

THE EXPLORATION OF THE RUWENZORI

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FROM earliest times, the ancient Mediterranean world was interested in the source of the Nile and there was clearly much conjecture amongst the geographers of those far off days, as frequent classical references show. As explorers amongst the moderns, therefore, discovered one mountain after another in central Africa, each discovery, in its turn, was heralded as the mountainous source of the great river. When the German missionary Rebmann, and his colleague Dr. Krapf, first sighted Kilimanjaro in 1846, they thought that they had found the snows to which the classics referred, as later did the discoverers of both Mount Kenya and the Bufumbiro volcanoes : these were all seen by European explorers before the Ruwenzori. Claudius Ptolemy, writing in about the year A.D. 150, was the first to make widely known to the western world that the source of the Nile lay in great lakes fed by streams from a snow mountain ; this he called the ' Mountains of the Moon.' His maps show the main features of the Nile valley with considerable accuracy and the longitude and latitude which he ascribes to his ' Mountains of the Moon ' agree, in a remarkable degree, with the position actually occupied by the Ruwenzori : this of course, in no way, applies to the other mountain masses of central Africa. This question is still argued by some, albeit there is little reason to support those who hold that it was not the Ruwenzori to which Ptolemy referred. The rivers that rise from Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro do not flow into the Nile ; the chain of the Bufumbiro volcanoes forms, in the Albertine Rift, the watershed between the great river basins of the Nile and the Congo, so that part only of the drainage from its heights flow to the Nile, whereas with the Ruwenzori it is an entirely different picture. The Ruwenzori range rises on the eastern side of the Albertine Rift and streams from its eastern, western, northern and southern flanks all ultimately send their waters into the river Nile, by way either of the Semliki river or of the great lakes, Edward, George and Victoria and finally Lake Albert.

It is now therefore commonly accepted that Ptolemy's ' Mountains of the Moon ' are, in fact, the Ruwenzori. There had been mention of the snow-fed sources of the Nile before his time and the Duke of the Abruzzi held that Aristotle, in 350 B.C., when he wrote of the ' Silver Mountain ' was the first person to mention the Ruwenzori. A hundred years before this, even so, Herodotus, the father of Greek history, had said that the Nile rose from a spring, fed by the waters of a bottomless lake situated between two sharp pointed peaks, Crophi and Mophi. Dr. Noel Humphreys picturesquely associates these sharp pointed peaks with Mounts Emin and Gessi, which appear so when seen from the north, and thus he makes the lake between them the ' Abysmal Lake,' and the source of the Ruamuli the fountain of the Nile as known to the ancient world.

If additional evidence is needed we must turn to Arabic literature for Arabic writers in the seventeenth century compiled much information, from earlier and partly legendary sources, as to the snows from which the Nile springs: these sources include a manuscript dated 1344 left by the Arab geographer Edrisi (Abou Abdullah Mohammed) who placed the great lakes and the Jebel El Qamar (Mountains of the Moon) with surprising accuracy. The sources of these tales were the Sabaean Arabs who are, in fact, credited, by certain authorities, with the real discovery of the Ruwenzori: it was this, no doubt, that led Ptolemy to make his remarkable deductions. These were most enterprising people and they are known to have travelled deep into the heart of Africa, so that it is unlikely that they did not reach as far as Lake Albert, from the southern end of which the northern peaks of the Ruwenzori are frequently visible, seen as two sharply pointed summits.

Sir Henry Stanley was the first to proclaim to the modern world the existence of the Ruwenzori, which he had seen during the course of the great expedition which he took out from England to relieve Emin Pasha, isolated in the heart of Africa by the Mahdist troubles in the Sudan. He claimed to have made the discovery himself on May 24, 1888, but in actual fact two members of his expedition, Surgeon Parke and Mountenoy-Jephson had seen the snows a month previously on April 20 in the same year, when near the shores of Lake Albert. Although at the time they reported their find to Stanley, he, in his book, *In Darkest Africa*, dismisses it on the improbable grounds that they were looking in the wrong direction. On his own first sight of the Ruwenzori snows he writes that his eyes were directed by a boy to a mountain said to be covered with salt. Without realising it, he himself had seen the range on a previous expedition twelve years before, when descending the escarpment above Lake George, as also had the Italian geographer Romolo Gessi, on his way to the first complete examination of the shores of Lake Albert. During his first expedition, in 1864, when he had discovered the existence of this lake, Sir Samuel Baker had seen the great mass of mountains to the south but naming them 'The Blue Mountains,' a name also found in Arabic literature, had entirely failed to realise the importance of the great natural feature that he had observed. Baker was, however, the first European to see the Ruwenzori.

