this world that I do really dislike it is a swag—a real good solid fifty pounder.

Three hours and a half of machine-like tramping, varied by wading streams, and we were in sight of the hut again, and behold! there was the defaulting pack-horse; we secured him carefully.

The hut seemed a palace, though all the bunks were burnt out of it and one side was held up with fencing wire.

The next three days consisted of wind and rain—gales of wind and lumps of rain.

The doings of the party were unimportant—boiling billies, frying chops, playing euchre, telling yarns, smearing Lean all over with vaseline and rubbing him down, sitting on the ends of logs whose other ends were making a merry fire, watching the sheep trailing down the valley in hundreds for shelter. Now a partial clear would raise hopes which were only to be dispelled by the next downpour. The pitiless blasts roared down the valley, the torrents poured on to the iron roof of the hut. The unfortunate pack-horse was tucked up, and shivered unceasingly for three days and nights under the shelter of the wire fence which formed the small paddock near the hut. We could not help thinking what our lot would have been had we been caught in this on the western side of the range, with no tent, very little food, and one man *hors de combat.*

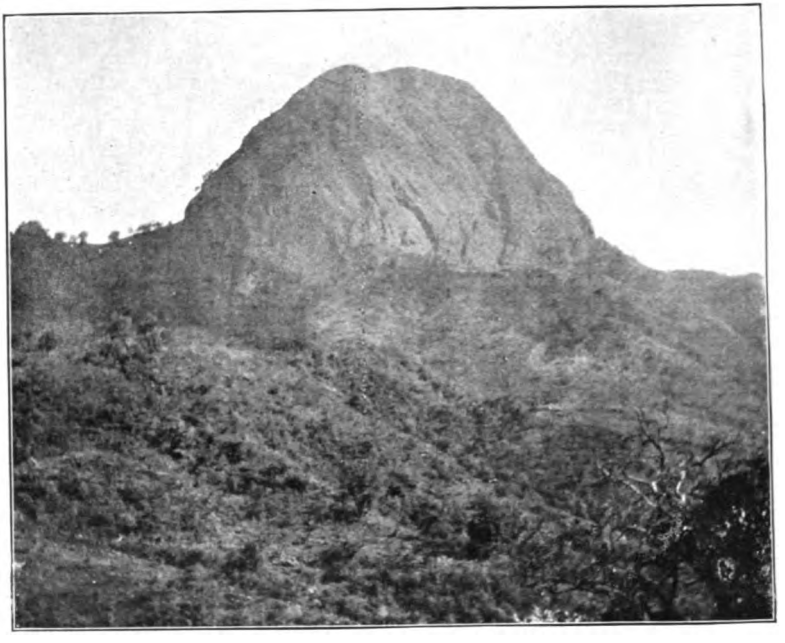
At last the weather showed signs of lifting, and we struck down the valley for Lily Bank Station, where we were greeted with a cordial welcome. The day following Lean and I made Richmond Station, while Annan returned with his horses to the higher camp and brought down the tent, &c.; and the next day we were once more at Tekapo, and from there found our way down country again by easy stages.

About Abyssinian Alps.

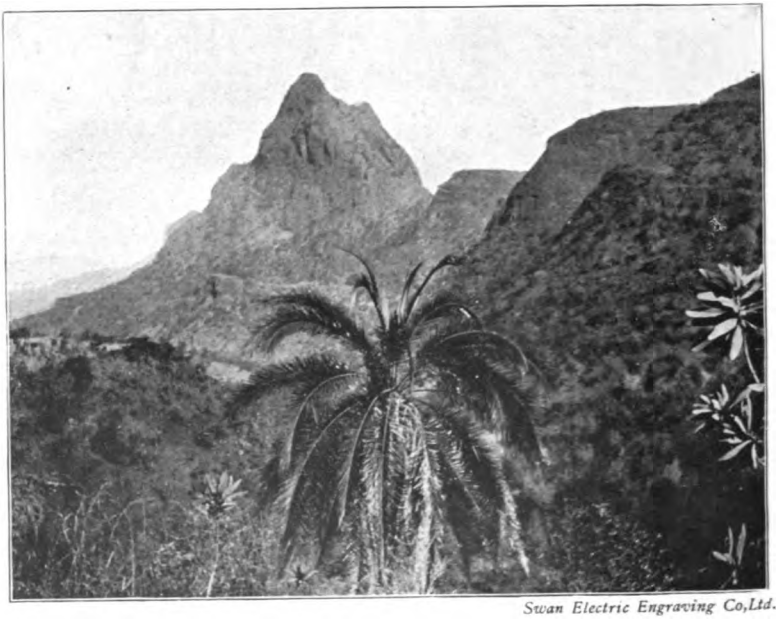
By GEORGE WHERRY.

