Canon Rawlinson has prudently discarded the theories which would place Ophir—explored by Hebrews and Phœnicians in Solomon’s time—either in Ceylon, India, Burmah, or on the Upper Zambesi. The Book of Genesis (x. 29) places Ophir in Southern Arabia, and Yemen was still rich in gold in the second century A.D. The fact that the elephants’ teeth, apes, and peacocks brought to Solomon bear, in Hebrew, names used in Indian languages proves little. The same words were used in Egypt and in Assyria, as well as by Greeks and Romans, for the ape and elephant. The Assyrian overland trade with India was (as proved by monumental evidence) as old at least as the ninth century B.C., and Ophir may have been the meeting-place of the Phœnician merchants, and of the Indian traders coasting from the mouths of the Indus. It is to be regretted, however, that, while supporting the better established view as to Ophir, Canon Rawlinson still adheres to the unfortunate identification of Tarshish with the region of Tartessus in Spain. Tarshish is enumerated in Genesis (x. 4) with places on the coasts of Asia Minor, and there can be little doubt that the Phœnician colony of Tarsus is to be understood—a town which was still a port in Cleopatra’s time, though the river has since then (as in so many other known cases) formed a foreshore which cuts off the site from the sea. If in the much disputed passage (1 Kings x. 22) which speaks of the ‘navy of Tarshish’ we are to understand that ivory, apes, and peacocks came from that town, it is more natural to suppose that they were brought overland by the Assyrian
traders than that they were found in Spain or in Libya, where they would probably not have borne the names known in India. It is very doubtful if any early traders but the Carthaginians and the later Greeks reached Spain. The Samians claimed to have been the first to pass the Pillars of Hercules, and tin, which was very early a Phoenician trading commodity, is not abundant in Spanish mines. Strabo and Diodorus are late authorities, and may refer to Punic rather than to Tyrian explorers when they relate the dogged determination whereby, after two disastrous expeditions, the Straits of Gibraltar were passed and Cadiz founded. Tin was used in Egypt and in the Levant at a very early historic period. It was known to the Akkadians about 2500 B.C. by a different name from that used by the Phoenicians, and which was adopted by the Greeks. Recent researches point to the Caucasus or to the Altai Mountains as the original source of tin, before the discovery of the Cornish mines on the west and of Indian tin on the east.


Anti-Slavery Reporter 11 (1891): 73-76
THE REAL “KING SOLOMON’S MINES.”

In the heart of the great watershed which feeds the Zambesi and the Limpopo (Africa), there is a mountainous plateau which has perhaps played an interesting part in the past history of the world, and which is probably destined to play a part more interesting in the world’s future history. . . . Long before the expedition of the “Pioneer Force,” it was known throughout settled South Africa that this land was altogether good. The few men who, led by sport or adventure, had made their way into it, brought back glowing reports, reports of mineral wealth which only time and trial can make good, reports of lush landscapes which were, perhaps, exaggerated by eyes used to the dry prospects of the Sandy Continent, but still tempting enough. Thus the report ran:

“Almost on the fringe of tropical Africa this land keeps a temperate air, fresh and fever-free, in which the European can work as well as breathe; for it is one of the terraces in which the great continent is built, and rises from five to six thousand feet above the sea. It is sparsely peopled for the most part; it contains vast solitudes without a single native to dispute them. It is a fertile land moreover—a land bursting with neglected fertility. Scratch the wilderness, and you will find a garden. It is well watered—a country of a hundred streams. Game ranges its hills and valleys, and there is grazing for a thousand herds of cattle. But these are only half the favours which Nature has lavished on this fortunate region. She has also made it one of her rare storehouses of mineral wealth. She has, if we are to believe half the stories, glutted it with gold. The rocks sparkle with gold; gold peeps out from every hillside; in the bed of every stream the sand is clogged with it. The traveller follows it for miles, till he can scarce believe his eyes, or contain himself for greed of so much treasure. Even the mild, lethargic Mashona sets his wives to wash a quillful of it out, half scared at his own temerity in meddling with the sacred tsipi, on the removal of which he thinks there rests a curse.”
“Perhaps the Mashona is right about the curse; but, at least, others have braved it before him years and years ago. Along the south and east the country is dotted with strange, broken relics of their work. The furnaces which they built to smelt the ore, the strong round keeps which they raised against the alarms of some besetting foe, the great stones in which they scored, in indecipherable characters, the record of their labours, perhaps the clue to their prize—these things remain, and move the awe of the Matabele and his Mashona vassal. There are mighty walls twenty feet high and ten feet thick; great conical towers thirty feet high and twenty in circumference, solid granite right through, a puzzle whether for purposes of work, or war, or of worship. There are vast ruined circumvallations, ring within ring, lying over acres and acres of hillside like the site of a vanished Babylon. The black savages who now hold the country stare in stupid wonder at courses of perfectly-chiselled granite, the work of builders who built for time, if not for eternity; and the native craftsman, kneading soft clay into pots, clumsily copies the ornamentation cut here and there upon the stone. The herring-bone courses, zigzags, and lozenge figures of the ancient architecture appear on the Mashona calabash.

