovas, and it was no go."

When he lapsed into silence once more the small boy again went at him with a question.

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"Didn't you have water?"

"That's just what was the matter," said the farmer. "I couldn't keep the ducks because I had water, and not because I hadn't water. I have a fine stream right beside the house."

"And wouldn't the ducks get into it?" asked the boy.

"They would and did," said the farmer, "and that is just where the trouble came in. If they had kept out of the water they would have been all right."

"Why, what did the water do to them?" asked the boy, with the persistency of a washerwoman who carries news budgets from house to house.

"What did it do to them?" said the farmer, rising and jumping onto his wagon, because he was so mad he couldn't keep still. "What did it do to them?" he repeated as he made a crack at the horse with the whip. "This is what it did to them. It took them down the current. Five minutes after I turned them loose they were on the stream, and they shot out of sight on the tide as if they'd been fired out of a cannon, and I ain't saw them since. Chickens is all right around a place where there's water; but when I want to keep ducks again guess I'll go off somewhere where there ain't no stream and then, if the ducks has got to have water, I'll put up a shower bath in the barn for them. Gee up!" then he shouted with vim at the recalcitrant horse, and was soon out of sight.—R. K. Mun-Kitrick.

White stockings and ties of sheet lawn which are actually made to wash are attractive. Some have turnover hem-stitched bows, and others with a tie plainly stitched to make a bow and ends to hang half way to the waist. None of these bought at a first-class haberdashery are expensive, but they are well made and show it.

BEER SOLD TO THE INDIANS.

Omaha, Neb.—(Special.)—An interesting sequel to the ferociously bloody double tragedy enacted at Ponca agency the night of May 1, is just working its way into the United States court here.

Indian Agent Baird arrived this week from Santee Agency, of which Ponca is a sub-agency, with Bertha Blackbird, Ed Howe, Emma Howe, his wife, and two Indian boys, all with the blood of the ancient sons of the soil in their veins, and all concerned in the drunken row and double shooting, May 1, in which Perry Laravie shot and killed Pete Blackbird and was in turn shot and killed by the mother of the murdered man and hacked to mince-meat by some one, presumably his father.

At the coroner's inquest, held shortly after, it was developed that a wholesale selling of liquor to the Indians has been going on under the very noses of the officials, by means of a device, by the side of which, by ingenuity and complicity, the nickel-in-the-slot machine is a relic of antiquity. The Indians testified that they were in the habit of going to a certain building where they made known their presence outside by certain prescribed and gentle warwhoops. Thereupon they would thrust an amount of money into a hole in the wall where it was swallowed up and lost to sight. Almost immediately and with the precision of the more mechanical device, a keg of beer, or two kegs, according to the amount of money they had put into the hole in the wall, would come rolling down an inclined plane, and would be immediately seized and carried away by the Indians.

There are many places in Ponca where one can get the fluid which maddens, and full as many, according to the authorities, where the noble red man can tank up and become a veritable red devil. It is chiefly this condition of affairs that brings Agent Baird to Omaha. Although one of his purposes is to file information before the grand jury against the old Blackbirds on the charge of having murdered Laravie, the great thing is his attempt

to secure an indictment against Adam Foster, proprietor of the Foster brewery at Ponca, on the charge of selling liquor to the Indians.

According to the agent, the two Indian boys in his band will swear that they, together with Pete Blackbird, on the day of the fatal affair, bought the two kegs of beer, which caused all the mischief, directly from a brewery by means of the money in the wall contrivance. Bertha Blackbird will testify that her husband told her that the beer was bought at the brewery, but that the two boys, who were sent to the Ponca agency from Oklahoma, bought it.

Agent Baird said last night: "With the evidence we have in the matter we will be able to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the brewery has been selling liquor to the Indians for some time, with only the slightest pretense of concealment. I understand that this building from which they roll the beer on the payment of money through the wall is either on or immediately adjoining their premises. All of the Indians knew of the graft and have been working it for all it was worth."

"We have the two empty kegs which were found at the Blackbird place in our possession, and they appear to have had no revenue stamps affixed. That, however, is a minor offense compared with the one we have in hand, and would properly come before the internal revenue department."

