
A Journey Through Gazaland

Author(s): Denis Doyle

Source: *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, New Monthly Series, Vol. 13, No. 10 (Oct., 1891), pp. 588-591

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of [The Royal Geographical Society \(with the Institute of British Geographers\)](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1800937>

Accessed: 16/06/2014 22:07

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) and Wiley are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography.

<http://www.jstor.org>

A Journey through Gazaland.

By DENIS DOYLE.

(Read at the Evening Meeting, June 29th, 1891.)

Map, p. 644.

I HAVE been asked to give a short account of my journey in January last from Manica to the mouth of the Limpopo.

The actual distance travelled was between 700 and 800 miles, which was traversed in 46 days. Our party consisted of three white men—Dr. Jameson, Mr. D. G. B. Moodie, and myself, and twenty-seven native carriers.

Although the season of the year at which we undertook this journey was known to be the most unhealthy and difficult for getting through the country, it was decided, much against the advice of the old hands, to attempt it. Leaving the head of the Umtali valley on March 16th, on the high plateau close to the kraal of Umtassa, we travelled in a southerly direction. We soon found that we would have to take a course somewhat to the west of a straight line, to prevent our being stopped by the rivers, which were then swollen and almost impassable. By this course we crossed nearly all the head waters of the rivers, and, with the exception of the Sabi, had no rivers to swim or ford that were in any way dangerous.

Our first day's journey brought us to Umzimonya's kraal, having travelled through a beautiful fertile country, and grass-clad hills. We camped for the night on a high flat rock, surrounded by immense granite koppies, on the top of which, as is usual in that region, the kraal of the chief and his people was built.

From here, through a finely-wooded country, we continued for two days, accomplishing about 20 miles a day.

From the top of the hill in Umgwenas country could be seen the vast undulating wooded plains occupied by the remnant of Umtama's people, a chief whose ancestors exercised sway over the greater portion of what is now called Northern Gazaland. In some instances through this country the height above the sea level was 5000 feet. For the next two days our course continued through the same broken country, plentifully watered with running streams every few miles, and with granite koppies surrounding us. On our left in the distance could be seen Chinanimani Pass. From this point the country became less broken, and in parts very beautiful, high grass-clad mountains and delightful valleys extending as far as the eye could reach, fitted for either agricultural or pastoral pursuits; in all directions could be seen a country calculated to carry an enormous European population. No sign of habitation could be seen anywhere, the natives having built their

kraals in the most inaccessible places, which could be reached only by paths known to the native guides.

At this point we leave the granite formation and enter upon the slate, and the expert who accompanied us (Mr. Moodie) stated that this portion which we were now passing through (the head waters of the Lusiti) was gold bearing. For several days the same description of country was followed. Near the head waters of the Lusiti some old gold workings were found, of the same character as those found in Mashonaland and Manicaland.

Passing through the dense bush of Shekwanda's country we suddenly commenced to descend to a much lower level, until the site of Manhlagas (Gungunhana's old kraal) was reached on the fourteenth day. The beauty of this country is difficult to describe, and its eminent fitness for agriculture for hundreds of miles round this kraal could hardly be overestimated. It was at this kraal only that any one was found acknowledging Portuguese authority in the country. Dropping so suddenly from the high plateau, along which we had travelled for 14 days, between 4000 and 5000 feet high, into the low country of 860 feet above sea level, the heat was intense, and both man and horse felt it extremely.

Crossing the Umswillis river on the evening of the day that we passed Gungunhana's old kraal, we camped for the night in a deserted kraal, of which there are hundreds in the neighbourhood still existing, and in perfect order, showing that it was occupied to a recent date. This, I might explain, was caused by the whole of Gungunhana's tribe travelling to the southward for the purpose of punishing Spelanyana, who had raised the flag of rebellion against him.

The next day was occupied in reaching Senumba's kraal, still travelling through undulating wooded country. On the left might be seen the high hills overlooking the Busi, and a corresponding range on the right. Much the same description of country was followed until reaching the Sabi, which is here a river of $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile from bank to bank, and at the time we crossed it there was half a mile of very strong running water. Across the Sabi the country altered in appearance, and here the presence of Gungunhana in the south became at once apparent, as the natives in this part of the country spoke with bated breath of "The King."

Shishongi's country was passed through without much difficulty, being practically level. After crossing the Sabi the country was a dead level, being in no place above 300 feet above the sea, covered with bush here and there, and with magnificent forests of timber. For 50 miles to the north of Gungunhana's, at this rainy season of the year, there is a series of swamps, so deep as to take the horses off their legs in many places.

After leaving Mazebe's country, very fine forests of timber are fre-

quently found, and the enormous crops grown by the natives in these parts testify to the richness of the soil, and although in many places through which we passed the crops were not ripe and not harvested, yet in no case did we find the natives complaining of the barrenness of the soil. In this district the richness of the crops might be attributed to the unusually large quantity of rain that had fallen during the season, as we were informed that the vast plains between the Sabi and Mazibe's are, during the most part of the year, impassable on account of the scarcity of water, and it was only through natives acquainted with the country that water was obtainable on the occasion of our passing.

