his hair resplendent with feathers completed the fantastic appearance of this poor blind man, who danced before us unceasingly, and made such hideous noises that we were obliged to give him some beads and ask him to stop.

The pass through which the road leads up from the river country to Fort Victoria is now called 'Providential,' by reason of the fact that the pioneer force of the Chartered Company did not know how to get over the range of hills rising to the north of the Tokwe River, until Mr. Selous chanced to hit on this gully between the mountains leading up to the higher plateau. Its scenery, to my mind, is distinctly It is green and luxuriant in tropical overrated. vegetation, with the bubbling stream Godobgwe running down it. The hills on either side are fairly fine, but it could be surpassed easily in Wales and Scotland, or even Yorkshire. In point of fact, the scenery of Mashonaland is nothing if not quaint. Providential Pass is distinctly commonplace, whereas the granite kopje scenery is the quaintest form of landscape I have ever seen.

Fort Victoria has no redeeming point of beauty about it whatsoever, being placed on a bare flat plateau, surrounded in the rainy season by swamps. Nearly everybody was down with fever when we got there; provisions were at famine prices—for example, seven shillings for a pound of bacon and the same price for a tin of jam—and the melancholy aspect of affairs was enhanced by the hundred and fifty saddles

placed in rows within the fort, which had once belonged to the hundred and fifty horses brought up by the pioneers, all of which had died of horse sickness.

The diseases to which quadrupeds are subject in this country are appalling. One man of our acquaintance brought up eighty-seven horses, of which eightysix died before he got to Fort Victoria. The still mysterious disease called horse sickness is supposed to come from grazing in the early dew, but of this nobody is as yet sure; the poor animals die in a few hours of suffocation, and none but 'salted horses,' i.e. horses which have had the disease and recovered, are of any use up here. Our three horses were warranted salted, but this did not prevent one of them from having a recurrence of the disease, which gave us a horrible fright and caused us to expend a whole bottle of whisky on it, to which we fondly imagine it owes its life. Another horse also gave us a similar alarm. One morning its nose was terribly swollen, and the experienced professed to see signs of the sickness Nevertheless nothing came of it, and in in its eve. due course the swelling went down. On close enquiry we discovered that it had been foolishly tied for the night to a euphorbia tree, and had pricked its nose with the poisonous thorns.

As for oxen, the diseases they are subject to make one wonder that any of them ever get up country alive; besides the fatal lung sickness they suffer from what is called the 'drunk sickness,' a species of staggers. When we reached Zimbabwe nearly all our oxen developed the mange and swollen legs; but recovered owing to the long rest. Besides these casualties they often die from eating poisonous grasses; also in some parts the unwholesome herbage, or 'sour veldt,' as it is known amongst the drivers, produces kidney diseases and other horrors amongst them.

All around Fort Victoria, they told us, the grass was sour, so we only remained there long enough to make our preparations for our excavations at Zimbabwe. Tools of all descriptions we had luckily brought with us from Fort Tuli, as there were none here when we arrived. In fact the dearth of everything struck us forcibly, but by this time doubtless all this will be remedied, for we were amongst the first waggons to come up after the rains, and now Fort Victoria, with the recent discovery of good gold reefs in its immediate vicinity, is bound to become an important place.

From Fort Victoria our real troubles of progression began. It is only fourteen miles from there to the great Zimbabwe ruins by the narrow Kaffir path, and active individuals have been known to go there and back in a day. It took us exactly seven days to traverse this distance with our waggons. The cutting down of trees, the skirting of swamps, the making of corduroy bridges, were amongst the hindrances which impeded our progress. For our men it was a perpetual time of toil; for us it was a week of excessive weariness.

For two nights we were 'outspanned' by the edge of a deep ravine, at the bottom of which was a swampy stream. This had to be bridged with trees and a road made up and down the banks before our waggons could cross over it. A few hundred yards from this spot the river M'shagashi flowed, a considerable stream, which is within easy reach of Zimbabwe and eventually makes its way down to the Tokwe. On its banks we saw several crocodiles basking, and consequently resisted the temptation to bathe.

By diving into the forests and climbing hills we came across groups of natives who interested us. It was the season just then in which they frequent the forests—the 'barking season,' when they go forth to collect large quantities of the bark of certain trees, out of which they produce so much that is useful for their primitive lives. They weave textiles out of bark; they make bags and string out of bark; they make quivers for their arrows, beehives for their bees, and sometimes granaries, out of bark. The bark industry is second only to the iron-smelting amongst the Makalangas.

At the correct season of the year they go off in groups into the forests to collect bark, taking with them their wives and their children, carrying with them their assegais, and fine barbed arrows with which they shoot mice, a delicacy greatly beloved by them; they take with them also bags of mealies for food, and collect bags of caterpillars—brown hairy caterpillars three inches long, which at this season

of the year swarm on the trees. These they disembowel and eat in enormous quantities, and what they cannot eat on the expedition they dry in the sun and take home for future consumption. Their only method of making a fire is by rubbing two sticks dexterously together until a spark appears, with which they ignite some tinder carried in a little wooden box attached to their girdles. At night time they cut down branches from the trees, and make a shelter for themselves from the wind. It is curious to see a set of natives asleep, like sardines in a box, one black naked lump of humanity; if one turns or disturbs the harmony of the pie they all get up and swear at him and settle down again. One man is always told off to watch the fire to keep off wild beasts, and then when morning comes they pack their belongings, their treasures of bark, mice, and caterpillars, and start off along the narrow path in single file at a tremendous pace, silent for a while, and then bursting forth into song, looking for all the world like a procession of black caterpillars themselves.

