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Towards Ruwenzori.—II.

By DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

AFTER four days' rest in our comfortable quarters at Fort Portal, where in the Collector's absence Mr. Crean, the Inspector in command of the King's African Rifles quartered in the neighbouring cantonment, played the host most kindly and efficiently, our caravan marched again. In ordinary circumstances, that is when the path is dry and the streams are unflooded, it is a three days' journey to the highest hamlet in the Mubuku valley: we took four. The first incident was our farewell to Kasagama, the Kabaka or ruler of Toro, who was waiting on the brow below the gates of his spacious compound to greet us and to be photographed. A few hundred yards farther on we passed through a pleasant avenue forming the approach to the Catholic Mission, here, as in most cases in Africa, a centre of cultivation.

The next three days we spent in climbing up and down in 'forthrights and meanders' along a switchback path through the tortuous recesses of a labyrinth of fertile but for the most part uncultivated foothills.

Between the Wimi and Mubuku torrents a long, low, green spur runs out at right angles to the Ruwenzori range. The scenery was always pleasing but never grand, as the valleys were too narrow to admit of any view of the higher ranges. Every day we had a thunderstorm, and the steep and slippery ascents and descents were trying to our porters, who made but slow progress. On the second day, the advance-guard, having waded the Wimi without much difficulty, sat down in a lovely dell near a banana plantation to wait for the baggage. Hours passed, while thunderstorms of unusual vigour broke

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upon us. Moritz and I sat under our umbrellas, like moist toadstools, wondering what could have delayed our companions. At last Mumm and his ragged regiment appeared on the horizon and slowly struggled down the winding path. The Wimi ford had been the cause of delay; a porter had fallen, and dropped into the stream the bag containing our rope and Mumm's climbing boots. A search party had been despatched after it, and was still in the rear. A little later it returned successful. But it was too late to move again, though there was no village near, and our men consequently supped badly and were far from happy.

Next morning we mounted a side glen which brought us to a gap leading into the Mubuku basin. The descent, of some length, was through charming scenery, a narrow vale with banana plantations and flowering trees. This opened on the broad valley of the Mubuku, here encompassed by low and verdant foothills, but closed at its head by steep mountain slopes and the dark crags of the Portal Peaks. The usual ford was impassable, but with the aid of the rope we got across without much difficulty a hundred yards lower down the stream.

A level track brought us in an hour to an open space beside the Mubuku, here a clear dancing burn, brown enough to please a Scotchman, close to which was a chief's enclosure and some native huts. This spot, 4,700 feet, is known as Ibanda, and there is a good picture of the view from it in Sir H. Johnston's book. The snows of *his* Duwoni are in sight, and on their right the steep faces of the Portal Peaks shine between the showers with frequent waterfalls. We pitched our tents beside the river.

The valley here should be interesting to a geologist. It is fairly broad, perhaps half a mile, and falls with a gentle uniform slope. Its alluvial surface is strewn with huge boulders, gneiss, and schist, which have obviously come from the central ranges. How were they transported, on a slow glacial sledge, or on an express waterburst like that which fell on the Baths of St. Gervais? In my opinion the latter agency is the more probable; a flood caused by some earthfall damming temporarily an upper glen. The extent of past glacial action in this region is not a problem to be solved off-hand with such limited opportunities of observation as fell to our lot. At about 7,000 feet on the slope at the entrance to the upper Mubuku Valley there is a bank which seen from Ibanda looks rather like a moraine. But it may well be the result of gashes cut by impetuous streams.

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The upright rocks higher up the valley have smooth surfaces that may be taken for the result of glacier polishing. But the rock is of a kind that naturally tends to slabbiness. The flatter crags are too densely smothered in vegetation to be easily examined. Of recent oscillations I did note distinct proof in a moraine, now overgrown, some five hundred yards below the present termination of the glacier. On the western side of the mountains that mysterious traveller Dr. David (who has failed to furnish to the Swiss Alpine Club Jahrbuch his promised article) reports that he discovered several morainic lakes near the existing glaciers.

I may conveniently make here some general remarks as to the structure of the range, which has now been pretty well ascertained. Its inmost portion consists mainly of granite, or granitoid gneiss. When this central block was thrust up dark mica schists and other varieties of the crystalline series of metamorphic rocks were thrown asunder and piled against its flanks. In these, masses of crystals are found, which are distributed as charms among the natives over a wide tract of country. In the popular belief, at any rate of tribes who dwell at some distance, the shining summits themselves are held to be blocks of crystal. The student of early Alpine literature will be reminded of the tradition recorded, and even accepted by some of the old Swiss scientists, that the crystals found near the St. Gotthard were formed of ice hardened in the course of countless ages of continual frost.

Ruwenzori, it must be borne in mind by those who read its literature, is not volcanic. Round its base, where doubtless lines of weakness were produced by the upheaval of the great range, many traces of volcanic action exist. There are, particularly on its S.E. flanks, a number of crater-lakes. But some of the earlier visitors, misled by what they saw on the outskirts of the mountains, have been far too prone to call every hollow a crater and every height a cone. The suggestion that there was once a great central cone is without any justification in nature.

