

parties were relieved when we had put a little distance between us and the village. Since then I hear a solitary white man has been murdered in the Mazoe Valley. Luckily our force amounted to three, a number sufficient to overawe any Mashonaland village.

There are some nice-looking farms just started on the slopes of the hills here. Near there we met a wondrous long string of natives in single file, who avoided us and looked askance at us and our animals. Some day or another, when Fort Salisbury becomes a big place, and food supplies are needed, those who have pegged out farms in the Mazoe district will reap a fine profit from their agricultural produce, if I am not much mistaken.

CHAPTER X

OUR EMBASSY TO THE CHIEF 'MTOKO

THERE is always a charm to us connected with the investigation of a country the name of which conveys nothing to anybody, and which is a blank on the map. This, I think, was one of the chief incentives to us to accept the diplomatic post of presenting a gift of forty pounds' worth of goods from the Chartered Company to the chief 'Mtoko.

We gathered that 'Mtoko was a powerful chief, dreaded by the natives, whose country lay about 120 miles to the north-east of Fort Salisbury; that he ruled over a large and almost unknown district reaching on the west to the territories under the influence of the Portuguese satellite Gouveia; and that his father, who had lately died, had entered into a treaty with the Chartered Company which gave them paramount influence, but that the present chief and his subjects, who were reported to have customs of an exceedingly primitive order, had as yet had no official dealings with the Company. This was about all the information we could gather.

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The following is an exact copy of my credentials:—

To the Chief Matoko

The British South Africa Company, Salisbury.
September 21, 1891.

My Friend,—Mr. Selous has told Mr. Rhodes, the Big Induna of all white men in this country, all about you, and he has sent his friend Mr. Bent to see you and your people, and to give you some presents from him; and also to tell you that you are now under the Great White Queen, and that the Portuguese will not trouble you any more.

You and your people will now live in peace and security.

I am, your Friend,

F. RUTHERFOORD HARRIS,
Secretary.

We certainly felt somewhat adventurous when we left Fort Salisbury, on September 23, on this journey of uncertain length and uncertain results. We could take hardly any comforts with us except our tent, and the smallest possible allowance of bedclothes, and only just enough food to keep us from starvation for a week, for the donkeys of this country carry very little weight, and the only bearers we could get were our two faithful Makalangas, Mashanani, and Iguzo. These, together with our three white men, who looked after the eleven donkeys, formed our only staff, for the interpreter had not yet come in, and was to be sent after us. The only fixed idea of time that we had was that a steamer was supposed to leave Port Beira for the Cape on November 18, and this at

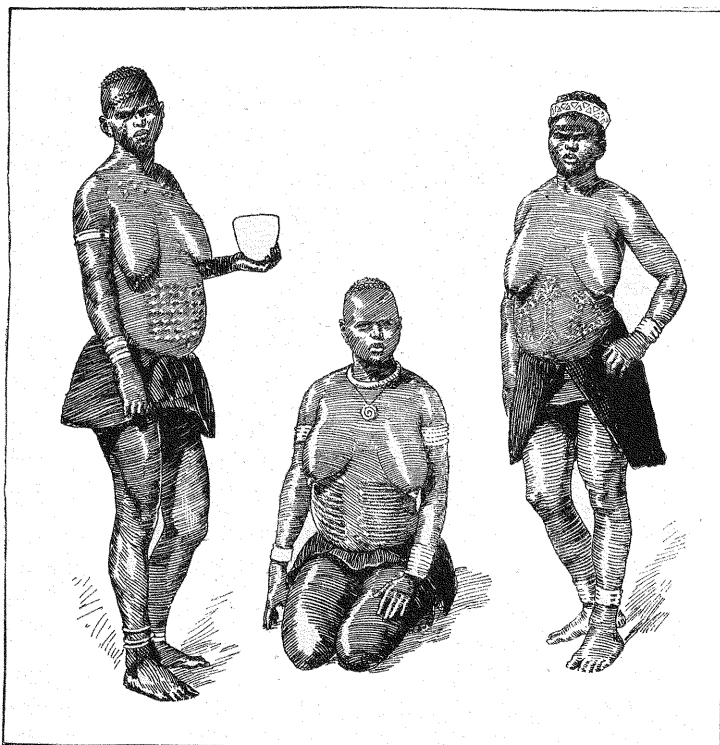
all hazards we had to catch ; the intervening space of time was to us a maze of delightful uncertainty, only to be unravelled as that time went by.

After a comfortable breakfast at the civilian mess hut, and farewells to our kind friends at Fort Salisbury, my wife, Mr. Swan, and I started on our three horses in pursuit of our donkeys, which had started along the Manica road about an hour before. These we soon caught up, and after a hot dusty ride of about ten miles we pitched our tents about one hundred yards from a large Kaffir village on a flat space, hidden away amongst a sea of small granite boulders. Here the women wore pretty chaplets of red and white beads sewn on to snake-skins, and aprons and necklets gaily decorated with the same ; the chief had a splendid crop of long black hair. Beyond this the village presented nothing fresh to our notice until night fell, when our rest was disturbed for hours by a series of hideous noises : drums were beaten, dogs were barking, men were howling like wild beasts, and when they ceased the women would take up their refrain, guns were periodically let off, and everything conceivable was done to render night hideous. On rising next morning and inquiring the cause of this nightmare, we were informed that a death had taken place in the village, and that the inhabitants were indulging in their accustomed wailing. I was also told that in these parts they carefully tie up the limbs of a dead man, his toes and his fingers each separately, in cloths, prior to burial, whereas a

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woman is only tied up in a skin, and her grave is of no account.

At the village of Karadi we left the Manica road



TATTOOED WOMEN FROM CHIBI'S, GAMBIDJI'S, AND KUNZI'S COUNTRIES

and entered a very populous district with numerous villages perched on the rocky heights, the inhabitants of which were greatly excited at the sight of us, and followed us for miles. This, we learnt, was Musung-

aikwa's country. The women here had a distinct tattoo mark of their own—namely, the lizard pattern, which we have seen on the dollasses or divining-tablets¹—done in dots on their stomachs. Some of the men, too, have the same device tattooed on them on their chests and backs. This is the third distinctive tattoo mark we have seen in Mashonaland—namely, the furrow pattern around Zimbabwe, the dots in squares in Gambidji's country, and here the lizard pattern, all of which are raised marks on the skin made by the insertion of some drug. They are evidently connected with some charm, but what the nature of it is I was never able to discover.

At Musungaikwa's, necessity for the first time made us acquainted with red millet-meal porridge, called respectively *sodza* and *ufa* in different parts of the country. With milk and sugar it is quite palatable but gritty; the natives like it best very thick, eating it with a stick and dipping it into water before consumption; they appear almost to live upon it, and dispose of surprising quantities. Much rice is grown about here in the swampy ground, sometimes in round holes, sometimes in wide furrows, which are surprisingly straight for Kaffirs, who seem to have the greatest difficulty in



WOODEN BOWL FROM
MUSUNGAIKWA'S KRAAL

¹ Chap. II.

producing a straight line. Their paths, though very accurate in direction, represent to the eye a long wavy line, and they are aggravatingly narrow for a European, who turns his toes out, to walk in, for the Kaffirs always go in single file, and always put their feet down straight.

The natives about here followed us with bags of bark fibre full of figs of a rich brown colour, which we purchased, and found excellent when they were not inhabited, as was generally the case, by hundreds of little ants.