An attorney for the brewing company said last night that as he came down on the train from Columbus, he questioned Bertha Blackbird, who was also in the train, and that she declared positively that the kegs bore the revenue stamps. Continuing, he said: "There is nothing to prove that the brewery sold the beer to the Indians. There can be no doubt that they bought it of bootleggers, with which the agency is infested."

Helen Gould's contributions to charity for the month of April are said to have been \$9,000.

FACING DEATH AT COLENZO.

Bombardier Stephenson, of the Sixty-sixth battery, has sent to his relatives at Manchester an account of the attempt to save the guns at Colenzo. The following are extracts:

"When I tell you I was the only man of a gun detachment and three drivers (making twelve men altogether) to return safe out of that hell of fire, you will wonder why and how I got through it. . . . The range was 1,200 yards, and our gunners and officers worked at those guns as if on parade. Then the enemy's artillery opened fire. I was the lead driver of No. 5 gun, and we were right in the center of the two batteries, and there we stood facing the guns, exposed to all that fire for nearly three hours. It was after we had lost half of our drivers and horses that we found a donga, exactly 1,000 yards from the enemy's position; we unhooked the horses we had left, and every man, as cool as a cucumber, walked his horse into this donga. We had to leave our horses on the bank, and they were instantly shot dead. It was while doing this that I nearly lost my life."

Continuing the story, Stephenson says: "While we were in this donga General Buller galloped up and told us to try and save the guns at all costs. He was as cool as ever. It was just at that moment my center driver got shot in the head. When one got shot it left myself and the wheel driver with six horses, and we had to go and face death to try and capture our gun. I

unhooked the center horses, and we started off at a mad gallop, with four horses in the limber, and just as we were about sixty yards from the gun, both of my horses were shot dead under me, and the wheel driver was shot in the leg. . . . I crawled from under my rider and considered what I should do. I wanted to get to the guns, as I had got so far, but I had two dead horses, and they were hooked to the other two. While I lay trying to get the horses unhooked I became aware that my wheel driver was shot.

"Then," concludes the gallant gunner, "I cut the harness away from the dead horses and freed the other two. Just as I was going to mount these other horses the driver got shot. I had one live horse left, which was hooked to a limber, and it was behind these horses and limber I lay for three and a half hours. Another team of four horses started off at a mad gallop to try to reach the guns, but the horses ran straight in my dead horses and would not move an inch. I told the drivers to crawl up to a trumpet with two horses to try and reach the major, but he was shot in the ankle, and fell from his saddle. He made three of us uninjured and two wounded. The wheel driver, who got shot again through the left cheek, died immediately." At last these heroes made a run for it, and, after many escapes, safely reached camp.—London Leader.

VETERAN OF WAR OF 1812.

Over 200,000 men were enrolled in the American armies during the war of 1812. Of this vast host one single man remains on the pension rolls of the United States. This lonely veteran is Hiram Cronk of Dunn Brook, Oneida county, a man 100 years old.

Mr. Cronk was born on April 29, 1800, at a humble home in the town of Frankfort, Herkimer county. He came of sturdy Dutch stock, of a family which has won fame through a litigation to regain the Cronk estates in the Fatherland. In the early childhood of Hiram the family removed to Wright settlement, about two and a half miles from the city of Rome. There the family lived about ten years, the boy attending school and helping about the chores. From Wright settlement the Cronks migrated to farm in the town of Western, then practically in the wilderness, and in that neighborhood Hiram Cronk has spent the greater part of his life. In 1837 he bought about 150 acres of land, on which he erected the house wherein he now lives with his only living daughter, Mrs. Sarah A. Rowley.

Before Hiram was 15 years old his spirit was roused over the issues of the war, and, with his father and his two brothers, John and Jephtha, he enlisted in the United States army and went to Sacket's harbor, where he served about 100 days. Hiram was so young and of such slight build that the other soldiers tried to joke with him, saying that, if need be, his father could pick him up and carry him to a place of safety. But such an act was

unnecessary, for in a skirmish with the British the youthful soldier carried himself so well that Captain Davis, who had command of the troops, said if he had a regiment of such soldiers he could go into Canada and fight the enemy on their own ground. For his services in the war of 1812 Mr. Cronk gets a pension of \$8 a month. He is one of Agent Orr's pensioners, on the rolls of the Buffalo office.

After the war the Cronks went home and Hiram took up the trade of itinerant shoemaker, going about the countryside and repairing the footwear of the people in their own dwellings. He generally made the trip twice a year, and thus kept the farmers' boots in condition for wear.