But we will not quarrel with Stanley, or deny him the right to have had the highest mountain named after him, for to him we owe the first knowledge that here was a range of snow mountains and, to him also, we owe the name 'Ruwenzori,' one of many names that he thought the natives had told him. Actually, and most appropriately, the word means 'the place whence the rain comes,' being derived from the Lunyoro prefix Ru- (Proper to ranges of mountains, rivers, or indeed, anything long) and 'enjura' or 'enzhura' meaning rain. The word was transcribed by Stanley as Runzori; hence Ruwenzori. To-day it seems practically impossible to trace any native name either for the massif itself or for the individual peaks, as the Bakonjo, who inhabit the lower slopes, seem to give names only to rivers and individual places

which they know and which are of value to them, such as caves, camping or hunting grounds. The name 'Gamba-ragara' is sometimes used by natives of neighbouring countries to describe the land in the Ruwenzori region and at his first sight Stanley seems to have been told that he was looking at the great mountain in the country of 'Gamba-ragara.' This name seems to derive from the expression 'Gamalaga Gabinba biri,' which means 'the great leaf in which the clouds are boiled' perhaps the new, and surely the most expressive of the native names for the Ruwenzori massif.

After his first sight of the snows, Stanley moved into the Congo, returning again in the following year, during the course of which he spent nearly three months in the Ruwenzori region and passed right down the western slopes of the massif, getting, of course, frequent views of the snow peaks. While this journey was being made, a member of his party, Lieutenant W. G. Stairs, climbed to a height of over 10,000 ft. up one of the western valleys, probably the Luzilubu, and so became the first European to see anything of the Ruwenzori at close range. He estimated the height of the snow peak which he approached at 16,600 ft., but he did not think that it was the highest point: this, the first of many climbs, took place in June 1889. The purpose of Stanley's journey having been accomplished he reached Zanzibar, in company with Emin Pasha, the name by which, in those parts of Africa, Dr. Eduard Schnitzer, the German who governed Equatoria for the Khedive of Egypt, was universally known, in December of that year. Emin, however, could not stay away from the land of the great lakes and June 1891 found him camped on the banks of the Semliki river, this time at the head of a German expedition, one of whose members was Dr. F. Stuhlmann. Stuhlmann climbed up the Butagu valley, at the present time the most commonly used of the approaches from the west, to a height of 13,236 ft. to the south of Mont Nugale and so gained the first near view of the snows, but even so did not appreciate the presence of glaciers: at the highest point reached he left a bottle and the place is now known as Campiya Clupa or Bottle Camp. G. F. Scott-Elliott, the naturalist, was next in the field, with a series of expeditions made in 1894 and 1895; he used the Butagu, Ruimi, Mobuku and Namwamba valleys but got no higher than had Stuhlmann and the results of his expeditions were primarily of botanical importance.

We are now, however, passing away from the days of the early African explorers and the names which, henceforth, are found to be associated with the opening up of the Ruwenzori are those either of local residents or of well-known mountaineers. The country near the base of the massif was reasonably well known and European soldiers, officials and missionaries were, by this time, living within sight of the mountains. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that the next excursion to the higher slopes was made by a member of the Uganda administration on what was probably a holiday trip and that he left no record other than that which is to be found in a private and unpublished diary. This was Captain Claude Sitwell, D.S.O. who went up the Namwamba valley in July

1898. Starting from Kilembe he reached the snows in three days, without encountering any remarkable difficulties. His brief notes make pleasant reading when compared with the sombre utterances of most of the travellers of this period. Of the way up we read, 'very pretty country, plenty streams to cross. Had to leave cows on other side of river as banks were too steep for them' and at the highest point reached, 'got up to snow, but could not reach top as there was sheer rock and no road.' Working out his route as best one can from such brief notes it seems that he must have followed an old native hunter's track, leading from the Namwamba river to the Ibanda rock shelter at the head of the Kurugutu valley and climbed some way up the rock peak of Rugendwara (13,899 ft.), on which snow often lies and which is still unclimbed.