These forests around Zimbabwe are lovely to wander in, with feathery festoons of lichen, like a fairy scene at a pantomime; outside the forests are long stretches of coarse grass, towering above our heads in many cases, and horrible to have to push through, especially after a fall of rain. They were then in seed, and looked just like our harvest fields at home, giving a golden tinge to the whole country.

Fine trees perched on the summit of colossal anthills cast a pleasant shade around, and if by chance we were near a stream we had to be careful not to fall into game pits, deep narrow holes hidden by the long grass, which the natives dig in the ground and towards which they drive deer and antelope, so that they get their forelegs fixed in them and cannot get out.

All around Zimbabwe is far too well watered to be pleasant; long stretches of unhealthy swamps fill up the valleys; rivers and streams are plentiful, and the vegetation consequently rich. Owing to the surrounding swamps we had much fever in our camp during our two months' stay; as we had our waggons with us we could not camp on very high ground, and suffered accordingly. This fever of the high veldt with plenty of food and plenty of quinine is by no means dangerous, only oft-recurring and very weak-Of the fourteen cases we had under treatment none were really dangerously ill, and none seemed to suffer from bad effects afterwards when the fever had worn itself out. The real cause of so much mortality and misery amongst the pioneer force during their first wet season in the country was the want of nourishing food to give the fever patients and the want of proper medicine.

As for the natives themselves, I cannot help saying a few words in their favour, as it has been customary to abuse them and set their capabilities down as nought. During the time we were at Zimbabwe we were constantly surrounded by them, and employed from fifty to sixty of them for our work, and the only thing we lost was half a bottle of whisky, which we did not set down to the natives, who as yet are happily ignorant of the potency of fire-water. Doubtless on the traversed roads and large centres, where they are brought into contact with traders and would-be civilisers of the race, these people become thieves and vagabonds: but in their primitive state the Makalangas are naturally honest, exceedingly courteous in manner, and cowardice appears to be their only vice, arising doubtless from the fact that for generations they have had to flee to their fastnesses before the raids of more powerful races. The Makalanga is above the ordinary Kaffir in intelligence. Contrary to the prognostications of our advisers, we found that some of them rapidly learnt their work, and were very careful excavators, never passing over a thing of value, which is more than can be said of all the white men in our employ. Some of them are decidedly handsome, and not at all like negroes except in skin; many of them have a distinctly Arab cast of countenance, and with their peculiar rows of tufts on the top of their heads looked en profil like the figures one sees on Egyptian tombs. There is certainly a Semite drop of blood in their veins; whence it comes will probably never be known, but it is marked both on their countenances and in their customs. religion they are monotheists—that is to say, they believe in a supreme being called Muali, between

whom and them their ancestors, or mozimos, to whom they sacrifice, act as intercessors. They lav out food for their dead; they have a day of rest during the ploughing season, which they call Muali's Day; they have dynastic names for their chiefs, like the Pharaohs of old; they sacrifice a goat toward off pestilence and famine; circumcision is practised amongst some of We have also the pillows or head rests, the strigil, the iron sceptres of the chiefs, the iron industry, all with parallels from the north. Then, again, their musical instruments, their games, and their totems point distinctly to an Arabian influence, which has been handed down from generation to generation long after the Arabians have ceased to have any definite intercourse with the country. During the course of these pages numerous minor illustrations will from time to time appear which point in the same direction. It is a curious ethnological problem which it will be hard to unravel. All over the country sour milk is much drunk and called mast, as it is in the East, and in parts of this country beer is called dowra or doro, a term which has come from Abyssinia and Arabia, and the method of making it is the same. The corn is soaked in water and left till it sprouts a little; then it is spread in the sun to dry and mixed with unsprouted grain; then the women pound it in wooden mortars, and the malt obtained from this is boiled and left to stand in a pot for two days, and over night a little malt that has been kept for the purpose is thrown over the

liquid to excite fermentation. It will not keep at all, and is sometimes strong and intoxicating. Women are the great brewers in Mashonaland, and a good wife is valued according to her skill in this department.

This Kaffir beer is certainly an old-world drink. There are several classical allusions for what is termed 'barley beer.' Xenophon and the Ten Thousand one evening, on reaching an Armenian village in the mountains of Asia Minor, refreshed themselves with what he describes as 'bowls of barley wine in which the grains are floating.'

The Egyptians too made beer after the same fashion, and used it also in sacrifices. Much that was known in the old world has travelled southwards through Nubia and Abyssinia, and is to be found still amongst the Kaffir races of to-day. Some of the words in common use amongst the Kaffirs in Mashonaland are very curious. Anything small, whether it be a child or to indicate that the price paid for anything is insufficient, they term piccanini; the word is universal, and points to intercourse with other continents. The term Morunko, or Molungo, universally applied to white men, is probably of Zulu origin, and has been connected—with what reason I know not—with Unkulunkulu, a term to denote the Supreme Being. At any rate it is distinctly a term of respect, and certainly has nothing to do with the Mashona language, in which Muali or Mali is used to denote God.

Finally, at long last, after exactly three months to a day of 'trekking' in our ox waggons, the mighty ruins of Zimbabwe were reached on June 6, 1891, and we sat down in the wilderness to commence our operations, with the supreme delight of knowing that for two months our beds would not begin to shake and tumble us about before half our nights were over.

