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THE RUINS OF ZIMBABWE

MYSTERY OF THE BACKGROUND OF HAGGARD'S STORY.

Ancient Fortresses in South Africa That Puzzle Archaeologists—Theodore Bent's Theory That They Were Built by a Race of Arabs in Search of Gold.

The ruins of Zimbabwe, which form the background of Rider Haggard's new South African romance, have excited much interest among archaeologists. They are not picturesque, nor have they cyclopean dimensions; but in the attributes of mystery and suggestiveness they are interesting relics of the past. They constitute a gleam from the darkness that surrounds South African history, and as such have puzzled investigators. Whence came the powerful race that built them? What purpose did their massive walls and narrow, winding passages serve? Were they prisons for the confinement of the slaves who worked in the gold mines near by? Were they fortresses built by an invading army with a view to permanent settlement in a hostile country? Were they temples or perhaps palaces of the atorigines of the land? All four theories have found their supporters. The first explorer to examine them thoroughly, less than thirty years ago, came to the conclusion—now wholly discredited—that one of the ruins was a reproduction of King Solomon's temple and the other a copy of the Queen of Sheba's palace. The latest and best theory very skillfully set forth by the last Theodore Bent, holds that they are of a settlement established and garrisoned by Arabs for the sake of the gold they found between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers.

Zimbabwe is a Bantu word, and means 'the great kraal,' or palace. It is used to denote any kind of building, but especially the residence of a native chief. Among the Kafirs, Zimbabwe is a common noun, and only Europeans use it to denote these particular ruins in southern Mashonaland. The ruins lie about fifteen miles southwest of Fort Victoria, about 250 miles due west of Beira on the Indian Ocean, and about 200 miles north of the Transvaal. They are the largest and most important, but not by any means the only ruins to be found on the rolling table lands of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. About fifteen such relics of the past have already been discovered in different parts of the plateau, and as the up-country and hilly districts are being gradually explored no doubt more will be met with. These ruins all show similar workmanship. Most of them are simply fragments of walls built of granite blocks, hewn or chipped into fairly uniform sizes. These blocks, which are usually about a foot long by six inches high, are strongly and neatly set together, though without mortar or any kind of cement. Why the ancient architects abstained from using cement cannot be conjectured, for the flooring of the buildings shows they were acquainted with its manufacture and properties. The buildings are generally found on the summit of some hill; the walls are rarely under seventy feet in height and always thinner at the top than at the base. Two more characteristics are common to them all. They are found only near gold mines and they all show the same scheme of ornamentation. This attempt at decoration is of the simplest kind and consists in placing some of the layers of blocks at an acute angle to the layers above and the layers below, thus producing what is known as the herring-bone pattern, and the side of the wall that contains this ornamental work invariably faces the rising sun. The majority of these ruined walls seem to have been constructed for purposes of defence, though a few have possibly a religious significance. According to Theodore Bent's theory they constitute a chain of forts erected by the conquerors to overawe the native tribes, culminating at Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe ruins are split up into two buildings, one of which stands on the top of a rocky and precipitous hill and the other on comparatively level ground about a third of a mile away. The building on the higher ground was obviously a fortress. Its outer defences consist of a series of walls, some single some double, stretching from point to point around the eastern and southeastern sides of the hill—the only sides, that is from which an attack was to be feared. The walls which are built of the same granite blocks already mentioned are in parts thirty feet high and thirteen feet thick, and decorated along the top with a succession of monoliths and small

round towers. From openings in them, narrow passages, barely wide enough to allow two people to pass, go zigzagging up the side of the hill toward the summit twisting in and out among the rocks joining one gigantic boulder with another, and completely commanding every possible approach. These passages are flanked in on each side by high walls, and from an intricate and bewildering labyrinth. Although destitute of any roof, they are dark and gloomy. At the top of the hill are ruins of what was once a temple, and close by Mr. Bent discovered a gold-smelting furnace and many curious tools.

The other building on the lower level frowned down upon by the fortress somewhat as the Acropolis frowns down on Athens or Edinburgh Castle on the city below, consists of a wall thirty-five feet high in parts and sixteen feet thick at the base, surrounding about three-quarters of an acre of ground. The ruin is rather elliptical than circular. Here, as in the other buildings, the wall is composed of chipped blocks of granite, fitted in perfect symmetry but without mortar. Where it faces the rising sun it is higher and thicker than at other points, and near the top runs the simple zigzag scheme a decoration described before. It has three entrances, the principle one facing the fortress to the north. From the entrance a very narrow passage, formed by the great surrounding wall on one side and an inner wall of the same height on the other, leads after twenty or thirty yards to an inclosure, in which stand two solid towers also of granite blocks, one of them thirty-five feet high and the other about five feet. The actual approaches to this are defended with buttresses on either side in which a rudimentary portcullis could be and probably was fixed. Obviously this inclosure, with its two solid towers, was considered especially sacred.