Who were they, these soldier-workmen of a vanished civilization, and at whose bidding did they force their way into this barbarous place to dig for gold? Ah, there's the romance—the mystery! 'And they came to Ophir and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon.' 'Now, the weight of gold that came to King Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold.' The mysterious folk who have imprinted on Mashonaland the traces of an ancient quest for gold were none other, so the learned have conjectured, than those quick, adventurous Phoenicians who, in the days when the Red Sea was the Mediterranean of ancient commerce, and the Mediterranean its Atlantic, brought 'gold of Ophir, fine gold, and great plenty of almug trees and precious stones,' to the Oriental monarch whose magnificence is still a proverb upon modern lips. . . . Before many years are out, we may expect to see the image of Queen Victoria stamped on the gold with which King Solomon overlaid his ivory throne and wreathed the cedar pillars of his Temple,'
THE LAND OF OPHIR

London: Longmans.

Is Mashonaland the land of Ophir? The question is not likely to get answered; but since the beginning of time it has been a favourite haunt of the traveller and treasure-hunter. Thence the ancients brought back fabulous nuggets; there the Portuguese concocted stories as wild as the Arabian Nights, transforming a dusky monarch of the Kaffirs into the great Emperor Monomatapa, whose golden splendour and gilded palaces were the envy of the world, and whose domain was a veritable Tom Tiddler's ground. Centuries afterwards there grew up legends of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, and many an ineffectual trek was arranged by Boers hungry for gold. Not even the visit of a patient and truth-loving Teuton could purge the atmosphere of romance, and Karl Mauch, who made his journey twenty years since, could not resist the most reckless speculation. Though he furnished an accurate description of the Zimbabwe ruins, which were the end of Mr. Bent's pilgrimage, he saw in the fortress a copy of King's temple on Mount Moriah, and compared another ruin to the Palace at Jerusalem inhabited by the Queen of Sheba. Surely the air of East Africa turns the most prosaic head. So at least we should have insisted until Lord Randolph brought home nothing better than a lion-skin. And now the famous ruins have been examined by an explorer trained in the stern school of science; and if Mr. Bent's story is not so lurid as the fables of the Portuguese, it is trustworthy, consistent, and supported by the irrefragable testimony of photographs and works of art.

However, the archaeological part of the book that is not worth the closest attention. We confess that Mr. Bent is not so entertaining when he writes of the modern savage. For, unless you have the talent of impressionism, you can scarce make the Kaffir amusing; and Mr. Bent is rather a statistician than an artist in words. Besides, the interest of Mashonaland is past and future and for the sake of the ancient romance as well as for the prospective wealth of England it is pleasant to think of it as the Land of Ophir.
A great part of Mr. Bent's volume is devoted to the interesting ruins of Mashonaland, which are certainly older than the Portuguese conquest, and represent the only traces of ancient civilisation as yet found in South Africa. He has done good work for the cause of exploration, and has shown courage in undergoing fatigue, privation, fever, and perhaps some danger; and he writes with modesty and prudence. But it must be confessed that his descriptions are at times so obscure as to be difficult to understand, even by aid of the excellent plans which he furnishes. His archaeology is weak; and the quotation of so obsolete an authority as Montfaucon, or of Perrot and Chipiez, who are themselves popular retailers of second-hand knowledge, is not likely to carry weight.

As much good work, no doubt, still lies in store, which Mr. Bent may be expected to accomplish, it is well to say that writings which have permanent value might be expected to rise above the fashionable slang of the day. Mr. Bent should bear in mind the terrible French dictum—*le style c'est l'homme*.