At this time, and in fact until the Duke of the Abruzzi's expedition of 1906, there was a remarkable degree of confusion as to the true topography of the range and its correct height, some estimates even suggesting, somewhat wilfully one fears, that the highest summit approached 20,000 ft. In the spring of 1899 C. E. S. Moore went up to the head of the Mobuku valley and so became the first to reach the glaciers, the existence of which had not previously been recorded, or, apparently, suspected: even Dr. Stuhlmann who had got quite close to the snows on the west side of the range and took a photograph, which shows the glaciers clearly, did not realise their presence. Moore climbed some way up the Mobuku glacier and reached the crest of one of the ridges on Mount Baker.

This climb, showing as it did that the Mobuku route gave easy and relatively quick access to the glaciers and that the snow line on the Ruwenzori was comparatively low for an equatorial mountain, provided the impetus for a series of similar expeditions. None of these were of real importance for they added no material information to the somewhat scanty knowledge of the massif then existing and this, to a remarkable extent, applies of all subsequent parties until that of the Duke of the Abruzzi in 1906. Now that we have full knowledge of the topography of the whole massif it is easy to comment on the lack of enterprise shown at the time but conditions of those days were very different from those that we find to-day, and it was no easy matter to persuade native porters to move into country that was unknown to them. However, had any of these parties walked up the easy slopes of Hamugoma, to the Freshfield pass, a matter of a little more than an hour from the point at which they took to the glaciers, they would have found the key to the problem. We can pass, therefore with but brief comment the activities of the parties that immediately followed. After Moore, and in the same year 1900, three parties followed his route up the Mobuku; these were Fergusson, who should have been Moore's companion, Stephen Bagge, a member of the Colonial Service stationed at Fort Portal, and, in September of that year, Sir Harry Johnston with W. G. Doggett and Wallis Vale. Sir Harry Johnston took a number of excellent photographs and made a series of lovely sketches, many of which have been

published in his book *The Uganda Protectorate*, in which there is a wealth of valuable information on the flora and fauna of the region, as well as of its native inhabitants. Unfortunately it was Sir Harry who was responsible for the most exaggerated estimates of the height of the Ruwenzori, carried away perhaps, by a patriotic and wishful desire to find in British territory a peak higher than the summit of Kilimanjaro, which was within the then German East Africa.

In the following year another officer of the Uganda Protectorate service, Mr. W. H. Wylde, took the same route and reached roughly the same point as had Moore before him. There was no activity in 1902, but shortly after the New Year the Rev. A. B. Fisher, a missionary stationed at Fort Portal, and his wife went up to the Mobuku glacier: Mrs. Fisher thus became the first woman to visit the Ruwenzori snows and, indeed, in those days it was a remarkable journey for a woman to have undertaken. They went up to the snows again in 1906 and their local knowledge was of great value to some of the later expeditions. We must move, now, once again to the western slopes for in 1904 Dr. J. J. David ascended the Butagu valley. Such accounts as he left of his expedition are, to say the least, extremely nebulous and it is difficult to ascertain the point, which, in actual fact, he reached. He claimed to have reached a pass on the main watershed at a height of 16,400 ft. and if, indeed, he actually did so, he must have climbed up the West Stanley glacier either to the col between the Moebius and Alexandra peaks or that between Moebius and Elena and so have been the first to see the great ice plain of the Stanley Plateau: it is unfortunate that he left such meagre records.