THE mountains of Northern Abyssinia have yet to be climbed, and before any mountaineering expedition can be successful the work of explorers in the sub-alpine regions will have to be more complete.

Bad weather, bad roads, wild beasts, and brigands at present may deter (or tempt) the traveller. The Italians, who are in touch with Abyssinia, are interested in mountains and are keen climbers, but the British mountaineer, approaching



VIEW IN N. ABYSSINIA.



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Mt. TUKURYE N. ABYSSINIA.

the country from our adjacent Sudan districts, may very fairly compete. The following extracts are from recent letters to me describing the country, and though my friend has cut out much of the best part of the text sent to him for revision, and has expunged his name, yet even in this mutilated state I feel sure that climbers will read his remarks with interest. Also the photographs of mountains, vegetation, and natives are worth a place in the 'Journal,' and may stimulate some mountaineer to make the ascent of the great peaks in Abyssinia.

Old writers on 'Æthiopia' have given us some accounts of marvels, not indeed as outrageous as those of Scheuchzer with his dragons, but still more wonderful, because they are often possible to explain by means of modern knowledge. M. Poncet, a French doctor of medicine, travelled there in the years 1698, 1699, and 1700, and described with apparent truth the country and the people. To quote from an English translation of 1709, he relates how he visited a church to witness a prodigy about which he had been told. He took a day to examine 'the truth of it in Person, with twenty Lancemen and the Officer for greater security of this little Excursion. On a very difficult mountain in a frightful solitude,' he writes, 'I no sooner enter'd the Church but I discover'd the Prodigy which gave Occasion to my journey and which I cou'd never have believ'd. They assur'd me that on the Epistle side [*i.e.* the south side] of the Church was to be seen Pendulous in the Air a round staff of Gold four Foot in Length and of the thickness of a good stick. This Prodigy appear'd so Wonderful to me that I was afraid lest my eyes might be imposed upon and that there might be some Artifice which I could not discern. I therefore begg'd of the Abbot to permit me to examine it more nearly, whether there were not some invisible Prop or Support. For my better Assurance and to take away all doubt I pass'd my Cane over it, and under it, and on all sides, and found that this Staff of Gold did truly hang of it self in the Air. This raised an Astonishment in me which continues to this very Day, finding no Natural causes of so wonderful an Effect.' Was this an hypnotic illusion or a Pepper's ghost? How it was possible to deceive so good an observer as Poncet I cannot conceive; I feel, however, assured of his sincerity. He gives a graphic account of what we should now call a thought-reading experiment in which a ring carefully hidden by Poncet was rapidly found by the expert. The Jesuits and later missionaries have left their traces on the history of this Christian country, and Father Lobo's book in French was

translated by Dr. Samuel Johnson. It was Johnson's first book and no doubt suggested the name and setting of 'Rasselas,' 'Ras' being a title of rank; thus *Ras* In'gădă was King Theodore's Prime Minister. Theodore is still fresh in our memories, with his heroic end at Magdala, when rather than fall into British hands he shot himself, or in Amharic metaphor he 'swallowed his revolver.'

Since their defeat at Adowa the Italians have seen more of the country in a peaceful way, and our own relations with Menelik, the reigning potentate, and his chiefs have also been uneventful, except that from time to time raiders and murdering thieves attack orderly villages in the Sudan and escape over the frontier to the Abyssinian hills.

In this connection I note that a traveller prefaces his book with the remark that his journey was as safe as bicycling on the Brighton road! The perusal of such books as are at hand, by Sir Samuel Baker, Rassam, and the more recent pages of Wylde, Vincent, and Hayes, sportsmen and explorers, has left me with the impression that for purposes of mountaineering the brief notes given below would prove of the utmost value. Sport with gun and rifle as a pretext is very well understood by the natives, but it is not likely that the climber himself would consider too seriously the shooting of the koodoo or the interview with King Menelik. That sovereign rules now with a strong hand, and it would be best that a caravan should travel through his country very soon, before death has removed Menelik's steady and sensible influence from the chiefs of the alpine districts. There was a famous phrase made by Disraeli after the brilliant campaign of Magdala that 'we planted the banner of St. George on the mountains of Rasselas.' My desire is that this may be done in a more peaceful manner by members of the Alpine Club. A lesson will be learned from this narrative, as from the African expedition of Mr. Freshfield and Mr. Mumm—namely, the importance of studying the climate and avoiding the rainy season. But my friend must tell his own story, and the rough sketch of a map will enable the reader to follow his route.

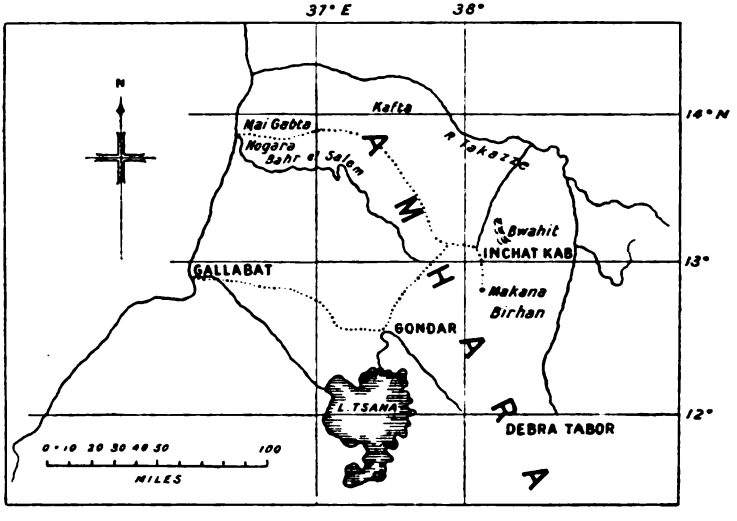
'Cámo, TSāgadye, Abyssinia: April 26, 1907.

'If you sketch the country as you travel it leaves you no time to write letters. My prismatic compass reminds me of a passage:

> Omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus, inter amicos
> Ut nunquam inducant animum cantare rogati,
> Iniussi nunquam desistant.

I make its tripod as level as possible, but nothing will induce it to swing; when it finally does so nothing will make it stop.

'It is just a week since I left D—— at Qavtya, which is about where they mark Mai Gabta in your map. I am now somewhere about the letter M of Amhara, which you may see sprawling across the map to the S.E. I started my sketch at Nogara, and have mapped out 102½ miles, up to 9½ miles behind this camp. I come down 4,000 ft. one day, and ascend 5,000 the next. They don't bother much about zigzags. I believe you would almost call it climbing. The mule path at Saas from Grund to Fee is a boulevard compared to any of these tracks, which are more like the path on past that little inn on the



way up the Mittaghorn. But no sign of ice or snow so far. I haven't seen any peak over, I should say, 11,000 ft., at which height trees manage to grow in these latitudes, apparently in comfort. My camp this morning was at 8,990 ft., among a thicket of rose bushes. I enclose you a blossom. They are nearly all over, but one bush seemed to have remembered the date. To-night I am at 7,370 ft., among palms and more roses. And it is uncommonly cold writing in the open air. The only tent I have with me is a *tente d'abri* for sleeping in; you can just get a bed in. I left my big one at Gallabat—too heavy for the mules. Of course I have not brought my camels; they would have been utterly defeated. I can't see

to draw at night. $\frac{1}{250000}$ tries one's eyes even by daylight. I find I can't draw more than 4 miles an hour, there is so much detail. The various peaks I get shots at, 30 miles off on either side, are capital checks; but it is very difficult to estimate one's pace up and down slopes. . . . We have passed through the brigand country without adventure other than being caught in some fearful storms. Last night it poured all night, and I couldn't sleep for the noise it made on the canvas.

'My hand is so numbed I must stop, and try what you say is impossible—to get warm at my fire.'

'Wógara: May 3, 1907.

'This is somewhere about the top left corner of H in Amhara in your map, a bit W. by S. of Inchat Kab. I move slowly, but imagine yourself travelling through Switzerland across country, sketching your way. What with that and writing up a route report every night, time flies. The drawing has now fallen behind the observations a matter of 53 miles. The weather has been so fine I have pushed on, making two treks every day, saving the drawing for bad weather. There are no water difficulties here. Every valley has a running stream—a pleasant change from the Sudan. This country is very much like the Riviera without the sea and without any roads or houses except straw huts. Except these I haven't seen a house for a month; and I don't miss the sight, which is because I am free from fever. When you're seedy you begin to see the points of a European bedroom. . . .

'At a village called Bilamba a violinist came and played to me: his instrument had only one string, and though only about viola size he held it finger-board up, as we do a 'cello. I photographed him, and wished I had an instrument to take down his singing, which was an impromptu account of my arrival. He was about sixty, and danced as he sang and played. Then came a man who had shot a lioness, with his friends and two boys bearing the skin on a pole. He fired a salute. The minstrel bracketed us in his *ἔπος*. They both received tips and went off to get drunk. No morbid sentiment there! Then came a woman with pains in her inside, for which I gave her my sovereign remedy, Epsom salts, though I think she had rheumatism. Later on came a man who had killed another in a quarrel, and had been condemned to pay blood money—80 dollars—to the deceased's relations. He asked for assistance. I thought 4 dollars (8*s*.) would be a fair contribution; he had expected much less. . . .