## CHAPTER III

### CAMP LIFE AND WORK AT ZIMBABWE

Our camp was pitched on slightly rising ground about 200 yards from the large circular ruin at Zimbabwe, and was for the space of two months a busy centre of life and work in the midst of the wilderness. There were our two waggons, in which we slept; hard by was erected what our men called an Indian terrace, a construction of grass and sticks in which we ate, and which my wife decorated with the flowers gathered around us—the brilliant red spokes of the flowering aloes, which grew in magnificent fiery clusters all over the rocks, the yellow everlasting (Helipterum incanum), which grew in profusion in a neighbouring swamp, wreaths of the pink bignonia, festoons of which decorated the ruins and the neighbouring kraal. Besides these she had the red flowers of the Indian shot (Canna indica), which was found in abundance on the hill fortress, fronds of the Osmunda regalis and tree fern, the white silky flowers of the sugar tree (Protea mellifera), and many others at her disposal, a wealth of floral decoration which no conservatory at home could supply.



MRS. THEODORE BENT

Our tent was our drawing-room; and in addition to these places of shelter there were the photographic dark tent, five feet six square, the kitchen, and the white men's sleeping-room, cleverly constructed out of the sails of our waggons, with walls of grass. the centre was an erection for our cocks and hens. but even from here the jackals occasionally contrived to steal one or two. Around the whole camp ran a skerm, or hedge, of grass, which latter adjunct gave a comfortable and concentrated feeling to it all. Outside our circle the native workmen erected for themselves three or four huts, into which they all huddled at night like so many sardines in a tin. Around us in every direction grew the tall, wavy grass of the veldt, rapidly approaching the time when it can be burnt. This time was one of imminent peril for our camp; the flames, lashed to fury by the wind, approached within a few yards of us. Men with branches rushed hither and thither, beating the advancing enemy with all their might; our grass hedge was rapidly pulled down, and we trembled for the safety of our Indian terrace. Suddenly a spark caught the huts of the natives, and in a few moments they were reduced to ashes, and the poor shivering occupants had to spend the night in a cave in the rocks behind. Luckily the strenuous efforts of our men were successful in keeping the flames from our camp, and we were thankful when this business was Instead of the tall, wavy grass, reeking with moisture when it rained and rotting in the heat of

the sun, we had now around us a black sea of ashes, recalling the appearance of the vicinity of a coal mine; but though less picturesque it was far more healthy, and during the last weeks of our stay at Zimbabwe the attacks of fever were less frequent and less severe.

From Fort Victoria came over during our stay a whole host of visitors to see how we were getting on. Prospecting parties going northwards tarried at Fort Victoria for a rest, and came over to see the wondrous ruins of Zimbabwe. Englishmen, Dutchmen from the Transvaal, Germans, all sorts and conditions of men came to visit us, and as temporary custodians of the ruins we felt it our duty to personally conduct parties over them, thereby hearing all sorts and conditions of opinions as to the origin of the same. of our friends told us that they reminded him forcibly of the Capitol of Rome; another, of a religious turn of mind, saw in them an exact parallel to the old walls of Jerusalem; and a Dutchman, after seeing over them, told me that he was convinced that they must be just one tousand year old, and built in the reign of Queen Shabby.' The names of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were on everybody's lips, and have become so distasteful to us that we never expect to hear them again without an involuntary shudder.

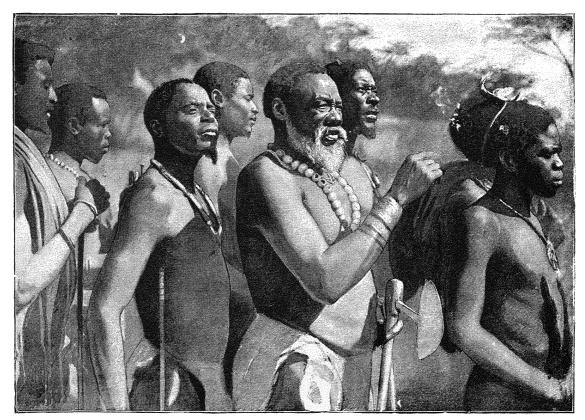
Thus our two months' stay at Zimbabwe can in no way be said to have been dull. We had our daily work from eight in the morning till sundown, with an hour at midday for luncheon and repose. Out of the working days we lost nine from rain, a curious soaking misty rain which always came on with a high south-east wind, and always, oddly enough, with a rise in the barometer, very exceptional, we were told, at that season of the year. Over these days I would willingly draw a veil; they were truly miserable and always resulted in fresh outbreaks of fever With the exception of these nine days amongst us. the weather was simply delicious, fresh, balmy, and sunny; after sundown and our evening meal we would sit around our camp fire discussing our finds of the day and indulging in hopes for the morrow. Most of our white men were musical, and beguiled the monotony of the evening hours by a series of camp concerts, which made us intimately acquainted with all the latest music-hall ditties. Occasionally rations of Cape brandy, better known as dop, would be sent out to the B.S.A. men in our employ; then the evening's fun became fast and furious, and on two occasions caused us no little anxiety. Luckily these rations were always consumed on the night of their arrival, and though the following morning revealed a headache or two, and an occasional attack of fever, we always rejoiced to see the bottles empty and to know that the orgy would not be repeated for perhaps a fortnight.