Gungunhana occupies a kraal situated 300 feet above sea-level, on a fairly healthy site. His kraal is the usual type of Zulu kraal, huts grouped together with an inner enclosure in which the royal wives are kept. Gungunhana himself has always been most courteous to us, and I am informed his fighting force consists of 20,000 warriors of pure Zulu breed, 2000 of whom are armed with the Martini-Henri, and the remainder with the shield and short assegai.

The country from here to the Limpopo in no place rises above 300 feet above the sea; there are some fine forests of timber, patches of bush, and lovely fertile valleys.

On approaching the Limpopo river the country becomes more swampy, and at this season of the year the banks are only approached through travelling some miles of slush and mud.

Bananas, pine-apples, and other tropical fruits might be seen here growing in wild luxuriance, and it was evident, from the amount of grain being harvested when we passed through, that, at any rate for this season, hunger would not trouble the people of Gazaland.

I have little more to add, but to say that throughout the length and breadth of Africa there are few places so well fitted to carry a large European population as North Gazaland, the portion which has been brought within the sphere of British influence under the treaty lately concluded with Portugal.

After the reading of the two foregoing papers,

Sir RAWSON W. RAWSON said: I venture to rise to ask for information. I will ask Mr. MILLSON if he can tell me whether the interior of the Gold Coast, not so far distant from Yoruba, is of the same character as that which he has described to us this evening. I am particularly interested, and should be glad to learn whether the country there is of the same character.

Mr. MILLSON: I think, in answer to that, I can add a little further information which will explain my ignorance; there is no country where the difference between one part and another is more striking than Africa. I think you may say that when you can step across a river from a fully-clad nation such as the one I have described, to one on the other side which I have not described, the clothing of which cannot be described because it does not exist, it will be readily understood how I am incapable of pronouncing any opinion on the country of which, though so near the places I have been describing, I know nothing except from hearsay.

The PRESIDENT said: I think the fact that no one present is able to add to the information which has been given us, either by Mr. Millson or by Mr. Doyle, is in itself a proof that their papers have been valuable contributions to geography. We have all been carried into regions about which I think we may say that until to-day we knew nothing. That is always agreeable, and it is particularly agreeable that we should have been able to conclude our session by two such valuable contributions. We have here present two gentlemen of South-east African descent—whom we are very glad to welcome here—the envoys of King Gungunhana. I hope they will tell their King, when they return, that his name has been received here in a very friendly manner, and that we learn with pleasure that his force is as considerable as Mr. Denis Doyle describes it to be. Before sitting down I would ask one more question of Mr. Millson. We were very much interested to hear that the British tin-plate trade is to a large extent dependent on African palm oil. We should like to know how that happens to come about. I was very much gratified to hear the observations which Mr. Millson made about Kew. No one who has administered a British province at a distance from the centre of the empire can fail to have been struck with the enormous work, the really imperial work, being done by that establishment. I do not know that anything remains for me to do except to give your thanks to the two gentlemen who have read the papers, to remind you that there are a great many interesting objects to be seen in the next room, and invite you to go there. I trust that we may all meet again in November, and have an agreeable recess.

Mr. MILLSON: I do not know myself the exact application of palm oil to tin plates, beyond the fact that a certain quality of palm oil derives its chief value from the limpidity which enables it to be used for the rolling or pressing, and thereby, I believe, for the polishing of the tin plates which are made to contain our daily food when travelling.*

* Mr. Millson has since communicated the following information on this subject, obtained from 'The Scientific American' of July 4th, 1891:—The plates are rolled in the ordinary manner into black sheets, eight of these sheets being rolled at one time, and after being sheared to size are placed in the "black pickle" bath of sulphuric acid, where all oxidation is removed. They are placed in an annealing furnace for thirty-six hours, and are next passed through the cold rolls, receiving a smoothly polished surface, after which they are annealed again and put into the "white pickle," where they are thoroughly cleansed from any oxidation, and are ready for the tinning process. The mode of putting on the coating of tin is a very simple one, and is begun by submerging the plates in a bath of palm-oil until all the water disappears, the oil forming a flux for the tin, the first coat of which is received in the tin-pot, the plates next being dipped into the "wash-pot," and when taken out the tin is spread over the surfaces with a brush by hand. The final act in the tin coating process is in passing the plates through rolls running in palm-oil, whereby the tin is evenly distributed, and a smooth surface is obtained. There are five of these rolls used, three running on top of two, and the plates make two passes through them, first being let down through the first and second of the upper set, and by a cradle arrangement are returned through the second and third. This completes the tinning operation proper, and the polish is obtained by rapid movements of the plates through bran and middlings, respectively, and then polishing with sheepskin. The result obtained at the Demmler works is a very excellent article of bright tin plate.