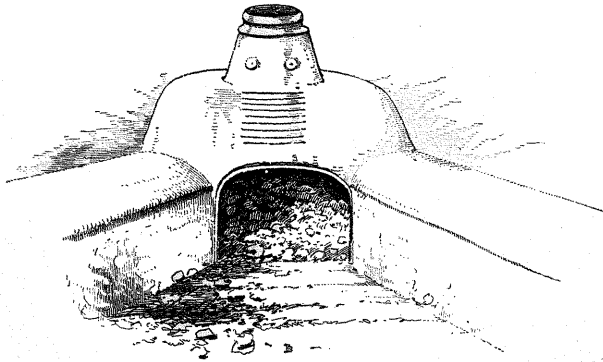
At about thirty miles from Fort Salisbury we reached a nest of seven or eight kraals ruled over by a chief called Kunzi. Here we elected to stay and wait for the interpreter, and as he did not join us for two days we had a pleasant time for rest and for studying the inhabitants. Kunzi, the paramount chief of this community, is a young and enterprising individual; he corresponds to the *nouveau riche* of Kaffirland, being spoken of as 'a chief of the assegai' in contradistinction to the old hereditary chiefs around. He came originally from 'Mtigeza's country, got together a band of followers, and won for himself with his assegai the territory he now occupies. To a chief of this description all the youth and prowess of the country flock, hence he had a remarkably fine set of followers, and these he rules with marvellous strictness. We had an example of his power, for we wanted to get bearers from him. He brought the men in person, and would not allow them to go with us until we had

paid the stipulated quantity of cloth in advance and deposited it with him. This arrangement did not please me at all, knowing well the tendency paid bearers have to run away, but it was inevitable. The men served us extremely well, accompanied us for a fortnight until we reached the spot arranged upon with the chief, and when I offered them more to go farther they refused, saying that they dare not do so without the consent of their chief.

Kunzi is an ambitious man, and talks of becoming king of Mashonaland, but as he was driven back during his last attack on his neighbour Mangwendi, and as the Chartered Company may have something to say to it, this eventuality seems at present in the dim future. Kunzi is, however, a man of promise, and if he had been born a little earlier he might have been in a position to resuscitate the fallen glories of the race.

Outside Kunzi's kraal is a fine iron smelting furnace, decorated with the breast and furrow pattern, and with a large quantity of newly made blow-pipes of dried mud, and decorated with a spiral pattern, lying in heaps outside. We watched the process here at our leisure. First they crush the ore obtained from the neighbouring mountains, which has a large quantity of manganese in it, and spread it on the rocks; the forge is heated with charcoal and kindled by two men with four bellows, each worked by one hand; the nozzles are inserted into the blow-pipes, and the blow-pipes into the charcoal; they press the bellows with their hands by means of a wooden handle, and work

with great vigour, singing and perspiring freely as they work. Around the furnace is a hedge of tall grass, and at night time, when the ore is cool, they remove it from the furnace and afterwards weld it into the required shapes with stone hammers. This time-honoured handicraft interested us much, mentioned as it is by Dos Santos three hundred years ago, and



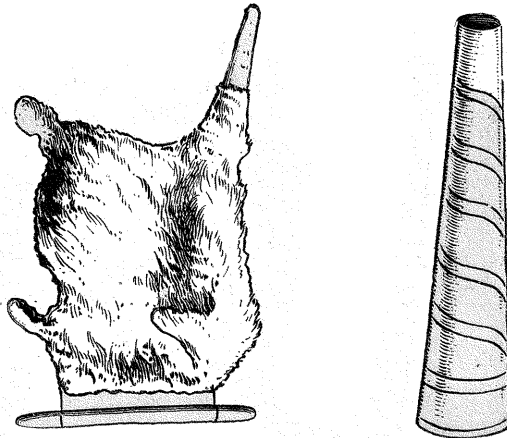
MAKALANGA IRON SMELTING FURNACE

by the Arabian writers close upon a thousand years ago, as a speciality of the country.

One of the neighbouring kraals is ruled over by Kunzi's brother Gwadeli, who, in his anxiety to be hospitable, gave us warm beer to drink, which nearly had the effect of an emetic. A rock rises out of the centre of this kraal, where is an *induna's* grave walled into the rock, with four pots of beer before it, and hedged off by a rope of bark.

The following morning we watched with some

interest a trader from Fort Salisbury selling goods to the natives. Beads, gunpowder, and salt were the favourite commodities he had to offer, in return for which he rapidly acquired a fine lot of pumpkins, maize, potatoes, and other vegetables; whilst for blankets and rifles he obtained cattle which I am sure would bring him in a handsome profit when he reached the capital. We ourselves got a



GOATSKIN BELLOWS AND BLOW-PIPE FOR IRON SMELTING

few interesting things at Kunzi's, including a quill with gold in it which the natives had found in the 'Nyagowe River, and a dexterously wrought garment for a young lady, about half the size of a freemason's apron; it is made of bark fibre, with geometrical patterns of excellent design worked into it, a species of textile with which we were to become better acquainted in 'Mtoko's country. Here, too, we saw

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sticks set up in the ground with the bark peeled off and bound round the top—a sort of fetich, which they call their *Maklosi* or luck sign. They set these things up whenever they come to a new country; also, on similar occasions, they kneel before a tree and burn snuff, saying as they do so: ‘Muali!’ (the



WOMAN'S DRESS OF WOVEN BARK FIBRE

native name for God) ‘we have brought knives, give us meat.’ Then they do the same at another tree, asking the same petition for their children.

A delicious stream for bathing and washing clothes flowed a few yards below our camp, which gave us sufficient employment for what would otherwise have

been an idle afternoon. At midnight our interpreter arrived, and the following morning we commenced our journey in real earnest.

At a village where we halted for a while we were introduced to a young girl, who was shortly to become chief Kunzi's eleventh wife—the state wife, to be presented to him by his tribe, whose son will be heir to the chieftdom, to the exclusion of the children by his other purchased wives. This marriage is usually recommended and seen to by the tribe when the chief is getting on towards middle life; and the succession in these parts is carried on in this way. She wore round her neck one of the large white whorls made out of the end of shells, which are common amongst the natives, but a specimen of which I tried ineffectually to get. This, I now learnt, is the sign of betrothal, and is transferred to the neck of the baby when born. Men also wear them for love philtres, and hence their reluctance to part with them.

During this day's march we passed by a pond dug in a hollow which was in process of drying up. These holes are dug by the natives in the dry season with the object of catching fish when the swamps dry up; also for fishing they make use of a thing very like our lobster-pot, which they tie to a fence across a rapid portion of the stream. The love the natives have for salt throughout this saltless country is very marked; for sugar and lollipops, which we offered them, they have a positive aversion; anything of a savoury nature pleases them immensely, and their

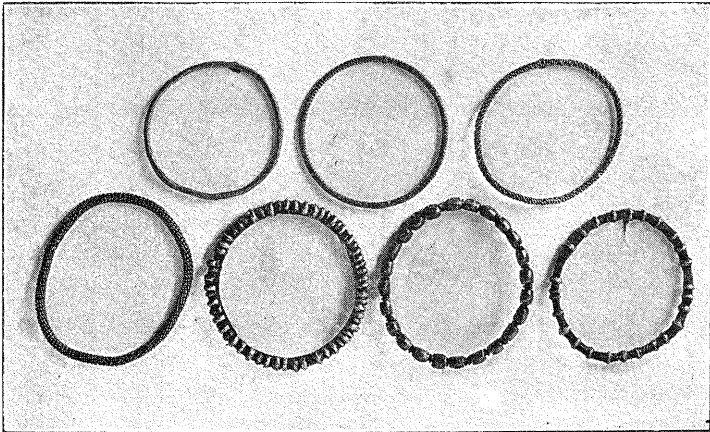
gestures of delight over the scrapings of tins of anchovy paste were most pleasing to contemplate. Mice, locusts, and caterpillars are their daintiest viands, and if given a lump of salt they will put it straight-way into their mouths and consume it with the greatest complacency.