When 25 years of age Hiram met his fate and married her in the person of Mary Thornton. For sixty years they lived happily together. She died in 1885. Six children were born to them. Five of them are living. One son lost his life in the civil war. Of grandchildren and great-grandchildren Mr. Mr. Cronk has about a score.

Chicago Post: "She is worth her weight in gold," they said: He looked at her critically and then shook his head. "Won't do," he said. "I'm looking for something of about that weight in diamonds."

During the year 1899 the United States issue about 2,500,000,000 of 2-cent postage stamps, which, if placed end to end, would reach a distance of nearly 40,000 miles.

THE BRITISH COLONY OF NATAL.

Until the first rude awakening of a few months back, with the initial lessons at Dundee and Glencoe, ninety-nine men out of every hundred knew nothing and cared less about the colony of Natal. Even Great Britain scarcely realized that it was on the map, but now that it is the seat of a possible revolution England hastens to placate that energetic bit of South Africa after a long period of neglect and even abuse.

The colony derives its name from the fact that it was discovered on Christmas Day, 1497 (the birth or "natal" day) by the celebrated Vasco de Gama, when that gentleman made his historic voyage (the first on record) to the East Indies, via the Cape of Good Hope.

Until developed by others this beautiful country had but little interest for Britishers. In 1835-7, however, the Boers accomplished the celebrated "trek" which landed them in Natal, and were not slow to turn to their advantage the wonderful resources of the fertile land. This they were allowed to do in peace until, of a sudden, the lion on an idle prow discovered that here was a garden spot of nature that had been temporarily overlooked. An excuse was hard to find, but finally it was decided that the Boers were treating the poor blacks with almost as inhuman cruelty as a loyal British subject could inflict. It was not to be borne. At once the British authorities intervened "in behalf of the suffering blacks," and in 1843 Natal was formally annexed by the British crown.

BOERS TREKKED AGAIN.

An immediate exodus of the Boers was the inevitable and usual result; the ancestors of Oom Paul's present soldiers trekking northward to found their present home in the Transvaal in 1848. The next problem was how to get sufficient of the chosen people to take their place.

In this dilemma the British government was greatly assisted by the private enterprise of one Joseph Charles Byrne. This gentleman was at that time the owner of huge tracts of land in Natal, for the development of which many thousands of immigrants were required. For this reason he put forward what is known as Byrne's immigration scheme, the alluring prospects of which were successful in bringing some 5,000 or 6,000 people into the colony about the year 1850.

Unfortunately for the scheme, the majority of the immigrants were of precisely the same class that still flock from Abilbon's shores whenever a sufficiently alluring bait is held out to them, be it from the frozen solitudes of ice-bound Klondike or the blazing heat of the African diamond fields.

There were, however, some few solid men among them, and these set to work and made the town of Durban what it is today, a thoroughly modern seaport, with beautiful suburbs, grand roads, excellent lighting and water supply, which welcomes the ships of the world to Port Natal.

Durban is distant seventy-two miles by rail from the capital, Pietermaritzburg. The route thither winds continuously upward, a physical feature which is characteristic of the colony. Indeed, from the seaboard to the Drakensburg mountains the ground rises in a continuous succession of long terraces. The natural consequence is that practically every temperature, from frizzling to freezing, may be chosen by the incoming colonist, according to his inclination and purse.

Just what this means to the inhabitants will best be appreciated, perhaps, when it is stated that practically every fruit and vegetable in creation

can be grown between the Drakensburg and the sea coast.

For instance, the low-lying coast orchards produce guavas, pineapples, bananas, mangoes, and, in fact, practically all the fruits of the East and West Indies. The higher lands produce the familiar plums, pears and apples of our own gardens, whilst oranges, lemons and most of the fruits of Southern Europe are almost as common as our own gooseberry bushes. In addition to these, there is a growing trade in tea and sugar planting, which may mean much to future generations of colonists, once the present crisis is past.

To ascend from plants to people, perhaps one of the greatest surprises experienced by the stranger coming to Natal is the tremendous disproportion that exists between the black and the white population. Roughly speaking, there are ten Kaffirs and one coolie to every white man, and the task of keeping this enormous colored population (there are upward of 500,000 Kaffirs in Natal) in hand during the present troubles can only be appreciated by those who have themselves lived in the colony.