Umgabe is the dynastic name of the petty chief whose territory includes the Zimbabwe ruins; he recognises the suzerainty of Chibi, but is to all intents and purposes a free ruler. He came the day after our arrival to visit us, and then we were introduced to the Makalanga custom of hand-clapping. The mysterious meaning attached to this hand-clapping I was afterwards able in a measure to fathom.¹ On the arrival of a chief or grand induna the hand-clapping is a serious undertaking, and has to go on incessantly until the great man is seated and bids them stop. Umgabe was glad to see us, he said, and had no intention of interrupting our proposed work, provided only we agreed to one thing, and that was to leave his women alone. As for ourselves and our white men, we answered that he need have no fear, but as for our negro workmen we would not hold ourselves responsible for them, but suggested that, as they would all be his subjects, he must see to them himself.

Umgabe is a huge fat man, tall and dignified, though naked; around his neck he has a string of large white Venetian beads of considerable antiquity, brought doubtless to this country by Arabian traders in the Middle Ages; in his hand he carries his iron sceptre, the badge of a chief, and his battle axe is lavishly decorated with brass wire. Amongst his men we saw many of varied types, some distinctly Arabian in features, and I am bound to say the Kaffir type amongst them was the exception and by no means the rule. Arched noses, thin lips, and a generally refined type of countenance are not, as a rule, prominent features amongst those of pure Kaffir blood, but they are common enough around Zimbabwe.

We made arrangements with Umgabe about our

¹ Chap. X.



UMGABE AND HIS INDUNAS

70 F

work, and collected together a team of thirty individuals who were to do our digging, &c., for the wages of one blanket a month, which blankets cost 4s. 10d. apiece at Fort Tuli, and probably half that in England. For this reward they were to work and also find themselves in everything; it is the present stipulated rate of wages in the country, but I do not expect it will remain so long.

We had great difficulties with them at first. Spades and picks were new to nearly all of them; they were idle: they were afraid of us, and also of the chief on the hill. If it was cold they would sit crouched over small fires of wood, and appear numb and utterly incapable of work. Then they insisted on eating at the inconvenient hour of 10.30 A.M. food brought for them by their women, paste of millet meal and caterpillars; and for every little extra duty they clamoured for a present, or a parsella, as they called it. These difficulties gradually disappeared. Some of them became excellent hands with pick and shovel; they got accustomed to us and our hours, and worked with a will. and for a teaspoonful of beads they would do any amount of extra work. Their chief skill was displayed in clearing. I almost despaired of getting rid of the thick jungle which filled the large circular ruin, so that it was almost impossible to stir in it. This they contrived to do for us in three or four days, hacking away at stout trees and branches with their absurd little hatchets, and obtaining the most satisfactory results. Also they were excellent at removing

piles of fallen stones, singing as they worked and urging one another on. Altogether we had no cause to complain of our workmen when confidence had been thoroughly established between us. Poor cowardly things that they are, anything like harshness made them run away at once. Our cook, whose temper was exceedingly capricious, one day pursued his native kitchen boy with a hatchet, and he never could get a kitchen boy to stay with him after that; they would poke their fun at him and rouse his ire exceedingly, but always at a respectful distance.

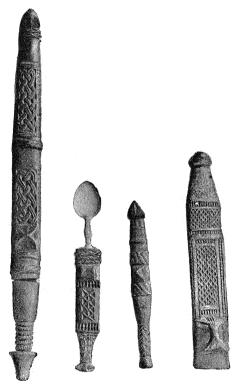
From the many villages on the heights around Zimbabwe came every day crowds of natives, bring-



HATCHET

ing provisions for sale, and we held a regular market in our camp. By this means we got as many cocks and hens as we wanted, eggs, milk, honey, and sweet potatoes; then they would bring us tomatoes, the largest I have ever seen, chillies, capers, rice, and monkey nuts. Some of these, I am told on excellent authority, are distinct products of the New World, the seeds of which must have originally been brought by Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish

traders and given in exchange for the commodities of the country; now they form an integral part of the diet of these people and prove to us how the ends of the world were brought together long before our time. These daily markets were times of great excitement for us, for, besides giving us an insight into their ways and life, we found it an excellent time to acquire



CARVED KNIVES

for a few beads their native ornaments. In carving their knives they are particularly ingenious. The sheath of these knives generally ends in a curious conventional double foot; the handle too seems intended to represent a head. Here again it would appear that they take the human form as a favourite basis for a design.

Also their snuff-boxes are many and varied in form; some are made of reeds decorated with black geometrical patterns, some of hollowed-out pieces of wood decorated with patterns and brass wire, also they have their grease-holders similarly decorated, all pointing to a high form of ingenuity.

They were very glad to get good English powder from us; but, nevertheless, before this advent of the white man they made a sort of gunpowder of their own, reddish in colour and not very powerful, specimens of which we acquired. The art must have been learnt from the Portuguese traders and passed up country from one village to another. From a species of cotton plant they produce a very fair equivalent for the genuine article, which they spin on spindles and make into long strings. When the natives found



BONE ORNAMENTS

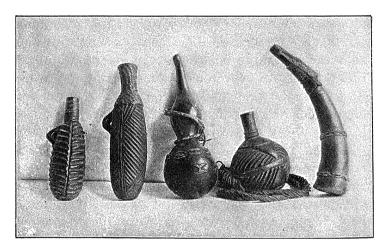
we cared for their ornaments they brought them in large quantities, and our camp was inundated with knives, snuff-boxes, bowls, pottery, and all manner of odd things. They were cunning too in their dealings, bringing one by one into camp small baskets full of

meal and other commodities from a large store outside, realising that in this way they got many more

beads and more stretches of limbo than if they brought it all at once. As for Umgabe himself, his chief kraal and residence was six miles away, and we saw but little of him after the first excitement of our arrival had worn off: but his brother Ikomo. the induna of the kraal on the hill behind the ruins. often came down to see us and was a constant source of annoyance, seeing that his friendly visits had always some ulterior motive of getting something out of us. On one of these occasions my wife had collected a beautiful bowl of honey; the rascal Ikomo first eyed it with covetousness and then plunged his hand into the very midst thereof, and enjoyed his fingers complacently for some time after, whilst she in disgust had to throw away the best part of her treasure.

