

GROHMANNSPITZE BY THE S. FACE.—On August 10, 1908, a new route was made up the S. face of the Grohmannspitze by Antonio Dimai and Johann Summermatter, of Randa, with the Fräulein Rolanda and Ilona Eötvös. On September 2 the climb was repeated by Johann and Ferdinand Summermatter, with Messrs. E. B. Harris and A. E. Russell; and, as no account of the first ascent has, so far as is known, been published, the following short notes of the second ascent may prove interesting. Starting from the Sellajoch Haus, the party made their way to the ridge which runs from the Col de Rodella to the S.E. corner of the Grohmannspitze, and along the ridge to the end, where the 'Kletterschuhe' were put on. Bearing to the left over easy rocks, they came on to the S. face, and crossed a broad black band down which water flows. Then followed two difficult traverses to the left (about 50 and 70 ft. respectively), and then for perhaps 1,000 ft. the way led up the wall bearing a little to the right in the direction of the black band. This part of the ascent was very steep and difficult, the holds being small but good. At the top of the wall is a sort of terrace, on the left of which is a couloir, down which water comes. The party crossed the couloir and ascended up or by the side of it to an overhanging place called by the guides the Traversierstelle. Dimai had attempted this route some eighteen years ago, but was unable to get beyond this place, and, after sleeping the night on the mountain, he and his companion finished the ascent by the Johanniskamin, which is some distance to the right. The first successful party traversed to the right about 40 ft., and then back to the left over a sloping ledge with few holds to a point higher up the couloir. On the second ascent Johann made the traverse; but, as the rocks were slippery with sleet which had just commenced to fall, he insisted on the rest of the party coming straight up the couloir, which proved less difficult than it looked. From here the way led straight up the couloir over two overhanging blocks, and then to the left on to the face. The party then zigzagged up to a small hollow, from which, bearing to the right, the top was reached.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

From Ruwenzori to the Congo: a Naturalist's Journey across Africa.

By A. F. R. Wollaston. (London: Murray. 1908.)

THE author of this attractive volume found himself attached at the last moment to a party organised by Mr. Ogilvie Grant of the British Museum, at the costs of private subscribers, in order (as Mr. Grant tells us in a prefatory note) 'to thoroughly explore all parts of the range of Ruwenzori.' The main object in view was, of course, to add to the collections of the Museum. But it might surely have occurred to the promoters of the expedition that such an opportunity for topographic work ought not to be lost, and that the summits of Ruwenzori as well as its slopes would repay

exploration. Moreover, beneath the Equator, neither animal nor vegetable life altogether ceases at levels below 17,000 ft. The fact that the party started without the light tents or ice-axes essential for work above the snow-line strikes us as a somewhat belated example of that disregard of mountaineering, as a branch of travel, which was at one time not unfrequently found in minds professionally devoted to 'a scientific object.' Is not science concerned with the whole of the earth's surface? We venture to hope that no similar mistake will be made in organising the Naturalists' expedition to New Guinea said to be in contemplation. That great island appears to offer the last unknown range of snow-peaks outside the polar circles.

The result of the limited outlook and lack of imagination of those who were responsible for the equipment of the party was that, as far as exploration was concerned, its members could do no more than serve as precursors to the more fortunate Italian prince.

Alpine climbers will sympathise warmly with Mr. Wollaston's disappointment in being compelled to sit for weeks in camp at the foot of the range while the Duke of the Abruzzi was making a clean sweep of its peaks and passes. But, even as it was, he and his colleagues, armed with an old ice-axe left behind by Mr. Freshfield, effected several inroads on the upper region, and did much more than any of their predecessors. Mr. Wollaston climbed a rock-peak N. of the Mobuku icefall, now named after him; he twice reached a point on the crest of Kiyanja, only a few feet below the highest top, and he sighted and approximately located the hitherto unrecognised culminating summits of the range. He penetrated, and but for the war which was raging between the natives and the Belgians, would have explored the main valley on the west of the mountains, which, as Signor Sella has proved, leads up to the highest snows. Of these excursions some account has already appeared in our pages. Their topographic results may be better considered in dealing with the volume which records the Duke of the Abruzzi's more complete successes.

We prefer to use our space here to insist on the rare merits of Mr. Wollaston's book as a record of African travel. Even keen readers of works of this class have found themselves at times loth to read more about Africa. Some years ago African explorers seemed to be all either missionaries or sportsmen, and their stories of slain elephants and converted savages became monotonous. We grew tired of swamps and deserts, the accounts of which were rendered yet more dreary by conventional and characterless woodcuts.

The first book which carried conviction that tropical Africa was worth visiting from the point of view of a lover of landscape was Sir Harry Johnson's 'Uganda' with its brilliant illustrations of beasts, birds, flowers, and scenery. Mr. Wollaston's pages serve to renew the delightful impression of a region that combines the attractions of Eden and Noah's Ark and yet is now within the reach of Cook's tourists! He will make many of his readers scan

seriously the advertisement of a trip round Lake Victoria which has lately decorated the window of the office in Picadilly.

Mr. Wollaston combines several important qualifications as a writer of travel. To begin with, as might be expected from his travelling library, he has style: he has also the art of selection; he does not encumber his narrative with day by day details of dreary marches and recalcitrant porters. A naturalist himself, he knows what and how to observe; he has a keen eye for scenery, and he can describe it so that, as Tennyson wrote of Edward Lear, 'We read and feel that we are there.'

While still on the railway the reader is arrested by the description of the animal and bird life on Lake Naiyasha, an enchanting and healthy spot, already provided with a 'hotel.'

On leaving Entebbe, the capital of Uganda, Mr. Wollaston's routes as far as the point where he descended into the low country of the Congo led him through what is probably the pick of Central African scenery. After the first few marches from Lake Victoria there are no more swamps; the path traverses breezy spacious uplands, and bold hills are continually in sight. If the traveller takes the postal track he descends to Fort Portal among fine bluffs and across belts of noble forest; should he take the Ankole road the approach to Lake Albert Edward (henceforth by the King's permission to be known as Lake Edward) is through a labyrinth of green hills and glens studded with blue tarns, sapphires set in the most exquisite enamel of tropical vegetation.

'By far the fairest view in Africa' is our author's verdict on the prospect of Lake Edward seen from the last spurs of Ruwenzori. We quote his description of it:—

'At our feet lay the great blue lake with its bays and islands and canoes stretching for sixty miles into the southern haze. Beyond, out of the haze, towering up to 18,000 ft., rose the huge cones of the Mfumbiro volcanoes. On our right, that is the west, the nameless blue mountains of the Nile and Congo waterparting sloped steeply into the lake. On our left flat lands by the lake shore and a belt of forest gave way to range upon range of the hills of Ankole, where two racing thunderstorms threw black shadows on the brilliant distance. Behind us rose abruptly the mighty mass of Ruwenzori—not the topmost snows, which lay hidden far behind, but forest-covered heights and tremendous precipices with two deep gorges hewn into the very heart of the mountain.'

The approach from the N.E. to Tanganyika may furnish a companion picture.

'As we came over a little hill there was Tanganyika not half a mile away. I said to myself at once "Lago Maggiore!" There was no doubt about it all; it was as though we had been coming down from Bellinzona to Locarno. The hills on either side were the same in form and height; there were clusters of villages scattered along their sides; there were deep gorges and mountain torrents. There was a dark promontory pointing out where

Canobbio lay, and the bluest water I have seen since I saw the Lago Maggiore, with here and there a patch of purple, when there was a puff of wind. The black euphorbias took the place of cypresses, and at Uvira, where we arrived a few hours later, the illusion was strengthened by the gardens of lemon trees laden with golden fruit.'

Between these prospects, between Lake Edward and Tanganyika, lie the remote Lake Kivu, which has charms of its own, that reminded Mr. Wollaston of the English lakes, and the very interesting group of lofty volcanoes from whose base start both the feeders of Lake Victoria and Lake Edward, the ultimate sources of the Nile. The highest of their summits is about 14,000 ft.: only one has yet been attained—though, like most volcanoes which have retained their form, they do not seem likely to afford any mountaineering problems.

Mr. Wollaston points out the drastic effect on the watershed of Central Africa that the elevation of this region has produced, cutting off Lake Kivu from the Nile, and diverting its outflow to Tanganyika. The mountains appear to shelter a separate race of Pygmies. From Tanganyika the traveller crossed into the basin of the Congo, a region more interesting to the humanitarian than to the mountaineer, into which we cannot follow him here.

The volume is furnished with a map and plentifully illustrated with good photographs. These will help its readers to appreciate Mr. Wollaston's admirable descriptions of the forests of Ruwenzori and to realise, what no language can convey, the weird forms assumed by the almost incredibly fantastic vegetation of the upper region.

D. W. F.

Ruwenzori: an Account of the Expedition of H.R.H. Prince Luigi Amedeo of Savoy, Duke of the Abruzzi. By F. de Filippi, F.R.G.S.; with a Preface by H.R.H. the Duke of the Abruzzi. 4to. 31s. 6d. net. (London: Archibald Constable. 1908.)

The bare results of the Duke of the Abruzzi's expedition to Ruwenzori have long been known, and a short account of them was given in this 'Journal.'* Neither the Duke himself nor any other member of his party had leisure to write a full account of his explorations, and the task was entrusted to Cav. Filippo de Filippi, a companion of the Duke on one of his former journeys. The author has the knowledge of the expert mountaineer and the instincts of an artist, and he has so successfully imbued himself, from the journals and conversation of the members of the party, with the spirit of Ruwenzori that it would be easy to believe that he was himself one of the expedition. The translation from the Italian by Madame de Filippi is admirable. The illustrations by Cav. Vittorio Sella are as good as anything he has ever done, but we do not think that the method of reproduction which has been employed is a very suitable one. Many of the plates

* Vol. xxii. pp. 386-392.

produce an impression of hard and clear-cut outlines, almost as if the scene were *in vacuo*, which is not found in the original photographs and is contrary to our recollection of a soft and abundant atmosphere, even during the rare hours of sunshine which we enjoyed in Ruwenzori. Except for that taken from Mount Baker, which is not reproduced here, the series of panoramic views is practically complete, and Cav. Sella is to be congratulated on his untiring energy and patience, which can hardly be appreciated by those who have not themselves shivered on the foggy ridges of Ruwenzori.

Such photographs as he gives us are scientific documents. The panoramas will be of no slight use in adding detail to the map and relief model of Ruwenzori now being prepared at the War Office as a result of the frontier survey recently completed by Major Bright. His numerous large pictures of single specimens of the strange flora will, we trust, find a place on the walls of the Natural History Museum.

Though it has nothing to do with Ruwenzori the panorama at p. 84 compels our admiration: it is the only photograph we have ever seen which gives a true idea of the spaciousness of Central African scenery.

Like other travellers before them, the Duke and his companions stood amazed at the fantastic vegetation and the unearthly scenery of the higher valleys. We cannot refrain from quoting Cav. de Filippi's admirable description of the third terrace (11,500 ft.) of the Mobuku valley. 'The whole valley on every side as far as you could see was one mass of luxuriant vegetation of indescribable strangeness. The ground was carpeted with a deep layer of lycopodium and springy moss, and thickly dotted with big clumps of the papery flowers, pink, yellow, and silver white, of the *helichrysum* or everlasting, above which rose the tall columnar stalks of the *lobelia*, like funereal torches, beside huge branching groups of the monster *senecio*. The impression produced was beyond words to describe; the spectacle was too weird, too improbable, too unlike all familiar images, and upon the whole brooded the same grave, deathly silence.'

The organisation of the expedition left nothing undone and no contingency unforeseen. The party numbered, besides the Duke, eleven Italians, including four guides and porters from Courmayeur; and the native caravan carried upwards of 250 loads. The resources of the local (Uganda) administration were placed freely at the disposal of the party, and the best use was made of them. The Duke carried one most important factor of success in his knowledge of the season of (probable) dry weather in the range, a fact which had eluded previous travellers. He was hampered somewhat by the conflicting theories held by his predecessors as to the positions of the various peaks, but this difficulty was dispelled by the clear views of the range seen from a distance of 40 miles, and again of the important peaks viewed from the lower valleys. Thus the Duke was enabled early to realise the importance of the Bujuku valley, a circumstance which had been suspected by the British Museum

party, who had been prevented by lack of means and men from cutting a way into it. The Bujuku may be described as being to the Mobuku what the Zermatt valley is to the Saas valley. To pursue this comparison further Mount Stanley will occupy the position of Monte Rosa, and the three passes now called the Freshfield, Scott Elliot, and Stuhlmann Passes will correspond to the Monte Moro, Weisssthor, and Lysjoch.

Two paragraphs (p. 198-9) adequately sum up the main features of the range. 'The range of Ruwenzori is situated less than half a degree N. of the Equator, and about 30° long. E. Greenwich. The general direction is N. and S. and the shape is very nearly that of the written G. The principal groups would compose the main curve of the G, while one group only, that furthest S., would represent the tail of the letter.

'The range consists of six mountains, *i.e.* groups of peaks with glaciers, divided from one another by cols without snow, and therefore quite clearly distinct from one another. The area actually covered by glaciers is a little more than 7 miles long in a straight line from S. to N., and about 4 miles wide from E. to W. The length of the watershed ridge, including all the groups—that is to say, the entire snowy range is about 11 miles long.'

We may add as the result of a study of Cav. Sella's complete set of photographs now in England, and, we hope, shortly to be seen in the Club Rooms, that S. of Mount Luigi di Savoia the highest crest seems, at a level of about 13,000 ft., to have been weathered to a uniform table-like surface, while the lower spurs, particularly those round the Mahoma valley, are crowned by bold rock towers. Were the Adamello group denuded of snow and glaciers it might present a similar aspect. It is also evident that the glens on the W. side of the range are not only steeper but shorter than those that send their torrents to Lake Ruisamba. The buttresses of Mount Stanley on this slope are noble specimens of mountain architecture.

With his excellent guides and porters, and ably assisted by the black army below the snow line the Duke of the Abruzzi climbed all the principal peaks of the range, and those that remain are of secondary importance. Between June 10 and July 19 sixteen peaks were climbed, some of them four or five times, and their heights and positions accurately determined. We may judge of the thoroughness with which the whole campaign was planned when we read that on one occasion the Duke of the Abruzzi saw from the top of a peak two other parties of his expedition carrying out their allotted tasks in other parts of the range. There are probably some fine expeditions still to be made from the western side of the highest peaks, and there remain innumerable rock-climbs of greater or less difficulty. The dangers and difficulties of mountaineering in Ruwenzori are found to lie mostly below the snow level. When its climatic seasons are recognised and better accommodation than a 'rock shelter' (*lucus a non lucendo*) has been provided in the upper regions the range

will probably in the future become a recognised goal for the lovers of mountains. For them its isolation, its atmosphere, and its strange beauty must always have charm. But it may safely be predicted that it will never become a popular resort of those who climb for climbing's sake; the snow is easy and the immense cornices on the summit ridges are safely buttressed by a forest of ice stalactites. The glaciers are little more than ice caps, and none of them are of the first magnitude. It appears that they are subject to the same conditions as Alpine glaciers, but the apparently contradictory suggestion is made that the limpidity of their streams is due to their almost complete immobility. Exactly the same feature, the clearness of glacier streams, is found in the Brenta Dolomites and in not a few other torrents in Tyrol, but we do not know that any responsible person has started a theory that it is the result of the immobility of the ice.

A few inaccuracies and misprints in the names of places and of previous travellers, and such plurals as 'Bakonjos,' might well have been avoided in a book which is likely to remain the classic description of one of the most interesting mountain ranges in the world. There are other matters of detail which might call for notice had they not already been dealt with in a review in the 'Geographical Journal.'

The taunt which has not infrequently been levelled against mountaineers that they contribute nothing to scientific or geographical knowledge should now be silenced for ever. Here a party of mountaineers have disclosed one of the last of the earth's secrets and have given to us an accurate description of the most mysterious mountain range in the world.

The Alpine Ski Club Annual: a Record of Winter Mountaineering. By Members of the Alpine Ski Club. No. I. Price 2s. (London: Horace Marshall & Son. 1908.)

Nothing could show more clearly the progress which ski-ing has made in the Alps than this well-edited, well-printed, and well-illustrated number of what is intended to be an annual publication.

All climbers will be interested in this new departure, and if the standard set in this first number is maintained we may look for a long life for this latest of Alpine serials.

The first article is naturally taken up with an explanation of the aims of the Alpine Ski Club. It will perhaps be well to explain these aims. 'The A.S.C. does not aim at competing with existing clubs, many of whose leading members we hope to enrol. We work on perhaps narrower but not conflicting lines. We do not touch racing, ski-jumping, or any form of record-breaking, however venial. We offer no badges, we frame no tests. To ensure that every member of the club shall be fit for first-class ski expeditions candidates for election are asked for a list of their climbs, but, once elected, no attempt is made to discriminate between members of the club. Our aim is to unite those bound by a common love for the mountains joined to a desire to explore them in winter—those,

in fact, who prefer spending long days on the heights to executing perfect "Telemarks" within a few yards of the hotel. We hope to facilitate mountaineering on ski by fitting out club huts and publishing ski-ing guides—one such to the Western Oberland will be obtainable next June. Lectures on ski-ing subjects and a journal containing the experiences of the members are of course included in our programme. We are, in a lesser degree, interested in all winter mountaineering, even without the aid of ski. With an ex-President (Sir Martin Conway) and an ex-Vice-President (Dr. G. H. Savage) of the Alpine Club as our leaders we are starting under good auspices, and we hope that many members of the Alpine Club will join this her latest offspring.'

After a long paragraph on winter mountaineering the article proceeds—

'Now to the pedestrian mountaineering in winter means hours of weary plodding through snowdrifts, and it is here that the ski steps in to the rescue, for on ski a climber sinks but a few inches into the most evil of drifts. Ski can be taken to the base of the rocks and regained on the descent. In this way Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, the Finsteraarhorn, the Jungfrau, and the Combin have all been partially or entirely climbed on ski.'

After 'The Aims of the Alpine Ski Club' have been explained there follow many interesting articles. Amongst them is 'A Raid on Ski amid the High Alps,' by F. F. Roget (this takes us to the Aiguille du Chardonnet, the Aiguille du Tour, and the Grand Combin). 'The Wildstrubel and Wildhorn on Ski' is by Walter Larden, A.C. Mr. Larden speaks with enthusiasm of his descent from the Wildhorn. 'The descent was absolutely perfect; a joy that I have never experienced in my summer climbs; worth living for; the memory of it calls up now a passionate longing that seems to suit strangely with middle age.'

Then we have 'Recollections,' by W. Rickmer Rickmers, A.C., who is so well known to all of us as the apostle of ski-ing amongst our own members. 'Four Days on Ski,' by the editor, gives a graphic account of a descent to Lenk by the Rawyl Pass. Mr. Lunn had good reasons for wishing to reach Lenk as soon as possible. He writes (on p. 63), 'I had never crossed this (the Rawyl Pass) in summer, but did not anticipate any difficulty in finding the way. I did not, however, allow for the fact that the pass, though traversed with safety by beasts of burden in summer, might be dangerous and difficult in winter. Like the Gemmi, the Rawyl path climbs a wall of precipices, and is perfectly safe in summer for man and beasts of burden. Had we foreseen its resemblance to the Gemmi we should never have attempted it, knowing from hearsay the condition of the Gemmi in winter.' After overcoming great and dangerous difficulties Mr. Lunn and his companion effected the descent in safety.

Other papers take us to the Furggrat, the Adler pass, Mürren, and Gurnigel. The number also contains an article on 'Mountaineering Literature of the Year,' and concludes with an account of the Alpine Ski Club's governing body and rules.