Of late years the imported Indian coolie has made considerable numerical progress in Natal. Hailing principally from Madras, he is imported under a five years' indenture; and, although primarily introduced for the tea and sugar plantations of the coast, is now to be found all over the warmer portions of the colony, upon the sheep and cattle farms, and as odd man generally. Unlike his brethren in the West Indies, and the Chinese in the United States, the Natal coolie is of real benefit to the land, since he does not hoard up his wages, in order to become a "blatant bondholder" upon a return to the land of his birth.

On the contrary, he frequently settles down at the expiration of his indenture, and opens a small retail store for the benefit of the Kaffirs and such whites as will deal with him.

The one great danger of this coolie importation will arise when the present 50,000 industrious coolies shall have been increased to such an extent that they shall have fully monopolized the small margin of work by which the 500,000 indolent Kaffirs at present manage to pay their annual hut tax and provide the necessaries of life. The result will probably be one of two extremes—either the rapidly increasing coolie competition will incite the Kaffir to serious work, or the government will be forced to follow Australia and California in their imposition of a poll tax upon the guileless Asiatic.

The principal work done by the Kaffirs is of a domestic nature. According to his desirability or otherwise, he can be hired at anything between \$2.50 and \$7.50 a month, plus his board, lodging and clothing. Happily, the latter need never be a large item in one's expenses, as long as one possesses any highly-colored cast-off garments, male or female attire being accepted with cheerful impartiality, providing the prevailing hues are sufficiently startling. In addition to this, a weekly gift of a few cents is usually bestowed on Saturday nights.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that, as in most antipodean countries, everything in Natal is upside down, as compared with home ideas. For instance, you burn at Christmas and freeze in June. Your south winds are icy; your flowers are beautiful, but scentless, and your birds most gorgeous, but songless. In short, beautiful as it all is, there is not one colonist in a hundred who does not yearn in his old days to return to the land of his birth.

SOME MUSIC-LOVING TOADS.

The following true story shows that toads have not only an ear for music but possess powers of discrimination heretofore undreamed of.

At a well known summer resort we were staying at the same hotel with a party of musical people, among whom was Mme. —, famous for her rich contralto voice.

These people were engaged to sing nightly at the amphitheater; and we guests of the hotel had a double share of pleasure, for on their return each night they gave a brief open-air concert on the hotel veranda. At such times every window in the hotel held an eager listener. Madame herself rarely sang at these moonlight parties, but one evening she was prevailed upon to do so. We were on the veranda at the time; and some one called our attention to a toad, which at the sound of madame's voice had hopped out of the grass on to the gravel walk close to the veranda steps, where he stood blinking and winking in the bright moonlight, his face turned toward the singer.

When she had finished, the toad waited. Then, at the sound of a chorus of voices, he hopped hastily away into the grass, and was lost to sight.

The second night he appeared again, this time with a companion; and they took up their places on the gravel walk. Madame had been notified of her new listeners, and was charmed with the oddity of the thing. While she sang, she watched their queer little faces; and not once were they seen to move. But when madame ceased to sing and the tenor began, they turned abruptly and hopped away, to the amusement of all.

The third evening every one was curious, and madame herself began the concert. Almost as the first word fell from her lips there was a rustling of the grass, and out hopped the two toads; and, following them, one by one, seven others. They all took positions along the walk, all facing the veranda, and proceeded to drink in the melody.

In spite of her usual care of her voice, madame "laid herself out" that night, and sang one after another of her choicest songs, her eyes all the time turned upon her queer little listeners; and, though they gave no applause, madame insisted that she had never met with a more sympathetic and appreciative audience. Their very silence showed their deep attention.

The two following nights the number of toads increased, until there were a score or more; and, if madame's engagement had not closed on the sixth night, it is probable that her fame would have spread until all the toads at the resort had gathered to hear her. As it is, no other vocalist has since proved attractive enough to command such an audience.—Youth's Companion.

A well-equipped cotton mill, owned and operated by negroes, has just been started at Concord, S. C. The mill contains 5,200 spindles and 140 looms. The mill management recruited its forces from the agricultural colleges and other colored educational institutions, and pays a slight percentage less than the regular rate prevailing in southern cotton mills.

A servant girls' union has been organized with a membership of 600 at Copenhagen, Denmark.