In 1905, for the first time in its history, a party of really experienced mountaineers visited the Ruwenzori: these were D. W. Freshfield, President of the Alpine Club in 1893 and possessor of a long record of climbs in the Alps and elsewhere, to say nothing of his Himalayan explorations, and A. L. Mumm, also a well-known mountaineer, together with the distinguished guide, Moritz Inderbinnen of Zermatt. They were, however, no more successful than their predecessors, reaching a point on the ridge similar to that attained by Moore. Having been unfortunately advised as to the most likely time of year they chose the month of November for their attempt and striking remarkably bad weather, even for that inauspicious month, were, almost literally, washed off the mountains by floods. Three months later, in January 1906, Herr R. Grauer, a member of the Austro-German Alpine club, with two members of the Church Missionary Society stationed in Uganda, H. E. Maddox and H. W. Tegart, both of whom had been up to the glacier the previous year, made the first ascent of any of the peaks, albeit a most minor one. Following the route of their predecessors they reached, on January 18, the summit ridge of Mount Baker and climbed a small rock peak, which they named after King Edward, but which is now more appropriately called Grauer's rock. Studying the accounts of these climbs as well as that of Wollaston which will be described immediately, the reason for the topographical confusion becomes more apparent. In

the first place it was thought that there were but four separately identifiable mountains, whereas, in fact there are six individual groups above the snow line and secondly parties reaching the summit ridge of Mount Baker seem to have thought that they were looking down the western slopes of the range towards the Congo forests, when they were looking to the north across the upper Bujuku valley towards the peaks we now know as Speke, Emin and Gessi. There was a variety of reasons for this confusion, of which bad weather and almost zero visibility were the most serious, but the complication was clearly increased by a laudable, and natural insistence on trying to identify the peaks by a series of native names, which we now know do not exist. Duwoni, Kiyanja and Ngombwimbi are prettier sounding names than Baker, Stanley and Speke but unfortunately they are not identifiable as individual features of the Ruwenzori range. The river rock shelters and camping grounds have fascinating descriptive names which, fortunately, can be retained and we must content ourselves with these.

At about the same time that the first ascent of Grauer's rock on Mount Baker was being made, the first British Museum expedition to visit the Ruwenzori arrived from England and established its base at Mihunga, at an altitude of some 6,000 ft., in the Mobuku valley. This was not, of course, a mountaineering party, its objects being research into the flora and fauna of the range but, fortunately, amongst its members was A. F. R. Wollaston, a thoroughly experienced mountaineer, who took the first opportunity possible to make an attempt on the high peaks. February of that year found him at the top of Grauer's rock, in the company of H. B. Woosnam and R. E. Dent, members of the same expedition, but this is to move ahead somewhat for Wollaston was not the first member of this party to go up to the snows. Woosnam, with M. Carruthers, took a camp up to Bujongolo in the upper Mobuku valley, late in January and from this point followed Grauer's route to the watershed. Woosnam cut forty or fifty steps in the Mobuku glacier with his hunting knife and then walked up easy snow to a point near the base of a black rock on the ridge, where he found a tin containing the names of Grauer's party: he had what he describes as a good view to the Congo side. On February 17, the day following their ascent of the rock, Wollaston and Woosnam got away from Bujongolo early and instead of following the previous day's route kept to the right (north) of the Mobuku, moving towards the peak that they describe as Kiyanja; after climbing over easy ice and snow slopes they reached the lower of the two summits that Johnston had thought of as the highest of the range. Then, and without difficulty, they ascended the higher of the peaks: this was, in fact the first ascent of the Wollaston peak (15,285 ft.) of Mount Baker and the climbers realised, of course, that they were not on the highest point of the range, although they did not get a clear view, which would have enabled them to sort out the muddled topography of the Ruwenzori.

Wollaston comes into the picture twice more: in May he left the expedition for a few days in order to be able to go into Fort Portal, meet

the Duke of the Abruzzi and give him the valuable information that he had been able to collect about the mountains, and in August when he tried to go up the Butagu valley from the west. This attempt was a fiasco, albeit not of Wollaston's making, for when leaving his second camp at about 10,000 ft., he received a message to say that the escort which the Belgian officers at Beni had insisted should accompany him had been attacked by armed natives and that one soldier had been killed and five wounded and so, on a brilliantly clear day, he had to descend and extricate the escort from a predicament which seems to have been largely of their own making. In a letter he wrote, '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 the three days back to Beni.' This is the only recorded instance of hostility from the natives living in the Ruwenzori region and seems to have been the result of stupid behaviour by the Belgian officer in charge of the escort, which was allowed to camp in the native gardens, cut down food crops, loot the huts and, as if this was not enough, shoot the village cow.

