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A Visit to the Mungao District, near Cape Delgado

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We ascended from the plain by a gorge, along a most vile path, and after two miles came on the "Chumun," a spring of water—one of the spots well remembered by our army on its march to Candahar in 1838, and used as a halting-place, owing to its open glade and spring. We then approached the summit by a goat-track, and from the pass looked down on the plains on both sides; to the N.E. on those through which the Kudania stream runs, and south-west into the Pesheen valley of the Lora, both sides yellow and parched; but the wind blew cold from the Candahar direction. Pesheen valley is reported to be rich and fertile, but I saw little to attract the eye. Across the Pesheen plain and the Lora, a muddy stream, we rode over a Kotul in the Shawl hills in the Quetta country. These desolate and low hills are the boundary between Afghanistan and Khelat. As we could not reach Quetta or Shawl that evening, we slept at the small village of Billilay, and next day marched into that well-known fort. The country lies high, as the elevation of the fort is about 5500 feet above sea-level, and it is built on a natural mound, the foot of which is protected by a wall and ditch. I was well received by the Khan of Khelat's Naib Abdullatif, who turned out his small force to salute me, and brought me to the fort and installed me in my quarters. As soon as I had the opportunity, I asked for permission to pass through the Bolan on my way to Jacobabad. He reluctantly assented, so early next morning I turned out of the fort; I told him to send the guides after me. I made only a short march that day to Sircub. By the evening my men arrived, and at midnight I started, as I was anxious to reach the mouth of the pass before any one could give the information to the robber tribes that infest it. As soon as it was light we crossed the Kharlaki, or bar that closes the defile from the plain, and descended into the bed of the Bolan. The difficulties of this route are naturally very great, but when Kafilas and unarmed travellers have to hurry through for fear of harm or death, the obstructions are multiplied exceedingly.

Of its entire length of sixty miles we did the first part, or forty miles, straight off, without delay, passing the well-known halting-places of our advancing army in 1838. As we neared the town of Dadur at its lower or southern end, the pass widens out, and we debouch into the plains; having descended the whole way from 5000 to 1000 feet. From here to Dadur, which is within our Sind frontier, is a vast plain called the Put, uninteresting and barren. And here I came across an English officer, and was thankful to have finished my journey by the 5th of January, 1873.

5.—*A Visit to the Mungao District, near Cape Delgado.* By Dr. J. KIRK, H.M. Consul-General, Zanzibar.

TAKING advantage of the movements of H.M.S. *Philomel*, I last month visited a few of the trading stations of the district of Mungao, the most southerly division of the Zanzibar dominions.

The district of Mungao extends along a hundred miles of coast, from Kiswere, in s. lat. 9° 25', to the small stream that forms the limit of the Sultan's territory in the Bay of Tungi, at Cape Delgado.

Previous to the survey carried on by Captain Gray of H.M.S. *Nassau*, in 1875, little was known of the different harbours of this part of the coast, and before 1870 the trade of Mungao consisted of a little copal, orchilla weed, and cowries, but principally in slaves that came from the Nyassa Lake.

During the prevalence of southerly winds, slaves were sent to Zanzibar, Somali Land, and Arabia; when the monsoon changed, Arab vessels transported slaves to the Comoro Islands and Madagascar.

So late as December 1873, Vice-Consul Elton described the condition in which he found the Mungao District as follows. "Trade is at a stand-still; copal digging is entirely stopped, the diggers being sold as slaves when on their way to the coast. Since then, Mungao has not been visited, as it became a matter of great importance to ascertain how far—the slave-trade being stopped—legitimate commerce had revived, or whether the trading-stations had not been ruined by the measures referred to, and the country abandoned.

In Zanzibar it was almost impossible to learn much, and nothing of a reliable nature, so various are the motives that influence native merchants to conceal the extent of their trade, and the sources of their profits.

The chief result of the hurried visit I have been able to make has been to show that throughout the whole district of Mungao the slave-trade is at an end, the road to Nyassa now little used, the principal chiefs who carried on the wars that depopulated the district so late as 1873 having become settled and industrious, and a commerce sprung up that in one year has reconciled the people of Mungao to the new state of things, and opened to them a source of wealth, but one wholly incompatible with wars and slave-trade. Last year the export of india-rubber from the Mungao district amounted to 1,400,000 lbs., which represents 400,000 dollars value, or, approximately, 90,000*l*.

In this new industry, Mchemba and his people, who before were the scourge of the district, have taken the lead. There are, besides, many other sources of wealth, for that region is suited for agriculture, and abounds in copal, cowries, orchilla-weed, ebony, calumba-root, and dye-wood; while inland there is coal of good serviceable quality, and iron in abundance.

Wherever I came in contact with the people I was glad to find the want of labour generally acknowledged and felt, and to meet with no sign of the slave-trade, the Nyassa caravans now passing by a direct route inland, and not through Mungao, as before.

The plans and charts of this coast lately published by the Admiralty will show that it abounds with spacious harbours, some of which are land-locked, with deep approaches, and capable of receiving the whole British fleet. The chief of them are Kiswere, Mehinga, Lindi, Mwanja, Mtwara, and Mikindani.

As the question of a road to Nyassa is one that of late, in consequence of the movement set on foot by the King of the Belgians, has attracted some attention in England, I may here state that any one of these places would afford good stations as a basis for operations; but I found the Tsetse-fly dangerously prevalent in several of the best localities, and this, where it occurs, would for the time make a road impracticable. This fly has now been seen at the Rovuma, Mikindani, and Mehinga. No doubt it exists also at Kiswere, so that I should, on this account, select Lindi as the most suitable, there being apparently a more peopled country inland; and Bishop Steere, who has adopted this as his point of departure for the interior, has not observed the fly on his line of road. As, however, I am not aware that the Bishop is personally familiar with the fly, the ground would require to be well examined before a trustworthy opinion could be pronounced on a matter of such vital importance as the selection of a proper road.