

THE GOLD REGIONS OF SOUTH EASTERN AFRICA

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The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa by Thomas Baines

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THOMAS BAINES

**THE GOLD REGIONS
OF SOUTH EASTERN
AFRICA**



Yours very truly
C. Baines

Anal p. 8.

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THE GOLD REGIONS
OF
SOUTH EASTERN AFRICA,

BY THE LATE

THOMAS BAINES, ESQ., F.R.G.S.

ACCOMPANIED BY BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

With Portrait, Map, and numerous Illustrations and Photographs.



MOLDOVITZUS BAINESI.—NATURAL SIZE.

LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, CHARING CROSS.

CAPE COLONY:
J. W. C. MACKAY, PORT ELIZABETH.

1877.

THIS BOOK,

WHICH COMPRISES THE LAST AND GREATEST WORK OF THE INDUFATIGABLE TRAVELLER,

THOMAS BAINES,

IS DEDICATED,

WITH SPECIAL PERMISSION,

TO

His Royal Highness Prince Alfred,

DUKE OF EDINBURGH,

AS

THE FIRST OF ENGLAND'S ROYAL RACE

WHO HAS LANDED UPON THE

SHORES OF SOUTH AFRICA.

P R E F A C E .

THE region described in the following pages was, until the last few years, when the explorations of Herr Mauch, Erskine, Elton, Chapman, and others somewhat dispersed the cloud of mystery in which it was enveloped, essentially a mythical one. Its geographical features were generally depicted in the manner described by Swift—

*“ So Geographers in Afric Maps
With savage pictures fill their gaps,
And o'er unhabitable downs
Place elephants instead of towns.”*

The name of Monomotapa (which means a place from which something valuable is derived), is seldom used except as a mediæval geographical term, found in old school geographies and obsolete atlases. It was supposed by its Arab and Portuguese discoverers and conquerors to include all the regions* south of the Zambesi, extending to the country of the Kafirs (Pays de Caffres) or even to the banks of the Orange River, the *Vigita Magna* of the old geographers, and the large towns supposed to exist in this region (shaken over the old Maps as if from a pepper castor) are frequently alluded to in the early records of the Cape Colony. We learn from these records, however, that several exploring parties were sent in search of rich countries during the latter half of the seventeenth century, but none of them succeeded in penetrating so far into the interior. The Seaboard or Coast Region was known under the name it still bears, that of “Sofala,” which signifies in Arabic a plain or low country.

Sabia lies more inland behind Sofala, and is supposed by some authorities, including Josephus, and no less a personage than the

* The country north of the Zambesi is Lower Æthiopia. The land of the lakes was known as the Empire of Monomotapi.

author of the Koran, to be the ancient kingdom of the love-sick Queen, who visited Solomon when in all his glory, and of whom Mahommedan, Abyssinian, and Jewish writers relate such innumerable traditions. Several ruins of ancient buildings are found still in this region, which is drained by a river disemboguing on the east coast, still called "Sabia." These ruins will be adverted to in this work, and we furnish an excellent illustration of them. The memory of the Queen of Sheba is still preserved amongst the Arabs of Sofala, as well as among the Habesh of Gondar in their scandalous chronicles (vide genealogical tables of the late King Theodore.*) The site of the region of Ophir has from time immemorial been a bone of contention amongst Archæologists, and vast learning has been uselessly expended to prove its locality, whether in Arabia Felix, or Arabia Petrea, Socotra, the Persian Gulf, India, the Punjab, Malacca, or the Moluccas of Spain. Even Peru, far away to the west, had its advocates, as we read in Ben Jonson—

"Here's the rich Peru,
And there within, Sir, are the golden mines,
Great Solomon's Ophir."

Such a weighty authority as Milton, who surely ought to know something on the subject, is in favor of Africa. In "Paradise Lost," xi. 399 to 401, he says—

"Mombaza, Quilca and Melind,
And Sofala (thought Ophir) to the realm
Of Congo and Angola farthest south."

Our own opinion of the situation of Ophir is undoubtedly in favour of South Eastern Africa.

"We have a vision of our own,
And why should we undo it?"

* The Transvaal Boers, although not a very literary people, yet like their Colonial brethren, great readers of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, are firm believers in the realm of Sheba and Ophir, as bordering on their Republic; in fact, as they advance northward their belief is getting more confirmed, that they will eventually reach Palestine or the Land of Promise, via Egypt. Already one of the tributaries of the Limpopo running north has been called by them the Nylstrom. It is a very curious thing what a Judaical or Old Testament tint all the ideas of these people have taken since their migration from the Colony, or, as they prefer to call it, their "sojourn in the wilderness."



DESCRIPTION OF PICTURE OF TOWER.

REMAINS OF ANCIENT TOWER IN "THE LAND OF OPHIR."—PORTION OF "THE HOUSE OF THE GREAT PRINCESS, OR PALACE OF THE QUEEN," 30 feet high, 15 feet diameter at its base, cylindrical to 10 feet from the ground, and then tapering upwards. No entrance observed by Herr March. Formerly, at intervals of three or four years, the people assembled here for solemn feast and sacrifice. After the sacrifice the High Priest entered the Tower, sprinkled the place, and prayed that "Mali," or, the Father, would remove all disease. The Portuguese are of opinion that these Ruins are portions of the remains of the City and Palace of the Queen of Sheba.