We halted that night at the village of Yandoro, still in Kunzi's country, with a solitary rock in its midst, divided into two parts by a narrow split forming a gully which is bridged over by trees, so that they can retire to the highest point when the Matabele come, and wait there till the *impi* has departed with their cattle and grain.

I learnt here a little more concerning the mysteries of hand-clapping and greetings. One of our bearers from Kunzi's kraal, Girandali by name, had relatives here, and I followed him to their hut, the inmates of which were seated solemnly on the floor and began to clap, whereupon Girandali commenced to relate parenthetically the events of his career since they last met; between each parenthesis the host clapped and said his name. This went on for fully ten minutes, each parenthesis being received with more or less clapping, as it attracted the attention of his hearers. When Girandali had done, there was a general clapping which lasted for some time, and then the formal part of the conversation was over.

The chief of a neighbouring village, Bochiko by name, here paid us a visit. He is a most curious speci-

men of his race, a veritable pigmy only four feet four inches in height. He has lost all his toes in battle and has had one leg broken and never set; he wore a large brass ring with curious patterns on it on his tiny fingers, and brass bracelets on his tiny arms, both of which we purchased from him. He is said to have five wives and five stalwart children.



BRACELETS

We were greatly surprised on rising next morning to learn that my mare, an old 'salted horse,' which we had had with us for six months, and ridden hard all the time, had presented us with a foal during the night—unfortunately a dead one. The mare did not seem much the worse for her adventure; in fact, I personally was the only sufferer, for a probably

misplaced compassion prompted me to walk instead of ride for the next day's march.

We were now passing through a corner of Mangwendi's country, a chief with whom we were to become better acquainted later on. Gaza, one of his chief *indunas*, has a kraal on an exceedingly high rock by which we passed; in fact, about here the country is very populous, owing to the rocky nature of the ground and the inaccessible eyries in which the natives can plant their huts. We wondered what the meaning of many pots might be which we saw here on high boulders with stones around and on the top. By inquiry we learnt that they were beehives, equivalent to the bark hives we so constantly saw farther south. There is much ceremony about here at the presentation of beer. At Malozo's kraal the chief handed the pot to one of our bearers, who handed it to the interpreter, who handed it to me. Their hair, too, is very wildly dressed, being long and tangled, and when it becomes past endurance by reason of the insects collected therein, they shave it off and hang it to a tree, revealing to the world their bare and greatly disfigured pates.

After this we went through a long stretch of almost uninhabited country, very lovely indeed to look upon, richly wooded, with glimpses through the woods of tree-clad heights, with strange finger-shaped rocks appearing out of them as far as the eye could reach into the blue distance. These granite *kopjes* would be distinctly wearisome were it not for

the ever-varying fantastic shapes. The forests themselves are painfully monotonous ; at one time you are riding through groves of medlars with coarse large leaves, then you come across a stretch of white-flowered sugar-tree (*Protea mellifera*), which, I think, of all trees is the most aggravating, from the dull monotony of its leaves and generally scraggy appearance of its branches. Its flower is very pretty, being like a soft silvery white chrysanthemum, three inches in diameter; it is very attractive to butterflies and pretty sun-beetles, with which the flower is sometimes quite covered. About here we passed a curious granite mountain called Mount Jomvga, rising above all the rest like a gigantic silver thimble. Mount Jomvga haunted us for days and days, and we never lost sight of it during the whole of our stay in 'Mtoko's country.

We were now rapidly approaching 'Mtoko's country, but the nearer we approached our goal the more difficulty we had in obtaining information as to where the chief actually lived. Some said he lived at the village of Lutzi, a few miles across the border, others said he lived about six miles farther on; consequently we were somewhat perplexed, and ended by stopping near Lutzi for a while, whilst our interpreter rode on to make further inquiries.

Amongst other embarrassing things that a son inherits with the chieftom are his father's wives. Of course a man is not expected to marry his own

mother, but his stepmothers are different, especially if, as often happens, they are young and comely. At Lutzi we were told that the new 'Mtoko had



WOODEN PLATTER FROM LUTZI

deposited several of his father's widows, presumably the old and ugly ones, whom he did not admire. Certainly some of the customs of this country are exceedingly strange, and we should not have believed them had we not again and again

asked the same questions from different individuals and always got the same reply. One of these is sufficiently horrible, and I hope the influence of the Chartered Company will soon work for its suppression. If a woman gives birth to twins they are immediately destroyed. This they consider an unnatural freak on the part of a woman, and is supposed to indicate famine or some other calamity. In this custom they differ essentially from their Matabele neighbours, where Lobengula, like our Queen, honours a prolific mother with a special gift. In 'Mtoko's country the unfortunate twins are put into one of

their big pots, with a stone on the top, and left to their fate.

In their marauding transactions there is a curious code of honour amongst them. Suppose a woman to be stolen from a tribe, the injured individuals lie in wait for the oxen of the thieves, and when captured take them to the chief, who allots them as follows: 1. One is slaughtered for general consumption and joviality. 2. The rightful owner of the stolen woman is next indemnified. 3. The rest of the tribe are questioned as to whether they have any grievance to be rectified. 4. If there are any oxen over they are scrupulously returned to their owners. Their code of morality is far below the standard amongst the Zulus in Matabeleland.

Many of the customs have a curious Eastern tinge; for example, hired labour is unknown, and if a man wants assistance in his fields he brews a quantity of beer, bids his neighbours come, and the better the beer the more labourers he will get. This custom is still common in Asia Minor and the East, where wine is the substitute for beer.

Lutzi did not interest us much; it is a scattered and poor-looking kraal on a bleak hill, with large stone semicircles, where the men of the village can sit and smoke sheltered from the wind; so on hearing that the 'Mtoko's kraal was really about six miles off, we set out for it about ten o'clock on the following morning.

There is much that is different in this country

from what we had seen elsewhere in Mashonaland, enough almost to point to a difference of race; the language, too, we found so different that we could understand but little of it ourselves, though the ordinary Makalanga terms for commodities such as *mazai* for eggs, *makaka* for milk, &c., were still in vogue. Probably the different circumstances of life will account for the difference in character. The people do not live in kraals huddled together on the top of rocks, but in small scattered kraals of from six to twenty huts dotted all over the country, where agriculture may take them, arguing a degree of prosperity and security to property which we had not seen elsewhere in Mashonaland. In these little kraals there is generally a hut raised on poles in the midst, which acts as a kind of watch-tower. They told us that the Matabele never penetrate as far as this, and that the only enemy they fear is the Portuguese half-caste Gouveia, whose territory lies over the mountains to the east; but his attacks were successfully repulsed by the old 'Mtoko, who had thereby established such a reputation for valour that none of his neighbours durst interfere with him.

The result of this condition of affairs was that in 'Mtoko's country we saw more cattle than we had seen elsewhere, but all of the same calibre. The characteristic of all domestic animals in Mashonaland is their small size. The cows are less than our Guernsey breed, and give very little milk; the sheep and goats are diminutive and unhealthy looking; the

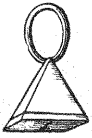
hens are ridiculous little things, and their eggs not much bigger than pigeons' eggs at home. As for the dogs, they are the most contemptible specimens of the canine race I have ever seen in any of my wanderings. This does not look well for the prospects of the agriculturists, but probably the diminution in physique amongst the Mashonaland cattle is rather due to the coarse grass and swampy land and the want of proper care than to any other cause.

