

they made bracelets, seven inches wide, by cutting off the two ends of the tin and drilling holes along the edge. One man tied the lid of a 'bully beef' tin round his neck, another fastened the round bottom of a milk tin in a jaunty fashion on to his black hair. Every tin we opened and finished was eagerly picked up by our followers and carried in net bags all the way, with a view to making some object of ornament out of them. Even when given an old pair of boots, the recipient only took out the brass hooks and eyes to fasten as ornaments in his loin-cloth, and cast the rest away.

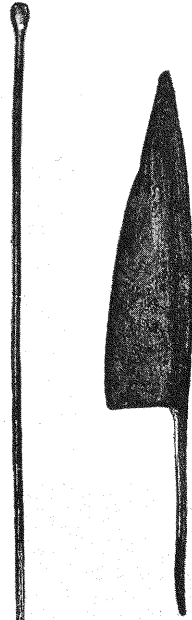
On leaving Fort Victoria we followed the Chartered Company's road for forty miles northwards with our waggons to Makori post station. One day we were encamped near the two large villages of Umfanipatza and Sibibabira built on two rocks, but now, with the confidence inspired by the presence of the Chartered Company, the inhabitants are beginning to build huts on the flat space around. We paid a visit to them both, and admired the tall euphorbia which grew in them and the rich entanglement of begonia and other creepers then in flower. In one hut we found a man weaving a bark blanket very neatly with no loom, only platting it with his fingers. It was done with a kind of pink twine made of some bark.

At Makori post station, under the shade of wide-spreading trees, and in close proximity to some fantastic granite rocks, which rose like gigantic

menhirs out of the plain and were covered with an almost scarlet lichen, we passed several busy days, preparing cruppers, girths, and breast-bands for our seven pack-donkeys ; bags for our coffee, sugar, and tea ; cobbling our boots and overhauling our clothes, and nursing four fever patients, for there had been two days of chilly drizzling rain, the inevitable result of which was fever for some of our party. The post station lay about one mile from our camping-ground ; the two huts where the B.S.A. men lived were situated on a rocky *kopje* full of caves, in one of which their horse was stabled, and from the top of the rock an extensive view was gained over the high plateau, well wooded just here and studded with rocks of fantastic shape. Here and there thick volumes of smoke rose from the grass fires common all over the country at this season of the year, which looked for all the world like distant manufacturing towns, and suggested the comparison of a view from a spur of the Derbyshire hills over the plain of Cheshire, with Stockport, Manchester, and other centres of industry belching forth their dense volumes of smoke.

On August 14 we started on our journey. It was a lovely morning, and our progress was very slow, for our cavalcade was so heterogeneous—my wife and I on horseback, Messrs. Swan and King with a horse between them, three white men to look after the donkeys, and Mashah and his Makalangas to carry what the donkeys could not. We straggled terribly at first, for the donkeys were obstinate and their pack-

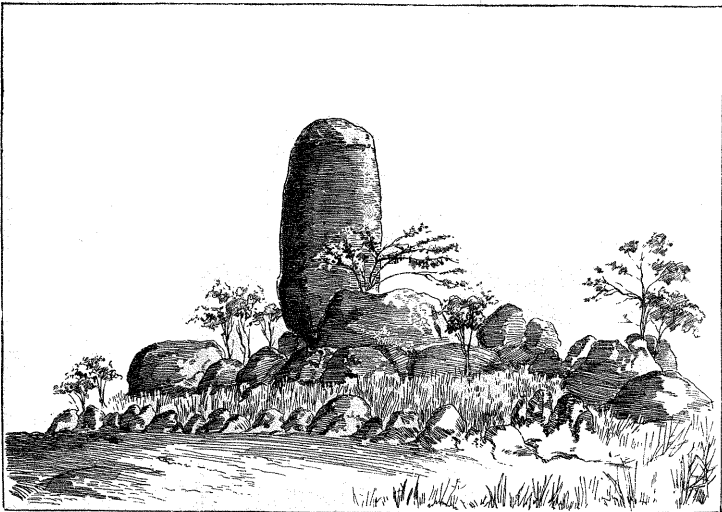
saddles unsteady, the natives were fresh and anxious to get along, so we had to call for frequent halts to readjust ourselves, which gave us ample opportunity for looking around. The country here is sown broadcast with strange granite rocks; one group had formed themselves into an extraordinary doorway, two columns on either side about sixty feet high, with a gigantic boulder resting on the top of them for the lintel. Like the structures of a giant race, these strange rocks rise out of the thick vegetation in all directions. Presently, as we were experiencing some little difficulty in getting our raw cavalcade across a stream, a Makalanga joined us who had been born without hands. To his left stump had been attached, by means of a leather thong, the claw of a bird; with the assistance of this he ate some food we gave him with marvellous dexterity, and fired his gun. He was a bright cheery individual, evidently greatly respected by his more gifted comrades.



IRON RAZOR
4 INCHES LONG

CHIEF'S IRON
SCEPTRE
3½ FEET LONG

We only accomplished seven miles this first day, owing to the difficulties of progression, and in the afternoon found ourselves encamped by a wretched village called Chekatu. Here they had no cattle and no milk to sell us owing to Matabele raids. The chief, Matzairé by name, came to visit us with his iron

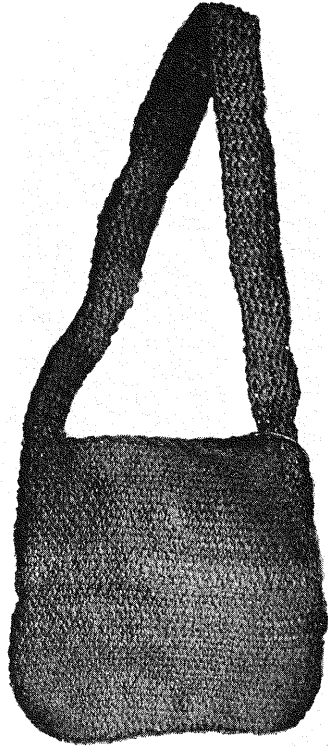


ROCK NEAR MAKORI POST STATION

sceptre in his hand, which made us think of the rods of iron with which certain Israelitish kings are stated to have ruled. We climbed amongst the huts before sundown and came across an old hag busily engaged in shaving the heads of her younger sisters, cutting their woolly locks into all sorts of odd shapes as fancy or fashion suggested. She refused our most

tempting offers to part with her razor, and it was not till some time afterwards that we were able to obtain a specimen of this Makalanga ironcraft.

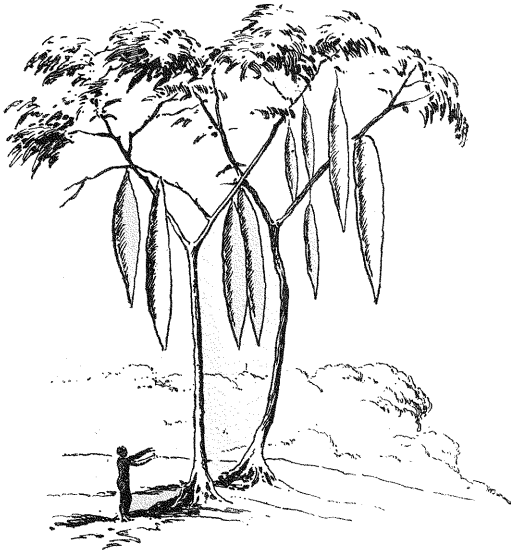
Next day we crossed two rivers, tributaries of the Tokwe, and after a prosperous ride of ten miles reached Sindito's kraal, called Sekatu, the inhabitants of which took us for a Matabele *impi*, and would not come down till Mashah had screamed to them that we were no rogues, but honest men. We gave the chief a cup of tea, which he detested, and as soon as politeness permitted he said he had had enough. He returned the compliment by giving us a calabash of good beer, which we drank with pleasure. Sekatu was rather a nice village, on a hill covered with thick