Frequently Ikomo would try to interrupt our work, and so frighten our black diggers from other villages that they ran away, and we had to collect a fresh team. On one occasion, whilst digging upon the fortress, we disturbed a large rock, which slipped. On it was perched one of their granaries, which promptly fell to pieces, and the contents were scattered far and wide. In vain we offered to pay for the damage done; almost in no time we were surrounded by a screaming crowd of angry men and women, with Ikomo at their head, brandishing assegais and other terrible weapons of war. For a moment the affair looked serious; all our blacks fled in haste, and we, a small band of white men surrounded by the foe,

were doubtful what course to pursue. At length we determined to stand their insults no longer, and seizing whatever was nearest—spade, pick, or shovel —we rushed at them, and forthwith Ikomo and his valiant men fled like sheep before us, clambering up rocks, chattering and screaming like a cageful of monkeys at the Zoo. Sir John Willoughby and one



WOODEN SNUFF-BOXES

or two men from Fort Victoria chanced to come over that day to visit us, and on hearing of our adventure he summoned Ikomo to a palaver, and told him that if such a thing happened again his kraal would be burnt to the ground and his tribe driven from the hill; and the result of this threat was that Ikomo troubled us no more.

Ikomo's kraal occupies a lovely situation on Zimbabwe Hill, with huts nestling in cosy corners amongst the rocks, from the top of which lovely views can be obtained over the distant Bessa and Invuni ranges on the one side, and over the Livouri range, and Providential Pass on the other, whilst to the south the view extends over a sea of rugged kopies down into the Tokwe valley. this point the strategical value of the hill is at once grasped, rising as it does sheer out of a well-watered plain, unassailable from all sides, the most commanding position in all the country round. The village is festooned with charming creepers, bignonia and others, then in full flower; rows of granaries decorate the summit, and in the midst are some of those quaint trees which they use as larders, hanging therefrom the produce of their fields neatly tied up in long grass packages, which look like colossal German sausages growing from the branches.

On one of the few flat spaces in the village is kept the village drum, or 'tom-tom,' constantly in use for dances. One day we found the women of the village hard at work enjoying themselves round this drum, dancing a sort of war dance of their own. It was a queer sight to see these women, with deep furrows on their naked stomachs, rushing to and fro, stooping, kneeling, shouting, brandishing battle axes and assegais, and going through all the pantomime of war, until at last one of these Amazons fell into hysterics, and the dance was over. On another occa-

sion, whilst visiting some ruins in a lovely dale about eight miles from Zimbabwe, we were treated to another sort of dance by the women of a neighbouring village. The chief feature in the performance was a grotesque one, and consisted of smacking their furrowed stomachs and long hanging breasts in measured cadence with the movements of their feet, so that the air resounded with the noise produced.

As for the men, they are for ever dancing, either a beer drink, the new moon, or simple, unfeigned joviality being the motive power. Frequently on cold evenings our men would dance round the camp fire; always the same indomba, or war dance; round and round they went, shouting, capering, gesticulating. Now and again scouts would be sent out to reconnoitre, and would engage in fight with an imaginary foe, and return victorious to the circle. If one had not had personal experience of their cowardice, one might almost have been alarmed at their hostile attitudes. On pay-day, when our thirty workmen each received a blanket for their month's work, they treated us to a dance, each man wrapped in his new acquisition. Umgabe, with his sceptre and battle axe, conducted the proceedings; it was a most energetic and ridiculous scene to witness, as the blankets whirled round in the air and the men shouted and yelled with joy. When all was over, each man measured his blanket with his neighbour, to see that he had not been cheated, and, gaily chattering, they wended their way to the village, with their blankets trailing behind them. The novelty of possessing a blanket was an intense joy to these savages. One tottering old man was amongst our workmen, and seeing his incapacity, I was about to discard him, but his longing for a blanket was so piteous—'to sleep in a



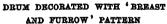
BOY BEATING DRUM

blanket once before he died'—that he was allowed to continue and do what he could to earn one.

Dancing is the one great dissipation of the Makalanga's life; he will keep it up for hours without tiring at their great beer-drinking feasts, at weddings—nay, even at funerals. At these latter ceremonies

they will not allow a white man to be present, so that what they do is still a mystery; but we heard repeatedly the incident festivities after a death had taken place—the shouting, the dancing, and the hideous din of the 'tom-tom.' One day a native







PLAIN DRUM

turned up at our camp with some curious carrot-like roots in his hand. On enquiry as to what he was going to do with them he replied that he was going to a funeral, and that they chewed this root and spat it out—for it is poisonous—at these ceremonies. The natives call this root amouni.

In our work at Zimbabwe we unwittingly opened several of their graves amongst the old ruins. corpse had been laid out on a reed mat-the mat. probably, on which he had slept during life. His bowl and his calabash were placed beside him. One of these graves had been made in a narrow passage in the ancient walls on the fortress. We were rather horrified at what we had done, especially as a man came to complain, and said that it was the grave of his brother, who had died a year before; so we filled up the aperture and resisted the temptation to proceed with our excavations at that spot. After that the old chief Ikomo, whenever we started a fresh place, came and told us a relation of his was buried there. This occurring so often, we began to suspect, and eventually proved, a fraud. So we set sentiment aside and took scientific research as our motto for the future.