Up a narrowing valley, with a gorge or *kloof* at the end of it, under the shadow of a rocky mountain, and almost hidden by a dense mass of timber, lies 'Mtoko's kraal, also, after the fashion of the country, a small one. In our innocence we advanced right up to the kraal; and despite the expostulation of an angry crowd of natives, who screamed and yelled at us, we commenced to pitch our tents close by the shady trees in a spot which looked very inviting for a few days' rest. Suddenly it dawned upon us that we had been guilty of some breach of savage etiquette, so I immediately despatched our interpreter to see the chief, with a portion of the present as a foretaste of better things to come. We seated ourselves rather disconsolately beneath the trees awaiting his return, watching the inhabitants, who swarmed around us.

The women of 'Mtoko's country are quite the most decent of their sex that we had seen since entering Mashonaland. Out of bark fibre they weave for themselves quite massive dresses, two yards long

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and one yard wide, which they decorate with pretty raised geometric patterns like one sees on old-fashioned 'Marsella' quilts at home; these they gird round their loins and fasten on with a girdle of bark



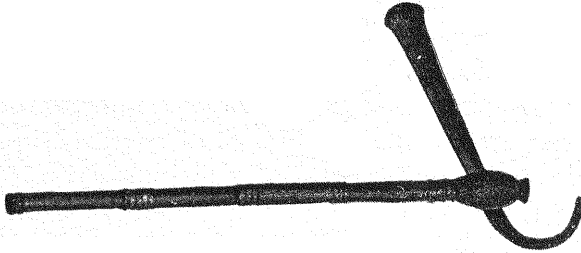
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netting, and consequently they present an air of decency to which their sisters in other parts of this country are strangers, with their tiny leather aprons scarce worthy

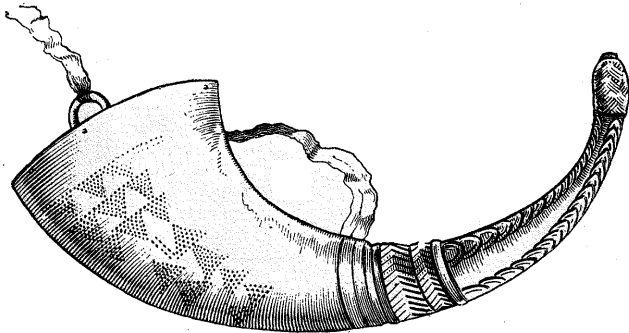
of the name of clothing. Nevertheless, when in their huts the women of this country take off this heavy and somewhat awkward garment, and one day, having crawled into a hut, I was somewhat startled to find myself in the presence of two dusky ladies dressed like Eve in the Garden of Eden. Most of the



BATTLE-AXE

people about here have their upper and lower lips bored, and insert in them either a nail-like object, somewhat after the fashion of the Nubians, or a bead or ring, or a plain bit of stick. Their front teeth of both upper and lower jaws are filed, an ancient

custom to which both Dos Santos and El Masoudi, the Arabian historian, allude. There is evidently a strong Zambesi influence in 'Mtoko's country; their battle-axes, their assegais, and their powder-horns are far more elaborately carved and decorated with brass wire than those we had seen farther south, and bear a close resemblance to those which the tribes on the Zambesi produce. In their hair they wear combs

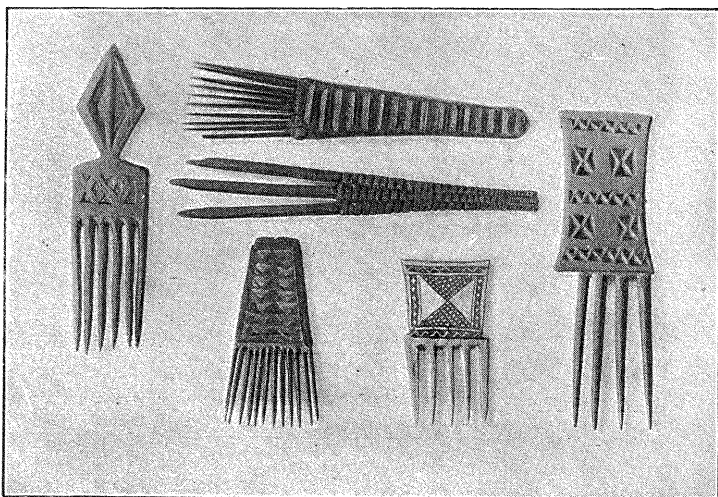


POWDER-HORN

inlaid with different-coloured straws, and their bracelets also are very elaborate.

Our emissary came back with a long face. The 'Mtoko, despite the offering we had sent him, was indignant at our invasion of his privacy; in fact, to avoid seeing a white *induna* without taking counsel with his head men, he had been obliged to take refuge in a cave. His father, he said, would not allow a white man to encamp within eight miles of his kraal. This happened to Mr. Selous, the only white man who

had as yet visited the country in an official capacity, when he came to get the old 'Mtoko to sign the treaty a few months before. However, he said he would consent to our pitching our tents at a spot indicated about a mile away, and would come and visit us and receive the rest of his gifts on the morrow.



A COLLECTION OF COMBS

Somewhat crestfallen and highly indignant at our treatment, we packed up our things again and hurried off as fast as we could, so that we might get our tents pitched before night came on.

The following day was advancing rapidly, and still no signs of 'Mtoko's visit. We were much annoyed at the loss of time and the supposed insult, so

we collected our presents together, and determined to take them and get them given, come what might. We set off and marched behind the gift, which was carried on the heads of many bearers. We had scarcely gone two hundred yards on our way, when men came running to us, announcing the advent of his majesty; so we went back again to prepare our rugs for the reception, and sat in state.

Through the trees we saw him coming, with a following of about fifty men armed with battle-axes and assegais. About two hundred yards from our camp they all seated themselves, and held a council which we thought would never end. The result of this was an envoy sent to state it as the monarch's opinion that the white lady had bewitched the presents, for she had been seen going to a stream and sprinkling the things with water which she had fetched from thence; that he would nevertheless graciously receive the presents, but that he would not keep them but give them at once to his uncle. Whilst we were making up our minds whether we should be annoyed or amused at this message, the chief and his men moved one hundred yards nearer to us, so we determined to await the progress of events. Here again they stopped for another *indaba*. This time the message, that the chief would like us to send him the presents to the spot where he was, was accompanied by a present to us of a kid and twenty pounds of meal. This somewhat pacified us. Nevertheless we sent a message back that if the chief wished

for the things he must come and fetch them in person. To the *indunas* who brought the message we gave a few articles for themselves.

The result of this last message was instantaneous. His majesty came forthwith, but he refused to sit on the rug prepared for him. He refused to shake hands, nay, even look at the white lady, and during the whole of the interview he trembled so violently, and looked so nervous, that we felt quite sorry for him.

'Mtoko is a fine specimen of his race, lithe and supple of limb, but more like a timid wild animal than a man. As he sat before us he nervously peeled a sweet potato with his battle-axe, and looked ill at ease. Gradually, as the presents came out, his sinister face relaxed, and in spite of himself became wreathed with smiles. Spread out before him was an entire uniform of the Cape Yeomanry, helmet and all, with two horsehair plumes. Then there were knives, and looking-glasses, and handkerchiefs, and shirts, and beads, and yards of limbo; wealth, doubtless, of which he had scarce dreamt, was now his. The impression made on him was great. He was overcome with gratitude, and after stepping aside for a few moments' talk with his head men, he told us that, as a return present, a whole live bullock should be ours. Permission was given to us to come and encamp under his kraal if we liked. His apologies were profuse, and he even ventured to touch the white lady's hand; and thus ended this strange interview.