But before this there had been the great Italian expedition and the Ruwenzori was no longer terra incognita. The Duke of the Abruzzi came out with a formidable party; he himself was a mountaineer and explorer of the highest order and his party included two well-known Alpine guides, Joseph Petigax and Cesar Ollier and the porters, Joseph Brocherel and Laurent Petigax. Ollier and Brocherel were not strangers to East Africa for they had acted as guides to Sir Halford Mackinder in 1899 when he had made the first ascent of Mount Kenya. There was also Vittorio Sella, perhaps the most accomplished of all mountain photographers, Umberto Cagni, who was to be principally responsible for the survey work, Roccati, in charge of the scientific side and twelve Europeans in all, a formidable team quite on the Himalayan model. We need not concern ourselves with their journey out from Naples, their reception at Entebbe or their walk up to Toro, and we can start to follow their movements only after they had established a base-camp at Bujongolo (12,461 ft.), the rock shelter at the head of the Mobuku valley used by most of the previous parties: this they did on June 8, 1906, taking a light camp up to the edge of the glacier on the following day. By 6.30 in the morning on June 10 the Duke and his two guides were on the terminal ridge of Baker, at the base of Grauer's rock, and there was perfect visibility so that, immediately and for the first time, the whole range was visible and its main topographical features, for so long a mystery, became apparent. This half-hour of clear weather at the start of the expedition was the explanation of the rapid and complete success that favoured them throughout and which enabled such an excellent map to be made, as they had reached a point from which all the high peaks could be seen. They were looking down to Lake Bujuku and saw the importance of the long Bujuku valley and so realised that the peaks at the head of the Mobuku valley were not on the main watershed, as all previous parties had imagined.

The Duke and his guides left Grauer's Col, the point which they had

first reached, after but a short stay and traversing the high ridge of Mount Baker climbed without difficulty to the two peaks of Edward and Semper. From the Edward peak, he was able, for the first time, to see Freshfield's Col and the valley, which is in fact the upper Butagu, which divides Mount Baker, where he was standing, from the highest of all, Mount Stanley. Returning to Bujongolo the party was held prisoner by rain for three days, during the course of which, however, Sella had followed the Duke's tracks to the Grauer's Col and turning in the opposite direction along the ridge had made the first ascent of Moore peak and had also climbed Wollaston. On the 15th the Duke, with Petigax, Ollier and Brocherel made the first crossing of the Freshfield pass and camped alongside the lower of the two Kitandara lakes. The next two days were spent in relaying loads up the valley and by the evening of the 17th the party had crossed the Scott-Elliott pass and established a high camp on the ridge overlooking the Elena glacier on Mount Stanley and opposite the two southernmost peaks, Elena and Savoia, of the central group : the higher summits were not visible from their camp, now known as ridge camp (14,858 ft.), but starting before dawn on the 18th, they reached the ice plain of the Stanley plateau at 6.30 and had a clear view of the twin peaks, the lower of which, Alexandra, was ascended in an hour without any serious difficulty. They waited for an hour and a half to get a really clear sight of the higher Margherita but without avail, although it was not entirely hidden, and eventually decided to take the shortest and most direct route, which is also, almost certainly, the most difficult and therefore descended the steep slope to the col. Crossing the great crevasses in the gap they took the direct line and, with Petigax leading cut up the practically vertical ice to Margherita, a way through the cornice being found by means of a short ice chimney : before midday they stood on the highest point of the range. After a day of rest in their tents at ridge camp they returned to Alexandra on the 20th finishing off the day with a traverse of the Elena and Savoia peaks.

We need not follow the rest of this expedition in such detail except in so far as it is necessary to show how completely they covered the highest part of the range. From the ridge camp the Duke and his guides descended into the Bujuku valley, climbed up to the Stuhlmann pass and camped near the twin lakes at the foot of the Speke glacier ; from this camp they made the first ascent of the Vittorio Emanuele peak of Mount Speke, without difficulty. They then continued northwards along the western slopes of Speke, crossed the Cavalli pass and climbed Umberto, the highest of the three peaks of Mount Emin, retracing their steps to the camp at the foot of the Freshfield pass, where they rejoined the rest of the expedition on July 1. The rest of the expedition had been by no means idle. Sella had made the ascent of two of the three peaks of Mount Luigi di Savoia, Stairs and Sella as well as making the first ascent of Moebios, had been to the top of Mount Baker on several occasions and had twice been up Alexandra : as a result of these climbs and of his determination not to be put off by bad weather he was able to