In the tomb of a chief it is customary to place a bowl of beer, which is constantly replenished for the refreshment of the spirit, for they are great believers in making themselves agreeable to the departed, and at the annual sacrificial feast in honour of the dead meat and beer are always allotted to the spirits of their ancestors.

One day as we were digging in a cave we came across the skeleton of a goat tied on to a mat with bark string; by its side was the carved knife, with portions of the goat's hair still adhering to it. Here we had an obvious instance of sacrifice, a sacrifice

which takes place, I believe, to avert some calamity—famine, war, or pestilence—which at the time threatens the community. The natives were very reticent on the point, but visibly annoyed at our discovery.

There is a good deal of music inherent in the



PLAYING THE PIANO

Makalanga. One man in each village is recognised as the bard. One of our workmen had his piano, which was constantly at work. These pianos are very interesting specimens of primitive musical art; they have thirty or more iron keys, arranged to scale, fixed on to a piece of wood about half a foot square, which is decorated with carving behind. This instrument they generally put into a gourd, with pieces of bone round the edge to increase the sound, which



MAKALANGA PIANO

is decidedly melodious and recalls a spinet. One finds instruments of a similar nature amongst the natives north of the Zambesi. Specimens in the British Museum of almost exactly the same construction come from Southern Egypt and the Congo, pointing to the common and northern origin of most of these African races.

About Zimbabwe we found the natives playing a sort of Jew's harp, made out of a reed and string, giving forth a very faint and ineffective sound. Also they have their cymbals and their drums, which latter they play with elbow and fist in a most energetic manner. Anything, in fact, which makes a noise is pleasing to them. At their dances they tie to their persons small reeds or gourds filled with the seed of the Indian shot, which rattle and add to the prevailing din. They are for ever singing the low, monotonous songs common to primitive races; they encourage one another with song when at work in the fields, or when out on a hunting expedition, and dearly did they love some small musical boxes which we had with us. Music is certainly inherent in them, and one of our men was quite quick at picking up an air, and very angry if his comrades sang out of time or tune.

When time permitted we made several little excursions in the neighbourhood of Zimbabwe. One of these led us to the ruins which they call Little Zimbabwe, about eight miles off. Of all these ruins they have next to no legends, which surprised us greatly. One story, however, they tell, which appears to have obtained universal credence amongst them—that long, long ago white men came and erected these buildings, but the black men poisoned the water and they all died. This story seems to

have about as much value in it as the one told us by De Barros, that the natives of his day thought that they had been built by the Devil.

About two miles from our camp there was a long flat granite rock, along which the path passed. either side of this are two piles of stones, and a line is scratched on the rock between them. Our guides each took a stone, scratched them along the line, and deposited them on the heap opposite. On returning in the evening they did exactly the same thing, and we were told that it is a luck sign, which they do on undertaking a journey to ensure them from danger by the way. It was a very lovely ride, past huge granite boulders, and hills covered with dense foliage, beneath which the women of a village danced for us to the tune of their drum, forming one of the wildest, weirdest pictures we had ever seen. On another occasion we rode to a fortified rock, which had been long since abandoned; but the rude stone walls had been constructed by a more recent race, and compared with certain ruined villages we afterwards saw in Mangwendi's country. On our homeward ride we turned aside to rest in a hut where we found natives busily employed in making beer, a process which they always carry out in the fields, where they have their stores, and in cooking locusts, which we tasted and thought not altogether unlike shrimps.

Thus our time passed at Zimbabwe, actively and pleasantly, and when our second month of work was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Chap. XI.

up, as we had much travelling before us in the country, we reluctantly decided on departure.

We went up to take leave of the induna Ikomo at his kraal on the day before our departure. was seated in front of his hut, eating his red-coloured sodza, made of millet meal, and locusts, allowing his head men, who sat around, to take occasional handfuls from his savoury platter. Conversation He told us how they had come turned on his tribe. to Zimbabwe about forty years ago, when he was only eighteen years of age, from the neighbourhood of the Sabi River, where they had lived for many No one was then living on Zimbabwe Hill, which was covered, as it is still in parts, with a dense No one knew anything about the ruins, neither did they seem to care. This is how all tradition is lost among them. The migratory spirit of the people entirely precludes them from having any information of value to give concerning the place in which they may be located; they seldom remain more than one generation in one place, and one place is to them only different from another inasmuch as it affords them refuge from the Matabele and has soil around it which will produce their scanty crops.

On leaving Zimbabwe and our work, we determined on making a tentative trip of a few days, with horses and a donkey, to see how we could manage travelling in the wilds in this country without our waggon home. Moreover, we wished to pay a visit

to Umgabe at his kraal, and to take his rival, Cherumbila, on the way back to Fort Victoria.