KNITTED BAG.

jungle, amongst which grew in profusion cucumbers, about six inches long, of a rich orange colour, with thorns outside and with a delicious bright green pulp inside. They are the *Cucumis metuliferus*, specimens

of which may be seen in the museum at Kew Gardens. We had seen these before, and looked upon them as poisonous, until our natives partook of them and gave us confidence. Ever afterwards, as long as they were in season, we indulged freely in this de-



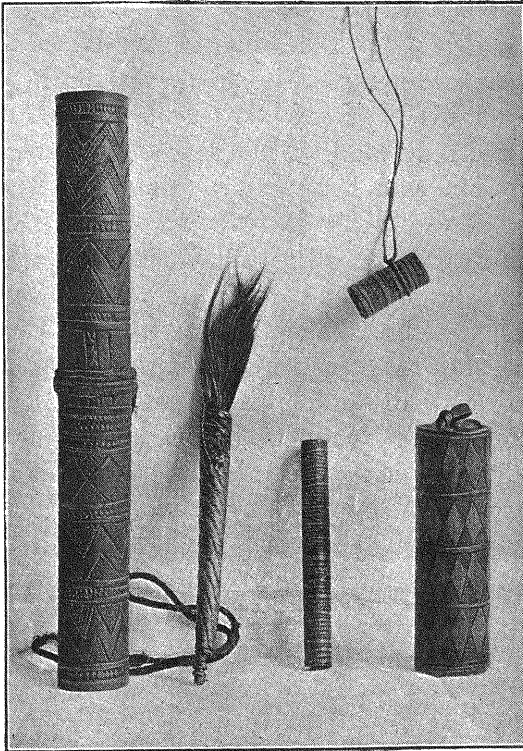
LARDER TREE

licious fruit, and voted it the best we had come across in Mashonaland.

The next day we halted for half an hour at a village called Imiridzi, where we acquired a bag of bark fibre, made by knitting the twine with two sticks for knitting-needles. These articles seemed very popular in this village, and nearly everyone was en-

DOWN TO SABI RIVER AND MATINDELA RUINS 257

gaged in their production. Midday found us at a very large kraal, the chief place in the dominions of a powerful Makalanga chief called Gutu. Gona is the



REED SNUFF-BOXES AND GREASE-HOLDER

name of the kraal, and it is completely buried between two high granite *kopjes*. At the entrance to it some tall trees are completely hung with provisions packed

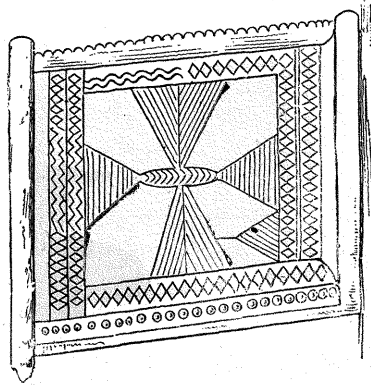
away in their long sausage-like bundles—bags of locusts, caterpillars, sweet potatoes, and other delicacies. These trees we henceforth called ‘larder trees,’ and found them at nearly every village. The inhabitants of Gona were unusually rich in savage ornaments, and we annexed many snuff-boxes, knives, and other oddments. The chief was unfortunately away, but his representative brought us fine pots of beer and milk, and we made a hearty meal despite the dense and rather unsavoury mass of natives which surrounded us during its consumption. They have a plentiful growth of tobacco plants near Gutu’s kraal, and large fields of rice, in which the women were just then busily engaged in making the broad furrows; they have very prettily carved doors to their huts, and many of the men wear sandals on their feet. Altogether Gona struck us as one of the most prosperous kraals we had seen in the country.

As we journeyed eastwards the appearance of the people was certainly wilder. We here saw their heads decorated with curious erections of woven grass, fastened into their hair and reaching an elevation of a foot, like miniature Eiffel towers on their heads;¹ and at a village called Muchienda we acquired two quaint-shaped straw hats with ostrich feathers sticking in the top, quite different to anything we had seen elsewhere. As we approached this village a long string of natives passed us on their way to hunt; on their heads they carried bark cases full of nets,

¹ *Vide* illustration, p. 262.

which they stretch across the valleys and drive the game into them. Muchienda was a lovely village by a rushing stream full of rocks, which formed a little waterfall; the stream was shaded by magnificent timber, and a background of lovely mountains made us think Muchienda an ideal spot, at which we would willingly have tarried longer.

Every day, as we approached the Sabi Valley, the scenery became grander; the dreary high plateau gave place to deep valleys and high rugged mountains; the vegetation was much more luxuriant and the atmosphere many degrees hotter, so hot that during our midday halts we did not care to wander very far

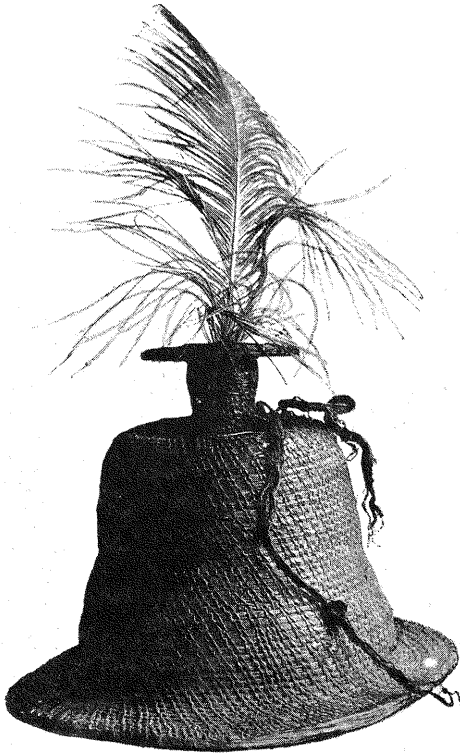


DECORATED HUT DOOR

from our camp, especially as we had a good deal of manual labour to perform apart from the actual travelling, in tent pitching, bed making, and cooking, for our white men were generally so tired with driving and packing the donkeys that we could not ask them to do anything after the march was over.

We soon got accustomed to sleeping on the ground. When it was unusually rugged, for the

grass grows here in tufts like the hair on the niggers' heads, we got grass cut on which to lay our rugs; occasionally we found it necessary to encamp on



STRAW HAT

spots over which a grass fire had passed, and then we got hopelessly black, and lived like sweeps until we reached a stream, where we could wash ourselves and our clothes.

Lutilo, with the village of Luti perched upon one of its lower precipices, is quite a grand mountain, almost Alpine in character, with exquisite views over the distant Sabi and Manica Mountains. Here we tarried for almost a whole day to visit an insignificant set of ruins a few miles distant, called Metemo, but which formed a link in the great chain of forts stretching northwards. It had been built in three circles of very rough stone, somewhat ingeniously put together on the top of a rounded granite hill, but hopelessly ruined. So we only tarried there a while to make a plan, and to rest, and enjoy the lovely view.

The country around here is very thickly wooded, and on our return to our camp a herd of deer passed close to us, a species known to the Dutch as *Swartvitpens*, or 'swarthy white paunches,' but we failed to get one, a matter of considerable regret from a commissariat point of view, for meat is scarce in the villages about here, and our tinned supplies were getting low.

We struck our camp at Lutilo rather late in the afternoon, and only got as far as a river called the 'Nyatzetse, the crossing of which involved the unloading of our animals. On the way we passed through two villages, where the inhabitants were busily engaged in building huts, for it was evidently a new encampment, and in making beer, which was too new to drink; the land around was being freshly turned up for their fields, after the approved Maka-

langa fashion. First they clear a space of jungle, leaving the larger trees, and pile up the brushwood round the roots, then they set fire to the heaps, and when it is consumed the tree is killed, and more easy to cut down.