Such are the main features of the Zimbabwe ruins. They do not amount to much, but they raise some puzzling archaeological questions. What was the significance of this sacred inclosure and the two solid towers, and what the meaning of the decoration facing the sun? One thing at least was evident, that the Kafirs were not responsible for their building; for the Kafirs never trim their blocks, but use loose stones, filling up the interstices with mud. The natives say that some white men erected the walls long ago, and were afterward poisoned by the tribes. Mr. Bent is believed to have got upon the right track when he made careful observations of the Makalanga who live near Zimbabwe and found among them evidence of a Semitic descent. Their faces which are distinctly Semitic; their religion, which is a monotheism, their habit of laying out food for the dead, of taking a day of rest during the ploughing season, of sacrificing goats to ward off pestilence and famine, their wooden pillows which resembled the head rests used by the Egyptians, their musical instruments, their drinks even, all pointed to some far-off Arabian influence. Turning to the ruins, Mr. Bent found that the decorations on the wall facing the east suggested a worship of the sun as a reproductive power—a common Oriental religion. As to the towers within the inclosure Mr. Bent had no difficulty in placing them among the objects which the Arabians used to worship. Allusions to similar towers are constant in the Bible, and the ruins in Sardinia, Malta, and Mesopotamia prove there is authority for saying that stones have at some time or other been worshipped in every country reached by Pœnician influence. Other indications of a northern origin were found in the discovery of some stones decorated in the conventional Pœnician style, and of part of a vase with letters on it resembling the proto-Arabian style of lettering used in the earlier Sabaean inscriptions; and Mr. Bent concluded therefore by naming the Arabs as the builders of Zimbabwe.

There is nothing historically inconsistent in this supposition. It is known from Egyptian monuments that a trade in gold between the Red Sea and southeast Africa existed 1,500 years before Christ; and much later the Book of Kings tells of Solomon's commercial adventures in the country of Ophir, which is believed to be south of the Zambezi. All over Matabeleland and Mashonaland are discovered ancient gold mines, some of which show architecture as simple and venerable as that of Zimbabwe. It seems, then, as if at some time a race of men, probably from Arabia, went down into the country now called Rhodesia, subdued the native Kafirs, lived in the midst of them in garrison towns and carried on a trade in gold with the Red Sea. When they came in at present unknown, except that it must have

been before Mohammed. The general tendency is to compromise on Solomon's reign.

ONLY ONE PEARL KING.

A Young Californian Interested in South Pacific Trade.

It is not generally known that one single merchant, a young Californian 32 years of age, controls the pearl shell markets of America and Europe. This monarch of the pearl trade is Samuel Harris. He operates in the Pacific Ocean, and he has built up an astounding commercial reputation in the course of eight years. There are plenty of cattle kings in the west, and wheat kings in the east and money kings everywhere, but there is only one pearl king, and that is Harris. Thousands of rare, translucent gems are brought to this country and shipped to Europe by his agents. He deals in mother-of-pearl shells by the ton, and the magnitude of his transactions has made the private mark of Harris, namely, a diamond enclosing a large H, a seal of international importance and a guarantee of genuine kingship.

Harris gathers his gems exclusively in the Society Islands. For eight years he has made these Pacific land spots the field of his interesting business. It was on the shores of Tahiti that first he earned his title of king. After repeated transactions with the natives whom he employed in pearl fishing he stimulated them from passivity to great activity, gaining their confidence and trust by honest and reliable barter. He never made promises to them that he did not keep. He paid them in full the price which they demanded. Himself a finished critic, a connoisseur, he never permitted them to overvalue a pile of shells, and they grew to admire him. He controlled the situation at Tahiti. He was easily king.

It is said that Harris has been a lover of these delicate gems since his boyhood. Pearls have always been to him the most mysterious, the most wonderful, the most beautiful handwork of nature. To him, gilded with an artistic, idealistic temperament, they appealed in a romantic, poetic way. To him each translucent globe seemed like a tear from the weird eyes of an earth-bewitched mermaid. They were silent tokens of the water maid's grief, she who perhaps pined for a terrestrial lover.