One lovely morning—the 6th of August—we left our waggons, our cook, and our curios to find their way to Fort Victoria by themselves, and set off. The scenery southwards down the gorge was charming, granite kopje after granite kopje carrying the eye far away into the blue hazy distance. The foliage was thick and shady, and as we halted at a stream to water our animals we plucked large fronds of Osmunda regalis and the tree fern. To our left we passed a huge split rock, just a square block of granite eighty feet high split into four parts, so that narrow paths lead from each side into the heart of it. It was one of the most extraordinary natural stone formations I have ever seen, and the natives call it Lumbo. relation of Umgabe's rules over a fantastic kraal, called Baramazimba, hard by this rock; its huts are situated in such inaccessible corners that you wonder how the inhabitants ever get to them. Huge trees sheltered the entrance to this village, beneath which men were seated on the ground playing isafuba, the mysterious game of the Makalangas, with sixty holes in rows in the ground. Ten men can play at this game, and it consists in removing bits of pottery or stones from one hole to the other in an unaccountable manner. We watched it scores of times whilst in the country, and always gave it up as a bad job, deciding that it must be like draughts or chess, learnt by them from the former civilised race who

dwelt here. This game is played in different places with different numbers of holes-sometimes only thirty-two holes dug in the ground-always in rows It has a close family relationship to the game called pullangooly of India, played in a fishthe sisoo fish, made of wood—which opens like a chess-board, and has fourteen holes in two rows of seven, small beans being employed as counters. same game hails also from Singapore and from the West Coast of Africa, where it is played with twelve holes and is called wary. In short, wherever Arabian influence has been felt this game in some form or other is always found, and forms for us another link in the chain of evidence connecting the Mashonaland ruins with an Arabian influence. The Makalangas are also far superior to other neighbouring Kaffir races in calculating, probably owing to the influence of this very game.

At midday we reached Umgabe's kraal and found our host only just recovering from the effects of drinking too much beer, and he had a relapse in the course of the afternoon to celebrate our arrival. He allotted us two huts, which we proceeded to have cleaned out. My wife and I occupied one, delightfully situated beneath a spreading cork tree; it was about twelve feet in diameter, and in the centre was the fireplace of cement with a raised seat by it on which the cook usually sits when stirring the pot. We spread our rugs where it appeared most level; but during the night, in spite of our candle, the rats

careered about us to such an alarming extent that sleep was next to impossible, and we had ample time at our disposal for contemplating our abode.

On one side was a raised place for the family jars, huge earthenware things covered with slabs of stone, containing meal, caterpillars, locusts, and other edibles. On the opposite side was a stable for the calves, which we were able to banish; but we could not so easily control the cocks and hens which came in at all the holes, nor the rats which darted amongst the smoke-begrimed rafters when day dawned. These blackened rafters of the roof the Makalangas use as cupboards, sticking therein their pipes, their weapons, their medicine phials, their tools, and their pillows, and we soon found that this was the place to look for all manner of curios; only the huts are so dark that it is impossible to see anything when there happen to be no holes in the walls. A low door three feet high is the only point for admitting light and air; consequently the huts are not only dark but Besides the walls, the Makalangas odoriferous. construct a primitive sort of cupboard out of the spreading branch of a tree tied round with bark fibre: this contains such things as they fear the rats may They are very ingenious in making things out of bark-long narrow bags for meal, hen coops in which to carry their poultry about, nets to keep the roofs on their granaries. Bark to them is one of the most useful natural products that they have.

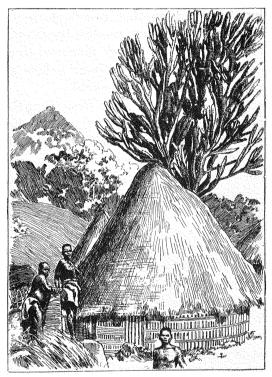
Umgabe's kraal has as lovely a situation as can

well be imagined. It is situated in a glade, buried in trees and vegetation, so that until you are in it you hardly notice the spot. Huge granite mountains rise on either side, completely shutting it in; a rushing stream runs through the glade, supplying the place with delicious water. Here is distinctly a spot where only man is vile; and the great fat chief, seated on the top of a rock, sodden with beer, formed one of the vilest specimens of humanity I ever saw.

The aforesaid stream in its course down the valley, just below the village, runs underneath a vast mass of granite rocks, which form a labyrinth of caves exceedingly difficult to approach. To facilitate the entry the inhabitants have made bridges of trees, and in times of danger from the Matabele they take refuge therein; they take their cattle with them, and pull down the bridges. In the interior they always keep many granaries well filled with grain, in case of accidents. Old Umgabe was most unwilling for us to go in and learn his tribal secret; however, nothing daunted, with the aid of candles we effected an entry, and a queer place it is. Granaries are perched in all sorts of crannies, traces of a late habitation exist all around, and the boiling stream is roaring in the crevices below.

The flat rocks outside were just then covered with locusts drying in the sun; millet meal and other domestic commodities were spread out too.

The rest of that lovely afternoon we spent in wandering about in this paradise, admiring the dense foliage, the creepers, and the euphorbia which towered over the huts, and regretted when the pangs of hunger and the shades of evening obliged us to return to our



HUT AT UMGABE'S KRAAL WITH EUPHORBIA BEHIND

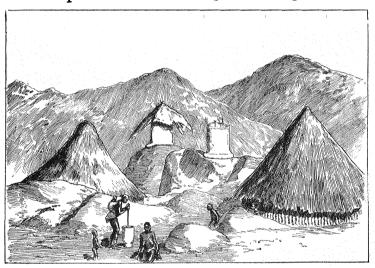
huts to cook our frugal meal and pretend to go to bed.

It was a long ride next day to Cherumbila's kraal, the bitter enemy and hereditary foe of our late host; we passed many villages and many streams on the way, and had a direful experience at one of the swamps which our path crossed just before reaching our destination. One of our horses disappeared in it, all but his head, another rolled entirely over in it, whilst we stood helpless on the bank and fearful of the result; but at length we managed to drag the wretched animals out, and an hour before sundown we reached Cherumbila's stronghold.

It is quite a different place from Umgabe's, and much larger, with huts running along the backbone of a high granite ridge. The principal kraal, where the chief lives, is fortified with palisades and rough walls, and is entered by a gateway formed of posts leaning against one another; the huts are better, with decorated doors, and the people finer than those of Umgabe's tribe. Many of them have their heads cleanly shaved at the top, with a row of curious tufts of hair tied together and made to look like a lot of black plants sprouting from their skulls.

Cherumbila himself is a lithe, active man, a complete contrast to Umgabe; a man of activity both of mind and body, he is feared and respected by his men, and is consequently one of the strongest chiefs hereabouts, and raids upon his neighbours with great success. Years ago, when he was a boy, he told us, his tribe lived on the top of one of the highest mountains overlooking Providential Pass, when a Matabele raid, or *impi*, fell upon them and drove

most of the inhabitants over a steep precipice to their death: the remnant that escaped came here and settled, and have now, under Cherumbila's rule, grown strong. The chief allotted us his own hut for our night's lodging. Nevertheless we had much the same experiences as on the previous night, which



AT CHERUMBILA'S KRAAL

made us vow that on our prospective trips to the Sabi and northwards we would take our tent and never again expose ourselves to the companionship of rats and other vermin in the native huts.

The following day a lovely ride over the mountains, through dense forests and swarms of locusts,

which our black men eagerly collected, brought us back again to Fort Victoria and comparative civilisation, where we made preparations for our more extended expeditions away from the road and our waggons, warned but not discouraged by our discomforts with Umgabe and Cherumbila.

# PART II DEVOTED TO THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF THE RUINED CITIES

# CHAPTER IV

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS RUINS

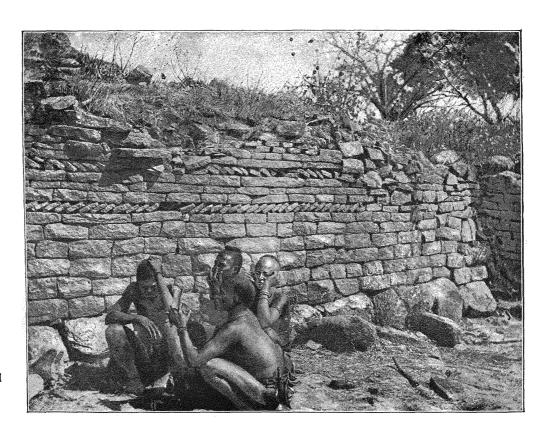
DURING our stay in Mashonaland we visited and carefully examined the sites of many ruins, a minute description of which I propose to give in this chapter. As a feature in the country they are most remarkable—ancient, massive, mysterious, standing out in startling contrast to the primitive huts of the barbarians who dwell around them and the wilderness of nature. Of course it was impossible in one season, and in the present undeveloped state of the country, to visit them all; but from accounts given of others which we could not visit, and which consequently I shall only briefly allude to here, there is enough evidence to prove that they were all built by the same race, in the same style, and for the same purpose.

From Dr. Emil Holub's work ('Seven Years in South Africa') we learn something about a ruin he saw on the Shashi River, which consisted of a wall protecting a hill and formed 'of blocks of granite laid one upon another, without being fixed by cement of any kind.' Also at Tati he saw another ruin, forming

a long line of protection for a hill, roughly put together on the inside, but on the outside, 'probably with some view to symmetry and decoration, there had been inserted double rows of stones, hewn into a kind of tile, and placed obliquely one row at right angles to the other. Each enclosure had an entrance facing north.' He concludes that the ruin was constructed to protect the gold, 'numbers of pits fifty feet deep being found in the vicinity.' This pattern, the construction, and the object undoubtedly connect these ruins with those which I shall presently describe.

Mr. G. Philips, an old hunter in these parts, said at the Royal Geographical Society's meeting, November 24, 1890, of the Zimbabwe ruins, 'They are exactly like others I have seen in the country—the same zigzag patterns and the mortarless walls of small hewn stones. When hunting in the mountains to the west of this I came on a regular line of these ruins, and one must have been a tremendously big There were three distinct gateways in the outer wall, which I suppose was at least thirty feet thick at the base, and one of those immense ironwood trees (hartekol), that would have taken hundreds of years to grow, had grown up through a crevice in the wall and rent it asunder.' He also described another ruin north-west of Tati. 'The walls are twelve to fifteen feet thick, and it is entered by a passage so arranged as to be commanded by archers from the interior, and it only admits of the passage of one at a time.'





Mr. E. A. Maund, in speaking of the ruins at Tati and on the Impakwe, says, 'As I have said, these ruins are always found near gold workings; they are built in the same way of granite, hewn into small blocks somewhat bigger than a brick, and put together without mortar. In the base of both of these there is the same herring-bone course as at Zimbabwe, though nearer the base of the wall. . . . The remains on the Impakwe are similar in construction and are within fifty yards of the river; it was evidently an octagonal tower.' Mr. Moffat, our political agent in Matabeleland, in speaking to me about this ruin, told me how it had been much demolished during his recollection, owing to the fact that all waggons going up to Matabeleland outspan near it, and the men assist at its demolition.

There is another ruin of a similar character near where the River Elibi flows into the Limpopo, and another further up the Mazoe Valley than the one we visited.<sup>1</sup>

I have alluded to these ruins, which I have not seen, to prove the great area over which they are spread, and I have little doubt that as the country gets opened out a great many more will be brought to light, proving the extensive population which once lived here as a garrison in a hostile country, for the sake of the gold which they extracted from the mines in the quartz reefs between the Zambesi and Limpopo Rivers.