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THE SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE.

EXPLORATIONS IN THE CAMEROONS DISTRICT OF WESTERN EQUATORIAL AFRICA.

(Read at Meeting of British Association, Bath, 1888.)

BY H. H. JOHNSTON, H. B. M. VICE-CONSUL, CAMEROONS.

SOME months after my return from the expedition to Mount Kilima-njaro, on which I had been despatched by the Kilima-njaro Committee of the British Association, I was offered the post of Her Majesty's Vice-Consulate of the Cameroons by Lord Salisbury, and I gladly accepted this fresh opportunity of continuing my African studies.

Unfortunately, during my two and a half years' residence in Western Equatorial Africa, my anticipations of abundant leisure for exploration and scientific research were but poorly realised. Owing to circumstances which I need not here detail, I had to accept the commission and undertake the work of the Vice-Consulate of the Oil Rivers in addition to that of the Cameroons, and further, when Consul Hewett returned to England to recruit his health, I was appointed to carry on his work as acting Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra. The multifarious duties connected with the administration of the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers, which at present is under Consular jurisdiction, rendered it necessary for me to greatly curtail my visits to the Cameroons, more especially as those visits were more connected with pleasure—the pleasure of research—than with business, inasmuch as the German rule which is now firmly established in the Cameroons has rendered my Consular duties both light and easy.

Such journeys, therefore, as I have been enabled to make—that is to say, in the district of the Cameroons—were chiefly confined to a short trip up the Cameroons River, six weeks' exploration of the Cameroons Mountain, and three months spent in surveying the district of the Rio

del Rey. Of course, independently of these excursions into the interior, there must also be taken into account a residence on the coast of considerable length, and many minor visits of short duration to places inland.

I will begin by describing my first ascent of the Cameroons Mountain, which took place during the rainy season, in the month of September. I deliberately chose the rainy season for the occasion of my ascent, because none of my predecessors had ascended the Cameroons Mountain during the rains, and had consequently not seen the flora of those regions at its finest development.

I set out from Victoria, a little township on the mainland, opposite Mondole Island, where my residence is placed. Victoria was founded some thirty years ago by the Baptist Mission. I was accompanied by a mixed following of native porters and my own Kru-boys. Our first day's walk was about eight or nine miles up to Bonjongo, a large native settlement and mission station, situated amid majestic forest at an elevation of about 2200 feet above the sea. Here the vegetation was eminently expressive of tropical wealth. Enormous *Bombax*, or cottonwood trees, towered into the sky, crowning their mighty grey columns of trunks with a canopy of light dentilated foliage. The handsome "barwood," with its glossy leaves and small fragrant blossom, the "kundi," or African teak, the "yellow-wood," the ebony, the "sauce-wood"¹ tree, lofty parinariums, showering down with every gust of the breeze their ripe yellow plums, on which the green fruit-pigeons fed so greedily, great umbrageous sycamore figs, whose gouty trunks were wreathed with bunches of red fruit, velvet-foliaged acacias, sterculias, and eriodendrons—these stood prominently forward among the array of noble forest trees surrounding the grassy glades of Bonjongo. Then, also conspicuous, were the handsome *Dracæna*, or dragon-trees—an arboreal member of the lily order—which here reached a height of close upon one hundred feet, towering up above the lower trees, and exhibiting most effectively their clusters of long spear-like leaves against the sky. And then the palms—the graceful *Elaïs*, with its crown of delicate fronds poised on the summit of a lofty, slender trunk, and its tidy, compact bunches of orange-coloured nuts neatly tucked away at the juncture of the leaf-stems with the trunk; and, entire contrast, the stately *Raphia*, bearing the largest frond of any existing palm, developing but a short trunk, and yet attaining a considerable height by the sheer ascent of its mighty plume-like fronds, while its huge masses of brown blossom, or its flat clusters of large scaly fruit depending heavily from the head of the palm, presented such a different appearance from the modest fructification of the oil-bearing *Elaïs*. This latter produces the celebrated palm-oil, which is the staple of West African commerce. The natives also drink the sap of the tree as "palm wine." The oil palm (*Elaïs guineënsis*) will not flourish at a much higher elevation than two thousand feet, and, although it may be induced to live at a greater altitude, it fails to produce fruit. The *Raphia* palm, already alluded to, is useful to the natives chiefly for the building