Some preliminary notes as to the character of the central valley we visited, may help to a better understanding of my narrative. To convey in words any precise picture of topography or scenery is always difficult, except for a few. I find Alpine comparisons helpful, and I shall therefore continue to use them even though they may offend certain critics. The Mubuku Valley mounts in a series of steps like Val Formazza, or the Val di Genova. Above Ibanda, the lower valley gradually narrows, until it is closed by a high spur projecting

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from the southern hills. Behind this spur lies a broad basin in which several streams meet. The Mubuku itself pours down into it in a continuous cataract of some 2,000 ft. When this height has been gained the traveller enters a mountain glen narrow and steep-sided, and fairly level, until it is abruptly terminated by a lofty cliff and a waterfall. Beyond these the valley rises in three more successive steps separated by swampy levels. The uppermost is enclosed in a cirque of cliffs capped by glaciers, which flow from a névé rising in comparatively gentle slopes to an icy ridge connecting two rock-peaks, Kiyanja and Johnston's Duwoni. The rise from Ibanda to the foot of the ice is 8,300 ft., to the watershed about 10,300 ft. The glaciers are rather Pyrenean than Alpine in their dimensions and character. They may compare favourably with the ice N. of the valley of Chamonix on the Buet and Dent du Midi range; they are puny compared to the glaciers of the higher Alpine groups.

The highest village on the Mubuku, Bihunga (6,800 ft.), is situated not in the valley but on the spur already mentioned, and it is a short, hot climb up to it. There is just room for a small camp on the steep slope below the few beehive huts. Above them we found the tent of a negro who had been sent out by an English official to collect natural history specimens on Ruwenzori. He said he had found little, but our experience of him did not lead us to believe that he had tried hard. He fled before a heavy downpour, leaving behind him the cover of 'Punch' and a page from an illustrated London newspaper, incongruous and unexpected objects in the wilds of Ruwenzori.

At Bihunga we changed our carriers. We dispensed temporarily with our Entebbe troop, our incompetent cook, and our dilatory waiter. In their place we took a company of the tribe of the district, men better accustomed to the mountain and its climate. Their clothes were scanty skins or rags, but we provided them, to their great satisfaction, with blankets which we promised should, as a reward for good behaviour, become their own on our return. Never have I had better porters in a far country. They were willing, good-tempered and helpful, and their head man kept up communications with our base and brought up provisions when needful. The provisions mostly walked up in the shape of sheep. The way in which these men carried heavy loads of 50 lbs. up the slipperiest mud-slides and over barricades of fallen timber was astonishing. I can see no reason why, in fair weather, a moderate-sized caravan should not camp as long

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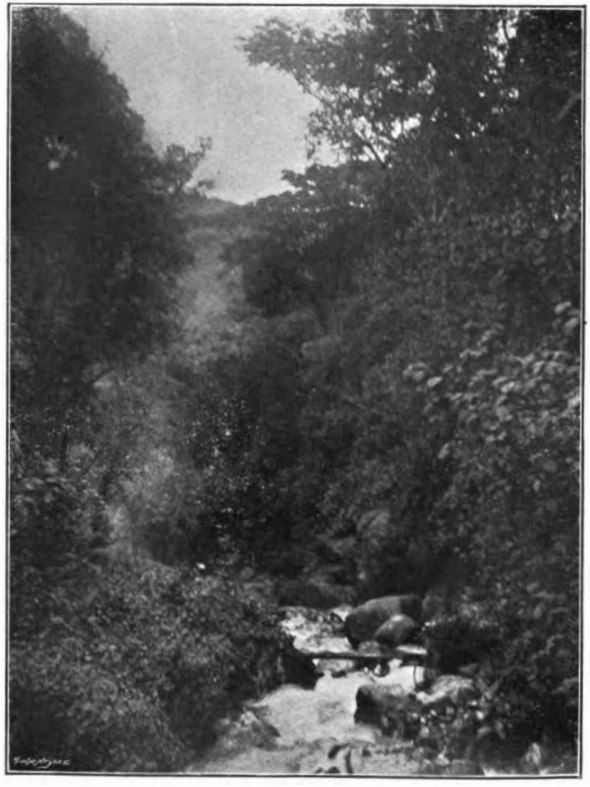
Photos by A. L. Mumm.

THE HEATH FOREST.



Swan Electric Engraving Co.,

IN THE TROPICAL FOREST.

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as it likes at the head-waters of the Mubuku. If sufficient wraps are taken the sickness among the carriers, which affected Sir Harry Johnston's plans, may, it seems, be avoided.

Like most mountain regions, however, Ruwenzori has been a refuge for various tribes, and in other parts of it the traveller may not find such serviceable companions. Dr. David has complained that he was purposely misled and made to wander up and down in the forest, losing all his goods. He points a contrast by remarking that within a few miles of this adventure the Europeans at Port Portal were grumbling at a delay of three days in the English post. Another tribe are stated by the missionaries to be cannibals with reservations; that is to say, they do not eat their own relations but pass on their remains to friends in the hope that the courtesy will be returned.

I need not attempt to describe in any close detail the walk, or wade, up the Mubuku. That has already been done by Mr. Moore, Sir H. Johnston, Mrs. Fisher, Mr. Maddox, and Mr. Dawe.

Our start from Bihunga was delayed by the rain, which was to be our too constant companion. From the brow of the spur, half an hour above the village, there is an enchanting view. A thousand feet below lies a great bowl filled by tropical forests of the utmost luxuriance. The tree-tops are broken only in a few places, where brown patches and curling smoke indicate new clearings for cultivation. Dark rugged peaks and ridges mingle overhead with the shining vapours. The path plunges, and the traveller is soon buried in a thicket of tree-ferns, dracænas, lobelias, wild bananas. Stately, smooth-stemmed trees spread a shade high overhead; they are all new to Europeans and have none but Latin names. If any reader wants to know more he must consult Sir H. Johnston or Mr. Dawe. The ground is carpeted with home-like-looking ferns and orchids; clear streams dance over rocky channels. It is a gay woodland, more akin to the forests of Sikhim than to the outliers of the great Congo Forest that shroud the hills of Ankole above Lake Albert Edward in majestic gloom.

After crossing this basin the track climbs at first under welcome shade, then up a long, open and warm hillside until it gains the narrow, projecting crest of a spur, along which it runs for some distance. Looking back we had an exquisite view over the folds of forest and the foothills to the golden expanse of the level country, in the centre of which a small lake (Lake Kobokora) shone out with jewel-like

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brightness. On the horizon, the soft outlines of the Ankole hills, the rampart of the Uganda plateau, glowed in aerial colours.

Presently the ridge, almost an arête, broadened somewhat, and a great rock protruded on its crest. Here our troop proposed to halt. The afternoon was young, and I objected—my bane in distant travel is impatience—but a sudden and heavy rainstorm settled the argument in their favour. The camping-ground was very limited, and water had to be fetched from a distance. Two of our men sent in its quest were benighted in the steep forest, and spent several uneasy hours in fear of leopards before they found their way back.

Next morning it still rained. Before long the path, hitherto fair, entered at once the upper glen and the bamboo zone and became execrable. Frequent halts had to be made while our men reopened a track between the dripping stems of the bamboos. At each halt a fire was lighted, and we clustered round it, shabby Europeans and shivering natives, a sorry spectacle. The track got worse and worse—it was an alternation of almost perpendicular sodden banks and deep bogs. We either sank up to our knees and were held fast in black sludge or stumbled over stumps and stems. We had hoped for mountaineering, we found ourselves mudlarking!

At last we heard the sound of water, and came out on the bank of the Mubuku, a full torrent. Our predecessors had all crossed it with ease. Our strongest natives tried the ford and failed. A reconnoitring party was despatched upstream. After a long absence their leader returned. His speech was unintelligible, but his aspect was cheerful. I had clambered eagerly after him through the jungle for a hundred yards when a bridge met my astonished eyes. The ingenious Bakonjos had utilised a boulder in midstream to build a bridge with long bamboo poles. A minute later I was shouting to my companions from the farther bank.

The condition of this ford, which had given no trouble to our predecessors, may serve as a proof of the exceptionally bad rains we encountered. They extended beyond the hills. Mr. Haldane, the Collector of Toro, wrote to me, 'You found the mountain at its very worst, in such awful, misty, cold weather.'

Beyond the bridge we walked, or rather splashed and waded, through a beautiful dripping forest. The rain had ceased for the moment, and fitful gleams of sunshine lit up the rich colours of the vast heights that hemmed us in. Presently we saw in front the Mubuku tumbling in a noble

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cataract down the great cliff which closes the valley. Kichuchu, the first of the so-called rock-shelters or native camping-grounds, lies at the base of this cliff, where it slightly overhangs. To reach it we floundered for several hundred yards through a morass and down the channel of a stream which in better seasons may possibly be a path. Kichuchu may then be a rock-shelter; as we found it, it was a dripping-well. My companions succeeded in making a fire and cooking. Mumm was excellent in the part of Mark Tapley: my melancholy only produced a reaction in his spirits.

Next morning we started to climb the great step in the valley in pouring rain. Henceforth I shall only mention the weather when it is fine.

Rude ladders have been fixed against the lowest rocks, but they are not necessary, and in coming down we avoided them. The scramble is long and steep, and was rendered arduous by the abominable muddiness of the path, on which it was easy to slide back farther than one had stepped forward. But there is no real difficulty, nothing but what may be met with on many a chalet path in the Alps. On the top we found a level meadow. We were now nearly 11,000 ft. over sea-level and above the dense hedge of the bamboo zone in a region of new and strange flowers, a weird and grotesque woodland which no one who has once penetrated it is ever likely to forget. Here were open glades filled with the upright stalks, 12 to 15 ft. high, of lobelias, green obelisques which reminded me in shape of the tombstones in a Turkish cemetery. About us stood tree-*Senecios*, or giant groundsel, gaunt writhing stems crowned at the top with mops of spiky leaves, fit for a witch's broom; the ground was carpeted with a shrub growing some 2 to 3 ft. high covered with white everlasting flowers. Blackberries and violets had wandered into this strange company. Among the plants representing a northern flora Mr. Dawe has also recognised the willow herb, a chervil, a ranunculus, a geranium. But these homelike touches were lost in the strange aspect of the larger growths. We followed the obscure track over bush, over briar, through mud and mire, until we came to a fallen forest. The prostrate trunks and branches have formed a continuous barricade, which takes half an hour to cross. The logs are hard, slippery, and covered with moss, which peels off under the boot. The actual soil lies 6 or 8 ft. below, and great care is needed to avoid the horrid pitfalls which gape at every other step and threaten danger to limb, if not to life. Beyond this obstruction we again crossed the stream—I by a fallen trunk, my

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companions by wading—and climbed beside a fine waterfall another step in the valley. At the further end of the next level we came to the rock shelter known as Buamba, a picturesque but very inconvenient camping-ground. The soil was swampy, and as if we had not water enough already, a pretty cascade tumbled from the impending cliff, fortunately not on us.

This camp has a story which has apparently escaped my predecessors. Sir H. Johnston tells us it is called Buamba, meaning 'up aloft,' because of its situation. Our head man, however, declared that it was named after a hill tribe known as Buamba, who dwell on the Semliki side of the mountains, and were accustomed to cross the high pass lying S.E. of Kiyanja, and come down as far as this spot in order to sell pottery and skins to the Bakonjo, who met them here. Of late years, since the Katwe road has become safe, the pass, which cannot be under 14,000 ft., has, we were told, been disused. We had already noticed in the view from Butiti this broad, snowless gap as a probable pass. There are several native passes over the lower southern and northern portions of the range, but this appears to be the only one that traverses the central group. From Buamba to Bujongolo (12,500 ft.) is a short walk, about an hour. We allowed it to be made a day's journey because we were anxious to give the weather, always detestable, time to improve. The accommodation at Bujongolo is a shade better than at Buamba. There is a convenient dry and sheltered site for one 6-ft. square tent, and there are a number of holes and crannies for porters. Logs have been laid as bridges between the boulders; they afford dry wood for the next comer, who is bound in honour to replace them. But it is impossible to stroll a yard in any direction without getting into water up to the knees or falling among hopeless entanglements of rocks and trees. Nor is there any extensive outlook to afford distraction. In the direction of the watershed impending rocks cut off all view. In the opposite direction, across the valley, one summit was visible at moments through the streaming vapours, a black buttress exposing a long slope of highly tilted rocks of a most forbidding aspect, alternately powdered with snow and gleaming with wet as the storms came and passed over. In these conditions it produced an impression which in clear weather it might hardly have upheld.*

Half-an-hour higher we passed another overhanging cliff

* See illustration.

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Photos by A. L. Mumm.

THE MUBUKU GLACIER



Swan Electric Engraving Co.,

A SPUR OF RUWENZORI.

FROM BUJONGOLO.

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that might serve as a shelter. At this point the glacier crescent at the head of the valley is first visible. The glen becomes very narrow and rises steadily, bending to the right. The highest reach is again a level and a marsh. The scenery is imposing and most singular. On the precipitous hillsides and rocky ledges tree-heaths drip with the perpetual moisture. Gaunt and grey, densely covered and draped in preposterous masses of moss and lichens, they look like the vegetable ghosts of a vanished world. Lobelias, tree-*Senecios* and *Helichrysums* grow upon the cliffs high above the lowest ice and up to over 14,000 feet. Higher still the rocks are stained yellow by mosses and lichens, no doubt the origin of the golden belt below the snow noticed by Stanley. The same effect may be seen on the seaward crags of the Maritime Alps The explorer is now too immediately under the range for the highest peaks to be effectively seen. What was to the N. or E. of the icefall we never saw free from mist. Looking back, however, a bold rocky mass was conspicuous south-east of the pass used by the Buamba.*

Some five hundred yards below the ice-tongue the slope steepens, and the track passes through a grove of senecios growing on an old moraine. The glacier now terminates in a cleft between steep rocks; the stream that flows from it in a triple cascade † is insignificant. The water is clear—the first clear water I saw in Uganda. It is probably rather the issue of some sub-glacial spring than the meltings of the ice. In Switzerland, in winter, the glaciers discharge clear water, while those in whose beds there are no sources discharge nothing. Glaciers in tropical and sub-tropical regions lose most of their substance by evaporation. The Himalayan torrents bear no proportion to the size of the snowfields.