Finally young Harris took a pleasure voyage to the distant Society Isles and saw what made his enthusiastic eyes bulge in their sockets. He saw native children playing along the sands with the richest pearls he had ever seen; he saw the native belles passing by with ropes of pearly gems about their throats, such treasures as would have made a society queen turn pale with envy. Then Harris made his first business trip to Tahiti, and he took with him \$3000 worth of merchandise. His burden consisted mainly of tobacco, knives, rope, fish-hooks and articles of clothing. These were luxuries to the native Tahitians, and the pearl trader brought back that year in exchange for his merchandise fully \$40,000 worth of pearl and pearl shells. He did not consider it a bad bargain and he has been back every year since.

Formerly only the lowest grade pearls were brought to the American market. The finer ones were retained abroad and rarely ever found their way this side of the water. Harris has turned the tables, and now brings to the San Francisco market the most perfect pearls found anywhere. The perfect stones are Orient and of translucent whiteness or glimmering iridescence. They are finely symmetrical in form and the best are generally pear-shaped, like a falling tear. The hunt for these beauties of the deep goes on incessantly. The same excitement and uncertainty attend the fishing as surround the tireless chase for gold or the determined digging in a diamond mine.

There is the same labor and the oft-repeated disappointment. Now and then a great surprise is brought up by the fearless pearl diver. That compensates for all the rest. Lately it was an immense black pearl, the handsomest of its kind ever snatched from the fathomless ocean. Harris brought it on his last recent voyage to San Francisco. After careful examination it was found to be absolutely perfect, having a weight of six karats. It is valued in the London markets at \$750.

Since 1895 Harris has revolutionized the trade in pearl shells. Only one grade ever found its way to the manufacturers of pearl shell ornaments and gewgaws. It was generally shell that was thin, flakey, and colorless, and sold for \$800 a ton. This

energetic young pearl king now exports four different grades or varieties, ranging in value from \$600 to \$1200 a ton.

All shells are purchased in bulk from the native fishers. They bring down their hauls of shell to the young king's schooner as it lies in port, fretting restlessly against the side of the rude piers. They bring down their find here for the king's inspection. He sits in state and passes judgment. Harris can tell at a glance what a pile of shells is worth. He is an expert at determining value, and he is a shrewd buyer as well, and has never remitted the native experts to outdistance him in judgment. When a pile of shells is dropped before him he picks up one or two and runs his arm carelessly through the heap, and in a moment can determine the grade for the natives are clever at assortment. No uncommon shell are found among the poor ones. They have not learned yet the trick of deception by mingling the good and bad.

NOTABLE FIRES.

Those in the United States Have Proved the Least Serious.

The largest fire of the year 1897 was what has come to be known as the Aldersgate street fire in London, the damage from which, variously estimated at first, has been put officially at \$10,000,000. Ten-million-dollar fires are very rare nowadays in countries equipped, however imperfectly, with apparatus for the extinguishment of fires, and in the United States conflagrations of such dimensions are practically unknown. In former times, however, such fires were not so rare, and what is known as 'the great New York fire' of 1835 involved a pecuniary loss of \$30,000,000, which represents, of course, a much larger amount, relatively, than would such a fire today, the purchasing powers of money being probably greater at that time, and, moreover, the system of insurance being such that by the failure of a large number of companies the insured were practically left without any compensation for the losses which they sustained. The number of buildings burned in the great New York fire which started in what was then known as Merchant street, in the Wall street district, was 700, and it was not the firemen who put a stop to it, but the United States sailors who came over from the navy yard and blew up a number of buildings.

The Chicago fire of 1871 entailed a loss of \$190,000,000 and covered an area of more than 2000 acres, consuming 17,000 buildings. The Boston fire, which occurred little more than one year later, entailed a loss of \$80,000,000, and destroyed 800 buildings, but these were of a much more substantial character than those burned in Chicago. Only about 20 per cent. of the Chicago fire losses were paid, but more than 60 per cent. of the Boston losses were met by insurance.

The aggregate losses in New York city from fires of all kinds occurring during the year, are now about \$3,500,000, and in any recent year they have not been so large as that, \$7,000,000. The nearest approach to that was in 1891 when they were \$6,900,000, the largest item of which was supplied by what was known as the Bleeker street fire at the corner of Greene and Bleeker streets on St. Patrick's day, the loss from which was \$1,466,000.

