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File 71, pp. 231-2.

231 The Mashonas are called Maswini or Amaswini. The hut tax is £48,000, at 10s a hut, and there are therefore 96,000 huts which, at rather over three persons a hut, gives about 300,000 natives in the country. The natives are nothing like the Zulus; they have none of their natural dignity. They are polygamists, and pay *lobola* as far as they are able in cattle. The hoe plays an important part. A girl who marries is given a hoe; if she has previously been deflowered, the husband returns the hoe with a hole made in it by him, which hole has to be filled up by a beast (present or compensation). In unsettled times the sending of a hoe is 'peace' and an assegai 'war'.

The Amaswini make better and more intelligent native servants than Zulus. The word 'Amaswini' means 'dirty' or 'unwashed'. They do not wear the headring. They live in small villages; a kraal would have 200 huts in it. Huts are built somewhat after the fashion of Tonga huts. The witchdoctors have great power in the country. The people are great thieves. A man from whom anything is stolen is justified in helping himself to things belonging to a neighbour. The language is very different from Zulu but on close study is found to have some kind of resemblance in structure etc.

Gilson's district lies chiefly north-east of Salisbury. He has been to Mount Wedza where natives dig iron. The natives are very clever in working with iron, can repair guns to the extent of turning a breech-loader into a muzzle-loader with nipple or hammer etc., and make metal beads.

In Mashonaland, almost due east of Salisbury and near the border, is a ruin of some town with terraces of houses miles in length. There is a legend among the natives that in the past they drove out a civilized people, and there is current a belief that they will yet do so again. At the residence of some well-known native was found an idol which, it is believed, she worshipped.

232 Mashonaland is well-watered, and sandy in parts. The journey from Beira to Salisbury is very pretty, through dense jungle and up granite hills on to high tableland. The administration of Matabeleland is carried on from Salisbury, although the two countries stand far more apart than Zululand and Natal. The Amaswini are treacherous people. When out on duty, Gilson's police would sleep round about him on all sides.

There is plenty of bush and trees in Mashonaland.

Gilson has never been able to find out if the Amaswini ever had

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a king. Gilson went to the country in or about June 1897, and has just returned from a six-months trip to England.