

# Amongst the Matabele.

## . Many Years Ago.

BY REV. W. CURZON-SIGGERS, M.A.

FABLE has long had its say about Matabele's Land. The Moors held firmly to the traditional belief that here the Queen of Sheba ruled in Oriental luxury and magnificence, and from this place to King Solomon they fetched gold, 400 talents. The land of Ophir has three claimants: one, a site on the west coast of India, two, Arabia, three, Sofala or some place inland. There is much to favour the opinion that the land of Ophir was the land of the Matabele, now better known as part of Rhodesia. For many years this land was known to be auriferous by white men who penetrated these regions, and retained the knowledge of the existence of untold wealth locked securely with masonic fidelity in the safe repository of their breasts. Even the natives who brought down occasionally quills of gold dust revealed nothing. Hunters penetrated these regions, and told us of the numerous pre-historic remains long before writers in English monthlies claimed to have discovered them. This is the land for the miner and farmer who are willing to work in harmony with the guiding spirit and originator of the British South Africa Company.

In the land of the Matabele there is pasture as well as gold. The ancients have extensively worked its gold, copper, and iron with appliances which we

consider rude, perhaps because we know nothing about them. These appliances could cut and remove enormous blocks out of the bowels of mountains, and leave all the sides as smooth as though a smoothing iron had been over them. The richness of the soils in some parts is supported by a good water supply from rivers and streams. Game abounds, though every month decreases the opportunities for sport. It seems as if food for man and beast had been preserved hidden in this goodly land until the over-teeming population of the Empire of the twentieth century required an habitation.

Though the country is large the land occupied by the Matabele is small, therefore there is room for whites and blacks. The native will be an invaluable and cheap servant to the colonist, and so long as fire water is kept from these bright lands, so long the white man may expect to have at hand a ready, cheap and willing worker. These natives are splendid servants under good management. If you simply tell a native to do some work, *e.g.*, in your garden, you might expect to find him, later on, reclining beneath the shade of the fig or pomegranate. And why not? You have not shown him that you understand what you want him to do. Your mere command is not sufficient proof to him, unless he has