The next day brought us at a very early hour to the site of the Matindela ruins, which was to be our halting-



DECORATED HEADS

place for a few days. The ruins certainly are fine, but far inferior to those of Zimbabwe; they are perched on the top of a bare granite rock about 150 feet high, a most admirable strategical position.¹ In the centre of them we pitched our tents for our welcome halt of three days, and made ourselves as comfortable as rain would permit, for it fell in torrents here even though it was the dry season. The

¹ For description of ruins, *vide* Chap. IV.

term 'Matindela' means 'guinea-fowl,' quantities of which birds are found around here, as indeed they are in most parts of this country.

We were now only twenty miles from the Sabi River, and the country around was almost deserted, ruined villages crowned most of the heights, and the deserted fields and devastation in every direction were lamentable to behold. There were evidences, too, of a fairly recent raid, in which the poor Makalangas had been driven out of their homes and probably carried into slavery. By common consent the two great Zulu chiefs, Lobengula and Gungunyana, whose embassy visited England last year, consider the Sabi as their respective boundary for marauding expeditions. On this occasion I believe Gungunyana and his Shangans were to blame, who, finding that Lobengula was cut off by the Chartered Company from this part of his district, had made bold to cross the Sabi and raid on the western side, bringing destruction into the Makalanga homes, which in former years had here been thought very secure, being, as they were, far from Lobengula and just out of Gungunyana's recognised district.

The Makalangas have the greatest horror of the Shangans, who dwell across the Sabi, and do Gungunyana's bidding. One day at Matindela we brought home a specimen of a curious fruit which hangs from the trees, eighteen inches to two feet long, like thick German sausages; it has beans inside, and we asked Mashah if it was good to eat: 'No Makalangas eat

umvebe,' as he called it, 'only the Shangans and baboons.'

Whilst at Matindela we sampled several kinds of strange fruit: firstly the Kaffir orange, a kind of strychnia, which is a hard fruit with yellow pulp inside around seeds, and of which every traveller should beware of eating if not quite ripe—an error into which several of our party fell; it is apt to produce violent sickness under those conditions, and at best it is painfully astringent, causing horrible facial contortions when you eat it, as most of the fruits about here do. Amongst other things, they brought to our camp at Matindela large quantities of the delicious cucumbers, monkey-nuts, sweet potatoes, and a sweet fruit which you chew and spit out like sugar-cane, which they call *matoko*. From the gigantic trees around us, the far-famed baobab trees, we gathered the nuts with the refreshing cream of tartar pulp inside. The baobab is the great feature of Matindela Hill; there are a dozen of them on it, huge giants, which in their growth have knocked down large portions of the walls. Though probably these trees are not as old as report says, nevertheless their presence here proves that these ruins have been utterly abandoned for many centuries. It is another problem to prove how their thick roots find sustenance for so huge a vegetable growth, perched as they are on an almost soil-less granite rock. Doubtless these roots follow the fissures in the granite and obtain the required moisture from some considerable

distance. The effect, however, is exceedingly odd to see these colossal trees growing in no depth of soil on the top of a granite rock.

I had always been sceptical about the honey-bird until its virtues were properly proved to us when at Matindela. An insignificant little bird, with a significant chirp, led our men over rocks and through jungle till they actually found honey, so that we could no longer indulge in doubts as to this mysterious gift, which, like the water-finding divining rods, I will leave to others to explain.

Traces of recent life around Matindela were numerous: the valleys had all at one time been ploughed: ruined huts, constructed high up in the trees, had served as outlooks for the agriculturists, bark beehives were in the trees, but the villages were all blackened and burnt, the granaries knocked down and the inhabitants gone, no one knows where. Never during any camp of lengthened duration were we visited by so few natives as at Matindela. About here game is very plentiful; we sighted fresh elephant and giraffe '*spoor*,' and we personally made the acquaintance of zebras, kudu, and other kinds of antelope. Across the valley below was an old and now disused stockade for catching game, and hunting-parties in this locality have been numerous. These parties are arranged by the Makalangas on a small or large scale; sometimes, when they have an elaborate system of stockades, they just drive the game towards a *cul de sac* or a narrow gap where

men are hidden in the grass; sometimes they have great parties forming two half-moons; one of these stations itself behind a *kopje*, whilst the other, with dogs and shouting, drives the game to them.

Their game laws give rise to frequent squabbles amongst the chiefs; it is generally understood that, if a man wounds a buck and another kills it, the wounder claims the carcass, but the killer is entitled to take whichever limb he wishes. There is a tribe near Zimbabwe who will not eat a buck unless it has had its throat cut, and so they endeavour first to wound it, and then proceed to cut its throat. For small buck, hares, &c., they make traps across the narrow paths with a beam which falls when the animal treads on the plank below, being fixed on the path between two sloping rows of stakes.

Our course from Matindela was north-east—not the most direct route to the Sabi, which is only about twenty miles due east, but we had nobody with us who knew the way, and we had to go to a village for a guide. After a ride of seven miles we reached a curious lofty mountain called Chiburwe, close on 1,000 feet above the plain; it is almost round, and its flanks are decorated with huge granite boulders rising out of euphorbia, baobabs, and rank tropical vegetation. On the side we first reached this mountain the vegetation was too dense to allow us to ascend, so we had to ride to the northern side and go up by a slippery slope of black granite, the ordinary approach used by the natives, whose bare feet cling readily to the rocks,

but which was horrible for feet encased in European boots. The summit is flat and grassy like a Brighton down, being covered with a soft small stagshorn moss, delightful to lie upon. This spot is the happy playground of two native villages, which are placed on either side of the mountain; here they are sublimely safe and free from the raids of their enemies, and Chiburwe forms a sort of Makalanga outpost in the direction of the Sabi. Amongst other names mentioned by Portuguese writers which are still retained in the locality we find Chiburga as a stronghold, where the Monomatapa's wives were kept. I think it highly probable that this is the spot. On the summit we found several sets of holes for the Isafuba game, and the inhabitants we came across seemed more than usually timid. Our view was indescribably lovely, with Lutilo and the spots we knew well behind us, and the mysterious blue mountains of Manica before us.

In a rocky crevice we found one of the miserable villages of Chiburwe, with no beer, no milk, no fowls and no eggs to be had; it appeared to be solely inhabited by two women grinding millet, who were much afraid of us, and retired into the darkest recesses of their huts. Their ingenuity in utilising bark is exemplified up here, where mud is scarce, for they make their granaries of the bark of the baobab, only covering the edges with mud, and binding them round with withes.

For two days after leaving Chiburwe we wandered

through trackless forests, guided only by a notion of the direction we wished to go, for we could not annex a native guide. A mile or two from Chiburwe we found a ruined fort of the best period of Zimbabwe work, with courses of great regularity, but much of the wall had been knocked down by the baobab trees which had grown up in it. Nobody could give us a name for this ruin in the wilderness, so we called it Chiburwe, measured it, took notes on it, and rode on.

The forest scenery was grand and impressive in its solitude; sometimes we had great difficulty in getting our animals through the thick undergrowth; the trees were rich in colour, red and light green, equal to any of our autumnal tints, out of which now and again rose granite boulders. The crossing of the River Mwaïrari, a fine tributary of the Sabi, gave us a little trouble; it has a fine volume of water with occasional rapids, waterfalls, and high rocks, and we had to follow its right bank for several miles before we could get our animals across; the river bed was luxuriant in tall pampas grass and patches of papyrus.