'The aneroid says 8,675 ft., and I write by a roaring fire, which gives a pleasing illusion of warmth. I haven't slept in the tent yet; these cold nights are bracing, and it is never really warm during the day—about 80° at 2 P.M. One sweats a good bit climbing in the sun. I have photographed various peaks I thought would interest you. The other night, just as I was dropping off to sleep and thinking about Musetta,

AN ABYSSINIAN ROSE TREE AT 9,000 FT.

comes a black cat playing round my bed. I picked him up, and he began to purr in the purest Amharic. I called Salim, and we tried how much meat he would eat—it was about his own weight, I should say. . . .

'I have collected amongst various other seeds some of these roses.* I never heard of roses growing from seed, only from

* Various seeds collected are now cared for by Mr. Lynch at the Botanical Gardens of Cambridge, and already are growing remarkably well.

cuttings, but don't see why they shouldn't, and am going to try when I get back to Khartoum.'

'Chilga: May 30.

'About May 10, when I was at Makana Birhan, [the chief,] Dejjach Gassasa, sent a courier to Gedaref, but gave me such short notice that I only sent a note to my mother and father —perhaps I sent you a line. I shall have to tell you all about things when we meet. I am now about 100 miles S.E. of Gallabat. You will see Chelga on the map. This morning I crossed the Atbara within a few miles of its source, at 6,000 ft. I have not done anything you would call climbing, but reached 9,300 ft., and rode into Makâna Birhân, the chief's headquarters, in a hailstorm. To the N.E. the heights of Bwâhit were covered with snow. I should say they were about 15,000 ft. I sketched my route as far as Makana Birhan and thence to Gondar, altogether some 200 miles, of which I still have some 100 miles odd to draw. Everything went off well with the chief, though there was one troublesome incident. . . .

'There are no roads in the country I traversed other than the very roughest of mule tracks. The mule does not, like the donkey, invariably follow in the tracks of the beast in front of him, so that there are usually several alternate tracks, and even if one knows one's direction it is often difficult to find one's way without a guide.

'Some camels were taken, with considerable difficulty, as far as Qavtya. Beyond that I came to many places quite impassable for camels, and it would require a great deal of blasting and other work to render them possible for this kind of transport.

'On the inhabited parts of the plateau the ploughman frequently selects an area for his operations lying right across the track, which he ploughs up with the rest. On my asking about this I was told that nobody ever travelled during the rains. As I happened to be an unwilling exception to this rule I found myself from time to time in the middle of a ploughed field, sometimes on a steep hillside, striving to discover where the track, which had originally wound about a good deal, emerged from it. On more than one of these occasions the advisability of conforming to the local custom of staying at home during the rains was forcibly illustrated by a heavy downpour, which left us no choice but to camp as best we could where we were and wait for fine weather in which to resume our search for the track.

'In narrow valleys the track often proceeds along the bed of

a stream with precipitous banks, a thoroughfare which in the rainy season is apt to be monopolised by the stream itself. . . .

'I had a shave at a place called Kaza. Camped in a narrow valley, I heard a fearful crashing just after I had blown my light out. "Elephants," I thought; but it got louder and louder, and I realised that it was an avalanche. Not a very big one, but it would have wiped out my camp had it been in its way. I did not spend much time examining the scene next morning; there might have been more to come. Much more difficult to be forewarned of such an accident than would be the case in a snow avalanche; for this was a landslip, in which tons of the mountain-side peeled away and tore down through the forest, leaving a scar above on the peak and a great track to the level below. A few days before I reached Gondar I got bitten (in fun) by a donkey—my right hand—which made it an awful sweat noting the bearings for my sketch. At Gondar I came across a manuscript history of Theodore (our friend of '68). Nothing would induce the owner to sell. I got a scribe to copy it. He only wrote three pages a day and there were sixty-five. I chipped in, sitting up a couple of nights, and have the copy with me—fifty-five sheets in my hand and ten in his. Some day, if the Press [of Cambridge University] will do it, I will fire it off with a commentary and translation. The account of the British expedition to Mágdala is most interesting. I also commissioned a man at Gondar to write me a history from the death of Theodore up to the present date. My hand still aches; I will shut up. Hope to be at Gallabat in ten days or so. The rains make my pace very slow, holding me up for days on end. . . .'

'Gallabat: June 9.

'At last! and such a business to get across Géndwa, our last river—100 yards wide and 5 ft. deep in the centre. My pony was carried away and let me in for a swim; he stranded some way down, luckily on the right bank (which in this case was the left). . . .'