take a magnificent series of photographs and panoramas. Cagni, having measured out a base line at Bujongolo had achieved a remarkable degree of success with the survey for which he was responsible and in order to get this done had been up to Grauer's Col of Mount Baker, had made yet another ascent of Alexandra and had twice climbed the difficult rock peak to the north-east of Bujongolo that bears his name. Roccati had meanwhile made a valuable geological examination of a considerable part of the area of the high peaks. The main body of the expedition descended the Mobuku valley from Bujongolo by the route which they had used on the ascent but the Duke, with Petigax and Ollier, once again moved round to Bujuku with a few porters. On their way down the Bujuku, which they ultimately followed to its junction with the Mobuku, they turned north up the Mijusi valley and climbed both the peaks of Mount Gessi so to round off the work of this amazingly successful expedition carried out as it was on the grand Himalayan model. The main problems were all solved and the Ruwenzori had found its proper place on the map of Africa.

Nothing further of importance took place for twenty years when Dr. Noel Humphreys paid the first of a remarkable series of visits to the range. As we have seen the Duke of the Abruzzi had used the technique of most detailed preparation and the highly elaborate expedition, with no expense spared. Dr. Humphrey's approach was entirely different; he worked with a few companions, or sometimes even alone, and his organisation was on the most spartan lines, with an amazing absence of paraphernalia. Even so he achieved results as great, perhaps, as that of the expedition that we have just described.

Dr. Humphreys took up two expeditions in 1926, the first in February and the second in July. On the first E. H. Armitage and D. Stedman Davies were his companions and but for the second ascent of Speke it did not produce remarkable mountaineering results. However, several attempts were made on Mount Stanley, not only by the plateau route, but also by way of the eastern ridges directly from Bujuku the possibility of reaching the Col between the twin peaks from the west was also noted. The northern plateau was crossed for the first time and after traversing the Roccati and Cavalli passes the party descended into the Congo, ultimately reaching Fort Portal by way of the Bwamba pass on the northern spur of the range. The second expedition took place in July and on this Dr. Humphreys was accompanied by E. H. Armitage, N. F. S. Andrews, R. T. Wickham and George Oliver and they made straight-away for the Duke's high camp overlooking the Elena glacier on Mount Stanley. The Stanley plateau was reached on eight successive days, without the view being clear enough to allow an attempt being made on the twin peaks. On the ninth day, however, their remarkable persistence was rewarded and skirting the base of Alexandra they climbed onto the main east ridge of Margherita and this they followed to the summit, a difficult cornice having to be negotiated before they got onto the ridge. From the top of Margherita they reached the original route to Alexandra, thus achieving the second ascent of the twin peaks, though not of course

of the lower summit itself, which had been previously climbed several times by the Italians. They then climbed Speke, including the first ascent of Johnston and the lesser summit, overlooking Bujuku, to which they gave the name of 'Trident peak,' crossed the Scott-Elliott and Freshfield passes to a camp on Hamugoma, from which they climbed the Edward and Semper peaks on Baker as well as the Stairs and Sella peaks of Mount Luigi di Savoia: the party came down by way of Bujongolo and the Mobuku valley. In 1926 also the American ornithologist, Dr. James P. Chapin, spent several months on the Ruwenzori, studying the flora and fauna of the western slopes. He climbed alone to a height of 15,400 ft. on Mount Stanley.

In order to complete the picture at this stage brief reference should be made to the visits paid by various French and Belgian naturalists, of which there has been a number. The first of these was that of M. Alluaud who went up the Mobuku valley with his wife in 1909. Then came the Belgian botanist J. Becquaert, whose name is now identified with one of the most frequently seen of the lobelias, who led an expedition up the Bu Tagu valley in 1914, the route also followed by Hunbat, who incidentally reached the top of Mugale (c. 14,700 ft.) in 1929 and M. and Mme. Lebrun in 1930. For many years now the western slopes of the Ruwenzori have been included in the Parc National Albert and this is the approach always used from the Coulo side.