The largest and most serious fire of which there is authentic record in Germany was in Hamburg in 1842, the loss resulting from it being \$35,000,000. The 'great fire' of London took place in 1666 and consumed two-thirds of the city, but there has never been any very accurate computation of the

loss and perhaps no such computation was possible. There have been many serious fires in France, but no one of them large enough to take rank in respect to loss among the notable fires of which there is a record.—New York Sun.

INDIANAPOLIS CURFEW LAW.

Policemen to Warn Children off the Streets Every Night.

Seventy-five policemen at roll call sat in the crowded temporary station room last night in a solid damp blue block. Says an Indianapolis paper and this mass of the majesty of the law was leavened with knowledge of the curfew law before being sent broadcast to set the law working in all parts of the city. Superintendent Quingley read the curfew ordinance slowly and distinctly, from 'Be it ordained' to 'witness my hand and seal.' The enforcement of the law was to begin that night, he said, after finishing the reading. The efforts at first must be in the nature of an experiment. The patrolmen must not be severe at first, and must always use a great deal of judgment. All children seen out in the streets after 8 o'clock must be warned, and warned in a way that would make them understand that the police meant to be serious. There must be no joking with the boys on the subject.

The superintendent called attention to the fact that some children under 8—such as those working at night or running errands for their parents or guardians. Some, too, he said, went to church, such as those attending choir practice. Some way of identifying such children he said would probably be adopted. Those of St. Paul's church intended to adopt a ribbon or ticket. Some girls under fifteen attended the Young Women's Christian association prayer meetings and other gatherings, and these were also to be distinguished by some sort of badge.

The superintendent said that, while the police were to use good judgment in the enforcement of the law, they were to be on the lookout for violations of it, and to speak to all children whom they found out after 8 o'clock. If they were in doubt they should call up the station and get advice from the sergeant or captain in charge there. He said their would be further instructions on this subject from time to time.

After all, a large part of the enforcement of the law came about without any action on the part of the police. When factory whistles gave forth a solemn tooting in various parts of the city at 8 o'clock, boys who were still in the streets made a grand rush to cover, and policemen saw boys scurrying home without lectures on their part. It was an impressive sight for the beginning of the enforcement of the ordinance—full of wet darkness which gave a mournful sound to the whistles, for the curfew blew rather than rang. The rain, however, was as effective as the curfew in keeping many children indoors.

Insect Horses and Their Riders.

At a recent meeting of the Entomological Society of Washington some specimens of chrysopa, a species of golden-eyed fly, which had been collected in the White Mountains, were exhibited as curiosities, because each carried on its back one or more minute acedomyiid flies. The opinion was expressed that this was a true case of a smaller species of insect using a larger species for the purposes of locomotion from place to place.

HE BROUGHT IT FROM THE WORLD'S FAIR.

And kept it two years.

The great World's Fair, at Chicago, in 1893, while it gave pleasure to many, gave pain to not a few as an indirect result, of their visit to the White City. People were lured along the miles of wonderful exhibits by the new marvels that met the gaze at every step, and did not realize their exhaustion until they dropped into a chair in some breezy corner by the lake and "cooled off." That's what began the trouble, in many cases. Of one such case, Mrs. L. W. Stevens, Fort Fairfield, Me., writes:

"My husband took a severe cold and cough two years ago last October—time of the World's Fair, which we attended. This cough lasted over two years, was accompanied by spitting of blood, and nothing could be found to help him, although various remedies were tried. Several doctors were consulted, but their prescriptions afforded no relief. Finally I saw an advertisement of Dr. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral in my paper and prevailed upon my husband to get a bottle and try it. The very first dose helped him and he was completely cured in a short time. We feel very grateful for what Dr.

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral has done for us, and shall keep it constantly on hand in the house."—Mrs. L. W. STEVENS, Fort Fairfield, Me.

Two years of doctoring for a cough, two years of "remedies" that gave no help, of prescriptions that profited only the men who wrote them, and then a trial of Dr. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, which helped from the very first dose and effected a complete cure in a short time. The difference between Dr. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral and all other cough medicines could not be better stated than in this comparison of results. It has cured the most stubborn and obstinate cases of chronic bronchitis and asthma. It is a specific for croup and whooping cough. It cures all coughs and colds and all affections of the throat and lungs promptly and effectively. In response to numerous demands Dr. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral is put up in half size bottles—sold at half price—40 cents. More about cures effected by Pectoral in Dr. Ayer's Cure book. Sent free, on request, by the J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass.