may no doubt be encountered if the ridge is adhered to all the way. We did not, however, miss an interesting bit that recalled the 'enjambée' of the Matterhorn.

My friend Valentine-Richards, writing in 1899,* says of this climb that 'it may be reckoned among the finest climbs n the Alps, in some details resembling the Italian side of the Matterhorn; but when the mountain is in good order it presents no point of special difficulty.' I entirely endorse these words, confirmed as they are by a second acquaintance; but in doing so I should wish it to be understood that the Matterhorn has a stronger claim, by points, to the honours conferred by the epithets lavished upon the Finsteraarhorn by the S.E. arête. Since writing the above I have had an opportunity of reading Mr. Claude A. Macdonald's account which appears in 'Alpine Notes' in the present number of this 'Journal.' His experience seems sufficiently like my own to justify me in recommending our expedition in good weather to any members of the Club who may find themselves in the district.

RUWENZORI.

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI has promised the Royal Geographical Society to furnish it with an account of his recent ascents in the Ruwenzori range. The paper, which will be read at the Meeting on January 14 next, will be illustrated by a number of photographic panoramas and views taken by Signor Vittorio Sella during the expedition. It is hoped that these may also be shown at the February meeting of the Club.

His Royal Highness, who has visited London since his return, reports that he has climbed the twelve highest peaks of the range, none of which exceed 17,000 ft. They all lie within a radius of seven or eight miles in a compact group, or rather a cluster of small glacier groups separated by high but snowless passes. On only one ascent, that of the highest peak, was any serious difficulty encountered. The party had no trouble with the natives, whom they found friendly and serviceable. Whatever reports to the contrary have been circulated were due to the imagination of a press correspondent at Entebbe.

The letter from Dr. Wollaston printed here gives an interesting account of his attempt to reach the western glaciers of Ruwenzori and of the reason of its failure:—

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* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xx. No. 148, p. 142.

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'Ituri Forest, between Fort Beni and Irumu,
Congo Free State:
August 12, 1906.

'DEAR MR. FRESHFIELD,—I think I told you in my last letter that I hoped soon to get round to the west side. After many difficulties and delays we arrived at Fort Beni, the Belgian post on the Semliki, about the middle of July. From there we set out with an escort, which the Belgian officer insisted on our taking, and which proved the cause of our undoing, and made the Butagu valley in three days. I left the party camped at 7,000 ft. (Kakalongo in Stuhlmann's map) and started full of hope for the upper parts of the valley, with ten porters, a camera, and your old Himalayan iceaxe. A good but very steep track, accurately marked in S.'s map, took me up to 10,000 ft., and I was just leaving my second camp, with only a short march ahead, when a message came from below that a detachment of the escort had been attacked a mile or two below our camp (at 7,000 ft.) by natives armed with guns—one soldier killed and five wounded, two fatally. My services were required to bring them together again, and my porters to carry them; so there was nothing for it but to go downhill as speedily as possible. As we retreated down the valley on the following day—the day on which I ought to have been within reach of the glaciers and taking photographs of immense interest—the snow peaks were all clear, as if to spite me, for an hour or more after their usual time, and I saw some superb views. It was impossible to take photographs, as we were dodging spears and arrows all the time. In fact it was a sort of running fight for three days back to Beni. A good many natives killed, but none of our people badly hurt. It was, I think, the cruellest disappointment I have ever known, to be within half a day's journey of our most coveted goal and then to be compelled to turn our back upon it. The root of the evil lay in the Belgian who had charge of the escort. In spite of protests he camped in the native gardens, cut down the shambas, at one place shot the village cow, while his soldiers looted the houses. In return for these and doubtless many former barbarities they rose up against him and we suffered for it. I am convinced that, had the Belgians let us go without escort, we should have had no trouble at all. When we left Beni a week ago they were preparing a punitive expedition to quell these wretched people, and will doubtless make bad worse. So until they have killed off all the natives, or until the Semliki becomes the Uganda boundary, the W. side of Ruwenzori will not be a very wholesome place for a white man. The latter event is, I suppose, too good a thing to hope for. Our people generally "climb down," I am afraid, in any boundary question, and a few miles of mountain seem a small thing hardly to be considered by the wise men of the Colonial Office. Is it out of the question for the Royal Geographical Society to bring some pressure to bear upon them? There can be no better evidence of the difference between the two Governments than the conditions of the Wakonjo on the east and the west sides of Ruwenzori.