Not wishing to uproot ourselves again, we thanked him for his offer, and said we preferred to remain where we were, but would come up and visit him on the morrow.

Afterwards we learnt the cause of all 'Mtoko's nervousness. His father had died shortly after Mr. Selous's visit. The common belief was that he had been bewitched; naturally he thought that the white lady had been sent purposely to cast a glamour over him. He had been told how these white men are ruled over by a woman, and he thought Queen Victoria had sent a humble representative of her sex to bring *about the same state of affairs* in his country. Her name was of course asked at the interview, and feeling the flatness with which her English appellation would be received, our interpreter promptly called her 'Msinyate, 'the Home of the Buffaloes,' to which high-sounding name she answered for the rest of her stay in 'Mtoko's country.

The day was far spent when the chief left us, and we took a stroll in the cool of the evening to a tiny kraal, consisting only of three huts, about half a mile from our camp. There was an air of prosperity about the place which pleased us. The huts are better built than elsewhere, and have porches. Their granaries are wattled, and have very well thatched roofs, and our reception was most cordial. They spread mats for us to sit on. They brought us monkey-nuts, tamarind, and other vegetables to eat, and seemed to think themselves greatly honoured

by a visit from the white *indunas* who had brought their chief such a fine present.

Next morning we walked up to visit 'Mtoko in his kraal. The twenty huts which compose it are girt around with a strong palisade. Each hut is large, and has a porch. 'Mtoko and his head men were seated on a rock in the midst of it with a wood fire for lighting their pipes. One of the *indunas* had just decorated his hair in splendid fashion, tying up his black tufts with beads, and covering the whole with a thick coating of grease, which soaked into his matted hair before our eyes under the strong influence of the sun. Into this circle we were all invited, for the dread of the white lady seemed to have passed away. She presented the monarch with some English needles, and his delight in receiving these treasures exceeded even that which he showed on receipt of the Chartered Company's gifts, for in 'Mtokoland they are accustomed to use strong sharp blades of grass for needles, on which ours were a distinct improvement.

Our object to-day was to inquire into the politics of the country, and to verify the strange stories we had heard about the priest of the lion god, the Mondoro, who is reported to be even stronger than the chief. We wanted to learn more concerning the cult of the lion, and where the Zimbabwe of 'Mtokoland was, where the annual sacrifices take place to the king of beasts.

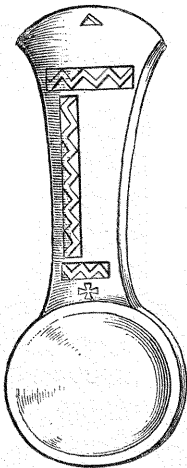
The question was a delicate one, and had to be tenderly approached, knowing as we did by this time

the extreme reluctance of the Kaffirs to disclose to white men the secrets of their religion. A man called Benoula seemed to take the lead in everything. The 'Mtoko hardly spoke, and looked very uncomfortable whilst the catechising was going on. The results of our investigations were vague. The Mondoro, or lion priest, was uncle to the chief, and he resided at Lutzi, the village by which we had passed. The old 'Mtoko on his death-mat had left his son and heir somehow or another in tutelage to this mysterious priest-uncle of his. When asked where the Zimbabwe was, he replied reluctantly: 'The Mondoro may tell you if he likes; I dare not.' Finally, after 'the Home of the Buffaloes' hair had been taken down by his majesty's special request, we made arrangements for Benoula to accompany us to Lutzi on the morrow and introduce us to the priest, whom we had been so near without knowing it when we first entered the country.

We took a look round the kraal before taking our leave. The cattle are all housed in the centre of it. There was the pigeon-cote, a feature in all the villages about here, consisting of a mud box with holes, raised on poles. Hard by dwelt a hideous black sow with a litter of young ones in a grass sty. There was a hut for the calves and a hut for the goats, a scene of bucolic prosperity which we had come across nowhere else in Mashonaland.

The following morning, after breakfast, we set off for Lutzi once more, armed with presents for the lion priest, and exceedingly curious about him.

Benoula was there before us, and everyone was expecting our arrival. Presently we were ushered into a large but rather dilapidated hut, where sat a venerable-looking old man, who received us and our presents with great cordiality. We seated ourselves on the ground, forming a curious assemblage: the



WOODEN SPOON.
LUTZI

Mondoro and his son, 'Mkateo, his enormously fat daughter Tourla, Benoula, and one or two *indunas*, our three selves, and our interpreter. 'I am the 'Mtoko,' was almost the first thing the old man said, explaining how he considered himself the rightful heir to the chieftdom. 'Next year, when the crops are gathered in, I shall return to the kraal where my brother died, and assume the command of the country.' We soon saw the state of things, which explained many points that had previously been mysterious. 'Mtokoland was threatened with a grave political quarrel, and all the elements of civil war were present. The elders of the country all recognise the Mondoro as their chief; whilst younger men, with everything to gain and little to lose, affect to follow the chief whose kraal we had visited, and whom they speak of as Bedapera at Lutzi, his own name, as distinguished from the dynastic name of 'Mtoko.

In his position as religious head of the community lies the Mondoro's strength. 'Here is the Zimbabwe of our land, here the annual sacrifice to the Maklosi of our ancestors now takes place;' that is to say, wherever the chief lives, and wherever the annual sacrifice takes place, there is the Zimbabwe of the chieftom.

Then we questioned him about the lion god, and he gave us to understand that the Mondoro or lion god of 'Mtoko's country is a sort of spiritual lion which only appears in time of danger, and fights for the men of 'Mtoko; all good men of the tribe, when they die, pass into the lion form and reappear to fight for their friends. It is quite clear that these savages entertain a firm belief in an after-life and a spiritual world, and worship their ancestors as spiritual intercessors between them and the vague Muali or God who lives in Heaven.

The lion of 'Mtoko is the totem of the tribe. We asked the old priest if we should get into trouble if we shot a lion whilst in his country. 'If a lion attacks you,' he replied, 'you may shoot it, for it could not be one of ours; our lions will do the white man no harm, for they are our friends.' There was a charming amount of dignity and sophistry about the old Mondoro. We felt that he was a far better man to rule the country than his nervous, superstitious nephew. Once a year this old Mondoro (the name Mondoro is common in this country both to the sacred lions and the priest) sacrifices a bullock and a

goat to the Maklosi or luck spirit of their ancestors. Formerly this ceremony took place at the residence of the old chief, and now here at Lutzi; much beer is drunk on the occasion, and it takes place in February, about the same time as the Matabele war-dance.

There is much more of the old spirit of the race about the Mondoro. He gave us the names of three generations of 'Mtoko who had ruled here before his brother—a rare instance of pedigree in this country; but the royal residence, Lutzi, is a miserable place, consisting of two little kraals crowning the two summits of a bare granite hill. One tree of sickly growth stood there, decorated, for what reason I could not discover, with part of a woman's bark dress, grass roots, hair, and other oddments. Doubtless they were luck signs too, but we could gain no information on this point. Evidence of festivities was also present in the shape of drums and long chains of grass cases for beads, which they hang round their calves to rattle at the dances. On a hill opposite stood a single hut, where an outlaw had lived till quite recently, they told us.

Before we took our leave the Mondoro presented us with a goat, regretting that, owing to the bad times, he could not give us a handsomer present. We now understood several points which had been a mystery to us before—the constant and rather deferential way in which the 'Mtoko had spoken of his uncle, and the reason why, in the first instance, our guides had told us that the 'Mtoko dwelt at Lutzi. Also we now

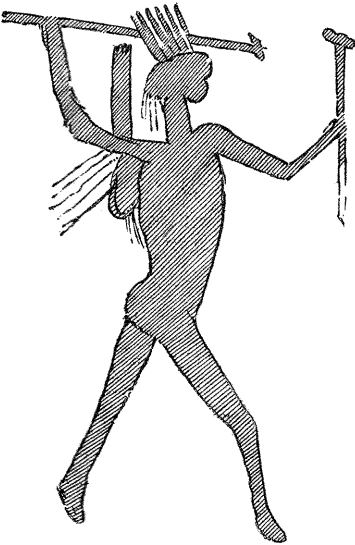
seemed thoroughly to grasp the strange cult of the lion god, a cult probably carrying us back to the far-distant ages, when the Arabian tribes invented the system of totems, and called the stars by their names.¹

Monteiro and Gamitto, two Portuguese travellers, who went to Cazembe in 1831-32, throw some light on the worship of the lion. They relate how the negroes near the Zambesi, 'being Munyaes, subjects of Monomatapa, revere royal lions of great corpulence as containing the souls of their ancestors. When the Munyaes discover the lions eating their prey, they go on their knees at a distance, and creep, clapping their hands and begging them with humility to remember their slaves, who are hungry, and that when they were men they were always generous; so that the lions may retire and the negroes profit by what they leave behind.' This is again another link connecting these people with the Zambesi and lands farther north. We were also told a story of how, during the old 'Mtoko's' struggles with the Portuguese, lions had been seen to attack the enemy, whilst they left the natives alone. Doubtless a faith of this kind is very conducive to valour, and may account for the superiority of the men of 'Mtoko over their neighbours.

The two above-quoted Portuguese travellers mention many Zimbabwees on their route northwards to Cazembe, and in another part of their work they often make mention of the Monomatapa, especially

¹ Kremer, *Akademis der Wissenschaft*.

the Monomatapa of Chidima, whom they speak of as 'a much decayed person, but still respectable.' His territory commences at Tete and goes on to Zumbo, 'and when one dies all make civil war, until one gets possession, and sends to the governor of Tete to confirm his title.'

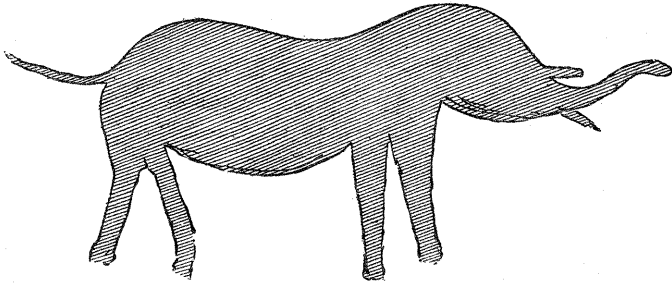


BUSHMAN DRAWING NEAR
'MTOKO'S KRAAL

From what I can make out of the older Portuguese accounts, the district of Chidima was formerly in the mountains to the north of 'Mtoko's. This was the district where the famous silver mines were supposed to be, in searching for which several Portuguese expeditions came to grief. In fact, it would appear that 'Mtoko, Mangwendi,

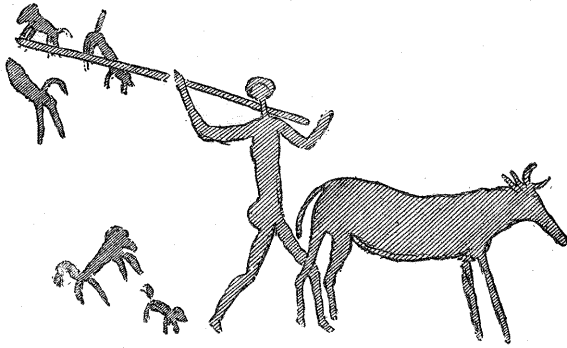
Makoni, and the chiefs in this part of the country are the modern representatives of the broken-up Monomatapa empire, who, fortunate in the possession of a rugged and mountainous country, escaped the visitation of the Zulu hordes, who on their way southwards probably passed by the more open high plateau of Mashonaland.

Next morning, whilst we were packing for our start from 'Mtoko's, I was informed of the existence of some Bushman drawings under an overhanging rock



BUSHMAN DRAWING NEAR 'MTOKO'S KRAAL

about half a mile from our camp. I hurried thither and took some hasty sketches of them. The rock is



BUSHMAN DRAWING NEAR 'MTOKO'S KRAAL

literally covered with these drawings in colours of red, yellow, and black, which had evidently eaten into the granite, so that the figures are preserved to

us. They represent all sorts of wild animals such as elephants, kudus, and cynocephalous apes; these are wonderfully well executed; the figures of warriors with poised spears and quivers of arrows are, however, grotesque. The most curious fact about them is finding these drawings so far north, and a close examination of this district will probably bring to light many more. The people who made these drawings inhabited all this district and down into Manicaland. Specimens, too, are found near Fort Salisbury; oddly enough, during our wanderings near Zimbabwe and the Sabi, we never saw any or heard of their existence.

After a ride of eight miles we reached the kraal of Kalimazondo, another son of the late 'Mtoko. It is just a circular collection of wattled huts, all joined together by a stockade. We alighted for a while here and sat in a hut, with a view to putting some leading questions to the chief concerning the state of the country. He told us that, in his opinion, his uncle the Mondoro was the rightful heir to the chieftdom, for his father, the old 'Mtoko, had wished it, but that his brother Bedapera had said: 'I am a man, I wish to be chief.' All the old *indunas* and the head men of the country were on the Mondoro's side, and he had little doubt but that he would succeed in establishing his claim.

When approached on the subject of religion, Kalimazondo grew vague and uncommunicative. We let him know that we had seen the Mondoro, and knew

a great deal. To all this he replied: 'I dare not tell you anything, or I should become deaf. I like my gun, and if I was to tell you anything it would be taken away, and I should be no man.' Kalimazondo is a cunning man in his generation, and we saw that we should learn no more about this strange and primitive community than it had pleased the priest of the lion god to tell us.

Close to Kalimazondo's kraal we passed the remains of the hedges or *skerms* which Mr. Selous and his followers had erected to protect their camp when on their visit to the old 'Mtoko, and we congratulated ourselves that it had not been our fate to be driven thus far from headquarters.

Next day we rode through an uninteresting waterless country, and encamped for the night by a stream which formed the southern border of 'Mtoko's country.

CHAPTER XI

*THE RUINED CITIES IN MANGWENDI'S, CHIPUNZA'S,
AND MAKONTI'S COUNTRIES*

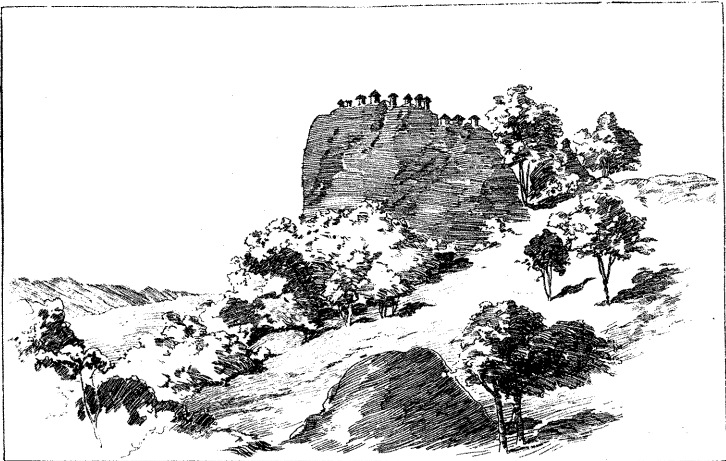
WE were now once more in the country of Mangwendi, a chief of considerable power, so nearly equal to 'Mtoko, they told me, that the two neighbours, like well-matched dogs, growl but do not come to close quarters.

The noticeable characteristic of this part of the country and all the way down to Manicaland is the number of ruined fortified kraals which one comes across, culminating, as if to a central head, at Chipunza's. These spots have been long deserted and are now overgrown with jungle. We visited one of these just after entering Mangwendi's territories; there is something about them which recalls the Great Zimbabwe—the triple line of fortifications, the entrances slightly rounded; but then the stonework is uneven, the walls being built of shapeless stones, roughly put together with mortar. Here we see none of the even courses, the massive workmanship, and the evidences of years of toil displayed in the more ancient ruins;

the walls are low, narrow, and uneven. Are we to suppose an intermediate race between the inhabitants of Zimbabwe and the present race, who built these ruins? or are we to imagine them to be the work of the Makalangas themselves in the more flourishing days of the Monomatapa rule? I am decidedly myself of the latter opinion. No one who had carefully studied the Great Zimbabwe ruins could for a moment suppose them to be the work of the same people; yet they are just the sort of buildings an uncivilised race would produce, who took as their copy the gigantic ruins they found in their midst. For the next few weeks we were constantly coming across these ruins, and the study of them interested us much.

Mount Masungwe was a conspicuous landmark for us for several days about here. It is a massive granite *kopje*, placed as a sort of spur to the range of hills which surrounds 'Mtoko's country. It is also covered with similar ruined stone walls belonging to a considerable town long since abandoned. The next day we crossed a stream near a village, called the Inyagurukwe, where the natives were busily engaged in washing the alluvial soil in search of gold. We halted for the night by another stream, under the impression that Mangwendi's was only about four miles off, and that an easy day was in store for us. But the fates willed otherwise. Shortly after passing a large village, where the inhabitants were more than usually importunate to see my wife's hair, screaming 'Voudzi ! voudzi !'—Hair ! hair !—as they scampered

by our side until she gratified their curiosity, we all lost our way in an intricate maze of Kaffir paths. Our interpreter was ahead and took one way; my wife and I on horseback, in attempting to follow him, took another; Mr. Swan on foot took another; and what happened to the men with the donkeys we never knew, for they did not reach Mangwendi's till late in the after-



MANGWENDI'S KRAAL

noon, complaining bitterly of their wanderings. We thought we were making straight for our goal, when, lo and behold! we found ourselves at the top of a hill near one of the deserted towns, tenanted only by a tribe of baboons. Our position was critical—we did not know which way to turn, when luckily we espied two little Kaffir boys, who guided us to Mangwendi's; and,

worn out with our long hot ride, we made a frugal meal by the side of a stream before ascending to the kraal.

Mangwendi's kraal is a large one, and situated curiously on the top of a lofty ridge. On turning to a Portuguese writer, Antonio Bocarro, who gives, in his thirteenth decade of his chronicle of India, an interesting account of the empire of Monomatapa, he says: The 'Monomatapa are of the Mocaranga race, a free race who do not have defensive arms, nor fortresses, nor surrounded cities.' This seems at first sight rather against the theory that the Monomatapa erected these hill fortresses, but then we must bear in mind that the Portuguese penetrated but little into these districts; and, furthermore, we found at Chipunza's kraal, a few days' journey off, the natives actually constructing similar walls around their chief kraal, evidently a heritage of stone building retained by them from some higher form of civilisation.

Bocarro gives us further information concerning the Monomatapa. He enumerates the chief officers of the kingdom, and amongst others he mentions 'Manguendi' as the chief wizard, or witch-doctor; he also mentions 'Makoni, king of Maungo,' as a vassal of the Monomatapa; and on inquiry at Makoni's we learnt that his country is still called Unga, and the tribal name is Maunga, just as Mangwendi's is called Noia and the tribe Manoia. Furthermore, he mentions one Chiburga as the majordomo of a large town where the chief's wives were kept, probably the lofty

hill we visited near the Sabi.¹ Thus Bocarro furnishes us with almost positive proof that the same people dwell here now as dwelt here under the rule of the Monomatapa, the only difference being that the Mocaranga race has split up into numerous branches. Over two of these Mangwendi and Makoni still exercise sway, still retaining their old dynastic names, and still inhabiting what once was the heart of the Monomatapa country. For these reasons I feel pretty confident in asserting that the series of ruined cities amongst which we had now entered is what remains to us of the once powerful chiefdom of Monomatapa.

In Mangwendi's country, as in 'Mtoko's, the great worship is sacrificing to ancestors, called here Bondoro, a name remarkably like the lion god Mondoro. The Bondoro are supposed to intercede for them with Muali, or God, and to get for them long life and prosperity. In Mangwendi's country, however, it is the head of each family who performs the sacrifice, with the help of a man called Nanza, the witch-doctor, one of the chief's family, but by no means having the same power as the Mondoro in 'Mtoko's country. They go to the ruined town which we had accidentally visited, where probably the tribe lived in former days. Here the bullock or goat is sacrificed, everyone present is sprinkled with the blood, and they put out portions of the meat, together with some beer, for the consumption of the Bondoro, and eat the rest themselves.

¹ Chap. VIII.

On the anniversary of the death of the last Mangwendi they assemble from all the country round and hold a great feast in honour of the late chief, at which the present chief conducts the sacrifice. Dos Santos, in his 'De Asia,' describes almost the same thing as taking place amongst the Mocarangas in his day: 'Obsequies are made every year to defunct kings; every year, in the month of September, when the first moon appears, the king makes grand obsequies for his predecessors, who are all buried there on a high rock where he lives, called Zimbaohe.' This hill-set village, where the people of Mangwendi now sacrifice, is still called by them their Zimbabwe. Dos Santos describes the eating, drinking, and dancing just as it might be done now.

Another curious custom to which Dos Santos also alludes is continued amongst them to-day. At Mangwendi's, during the ploughing season, they only work for five consecutive days; they observe the sixth, and call it Muali's day, and rest in their huts and drink beer. The chief always announces this day of rest publicly to his tribe. Dos Santos gives the following account of it: 'There are days on which they are not to work, appointed by the king, unknown to them, when they make feasts, and they call these days Mozimos, or the days of the holy who are already dead.' The term Mozimo for the spirits of ancestors is still used in many parts of the country, and has been compared with the term *molimo*, used by the Bechuana for the Supreme Being. Alvarez

mentions the *muzimo* as the god of the Monomatapa, and Gravenbroek (A.D. 1695) also states: 'Divinitatem aliquam Messimo dictam in lucis summo cultu venerantur.' This day of rest is observed during the ploughing season only; it may possibly be of Semite origin, but more probably has been suggested by the obvious necessity and advantage of intervening days of rest during a period of hard work.

Mangwendi's kraal is a very fine one, quite a long climb from the spot where we were encamped. It is surrounded by palisades, and at the entrance is a tree filled with trophies of the chase, the antlers of many deer, and the skins of many wild beasts, which present quite an imposing appearance. The chief was seated on a rock outside, chatting with his *indunas*, when we arrived. He took us into the village and had beer fetched for our delectation. He is an extremely courteous, gentlemanly man, and seems most friendly to the white men who come in his way; and as his kraal is not very far from the new road into Manicaland, and as this district is very populous, he is constantly visited by traders and others.

Mangwendi has ten wives, and two young girls, whom he has bought but not yet married, and his family consists of ten sons and ten daughters, one of whom, a bright-looking girl of about fifteen, came down to our camp to sell us meal and beer. Unfortunately we could get little else, for the traders had bought up all the available provisions, and from this point until we reached Umtali we suffered more from

starvation than during any part of our journeyings in Mashonaland. 'Mtoko's bullock was done; we could get no meat at any of the kraals, or game along our road; our coffee, sugar, and jams were all done, and our meals, with rare exceptions, reduced themselves to millet-meal porridge, rice, and tea, none of which were very palatable without the ingredients of milk and sugar; and the provoking thing about Kaffir meal is that it will not bind to make bread, so that for the staff of life cold rice made into a shape was our only substitute. We generally kept our pockets full of the ground-nuts (*arachis*), commonly called 'monkey-nuts,' which are excellent when roasted in the embers, and capital assistants in warding off hunger.

On leaving Mangwendi's we had regretfully to part with our bearers, who had accompanied us all the way from Kunzi's, and engage fresh ones in their place. One of these, to our surprise, chose to take his wife with him, but as she had to carry her baby on her back and food for herself and her husband, she, poor thing, was so done up after our first day's march of seventeen miles, that her husband sent her back again.

Our first camp after leaving Mangwendi's was at a very interesting spot—an isolated granite *kopje* called Nyanger, rising about two hundred feet above the surrounding plain. It was entirely covered with old walls, irregular in shape, and similar to those above mentioned, and evidently in former years a place of great strength. It had been long abandoned, for

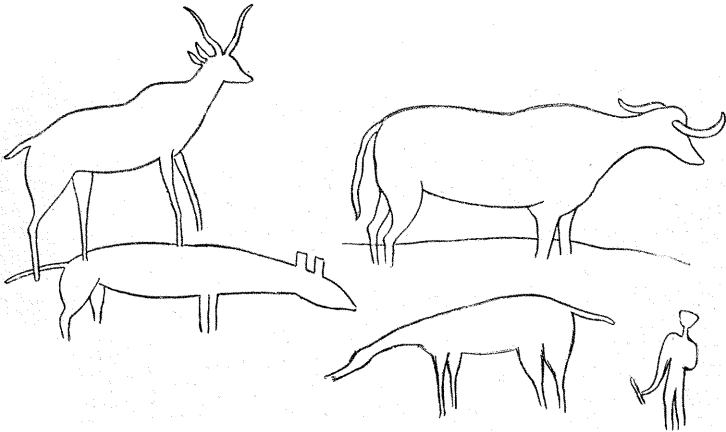
there were no signs of habitation thereon, and the approaches were full of *débris*. To the north-east of this *kopje* is a very curious grotto, or domed cave, entirely covered with Bushman drawings. A kudu and a buffalo are excellently drawn, almost worthy of a Landseer, and in their drawings one can distinctly trace three different periods of execution : (1) Crude and now faint representations of unknown forms of animal life. (2) Deeper in colour, and admirably executed, partly on the top of the latter, are the animals of the best period of this art in red and yellow. (3) Inartistic representations of human beings, which evidently belong to a period of decadence in the execution of this work.

The colours are invariably red, yellow, and black. I am told that the two former are obtained from certain coprolites found in these parts, which, when broken open, have a yellow dust inside.

In this curiously decorated cave we found also many graves formed by plastering up holes in the rock with a hard kind of cement. We opened one of them, and found that the corpse had been wrapped in skins and placed here. In the centre of the cave is a large semicircular wall, entered in the middle by a rounded entrance ; behind this is a sort of palisade of grass matting placed against poles, to protect it from the wind, and behind this are similar cement-covered graves. Now the present race do not bury in this way, but evidently come here at certain times to keep the place in order, and doubtless venerate the

spot as the resting-place of remote ancestors. There are also several other graves on the flat space around Nyanger rock, piles of stones placed around a crescent-shaped wall, which is evidently a sort of rudimentary temple in which the sacrifices take place.

On our march that day we passed several of these cemeteries in the open *veldt* far from any trace of



BUSHMAN DRAWINGS FROM NYANGER ROCK

habitation. They are generally placed on slightly rising ground, and always have the semicircular structure, which reminded us of the stones placed at the village of Lutzi, where the inhabitants collected to smoke and talk, protected from the wind. These spots are evidently still venerated, and form another of the many problems connected with the past in this district of Africa. I think they are the

places to which Dos Santos alludes in the following paragraph, where he refers to the chiefs who 'make grand obsequies to their predecessors, who are all buried there.' In a memoir written by Signor Farao, governor of Senna in 1820, there is a curious testimony to this theory. He writes: 'The mountains of Magonio (Makoni?), in Quiteve, were noted as the burial-places of the kings and queens of Quiteve, Gembe and Dombo. The remains were carried in procession to the caves, where they were deposited alongside the bones of former kings, and some of the most esteemed women of the deceased, or his secretary, and some of the great people, were sacrificed at the ceremony.'

Most of the granite *kopjes* in this district have been similarly fortified to Nyanger rock. Time would not permit of our visiting many of them, but I am certain that a careful investigation of this district would produce many valuable additions to the already large collections of Bushman drawings. The fortifications of these rocks are generally in rows of walls in terraces with narrow rounded entrances; they are all constructed in a rough manner, with irregular-shaped stones joined together with cement.

Near the river Chimbi, which we crossed shortly before reaching Chipunza's kraal, there is a particularly interesting specimen of this class of ruin. The rocky *kopje* is fortified with walls, all the nooks and crannies being carefully walled up, and below this is a curious half-underground passage which evidently connected the fortress with its water supply; it has

a wall on either side of it—one four feet thick, and the other eight feet thick; and the passage is roofed over with large slabs of stone, some four and some five feet long. This passage can now be traced for about fifty feet; it is nearly choked up with rubbish, but the object for which it was originally constructed is obvious, as it leads down to low swampy ground, where water could be obtained.

A mile or two beyond this we alighted for a short time at a pretty village called Makonyora, which had been surrounded by a palisade which had taken root and grown into shady trees of considerable size. The inhabitants seemed numerous and well to do. In this village there are many instances of walls constructed like those we had seen in the ruined villages; the foundations for the huts and granaries also are of stone, so that the air may pass underneath, forming neatly executed stone circles. The various gullies between the rocks are carefully walled up, and you pass from one collection of huts to the other through low entrances in these walls. There is no doubt about it, that these people here possess an inherited knowledge of stone building which exists nowhere else in Kaffirland, unless it be amongst the Basutos, who, I am told, are skilled in stone building, and who, at a not very remote period, are believed to have migrated from this very country. It seems to me hardly possible that the gigantic buildings of Zimbabwe and places in this country can have existed in their midst without the inhabitants making some attempt to

copy them; and here we have an imitation, though a poor one, in the heart of what was the strongest chiefdom of the country.

The aspect of the country is here very curious, the high level plateau (it is about 5,000 feet above sea level) is, as it were, closely sown for miles around with rugged granite *kopjes*, some only fifty feet high, whilst others reach an elevation of several hundred feet. They are very evenly arranged, too, as if they were the pieces for a cyclopean game of chess. Through this region we passed, and at the eastern end of it we reached our destination, Chipunza's kraal, where we proposed to halt for a day or two. Chipunza's is a very large village, built on a gentle rise on the right bank of the Busapi River, with huts packed away into all sorts of snug corners amongst the rocks. Immediately below these, and within easy reach of the river, we pitched our tents. It was a great disappointment to us to be able to get no meat here. Our meals, which were composed entirely of things farinaceous, were growing exceedingly monotonous, and we almost hated the sight of the porridge-pot, which turned up with unvarying regularity. As against this, the air at Chipunza's was the finest I have ever breathed, exhilarating like draughts of champagne.

When we reached the village we found the ladies of Chipunza with their bark blankets tied tight around them, for it was chilly, seated in picturesque and strange groups amongst the rocks, busily engaged in a still stranger occupation. They were burning little



CHIPUNZA'S KRAAL