The ruins in question are not new discoveries, though they have never before been excavated. They are mentioned by early Portuguese writers, and have long been known, at Tati and elsewhere, to hunters and settlers. They were visited by Herr Mauch in 1871, and their legend forms the basis of the novel called 'King Solomon's Mines.' Although the name Zimbabwe is commonly applied to the finest example, south-east of Fort Victoria, this is not a local name, but is applied by the natives to many such ruins. Mr. Mackenzie gives the word as *Ma-Zimbae*, and the Portuguese spelt it *Zimboe*. It is possibly connected with the Sechuana word *Sebo* for a 'shelter.' The ruins, consisting of round
enclosures with very thick walls, made of small drystone granite courses, arranged with considerable regularity, are found wherever there are remains of ancient gold mines, and appear to be clearly the relics of former forts, intended to protect the traders or the miners, which it is difficult to suppose were built by the natives, although stone krantzes (or strongholds on the hills) of inferior workmanship are common in both Bechuana-land and Manicaland, which were certainly made as defences against the Zulus. The native tradition assigns the Zimbabwe ruins to white men, who came long ago for the gold. If native tribes were strong and warlike, and the traders without firearms, it is possible that such fortresses may have been necessary for defence against them; but they would rather seem to have been erected against some civilised race like the Portuguese, by the Arab chiefs, whom the latter found in possession of the gold-bearing region. Dos Santos, in 1689, describes these ruins, and speaks of a Zimboe on a mountain (whereabouts is not clearly stated), to which the native king went yearly, at the first new moon in September, to visit the ancestral tombs. For eight days the people danced and drank beer, in honour of the Mozimos or ancestral spirits (the Sechuna Modimo), and a witch doctor was supposed to be possessed by the spirit of the dead king, and to prophesy to the living monarch.

De Barros, in 1552, also describes these ruined stations more exactly, and speaks of an inscription, which has not, however, been found. The Arabs stated that the buildings were very ancient, and had been erected to protect the gold mines. Alvarez (wrongly quoted by Mr. Bent as Leo Africanus) attributes them to the devil. A letter now in Lisbon, dating 1721 A.D., repeats the earlier accounts; and the natives say that the white men were poisoned by the black men—a story which, if it has any foundation, can hardly be very ancient among African migratory peoples. There is so far no evidence that the buildings need be regarded as very much older than the time of the Portuguese settlement on the east coast, about 1500 A.D.

The popular legend that these gold mines represent the Land of Ophir and the home of the Queen of Sheba was taken by the English from the Dutch, by the latter from the Portuguese, and by them from the Arabs. All alike seem to have been profoundly ignorant of Old Testament geography. It is agreed by scholars, such as Lenormant, Canon Rawlinson, and others, that Ophir and Sheba were in South-
ern Arabia, near Yemen, as is indeed very clearly stated in the Bible.* Conto, a Portuguese writer, however, says (as quoted by Mr. Bent), that from these mines '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 call it Fur, and the Moors (that is, the Arabs) A fur.' This is the basis of an absurd theory, to which, however, Mr. Bent does not commit himself. It is to be remarked that the Talmudic tales about Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Belkîs), which are repeated in the Korân and in the Moslem commentaries on the same, were known in Arabia before Muhammad's time. It is quite possible that the Arabs, who so localised the legend, were settled in this region before the era of Islam; and no traces of Moslem belief seem to have been found. But wherever the idea was first propagated, it is certain that it has no foundation, and that the Queen of Sheba was a Yemenite princess.

With the theories of Mr. Swan, to which Mr. Bent partially subscribes, it is not proposed to deal at any length. He sees in these ruins the remains of temples of Phœnician star-worshippers, and is a believer in esoteric architecture, in the star orientation of Greek temples, and in other equally problematical theories of a certain class of antiquarians. It is fortunate for those who spend time in tracing the relation of buildings to the transit of stars that the sky is full of stars from which to select. Mr. Swan honestly admits that he cannot make his theoretic lines fit with any star of the first magnitude, nor were the stars best known to Arabs and Phœncians here visible. Those who have practical acquaintance with antiquity know that the astronomical observations of early races were rude and simple; that esoteric architecture is a modern craze; that the standards of ancient measurement, linear or angular, were as a rule extremely imperfect; and that the new theory of orientation of Greek temples rests on the false basis of a supposed Solar year; for the Greek year, which determined the incidence of festivals on certain days of the month, was, as all scholars know who have studied the subject, a Lunar year, which had no sidereal connexion.