On the second afternoon after leaving Chiburwe we sighted the Sabi River, having gone miles out of our way; it is a really magnificent stream even here so far inland, and is navigable now for canoes very *little below where we struck it*. In ancient times it must have been navigable for larger craft, for all African rivers are silting up. There is little doubt but that the ancient builders of the ruins in Mashona-

land, the forts and towns between the Zambesi and the Limpopo, utilised this stream as their road to and from the coast ; and as the country again is opened out it may still be found useful as a waterway for small craft. Where we struck the Sabi it is a rapid river, flowing through a gorge and with a rocky bed ; there are no marshes here, but fertile-looking slopes leading down to it, which appeared to us to promise well for the future agriculturists who settle on its banks, though the rainfall, which takes place only in summer, and for the space of only four months, will be a drawback to cereals. Now these slopes are entirely deserted, and about here we saw no villages, nor natives, nor paths, for days, doubtless owing to the raids of Gungunyana and his Shangans from across the stream. There is no doubt about it, the world is not full yet. In Mashonaland there exist tens of thousands of acres of fertile land entirely unoccupied. Thanks probably to the Matabele raids, the population is here exceedingly scanty, and when one travels through the long-deserted stretches of country, healthy, well watered, and capable of growing anything, which still exist between the Zambesi and the Limpopo, one cannot help thinking that those who complain of the world being too full, and that there is no opening for colonisation, are a century or two before their time.

Everybody revelled in the waters of the Sabi that evening—bathing and washing clothes occupied most of our time until it was dark ; but, alas, our camp was

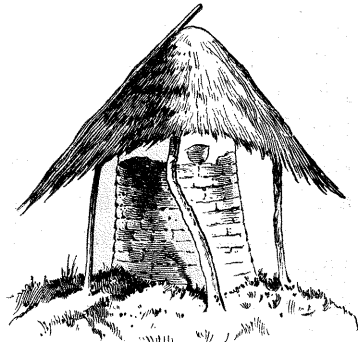
pitched on ground over which a grass fire had passed, and the good effects of our Sabi wash were more than obliterated. We again plunged into the trackless wilderness, and it was not till the second day after leaving the river that we once more joyfully found ourselves in a native path leading in the direction which we ought to go; but we followed it for over thirty miles before we came across a village. This was called Zamopera, on the banks of a pleasant stream. We were so pleased to see people again and to have a chance of replenishing our stock of provisions that we tarried there for the best part of a day, and pitched our camp beneath the shadow of a friendly rock. Crowds of men and women from Zamopera came to visit us; wild-looking people they were—the men with long matted hair hanging like a fringe over their faces, and hung with beads and cowrie-shells, whilst the women here cut off all their hair except a circle in the middle, which is short and threaded with beads in seven rows, four of white outside and three of red in the centre, looking exactly like round bead mats on the top of their heads. We were now in the country of another great Makalanga chief, called Gambidji, whose kraal, perched on a lofty rock, we sighted in the distance, but had not time to visit.

In the villages about here, which are numerous and flourishing, we saw many curious objects, some of which we acquired, others we could not strike a bargain for: a native razor, bone dollasses, and quaint-shaped battle-axes were added to our collection.

Mafusaire's village is perched amongst odd-shaped boulders, fantastic as the rocks in Dovedale, ever varying in form. The inhabitants were a very friendly lot, and were almost beside themselves with delight when my wife took down her hair and showed them its length. They greatly prized a gift of a few of these long hairs, which they will doubtless keep as a memento of the first white lady who ever came amongst them.

The fear of the Makalanga of horses is most curious; even our own men would not touch them, and the villagers were quite awestruck when we mounted. They generally followed us in crowds for a little distance from the village, and screamed with delight when we trotted, scampering and capering by our sides.

We passed by the tomb of a chief on the afternoon after leaving Mafusaire's; it consisted of a mound with a circular construction of stones on the top of it, over which is a thatched roof standing on posts; on the top of the stones stood a pot, in which beer is periodically put, for the delectation of the deceased.



CHIEF'S TOMB

We were now in the immediate neighbourhood

of Mount Wedza, the highest point in Mashonaland, with an elevation of over 6,000 feet above sea level. It is for the most part a dark forest-clad ridge, and it is from here that the natives of Gambidji's country get the iron ore which they smelt in their furnaces and convert into tools and weapons. The villages in this district are entirely given up to the smelting business, and outside the kraals usually are erected two or more furnaces. They are still in the Stone Age here, using for anvils and hammers pieces of hard diorite. One of these villages where we halted for a while was, to our astonishment, called Smet. Not believing our ears, we asked again and again, and got the same reply. The only solution to this strange nomenclature seems to be, that they either got the name from some Dutch trader or from some enterprising Makalanga who had been down to work in the Kimberley mines. For long these natives have been in the habit of doing this, tramping all the way from the Zambesi to the diamond-fields, and not returning thence until they have acquired enough wealth to buy a wife or two and settle themselves in life.

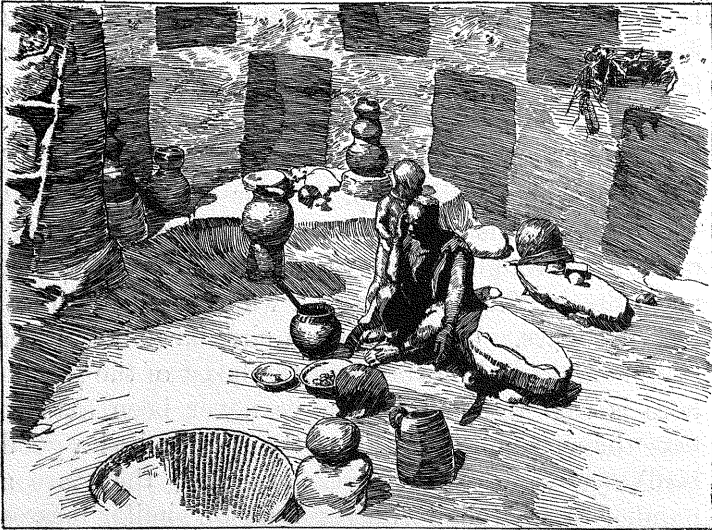
A man from Smet, who was going to 'Mtigeza's kraal, volunteered to act as our guide. He carried with him three large iron hoes which he had made, and for which he expected to get a goat at the kraal. Gambidji's country is very extensive, extending nominally from the Sabi to a ridge which we crossed before reaching 'Mtigeza's, and most of the iron-smelting villages recognise his sovereignty.

Two chiefs of the name of 'Mtigeza live around Mount Wedza, both claiming to be the descendants of the old 'Mtigeza stock. Our 'Mtigeza was a queer little old man, almost in his dotage, but considered very powerful by his neighbours, and this was evidenced by the villages being more in the open, and not seeking protection from rocky heights. His fortress is a curious one, situated on an extensive plateau 4,800 feet above the sea level, with disjointed low masses of rocks dotted about. Around the central mass of rocks is 'Mtigeza's head kraal, surrounded by palisades, and the rock itself is strongly fortified, with all the approaches walled up, and for us Europeans it was by no means easy to reach the summit by means of holes through which we could hardly squeeze, and slits in the rock through which we could only pass sideways. On the top is a circular fort built of rough stones and mortar, and the boast of the people here is that the Matabele have never been able to take their stronghold. From the fort we had a good bird's-eye view over 'Mtigeza's realm; there are a number of encircling villages built on similar masses of rock, about half a mile or more distant. These are governed by the old man's sons.

We sent the old chief a blanket, and he presently came to pay us a visit. According to our custom, we showed him our things, in which he did not manifest much interest until my wife produced a burning-glass, and showed off its wonderful fire-producing qualities on his skin. Then in a weak little voice the old chief

murmured, 'I, 'Mtigeza, want it,' and she promptly presented it to him, also a little salt. As we lunched he sat and watched us, but would partake of nothing we offered him, until we threw some well-picked chicken bones to our men; these he coveted and got.

'Mtigeza held an *indaba* or palaver of his in-

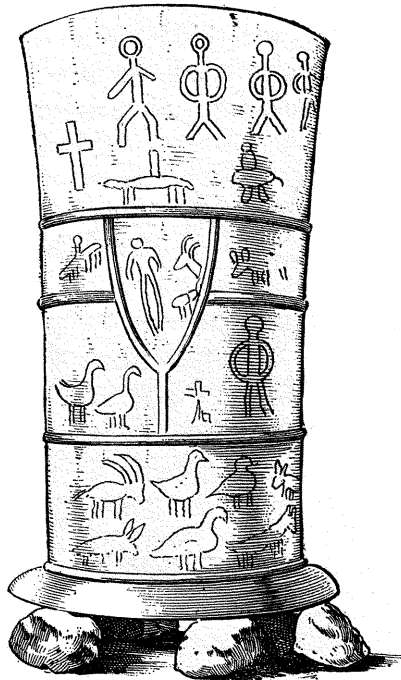


INTERIOR OF A HUT

aunas in a shady nook before his kraal, the result of which was that a goat was to be presented to us by quite a lengthy process. First of all it was presented to Mashah, who humbly received it with hat off and head bowed, making all the necessary compliments for us. Mashah then presented it to our white

men, and they finally presented it to us, and it formed a valuable addition to our larder.

We were surprised to find little evidence of wealth in 'Mtigeza's kraal. Their knives and snuff-boxes were decidedly inferior in workmanship to those we had seen elsewhere, and this we found as we travelled on to be invariably the case where the Matabele or Zulu influence has been least felt. The Zulu is the most ingenious of the Abantu races, and has imparted his ingenuity to the Makalanga, over whom he has raided and many of whom have been his slaves.

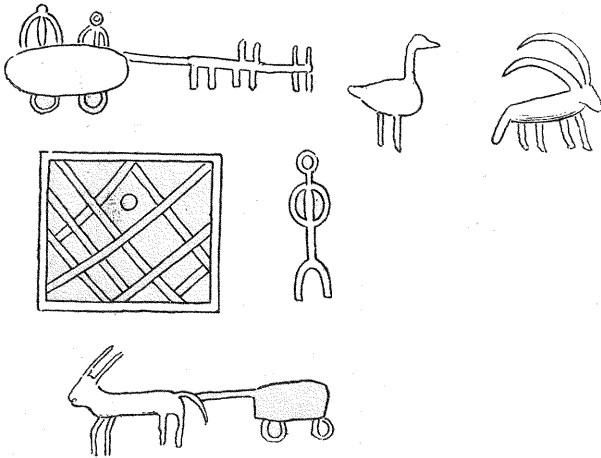


HOUSEHOLD STORE FOR GRAIN, WITH
NATIVE DRAWINGS

There were two as yet roofless but substantial huts being built in the kraal entirely of mud, which is a new departure for the Makalanga. The insides of these were decorated with squares of black and white, like those one sees in Bechuanaland. Undoubtedly

276 EXPLORATION JOURNEYS IN MASHONALAND

foreign influence is being felt here from its proximity to Fort Charter, and very soon the architectural features of Makalangaland will change with the rapidity that all things change in Kaffirdom. Inside the huts were big household granaries for the domestic stores, also made of mud and decorated curiously with rims, and rude paintings in white of deer, birds,



NATIVE DRAWINGS

and men. One represents a waggon with a span of six oxen and a man driving it. The artistic skill is, of course, of a low order, but it shows the influence of the Morunko, or white man, and how his approach has been the theme of their wonder and excited their imagination. I doubt not but those who follow after us will find attempts made to illustrate on their granaries

a Morunko lady with long flowing hair trotting on that strange animal, the horse.

'Mtigeza and his kraal pleased us so much that we did not leave till quite late in the afternoon. We passed through quantities of rice-fields, which spoke of prosperity; and this Makalanga rice is truly excellent, being larger, more glutinous, and of a pinker hue than our Indian rice, which to our minds tasted very insipid after it. It was almost dark when we reached Matimbi's kraal, and pitched our tents close to the tomb of another chief. Matimbi came down to see us; he is the handsomest of all the chiefs we had yet seen, with quite a European-shaped face, long hair and long beard, both rarities in this country, and a splendid knife, carved and decorated with brass wire, which we coveted but could not obtain.

On the following day, September 2, a long ride brought us to Fort Charter and our waggons in time for our midday meal. Thoroughly did we enjoy our tables, our chairs, and our waggon-beds after nearly three weeks' intimate acquaintance with mother earth. Until the experience of greater privations farther north came upon us, we thought we enjoyed the food, the soup, the bully beef, the bread, and the jam which our cook placed before our hungry eyes to the utmost extent that man could do.

Here we regretfully parted with our friend Mashah and most of our Makalangas; two only of enterprising mind elected to follow us and earn more blankets, and they served us with unswerving fidelity

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till we reached the coast at Beira. Mashanani was the name of one of them, whose only fault was a too great attachment to Kaffir beer ; Iguzu was the name of the other, the most industrious man I ever saw. When not working for us, he would sit on a rock for ever patching a ragged old shirt that had been presented to him, until there was little of the original fabric left, or else turning old jam tins into ornaments or threading beads.

CHAPTER IX

*FORT SALISBURY AND THE OLD WORKINGS
AND RUINS OF THE MAZOE VALLEY*

A FEW remarks on the future capital of the Mashonaland gold-fields may not be amiss, by way of sharp contrast, in a work more especially devoted to the study of the past. The same motive, namely, the thirst for gold, created the hoary walls of Zimbabwe and the daub huts of Fort Salisbury, probably the oldest and the youngest buildings erected for the purpose by mankind, ever keen after that precious metal which has had so remarkable an influence on generation after generation of human atoms. These remarks on Fort Salisbury will, moreover, have a certain amount of historical value in years to come, when it has its railway, its town hall, and its cathedral, for we were there on the day on which its first birthday was kept, the anniversary of the planting of the British flag by the pioneers on the dreary upland waste of Mashonaland. It seemed to us a very creditable development, too, for so young a place, when it is taken into con-

sideration that Fort Salisbury, unlike the mushroom towns of the Western Hemisphere, has grown up at a distance of 800 miles from a railway, without telegraphic communication, and for months during the rainy season without intercourse of any kind with the outer world, handicapped by fever, famine, and an unparalleled continuation of rain.

In the space of twelve months three distinct townships had grown up. One was under the low hill or *kopje* devoted to business men, where indications of brick houses succeeding daub huts had already manifested themselves; solicitors, auctioneers, and a washerwoman had already established themselves there; bars, restaurants, and a so-called hotel had been constructed. Fort Salisbury had already started its mass meetings and revolutionary elements, for it seems that in all new communities the spirit of evil must always come in advance of the good. An enterprising individual had produced a paper called the *Mashonaland Times and Zambesia Herald*, and two men had brought billiard-tables with them, one of which was hopelessly smashed on the journey, ensuring for the other a successful and paying monopoly. About half a mile from this busy quarter was the military centre, the fort and the Government stores surmounted by Her Majesty's flag, forming a little village in itself. A quarter of a mile farther were the huts devoted to the civil administration; and farther off still were the hospital huts superintended by some charming Benedictine sisters

and a Jesuit Father. Around all this was the wide open *veldt* of Mashonaland, studded just then by lovely flowers, and grazed upon by many lean, worn-out oxen, the sole survivors of many well-appointed teams which had struggled up the same interminable road that we had, leaving by the roadside the carcasses of so many comrades, which, in process of decay, had caused us many an unpleasant sensation.

On September 12, the anniversary of the arrival of the pioneers, a grand dinner was given to about eighty individuals at the hotel to celebrate the event: representatives of the military, civil, and business communities were bidden; gold prospectors, mining experts, men of established and questionable reputations—all were there, and the promoters underwent superhuman difficulties in catering for so many guests, and gave fabulous prices for a sufficiency of wine, spirits, and victuals properly to celebrate the occasion. It was in its initiative ostensibly a social gathering to celebrate an ostensibly auspicious occasion; but one after-dinner speech became more intemperate than the other: the authorities were loudly abused for faults committed by them, real or imaginary; well-known names, when pronounced, were hooted and hissed; and the social gathering developed, as the evening went on, into a wild demonstration of discontent.