Dr. Humphreys returned to Uganda in 1931 as Medical Officer and Surveyor to the Air Survey Company that was making an air photographic survey of the basin of the White Nile on behalf of the Egyptian Government. He arranged as part of his contract to make two flights over the mountains and this brought to bear on the Ruwenzori the most modern method of exploration, namely that of following up in detail on the ground what had previously been observed from the air. The first flight over the range was made on December 13, 1931 in a Gipsy III de Havilland Puss Moth with a ceiling of 16,800 ft.; the pilot was P. W. Lynch Blosse. They flew over the Scott-Elliott pass at the ceiling height for the plane, when an air current shot them up to 18,400 ft., which height they were able to hold sufficiently to allow them to fly over the top of Margherita itself. They flew round each of the snow mountains in turn and backwards and forwards over both the northern and southern plateaux, so definitely proving that there were no snow mountains other than those already known. They discovered in this flight some twenty unrecorded lakes, including the remarkable chain of eight lakes in the upper Nyamagasani valley and of course, for the first time an overall picture of the whole range was revealed to them. Dr. Humphreys describes the Ruwenzori as 'an elliptical peneplain—deep valleys radiating from the centre.' One other flight was made ten days later.

In 1932 Dr. Humphreys followed up his observations from the air by a series of no less than five expeditions on foot, throughout all of which he not only carried out a survey of the country traversed but also collected plants and specimens which were sent to England. The first of

the expeditions took place during February and March and George Oliver was his companion. They went up the Bujuku and Bukurungu valleys, made the second ascent of the Iolanda peak of Mount Gessi, Humphreys actually completing the ascent with a broken arm and descended by way of the Lamia which was traced from its source on the ridge between Mount Gessi and the Portal peaks. In April Humphreys started alone but was later joined by Oliver. Leaving the Mobuku they entered, for the first time, the Kurugutu valley, from the upper end of which they climbed a new peak between Stairs and Sella on Mount Luigi. They then crossed to the headwaters of the Namwamba and after spending several hours on top of a lesser summit saw the way to the Weismann peak, the highest point of Mount Luigi di Savoia, and this they climbed for the first time, without difficulty, on April 17. They then explored down the valley of the Nyamagasani, visiting the eight lakes seen from the air, climbed the prominent Watamagufu, returning with some difficulty across a high pass to the west of Mount Luigi di Savoia and so by way of the Freshfield pass to the Mobuku. These two expeditions were perhaps those of the greatest importance and included the principal work of following up the observations from the air.

In June and July, Dr. Humphreys returned alone, choosing on this occasion an entirely new line of approach, namely the watershed to the north of the river Ruimi, which gave an easy though perhaps not particularly direct route to the snows. The headwaters of the Ruamuli were explored, an unclimbed peak on Mount Emin, Okwetegereza the Waiting peak, was climbed and yet another new route was traversed on the way down, the ridge between the Lamia and Ruamuli rivers. During July and August he joined the Belgian expedition, based on Mutwanga in the valley of the Butagu and which will be described later, and made, in company with members of that expedition, an ascent of the Margherita peak of Mount Stanley from the west. The month of October saw Humphreys' last visit to the Ruwenzori and on this occasion Harry Turner, A. J. Rusk and F. R. Jackaman were his companions; they struck weather of exceptional cold and severity but succeeded in making the second ascent of the Umberto peak on Mount Emin by a new and difficult route. During the course of his seven expeditions Dr. Humphreys made a remarkably complete examination of the range and supplied much missing detail which has been added to the map produced on the Italian expedition of 1906; his work added greatly to our geographical knowledge of the range.

1932 was altogether a remarkable year on the Ruwenzori for in addition to the expeditions just described and the Belgian expedition E. E. Shipton and H. W. Tilman paid the range a visit. This was in the month of February and during the course of two weeks based on the rock shelter above Lake Bujuku, they made the third ascent of the Margherita peak of Mount Stanley, the third ascent of Mount Speke and the first ascent of the north face of Mount Baker, a climb that proved to be fully up to the traditional standard of difficulty associated with

north faces, a severe complicated rock climb on steep rock, often wet and frequently moss covered. Before climbing Margherita they camped for a week on the Stanley plateau, spending several days wandering around in the fog without even being able to see the twin peaks. The Belgian expedition, already mentioned, was organised in the grand manner, as many as five hundred porters being used, and an immense quantity of baggage and paraphernalia being moved up and down the mountain. The expedition was led by Count Xavier de Grunne and included the well-known Alpine guide Joseph Georges, of La Forclaz in Valais, known as 'le Skieur.' The principal mountaineering results were two new routes up Mount Stanley from the west, one of which led to the previously unclimbed Albert peak, the north-west shoulder of Margherita, and the first ascent of the Kraeplin peak of Mount Emin. Additionally a good new route was made up the east wall of the Elena peak on Stanley and Speke was climbed from the north-west. By the end of 1932, a year that ranks with 1906 in the annals of Ruwenzori exploration, most of the major features were known.

Such exploration as has been carried out subsequently can be passed over rapidly. There was a British Museum expedition in 1935, which was primarily a collecting expedition; from a mountaineering point of view nothing of any importance was achieved except an ascent of the Weismann peak of Mount Luigi di Savoia from the south. This expedition, however, pioneered a new approach to the snows, by way of the lovely Nyamagasani valley and the string of lakes discovered by Dr. Humphreys when flying over the range in 1931: a party also followed the Namwamba river from Kilembe to its source. A detailed account was published in Patrick Synge's *Mountains of the Moon*. In 1943 three Polish climbers, J. de Golcz, Michael Makowski and Jevry Skolowmoski found themselves in Uganda, working on the establishment of refugee camps and in June of that year managed a hurried visit to the Ruwenzori: they made the first difficult ice climb on the range, ascending Alexandra directly from Bujuku through the ice-fall and séracs of the formidable East Stanley glacier. Golcz, a member of the famous French club, the Groupe de Haute Montagne, was the leader.

The Portal Peaks are perhaps the most prominent feature of the range as seen from Fort Portal and the east; they were so named by Sir Harry Johnston after Sir Gerald Portal and because he viewed them as the 'awful portals of the snows.' Until 1942 none of these interesting peaks had been climbed although Dr. Humphreys had called attention to their possibilities when passing along their west flank in 1932, whilst tracing the Lamia from its source. Three separate expeditions have since visited them and the three principal summits have now been climbed. The first of these took place in October 1942 when R. N. Posnett and the writer climbed Rutara, the southern peak, from the east by way of the long ridge that leads down to the Mobuku valley; in the event no difficulty was found as a result of the fortunate discovery of a break in the final cliff at a most unlikely point. In January 1945 Dr. A. J. Hadow, who has made a series of most interesting expeditions

including the ascent of a new peak on Mount Luigi di Savoia and further explorations in the Kurugutu valley, climbed the central of the Portals from the Bukurungu valley with J. R. C. Spicer and J. C. Bugher. Starting from the same point Dr. R. G. Ladkin and the writer made the first ascent of Kihuma, the highest Portal, in June of the same year. Thanks to some preliminary work by Haddow and some detailed surveying of his own, P. H. Hicks, who had the rare good fortune to find himself on the top of Gessi on a clear day, has made a good map of the Portal Peaks and been able to correct some errors which the Duke of the Abruzzi's map contained in regard to this part of the range. In January 1947 Haddow and Professor Eric Holmes climbed Kinyangoma, the peak above Bigo, which is incorrectly shown on the earlier maps as the Southern Portal, with which peak it has, in actual fact, no connection.

This completes the story of the exploration of the Ruwenzori to date ; other journeys have been made, a few new climbing routes have been found and attempts have been made at others but these do not as yet find a place in this account of the history of the opening up of the range. The authorities of the Parc National Albert have developed a series of rest camps in the Butagu valley and the Mountain Club of Uganda has put Alpine huts in the Mobuku-Bujuku valleys so that, from either direction, approach can be made to the high peaks in reasonable comfort. And so the Silver Mountain of Aristotle, the ' Fons Nilus ' of the ancient world, has lost its mystery. First seen by the early explorers of central Africa ; approached but not mastered by Stuhlmann, Freshfield, Johnston and others ; finally explored and climbed by the Duke of the Abruzzi, Dr. Noel Humphreys and the many others who have contributed to our knowledge of the geography and topography of the range and the means of access to it, the road to the high places of Ruwenzori now lies open to all who wish to take it and know how to appreciate it.