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'The rare views that I got of the range from this side show it to be much finer than from the east, as one would expect, the Semliki being about 2,900 ft. at Beni. There is a very fine valley I looked into (Russirubi in Stuhlmann; Paka is the name I got for it from a native thereabouts) which leads up to the snow, on the N. slopes of the highest peaks, I should imagine. No European has ever been into it yet. I confess that I am more than ever anxious to come back at the earliest opportunity, and this is a valley that would be well worth exploring. The Belgian Dr. David went up the Butagu valley, but how far he went I have been unable to find out. I found the relics of an English pair of breeches at 10,000 ft.! Perhaps Scott Elliot's of 1894? Stuhlmann's photograph is of the highest peaks looking a little north of east.

'I hope the Duke of the Abruzzi will find some good native names for the highest peaks. "Birika" (boiling pot) is the only name I heard on the E. side for the snow peaks.

'I have a photograph of "King Edward's Rock," taken from above Bujongolo, which I don't think its godfathers would like to have published, it is so evidently the lowest point of the Mubuku ridge. I am afraid you will not find any of my photographs at the British Museum. I have them all here, and only a few of them are developed; but I shall have great pleasure in sending them to you when I get back to England next year. This expedition comes to an end at Entebbe in a few weeks; then I am off to the volcanoes Mfumbiro, at the S.W. of Lake Albert Edward, Kivu, and Tanganyika.

'If you think any extracts from this are of sufficient interest for the "A. J." or elsewhere, please send them with apologies. Writing letters in this forest of pigmies and okapis is none too easy.

'Approximate heights of peaks: Duwoni, 15,893 ft.; Kiyanja, 16,379 ft.; peaks N.W. of Kiyanja, 16,700 ft.; highest peaks, 17,000-17,200 ft.; big snow (? Saddle Mount), 16,000 ft.*

'A. F. R. Wollaston.'

Arab Legends regarding Ruwenzori.—In A.D. 1686 an Arab compiler, quoted by Sir H. M. Stanley ('In Darkest Africa,' vol. ii. pp. 280–1), undertook to describe from earlier authorities the legendary snows at the Nile sources. I make here a few extracts from his compilation:—

'Others say that the Nile flows from snowy mountains, and they are the mountains called Kaf.'

'There is a difference of opinion as to the derivation of the word Gumr. Some say that it ought to be pronounced Kamar, which means the Moon, but the traveller Ti Tarshi says that it was called by that name because "the eye is dazzled by the great brightness."

* The observations of the Duke of the Abruzzi will reduce these heights and bring them into close correspondence with those obtained trigonometrically by Captain Behrens, R.E.—D.W.F.

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. . . This chain has peaks rising up into the air and other peaks lower. Some have said that certain people have reached these mountains and ascended them, and looked over to the other side, where they saw a sea with troubled waters, dark as night, this sea being traversed by a white stream, white as day, which enters the mountains from the north. . . . Some say that people have ascended the mountain, and one of them began to laugh and clap his hands and threw himself down on the further side of the mountain. The others were afraid of being seized with the same fit, and so came back. It is said that those who saw it saw bright snows, like white silver, glistening with light. Whoever looked at them became attracted and stuck to them until they died, and this science is called human magnetism.'

'It is said that a certain king sent an expedition to discover the Nile sources, and they reached copper mountains, and when the sun rose the rays reflected were so strong that they were burnt. Others say that these people arrived at bright mountains, like crystal, and when the rays of the sun were reflected they burnt them.'

Surely it is difficult to believe that no substratum of fact underlies these graphic details. D. W. F.

NOTES FROM SIKHIM.

Mr. Douglas Freshfield writes, 'I have received the following account of a journey made last summer in Upper Sikhim, behind Kangchenjunga, from M. de Righi, the proprietor of the Woodlands Hotel at Darjiling. It furnishes an agreeable proof how easy it may be for travellers with the necessary will and energy to travel in this part of the Eastern Himalaya. I trust that before long this wonderful region may become familiar to many of our countrymen resident in India.

'For me at least, and perhaps for some of your readers, M. de Righi's letter has a further interest. It may be remembered that in my volume "Round Kangchenjunga" (p. 191) I described how, in 1899, on our descent from the Jonsong La into Nepal one of our coolies was missing, and was reported by his companions to have begged them to leave him to die. This is what I wrote at the time: "They furnished him with a few biscuits, covered his face with a cloth, and continued their march. At first we had so many disappearances and returns that I was incredulous of the tale; and, until we regained Darjiling, I entertained strong hopes that the missing man would appear among the list of deserters. But he never did, and Rinsing finally brought forward a claim for damages for the life of his retainer or tenant."

'For this alleged loss to my party I incurred the blame of the egregious Mr. Crowley and sundry other press writers. They will doubtless be glad to learn, on the excellent authority of the missing

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