We were about 1½ hrs. from camp. Heavy showers swept the sky. We lit a fire under the rocks and ate. With a little spadework it would be easy to establish a camp at this spot, which is in many ways preferable to Bujongolo. There is, however, no natural shelter for porters.

A slight clearing encouraged Mumm and Moritz to push on. I lingered a moment, and when I started found that they were already well ahead and had passed the so-called cave where the first explorer left a rope. I was still stiff from my mule-tumble of a fortnight before, and, feeling confident that this was only a reconnaissance, gave up the pursuit, and spent my time in nursing the fire, catching glimpses of the upper

* See illustration in last number. † See illustration.

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peaks, contemplating the glacial source of the Nile, which vindicated so triumphantly Ptolemy against his critics, and reflecting what a very odd corner of the world I had got to.

My companions came back before I expected them. They had soon reached the cliff that stopped earlier explorers, and climbed up it; then they had taken to the ice, and had had a fair amount of step-cutting on narrow edges and one or two queer passages between ice and rock before they got to the top of the ice-fall and the verge of the easy and gently sloping upper snowfield. There was nothing to stop them from walking to the watershed but the dripping mists and sleet which now enveloped them.* They left the farther climb for another day, which never came; for it took us some time to realise that the weather would exhaust our patience before we had exhausted its spite.

We all went back to Bujongolo. Wet fogs, cold rain, and sleet again enveloped and persecuted us. The continual gloom and damp affected our muscles and our morals, there was nothing dry in camp, and it was impossible to dry anything. Moritz grew rheumatic. When Mumm gave the order to retreat no one protested; we were almost glad of it.

Mudslides are better to descend than to climb. Despite a late start we got down early in the afternoon to our first bivouac—that is, we compressed three days' march into one. There were no bridges to build and no bamboo brakes to hack out. From the brow above Buamba we had a noble view down the valley. On the crest of one of its wooded spurs is set a little tarn which some of our forerunners call, perhaps without reason, a crater lake. It is thousands of feet higher than any other crater lake, and I very much doubt its having a volcanic origin. Next morning we enjoyed the lovely descent down the fern-clad open banks into the bowl of tropical forest. We had come, like Moses, out of the local cloud, and bright sunshine lit up the eastern plain and made the little Lake Kobokora glow like a diamond in its centre. At Bihunga, where we arrived just in time to escape a heavy storm, we found our camp and followers, and having bidden a cordial farewell to our Bakonjo companions, who had behaved excellently to the last, moved on to the open valley at Ibanda.

Here we rested a day. What had been going on meantime in the mountains was indicated by the river. The Mubuku,

* Among Mr. Wollaston's photographs is one which must have been taken close to the highest point reached by Mr. Mumm. It shows well the easy character of the upper slopes.

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THE PORTAL PEAKS

FROM IBANGA.



Photos by A. L. Mumm *Swan Electric Engraving Co.*

THE MUBUKU TORRENT IN FLOOD.

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in ordinary times a pretty trout stream, came down in a sudden spate, filling its channel from bank to bank, rearing in yellow waves six feet high against every obstacle, and tearing the tall reeds in bundles out of the shallows. It was a fine sight in itself, and a welcome testimony to our prudence in abandoning the heights.

On the following morning we were hastily summoned by the porters. When we came out of our tents we found them gazing with wonder at an extraordinary sight. The sky was generally overcast, but low on the eastern horizon a narrow belt was clear. Into this belt the sun had just climbed over the hills of Ankole. The peaks of Ruwenzori were visible against a leaden vault. The sun's rays, as they struck the snows, painted them not an 'awful rose' but a deep blood-red. The lower rocks and woods—this was an effect I have never seen elsewhere—were turned into a rich purple or strawberry colour. In the circumstances there seemed a demoniacal mockery in this farewell appearance of the mountain. In five minutes the spectacle was over and the curtain of mists speedily fell on the snows.

At the ford of the Mubuku, which we fortunately were not called on to cross, we left our former track and turned to the right, up a pretty side-glen. Our path, devious and narrow as an English footpath, led us through charming cultivated country. The valleys were green with banana groves and fields of maize, broken by groups of palms or bright red-blossomed Kaffir trees. The grass, knee-deep, the height of a home hayfield, was full of flowers, amongst them tawny gladioli; convolvuluses trailed over the bushes their large blue blossoms. In front lay a broad valley, partly filled by the shining surface of a large lake, and beyond, some thirteen miles off, rose a range of mountains with smooth but bold outlines. They reminded me of the Apennines between Rome and Naples, but the atmospheric colouring was richer than that of Italy and more to be compared in intensity (though different in tone, owing to the greater abundance of moisture) to that of Greece. The skies in Uganda are a perpetual pleasure. I use the plural advisedly. The dome overhead is never monotonous: in each quarter of the heavens there is something different and beautiful going on; one is never tired of watching the changing complexity of the clouds, the delicate shifting of vapours, or the sudden onset of the local thunderstorms on the transparent fields of blue. There were other distractions close at hand for a traveller tired of sky-gazing. On the plains herds of deer and

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antelopes were always grazing. On the fourth day, as we marched southwards, the path passed close to a bay of Lake Dweru * and was entirely poached by the recent passage of a herd of hippopotamuses. A mile farther on I had a rare treat. Strolling alone in front of the caravan I came on a round lake, about a quarter of a mile across, surrounded by a dry beach. It served as a paradise for birds. On the water floated great white cormorants, round them circled an obsequious crowd of ducks of various sorts and sizes. On the shore there was a promenade of ibises, herons, pelicans, geese, I know not what. Golden-crested cranes danced about delicately in little groups of four or six, giving themselves the conscious airs and graces of well-dressed beauties. It was the sort of spectacle one finds represented in children's natural history books, but never expects to see in Nature.†

By this time the Ruwenzori range on our right had sunk into soft green hills. We crossed two of their last and lowest spurs, passing between deeply set crater-lakes, and from a third suddenly saw before us the wide expanse of Lake Albert Edward, the most remote of the Nile lakes and the last to be discovered. It has by far the most mountainous shores of the three, and, as it is just not too big for all its shores to be visible at once, presents a very imposing appearance. The range on the W., which falls abruptly into its waters, must rise 7,000 feet above them. Its long crest reminded me of Monte Baldo, seen from the Lake of Garda. Far away on the southern horizon in the clearness after a storm we recognised the forms of the great volcanoes, 13,000 feet high, which rise close to the watershed of Africa between the Nile sources and Tanganyika. The grassy shore below us was studded with beehive huts and the water alive with fishing canoes.

Next day we walked four miles in order to visit the salt lake of Katwe, which is a source of revenue to the chief of Toro and threatens to be a subject of dispute between the English Government and the Congo State. It lies, picturesquely framed in palm groves, in a deep basin among bare grassy downs. A narrow ridge, on which stands a ruined fort, separates it from the great lake. Its chief charm, as we saw it, lay in the extraordinary brilliancy of the reflections

* I use Sir H. Johnston's name. Most maps call it Lake Ruisamba.

† See Sir H. Johnston's *The Uganda Protectorate*, vol. i. p. 129, for a fuller and more descriptive catalogue of the water-birds of Uganda.

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in its waters. The blue of the lower spurs of Ruwenzori was unbelievable. In the opposite direction we enjoyed an almost panoramic view of Lake Albert Edward with its green promontories and islands and impending ranges, on which thin columns of smoke gave token of human habitation.

Our onward course led us along the north-eastern shore of the lake. It was fringed with reeds and beautiful blossoming bushes; great white cormorants floated on its waters. The short flowery meadow herbage formed a delightful contrast to the elephant grass, 12 ft. high, that too often cuts off all outlook on the paths of northern Toro. Circling over it and hungrily chasing their insect food, were flocks of swallows lately arrived in their winter quarters. The path keeps along the lake shore under a low hill. It does not seem to have occurred to the earlier passers-by to mount to the brow. At any rate, they have not described what is seen from it. Maps (most of the early ones, not Sir H. Johnston's) show Lake Dweru as a backwater of Lake Albert Edward. This is a curious mistake, without any excuse or foundation in fact. What met our eyes as we crested the hill was a sight new to me in Uganda; a noble river, some 600 to 800 yds. wide, flowing in graceful curves with a clear smooth and strong current between high wooded banks. Tall palms and strange trees of even greater height hung over the water in the hollows or climbed up towards the open grasslands, behind which the blue hills of Ankole rose in the distance. On the tree-tops were many enormous nests of fishing birds, and a canoe containing some native fishers shot round the lowest corner in sight, paddling against the current. The landscape was one of the most romantic I saw in Africa, and so admirably composed that a painter might have put it on canvas without altering a line.

Returning to the path and losing sight of the river for a mile or two we came upon it again at the ferry, where it falls into the lake. Here we found a flotilla waiting for us; a 'dug-out,' that is, a boat hollowed out of a single gigantic stem, and several very patched-up and leaky bark canoes. The farther bank was the popular bathing-place for the villages on the shore. Lake Albert Edward enjoys the distinction among African lakes of being free from crocodiles. We are far here from the primeval nudity of Kavirondo, and the dark ladies managed their blue gowns with at least as much decorum as Parisians at a French seaside resort. On the shores of the lake Indian corn, introduced by Arab traders, is extensively cultivated. Our next day's march to Kichlamba (14 miles) lay across a plain to the foot of the Ankole hills

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which we had had so long for companions. Halfway we came on a skull in the middle of the road. I was told that it was all that remained of a native who a week before had gone to sleep under a tree and been devoured by a lion. Soon afterwards our Nubian escort had an altercation with a man who was, contrary to law, carrying a naked spear, and arrested him.

That evening, while Mumm shot antelopes, I got a hazy view of Ruwenzori, three snow-peaks rising over lower heights. Next day we climbed up into and through the hills, a lovely march. The valleys were pitted with ancient craters, some dry, others containing lakes, set in the richest tropical vegetation. Our prisoner made a bolt for one of these hollows, and would have escaped into a thick banana plantation had he not near the bottom slipped and turned a summersault. The pursuing Nubian went over after him, but was the first to recover himself and secured his prisoner.

At the head of a narrow glen we crossed a steep pass, from which there was a glorious view to the south over a vast deep-green forest stretching away towards the eastern shores of Lake Albert Edward. It is akin to the great Congo Forest, in which Stanley wandered; the general character was sombre, perhaps it was not the season of flowers. Straight, smooth trunks ran up to an enormous height, bearing aloft a dense canopy of foliage; the ground was carpeted with dark-leaved plants; brooks trickled through the hollows. After an hour in the shade we camped with some woodcutters at its edge.

Late in the evening, in place of the natives bringing bananas for our porters, the Nubian soldier in charge appeared with three prisoners and a wounded man. The villagers carrying our men's food had been met and assaulted by a party from another village, who had shouted that the white men must not be supplied, and in the scuffle one of the carriers had been badly wounded by a spearthrust in the arm. The Nubian, being armed with a gun, had run in three of the assailants. Next morning, accordingly, we started with four ill-favoured negroes tied together with Alpine rope. The event of the afternoon was a really terrific tropical thunderstorm. The noise was tremendous, and the downpour incessant for an hour and a half. When a bouquet of flashes hit the ground all round us I must confess that I felt nervous as to what might come next. It proved, however, the final flare-up.

The country we had been going through is an intricate highland region. Seen from Lake Albert Edward its hills appear to run N. and S.; this is, however, only the effect of the

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escarpment of the great Uganda tableland. The main ridges in Ankole run E. and W., and are high green downs reaching 6,000 ft. or more above the sea and 2,000 ft. above the plateau. Between them the space is occupied by the oddest possible collection of round-topped green hillocks sprinkled about thickly and without order. In form they reminded me more of the hills old cartographers used to dot about their maps than of anything I have seen in Nature elsewhere.

We camped in a hollow glen, surrounded by high grass and bush—an unhealthy spot, where I believe I caught malaria. At dawn we were told that a man with a spear had been seen prowling near our tents. This was unpleasant, as we were not far from the spot where, in the preceding May, the Collector of the District had been speared through the heart while he sat reading in the verandah of a Rest-house. Our Nubians further asserted that the hilltops were thick with spearmen. I suspect there was some exaggeration. But shouts were certainly audible from the bush, and they were interpreted to us as meaning, 'The white men are starting.' The friends of our prisoners may have been hanging about with a view to a rescue. We were too strong a party to be assaulted in the open. Their only chance would have lain in a rush out of the copses that frequently overhung the zigzags of the path. There was an opportunity, however, for a display of martial ardour; we kept close order, and Mumm, as commander-in-chief, bristled with cartridges. His rôle was modified by the sudden appearance of Ruwenzori, one white peak excelling all the rest until it was overcome by the clouds. 'Cedant arma togæ.' The warrior was converted into a photographer. In the centre of a hollow square he adjusted his camera with his customary deliberation. The result, unfortunately, was a failure.

The landscape now became more level, and of enemies we saw no more. I despatched a messenger to Mberara, the capital of Ankole, and the officials there sent out twelve policemen, who relieved us of our inconvenient charge. The explanation of the affair given us was as follows:—A chief had died, and his tribe was divided into factions by a disputed succession. Hence the villagers had carried their feud into our provisionment; they will be warned not in future to let their local broils affect white men.

Round Mberara, famous for its majestic long-horned cattle, the country is undulating and continues so during the week's march to Masaka. The hills are quite low and sparsely sprinkled with cactus-trees that look from a distance like yews.

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At Masaka a bare hilltop has been planted by an artistic Collector with oleanders and pomegranates. The interior of the Boma, or fortified enclosure, is a bower of roses, rampant rose-trees like those in Burne-Jones's pictures, with long branches ablaze with blossom all the year round. Lake Victoria lies only a few miles east of Masaka, and is frequently in sight on the road to Entebbe, which runs, for the most part, through fine 'park-like' scenery.

My four days at that centre of civilisation, of dress-clothes and dinner-parties, of lawn-tennis and football, were luxuriously spent in a bungalow hospital. A certificate that I had contracted two fevers relieved me from assisting my companion in winding up the accounts of our two months' trip. In this task he was ably assisted by Mr. Moggridge, the young Englishman from Natal whom we had engaged to act as our camp-manager and interpreter, in both of which capacities he had proved very efficient.

At four in the afternoon on the day we left Entebbe our comfortably appointed steamer reached Jinga, where the Nile leaves the Lake, and anchored a mile above the Ripon Falls. To shorten the walk in my enfeebled condition, I got a native dug-out with fifteen paddlers, to row down as far as the Ferry. The Falls are of the class of Schaffhausen: they lack height. But there is a glorious rush of green water, five floods separated by tiny rocks, or islets, clothed in the most vivid verdure. Below the cascade is a great pool, where huge fish leap in the eddies and eagles circle overhead, and then for several miles the great river hurries on in a long rapid between high wooded banks, till a bend in its course conceals it from sight. It is a worthy birth for the Nile.

Another day was spent on the lake, and on the third from Entebbe we got into the train. We began to speculate how many and what beasts we should see. At first we scored rather slowly. There were, of course, hartebeests and springboks in hundreds. A large party of baboons, three giraffes, and several hyænas next came in view. It was not till sunset on the second day that the train pulled up to give us a better view of a fine lioness which was strolling beside the line some thirty yards off. The station we came to five minutes later is famous for lions. Here, during the construction of the line, an unfortunate engineer was pulled out of a carriage in which he was sleeping, and devoured. The present station-master, an Indian, is credited—I cannot say with what truth—with having recently had occasion to send out the following telegrams: 'Please send further police pro-

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tection. Men very brave, but less so when roaring begins.' 'Please let 10 A.M. run up to platform disregarding signal. Signalman up post, lion at bottom.'

Let me recapitulate the main facts we ascertained as to Ruwenzori. The extent of the Alpine portion of the range is not more than 20 miles, probably not more than 12 miles of this is ice-clad. None of its peaks is likely much to exceed 18,000 ft., perhaps none soars above 17,000 ft. They rise in a group, one of them a snow-summit considerably surpassing Kiyanja and the other tops visible from the Mubuku Valley. It is probable that this highest peak which is not visible from the Mubuku Valley stands W. of the watershed. The only glacier basin of any size E. of the chain is that of the Mubuku; it abuts against the western glacier basin photographed by Dr. Stuhlmann. The snow-level is high, not less than 14,500 ft., and vegetation extends to this height, though snow often falls and lies for a time much lower. There is no separate group with a summit 20,000 ft. high where 'The Saddle Peak' is shown on some maps. The natural history collectors from the British Museum will probably conquer several of the summits. Whatever they leave in the way of virgin peaks will doubtless fall to the Duke of the Abruzzi.* Princes have formidable methods and means of courtship. Were I to go again, which I have no intention of doing, I should make every effort to get to the top soon after dawn, and before the clouds. I should sleep on the edge of the snow and use lanterns, as people used to on Mont Blanc; for to climb Ruwenzori and see nothing would be deplorable. The panorama, no doubt, would be more stimulating to the imagination than impressive to the eyes. The lower ranges would be sunk in dim aerial distances. But it would be unique, with the two great lakes in sight, and would embrace practically the whole region of the Nile sources. And to the topographer the insight gained into the structure of the Ruwenzori group would be invaluable.

I shall not be surprised if Ruwenzori is frequently visited in the coming years; for the Nile route to Uganda, already open, will very shortly be greatly improved and quickened, and the Messrs. Cook will doubtless soon be prepared to give circular tickets *viâ* the Red Sea and return by the Nile. Ruwenzori is a fortnight's march from Lake Victoria and about a week's from Lake Albert. A four months' winter tour may suffice for the round, including

* See p. 242.

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a visit to the mountain. Our tour of 500 miles from Entebbe and back occupied eight weeks to a day. I was three weeks in reaching home from Entebbe.

I may best conclude this paper by reverting to an old custom in this Journal, and expressing my very heartfelt thanks to our guide and companion from Zermatt for his services throughout the journey and for the thoughtful care with which he looked after me in my fevers. I cannot wish anyone a better travelling companion in health or in sickness, on the march or in camp, than Moritz Inderbinnen.*

Six Months' Wandering in the Himalaya.

By T. G. LONGSTAFF.

(Read before the Alpine Club, June 11, 1906.)

I BELIEVE it is usual to commence a paper before this audience by a reference to the Honorary Secretary, and I feel that I ought not to depart from so honoured a custom. Yet I cannot say that it is with great hesitation, and after much pressing by that eminent mountaineer, that I address you to-night, because it is entirely due to my own importunity that I am here. Neither can I commence, 'Story! God bless you! I have none to tell,' because before I have finished my paper you will be hinting that it is all story and no climbing. For both these reasons I ought to be brief; and the Honorary Secretary has begged me to be brief. I regret to disappoint him. The paper is a very long one, and I have more slides than I ought to show you to-night. Furthermore I am sorry to find that I can hardly hope to make myself intelligible without a somewhat lengthy and perhaps personal preface. For the latter I ask your pardon, and for the rest your patience.

Like most mountaineers my thoughts have often turned towards the Himalaya, but what especially attracted me were the districts of Kumaon and Garhwal in the United Provinces. This region, rising in the S. directly from the great Gangetic plain, is wedged in between Nepal on the E. and a group of semi-independent hill States on the W., and is bounded on the N. by the plateau of Western Tibet. In this corner of the Himalaya is to be found mountain scenery

* I have used in this paper Sir H. Johnston's local names. I must refer readers who desire to know more of Uganda to his invaluable volumes.

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