There is a curious circular tower at the large Zimbabwe ruin, where Mr. Bent made excavations, which he compares with the nourogs of Sardinia, with the pillars of Hierapolis, and with the sacred cone of Ashtoreth in Phœnician temples.

* Gen. x 28, 29.
Monomotapa (Rhodesia): its Monuments and its History from the Most Ancient Times to the Present Century. By the Hon. A. Wilmot. (Fisher Unwin.)—The work before us owes its existence to the enlightened liberality of the British South Africa Company, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, and Mr. Wilmot, and it is fittingly introduced to the public by a preface from the pen of Mr. Rider Haggard. The author was advised to undertake his researches by Mr. Cecil Rhodes, and we must say at the outset that, although we differ from him entirely as to his conclusions, we recognize that he has spared neither time nor labour in the fulfilment of his self-imposed task. It is only natural that the men who have brought the ancient realm of Monomotapa under the sphere of British influence should be curious as to its ancient history, and much sympathy is due to them from all English-speaking people. The aim of Mr. Wilmot’s book is to prove that Monomotapa has a long and honourable history, and to show that its earliest inhabitants of whom we know anything were the Phoenicians. He has, moreover, no doubt that it was either the Ophir with its Solomon sent for gold or “one of the Ophirs.” In recent years, it will be well remembered, Mr. Bent visited Mashonaland and the marvellous ruins of massive stone buildings which still remain at Zimbabwe. Having examined them carefully, he made up his mind that these striking objects were built by the Phoenicians when, as Mr. Wilmot thinks, Hiram of Tyre and Solomon of Israel brought gold to Palestine. This theory Mr. Wilmot adopts en bloc, and then sets out to prove it by quotations from ancient writers and arguments which, for the most part, concern monoliths and other monuments set up by “nature worshippers.” He divides his book proper into three chapters, which treat of Phoenicia, Arabia, and Portugal; besides these we have a good map, copied from a document in the Vatican, and four append-
Having said all that he can say in favour of the Phoenician origin of the remains, he goes on to prove that the inhabitants of the peninsula of Arabia traded with the gold workers of Mashonaland, and this involves him in statements about the early history of Arabia, probably the most unsatisfactory part of the book. The chapter upon the relations which existed between the Portuguese and the nations of Eastern Africa is much better done, and, as he has plenty of historical facts to give, we stand on firmer ground, and Mr. Wilmot's narrative is interesting. The arguments which he brings forward to show that Monomotapa was "one of the Ophirs" are far from convincing, and we, at all events, prefer those which place Solomon's Ophir either in Arabia or India or in both. Further, Mr. Wilmot has not explained away either the reading of the LXX., "Sophir," or the Arabic rendering of the same by "India" in 1 Kings ix. 28 and Isaiah xiii. 12; besides this, the words for "apes" ( Heb. p, 1 Kings x. 22) and "peacocks" ( Heb. p, 1 Kings x. 22) are derived from Indian and not African originals. We have not space to combat his arguments one by one, and so must content ourselves by saying that most of them have no facts whatever to rest upon; even in cases where his views may be correct they are most improbable. A glance, too, shows that Mr. Wilmot knows many of his best authorities at second hand only, and his quotations are somewhat vague. On p. 63 he writes "Esmunasa" for Eshmunazar;
ANCIENT AND MODERN IN SOUTH AFRICA.


The period covered by the three volumes before us is approximately 3,000 years. Its story carries us in a magnificent sweep from the dim and almost indiscernible past right up to the present. It is, in a word, the story of ancient and modern in South Africa. We begin with the reputed Ophir of King Solomon and end with the British South Africa Company. From first to last the narrative is one of intense interest for British readers. We see the far-off Phœnician filling in the antique world the rôle of colonizer and trader filled by the Briton to-day. We see the ancients, whether Phœnician or Arab, and the moderns, whether Portuguese or Briton, fighting for and appropriating the same territory, largely with the same motive. Thanks to the learning and skill of such inquirers as Mr. Theodore Bent and Mr. A. Wilmot—the one amid the ruins of Rhodesia; the other amid the archives of Lisbon and the Vatican—we have to-day a fairly reliable idea of the Empire of Monomotapa. When closely

(Continued on next page.)