At the bottom of all this ill-feeling was the question of supplies. The previous rainy season had been passed by the pioneers in abject misery; there

was no food to eat, and no medicine to administer to the overwhelming number of fever patients. The rainy season was now fast approaching again, when for months the place would be cut off by the rivers from the outer world, and the 400 waggon-loads of provisions promised by the company had not yet arrived. Lucky were those who had anything to sell in those days: a bottle of brandy fetched 3*l.* 10*s.*; champagne was bought at the rate of 30*l.* a dozen; ham was 4*s.* 6*d.* a lb.; tins of jam 5*s.* 6*d.*; butter, tinned meats, and luxuries were impossible to obtain; and yet when, after a few weeks, the 400 waggons did come, there was a glut in the market of all these things; plenty was ensured for the coming wet season, and there were no more mass meetings or abuse of the authorities.

Probably few cases have occurred in the world's history of greater difficulty in catering than that which presented itself to the Chartered Company during the first year of Fort Salisbury's existence. Very little could be obtained from a native source, for the inhabitants here are few. Hungry, impecunious gold prospectors were flocking into the place; the usual tribe of adventurers, who always appear as impediments to a new and presumably prosperous undertaking, were here by the score. Eight hundred miles lay between Fort Salisbury and the food supply, which had to be traversed by the tedious process of bullock waggons. The Pungwe route, which had been confidently looked to as a more rapid means of com-

munication, had so far proved a *fiasco*, and hundreds of pounds' worth of provisions were rotting on the other side of the fly belt at Mapanda's and Beira; so no wonder discontent was rife at the prospect of famine and death during the ensuing wet months, and no wonder just then that the administrators were at their wits' end, for, though firmly believing that the waggons would come, they could not be sure, for there was no telegraphic communication in those days. One morning we saw Mr. Selous hurriedly despatched to bring up the waggons at any cost. A few weeks later we heard that they had arrived, and the danger which had threatened the infant Fort Salisbury was averted.

At an elevation of 5,000 feet above the sea level, and barely 18° south of the equator, the air of Fort Salisbury is naturally delicious, and it will probably be the healthiest place in the world when the swamps in its vicinity are properly drained, from which, during the rainy season, malarious vapours proceed and cause fever. The question of drainage was exercising the minds of the authorities when we were there, and much probably has now been done in that direction. Searching winds and clouds of dust were about the only discomforts we personally experienced whilst encamped there; these, however, caused us no little inconvenience, as we were preparing our belongings for various destinations, a matter of no small difficulty after seven months of waggon life. We were told to sell everything we could, including our

waggons and oxen, as it would only be possible to perform the rest of the journeys before us with horses and donkeys and bearers, necessitating the reduction of our impedimenta to the smallest possible quantity. What promised to be a very interesting expedition was in store for us—namely, to take a present of 40*l.* worth of goods from the Chartered Company to a chief, 'Mtoko by name, who lived about 120 miles north-east of Fort Salisbury. His country had as yet been hardly visited by white men, and was reported to be replete with anthropological interests. Then we were to make our way down to Makoni's country, where the existence of ruins was brought before our notice, and so on to Umtali and the coast. This prospective trip would take us many weeks, and would lead us through much country hitherto unexplored, so that ample preparations and a careful adjustment of our belongings were necessary. The best interpreter to be had was kindly placed at our disposal by the Chartered Company, as the language in those parts differs essentially from that spoken at Zimbabwe and the Sabi, a certain portion of which had by this time penetrated into our brains. The interpreter in question was just then absent from Fort Salisbury, so to occupy our time we decided on a trip to the Mazoe Valley, and the old gold workings which exist there.

Having despatched three donkeys with bedding and provisions the night before, we left Fort Salisbury one lovely morning, September 15, and rode

through country as uninteresting as one could well imagine until we reached Mount Hampden. Somehow or another we had formed impressions of this mountain of a wholly erroneous character. It has an historic interest as a landmark, named after one of the first explorers of Mashonaland, but beyond this it is miserably disappointing. Instead of the fine mountain which our imaginations had painted for us, we saw only a miserable round elevation above the surrounding plain, which might possibly be as high as Box Hill, certainly no higher. It is covered with trees of stunted growth; it is absolutely featureless; and is alone interesting from its isolation, and the vast area of flat *veldt* which its summit commands.

Soon after leaving Mount Hampden the views grew very much finer, and as we descended into the valley of the Tatagora, a tributary of the Mazoe, we entered into a distinctly new class of scenery. Here everything is rich and green; the rounded hills and wooded heights were an immense relief to us after the continuous though fantastic granite *kopjes* which we had travelled amongst during the whole of our sojourn in Mashonaland. The delicate green leaves of the machabel tree, on which, I am told, elephants delight to feed, were just now at their best, and take the place of the mimosa, mapani, and other trees, of which we had grown somewhat weary. The soil, too, is here of a reddish colour, and we enjoyed all the pleasurable sensations of getting into an entirely

new formation, after the eye had been accustomed to one style of colouring for months.

As we proceeded down the valley the hills closed in and became higher; occasional rugged peaks stood up out of gentle wooded slopes; and if one had ignored the trivial detail of foliage, one might have

imagined that we were plunging into a pretty Norwegian valley with a stream rushing down its midst.



NATIVE BOWL FROM THE MAZOE VALLEY

Presently we came upon a nest of native kraals, and alighted to inspect them. There are those who say that these people are the real Mashonas, who have given

their name to the whole country. This I much doubt; at any rate they are very different from the Makalangas, with whom we had hitherto been entirely associated, and have been here only for a few years. When Mr. Selous first visited this valley on one of his hunting expeditions in 1883, he found it quite uninhabited, whereas now there are many villages, an apt illustration of the migratory tendencies of these

tribes. They are quite different in type to the Makalangas, and, I should say, distinctly inferior in physique. They build their huts differently, with long eaves coming right down to the ground. Their granaries are fatter and lower, and made of branches instead of mud, these two facts pointing distinctly to a tribal variation. They wear their hair in long strings over their face, one on each side of the nose, and the others hanging on their cheeks, giving them quite a sphinx-like appearance. These strings are adorned with beads and cowrie-shells, and must form the most uncomfortable style of *coiffure* that ever was invented. They have magnificent bowls of hand-made pottery, decorated with chevron patterns in red and black, which colours they obtain from hematite and plumbago; and on all advantageous spots near the villages are platforms raised on stakes for drying grain.

Undoubtedly this race, whoever they may be, have a northern origin, for they call beer *Doorah* or *Doro*, the same word used for the same material in Abyssinia and Nubia. This word is also used in M'toko's and Makoni's country. Curiously enough, Edrisi, in his geography, when speaking of the Zindj inhabitants near Sofala, makes this statement: 'Dowrah is very scarce amongst them,' pointing to the Arabian origin of the word; whereas in Manicaland beer is called *Wa-wa*, and in Mashonaland, south of Fort Salisbury, it is called '*Mtwala*, a word of Zulu origin.

Four miles beyond these villages the valley gets

very narrow and the scenery very fine ; and the shades of evening found us comfortably located in the huts of Mr. Fleming, a gold prospector, at a distance of twenty-five miles from Fort Salisbury and in the vicinity of the ancient mines. Immediately opposite to us rose a fine rocky mountain in which are caves where the natives hide themselves and their cattle during Matabele raids. It was a lovely warm evening, and as we sat contemplating the scene and resting after the labours of the day, we felt the soothing influence upon us of scenery more congenial to our taste than any we had yet seen in Mashonaland.

The first set of old workings which we visited was only a few hundred yards from Mr. Fleming's huts, and consisted of rows of vertical shafts, now filled up with rubbish, sunk along the edge of the auriferous reef, and presumably, from instances we saw later, communicating with one another by horizontal shafts below. We saw also several instances of sloping and horizontal shafts, all pointing to considerable engineering skill. It must have been ages since these shafts were worked, for they are all filled nearly to the surface with *débris*, and huge machabel-trees, the largest in the vicinity, are growing out of them. We then proceeded to visit some old workings about a mile and a half off on the hill slopes. One vertical shaft had been cleared out by Mr. Fleming's workmen, and it was fifty-five feet deep. Down this we went with considerable difficulty, and saw for ourselves the ancient tool marks and the smaller horizontal shafts

which connected the various holes bored into the gold-bearing quartz.

I am told that near Hartley Hills some of these old workings go down even to a greater depth, and that one has been cleared out to the depth of eighty feet, proving incontestably that the ancient workers of these mines were not content with mere surface work, and followed the reef with the skill of a modern miner.

All about here the ground is honeycombed with old shafts of a similar nature, indicated now by small round depressions in straight lines along the reef where different shafts had been sunk; in fact, the output of gold in centuries long gone by must have been enormous.

Since the modern invasion of this gold-producing district a considerable amount of prospecting has been done, but of necessity time has not allowed of a thorough investigation of the country. Wherever the gold prospector has been, he finds instances of ancient working, and these old shafts extend all up the country wherever the gold-bearing quartz is to be found. There are ruins similar to those at Zimbabwe and the old workings in the Tati district. The old workings and ruins extend for miles and miles up the Mazoe Valley. Numerous old shafts are to be found at Hartley Hills, and on the 'Mswezwe River. Near Fort Victoria and in the immediate vicinity of Zimbabwe the prospectors have lately brought to light the same features; everywhere, in short, where the pioneer prospectors

have as yet penetrated overwhelming proof of the extent of the ancient industry is brought to light. Mr. E. A. Maund thus speaks of the old workings in the 'Mswezwe district':¹ 'On all sides there was testimony of the enormous amount of work that had been done by the ancients for the production of gold. Here, as on the Mazoe and at Umtali, tens of thousands of slaves must have been at work taking out the softer parts of the casing of the reefs, and millions of tons have been overturned in their search for gold.'

In all these places, too, as in the Mazoe Valley, especially down by the streams, are found crushing-stones, some in long rows, suggesting the idea that the gold had been worked by gangs of slaves chained together in rows, after the fashion depicted on the Egyptian monuments and described by Diodorus; and near Mr. Fleming's camp we were shown traces of a cement smelting furnace similar to the one we discovered in the fortress of Zimbabwe, showing that all the various processes of gold production, crushing, washing, and smelting, were carried on on the spot.

As we proceeded up the Mazoe Valley we saw plenty of traces of the juvenile enterprise at work on the old hunting-ground; and a little below Mr. Fleming's camp the Taragona and Mazoe Rivers join, the latter coming down from a valley of higher level, by a *Poort* or gorge. Established on the old workings along here were numerous settlements bearing

¹ Lecture before the Colonial Institute, April 12, 1892.

modern names—Rothschild's, Cherry's, Lockner's, and others—and soon probably a little township will spring up around the mining commissioner's hut, where the Mazoe River is lined by fine timber, including lemon-trees, the fruit of which was just then ripe, and deliciously refreshing after our hot morning's work. These lemon-trees are alluded to by Dos Santos as existing in these parts in his day three hundred years ago.

The mining commissioner, Mr. Nesbit, entertained us most hospitably for our midday repast, and directed us on our way to the Yellow Jacket Mine, near which we were to see more old workings and an ancient ruined fort. By another narrow gorge or *Poort*, rich in vegetation, and lovely to look upon, we reached the higher valley, and when darkness had already set in, by the aid of the distant glimmering light of a camp fire we made our way to the tents of the Yellow Jacket prospectors, whose abode we had nearly missed in the gloaming. The kindly prospectors hastened to prepare for us an excellent supper of eland steak, for they had shot one of these fine beasts a day or two before, a wonderfully good stroke of luck for us, as we were without meat. The eland is the best beast you can kill in Mashonaland, for not only is it large, but around its heart it has a considerable amount of fat, so that its flesh can be properly served up, and not reduced to lumps of leather for want of grease. They had also shot a

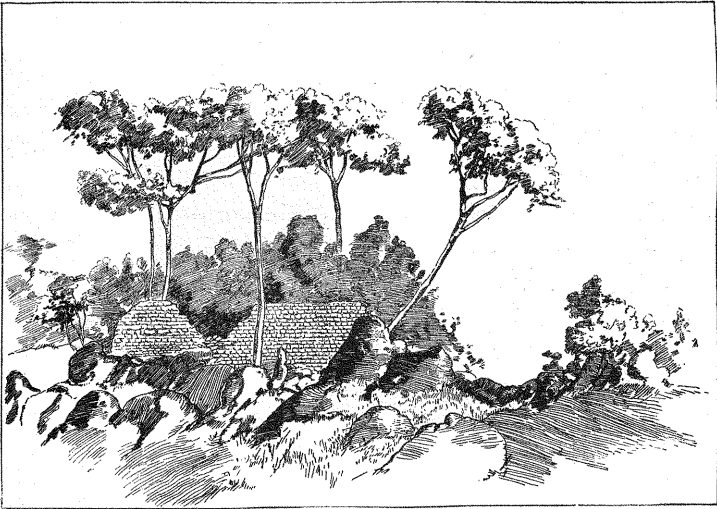
fine lion here not long before, and proudly showed us the skin.

The country about here is very thickly wooded, and we had a glorious ride next morning to the ruins we wished to visit, about five miles distant, across rushing streams overhung with verdure, and in which alluvial gold is still found in small quantities. Here we saw specimens of those curious birds with long tail-like feathers at the end of their wings, which can only fly for a short distance, and seem overweighted by nature for some peculiar freak of her own. There are, too, all up this country many varieties of small birds with tail feathers four or five times their own length, which droop as they fly. These birds seem to me to resemble closely the one depicted on the temple of Deir-el-Bahari in the representation of a village in Punt (Mariette's 'Deir-el-Bahari,' plate v.), identified as the *Cinnyris metallica*, and found all along the east coast of Africa.

We reached the ruin in good time, and halted by it for a couple of hours. It is a small ancient fort, built, as usual, on a granite *kopje*, and constructed with courses of wonderful regularity, equal to what we term the best period of Zimbabwe architecture. Not much of the wall was standing; enough, however, to show us that the fort had been almost twenty feet in diameter, and to cause us to wonder where the remaining stones could have gone to, as there are no buildings or Kaffir kraals anywhere near it. This is another of the many mysteries attached to the Mashonaland

ruins ; where the walls are ruined the stones would seem to have entirely disappeared. This difficulty confronted us at several places, and I am utterly at a loss to account for it.

The fort, as it stands now, is exceedingly picturesque, in a green glade with mountains shutting it in



RUIN IN MAZOE VALLEY

on all sides ; fine timber grows inside it and large boulders are enclosed within the walls. It was obviously erected as a fort to protect the miners of the district, and is a link in the chain of evidence which connects the Zimbabwe ruins with the old workings scattered over the country.

On our homeward journey we visited a lot more

ancient workings, some of which are being opened by the present occupiers, who seemed tolerably well satisfied with their properties, despite the strictures which had been passed by experts, that the gold reefs in the Mazoe Valley 'pinched out' and did other disagreeable things which they ought not to do. From a picturesque point of view the Mazoe Valley is certainly one of the pet places in Mashonaland: the views in every direction are exquisite, water is abundant everywhere, and verdure rich; and if the prospectors are disappointed in their search for gold, and find that the ancients have exhausted the place, they will have, at any rate, valuable properties from an agricultural point of view.

Owing to our previous arrangements we were obliged to return to Fort Salisbury the next day, regretting much that we had not time to proceed farther up the Mazoe Valley, where, about forty miles farther on, is another great centre of ancient industry. I was told of another ruin there, probably built for the same defensive purpose; it is near a Kaffir village called Chipadzi's. About twenty-five miles farther up the valley from the commissioner's is Mapandera's kraal on the Sangwe River, a tributary of the Mazoe or Mazowe. Here, on the Inyota Mountain, gold is said to be plentiful and old workings very numerous, as many as seventy-five crushing-stones having been counted on one single claim. Twenty miles south-east of Mapandera's is Chipadzi's kraal, and a few miles from here in the mountains is another ruin,

described to me as being a circular wall round a *kopje* from 150 to 200 feet in diameter. This wall is in a very ruined condition, being not more than four feet in height, but the courses are reported to be quite as regular as those of Zimbabwe, which appears to be the crucial test in classifying these remains of ancient workmanship. It has no entrance, and the natives thereabouts did not appear to know anything about it or attach any special interest to it.

The Mazoe Valley is frequently alluded to in early Portuguese enterprise, being easily approachable from the Zambesi, and the river is, I am told, navigable about eighty miles below where we struck it.

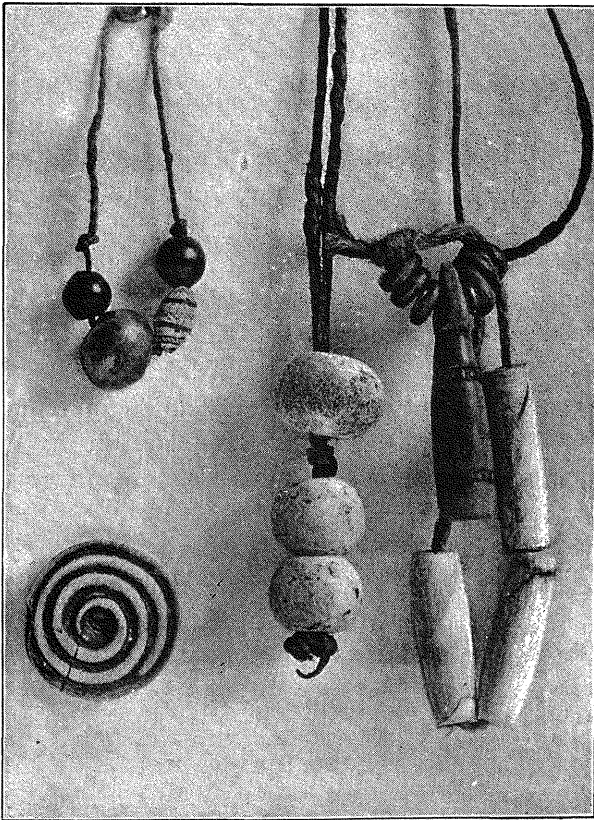
Couto, the Portuguese writer, thus speaks of the gold mines here in his quaint legendary style: 'The richest mines of all are those of Massapa, where they show the Abyssinian mine from which the Queen of Sheba took the greater part of the gold which she went to offer to the Temple of Solomon, and it is Ophir, for the Kaffirs called it *Fur* and the Moors *Afur* . . . the veins of gold are so big, that they expand with so much force, that they raise the roots of trees two feet.' He fixes the spot which he here alludes to farther on when speaking about the three markets held by the Portuguese in these parts: '(1) *Luanhe*, thirty-five leagues from Tete South, between two small rivers, which join and are called Masouvo; (2) *Bacoto*, forty leagues from Tete; and (3) *Massapa*, fifty leagues from Tete up the said River Masouvo.' Now the Mazoe, which, doubtless, in the native tongue, is the

Maswe, like the Pungwe, Zimbabwe, &c., joins the Zambezi just below Tete.

Further evidences of this Portuguese enterprise will doubtless come to light as the Mazoe Valley is further explored. In the vicinity of a new mine called the Jumbo, fragments of old Delft pottery have been found, a few of which were shown to me when at Fort Salisbury. Nankin china is also reported from the same district, an indubitable proof of Portuguese presence; and no doubt many of the large Venetian beads, centuries old, which we saw and obtained specimens of from the Makalangas in the neighbourhood of Zimbabwe, were barter goods given by the traders of those days to the subjects of the Monomatapa, who brought them gold in quills to the three above-named depôts, collected from the alluvial beds of the Mazoe and other streams. It is rumoured amongst the inhabitants of the Mazoe and Manica that long ago, in the days of their ancestors, white men worked gold and built themselves houses here. This rumour most probably refers to the Portuguese, who at the three above-mentioned places had churches and forts, faint traces of which are still to be found in the district.

Corvo, in his work 'As Provincias ultramarinas,' speaks at considerable length about the early Portuguese enterprise and the jealousy of the Arab merchants at their advent, and how these men excited the suspicion of the Monomatapa and brought about the subsequent martyrdom of the Jesuit missionary

Silveira and the entire destruction of the Portuguese mission, which had nearly converted the Monomatapa



THREE VENETIAN BEADS; ONE COPPER BEAD; THREE OLD
WHITE VENETIAN BEADS; BONE WHORL, MEDICINE
PHIALS, AND BONE ORNAMENTS

in 1561. He concludes his remarks on this subject as follows:—

‘The early Portuguese did nothing more than substitute themselves for the Moors, as they called them, in the ports that those occupied on the coast; and their influence extended to the interior very little; unless, indeed, through some acts of violence, or through some ephemeral alliance of no value whatever, and through missions without any practical or lasting results. It is easy to see, by looking at the map, where the Portuguese influence extended to, and that they never left a good navigable river as a basis of operation. They went up the Zambesi, and up the Mazoe as far as they could, where they established the three fairs for trading purposes, and up the Pungwe and Buzi Rivers, establishing themselves in the same way at Massi-Kessi and Bandiri; and beyond this their influence did not extend at all during what may be called the most flourishing epoch of their colonial existence.’

From the Yellow Jacket tents we had a long ride before us of thirty miles back to Fort Salisbury. We arose betimes and found it very cold, with a thin coating of ice on the water-cans, almost the only time we saw ice during our ‘winter’ in Mashonaland, although occasionally the wind was cold and the nights very fresh. Winter in these parts is delightful, with brilliant sun by day; but as evening approaches a coat is necessary, and during our two nights at the Yellow Jacket huts we had to remove rugs, which were sorely wanted below, to procure the necessary warmth above.

One more breakfast off that excellent eland fortified us for our ride, and the sun was not high in the heavens when we bade farewell to our hospitable entertainers. About three hours' ride brought us to the Mazoe again just before it enters the Poort on its way to the lower valley. At the extremity of the valley we were riding down, just before the hills are ascended to reach the level plateau, there is another nest of Kaffir villages; one of these had incurred the enmity of the officers of the Chartered Company for refusing to recognise its authority by restoring stolen cattle.

A fine of cattle had been imposed on the chief, accompanied by a threat that if the fine was not paid by a certain day the kraal would be burnt down. The fine was not paid, and Major Forbes, with a band of men, rode out to execute the orders, borrowing two of our horses for the occasion. As we passed through the village the ashes of huts and granaries were still smouldering, broken pots and household goods lay around in wild confusion, and all the inhabitants had taken refuge at one of the neighbouring villages. As we passed by this it is needless to say we did not meet with an altogether cordial reception; we dismounted and went amongst them, asking in vain for beer, eggs, and fowls.

'The Morunko had taken them all,' they said, and they received our overtures of friendship with silent, and we thought rather ominous, contempt. Accordingly we remounted and rode off, and I think all