¹ *Erythrophloeum*, from the bark of which a violent emetic is extracted by the "witch-doctors."

materials it provides. The fronds, with a little manipulation, make capital "mats" for roofing a house with strong thatch, and from the mid-ribs are made useful staves and rafters. All round about Bonjongo the flowers of trees and herbs offered brilliant masses of colour. There was the *Lonchocarpus* tree, bearing great sprays of mauve blossoms like the laburnum in shape and kind, and there were many shrubs and creepers of the same leguminous order, with gaudy flowers—yellow, purple, or white. The *Pentas* displayed its beautiful heads of scarlet flowerets, and in all the moist glades rose hedges of *Canna*, or "Indian shot," with flowers of deepest crimson. The numerous species of *Hibiscus* and *Pavonia* contributed their large blossoms of yellow, pink, or white to the wayside herbage, the mauve-pink *Ipomœa convolvulus* trailed over and festooned the bushes, and the ground was dotted with the bright blue flowers of the straggling *Commelina*.

Alas! to most of my hearers this description will seem but a wearisome recital of unfamiliar botanical names, and they will be unable to call up before their imaginations the vivid beauty in colour and form of the tropical vegetation which clothes the lower slopes of the Cameroons Mountains.

As soon as my business at Bonjongo was finished, I ascended another thousand feet to Mapanja, another large native village situated at an altitude of 3,300 feet above the sea. Here I put up with some young Swedish gentlemen, who had recently come out to the Cameroons with the intention of making plantations and trading in indiarubber, which is produced in great quantities in these forests.

The next morning, having engaged a number of Mapanja people as porters, and having previously sent on five men to clear the path through the forest (which from disuse had become much overgrown), I quitted the last outpost of civilisation—the Swedes' dwelling—and started on the long climb to "Mann's Spring," which was to be my camping-place for the night. For a little way after leaving the native village we traversed plantations of bananas and edible arums (*Colocasia*), then we plunged—if you can be said to plunge when you are scrambling up-hill—into the dark forest. The faintly-indicated track ran chiefly along ridges of rock, with a ravine on either side, and often we had to walk for yards along the slippery trunks of fallen trees, these sometimes bridging abysses of vegetation where, in the case of a fall, one might sink far out of sight before reaching firm ground.

The wild-flowers—now I am going to bore you with botany again!—were beautiful almost beyond description, especially the orchids, which were displayed with a variety and profuseness rare to Africa, where this strange and lovely group is but poorly represented as a rule. Some of the orchids—the majority—were terrestrial. There was one species with large heads of mauve purple-centred flowers. It grew in the forest glades with a luxuriance rivalling the wild hyacinths in English woods, and through all the vistas one caught the stream of tender mauve, peach-like colour meandering beneath the soft green verdure of the ferns and lycopodiums. Another orchid grew in masses on the sodden tree-trunks, and its sprays of flowers were white and orange. There were *Angraecums* and

Habenarias, and other orchids, white, white and green, purple, and flesh-colour, new to me and nameless. For the space of our ascent, between four and five thousand feet altitude, we were certainly in Orchid-land. What a scene, and what a subject for the transformation scene of a superior pantomime to be given at Drury Lane a quarter of a century hence, when the general public are educated up to it! Lovely girl postulants could imitate, on a gigantic scale, the sun-birds, the hawk-moths, the bees, hornets, and butterflies visiting the glowing calyxes of these fantastic flowers, which should spring from the ground in tall, sturdy clumps like the great *Lissochilus* orchids by the river banks, and hang from the "wings" and the "flies" after the fashion of the many strange and lovely epiphytic forms which frequent the moist depths of the equatorial forests. When the show of orchids lessened, the tree-ferns appeared on the scene, and added another element of beauty to the exquisite glimpses of forest glades which every turn and twist of the path revealed. In one place we passed for a hundred yards through a natural avenue of tree-ferns, which was named by Captain Burton (when he made his ascent of the mountain) "Fern Gate." Other ferns, though not arboreal, attained a considerable height above the ground owing to the immense size of their fronds, some of them being six feet in length. The trunks of nearly all the trees were thickly clothed with a rich mantle of ferns, often resembling a drapery of green lace. The ground was covered with a dense carpet of delicate lycopodium and orange-tinted moss, from which spongy surface little scarlet fungi gleamed in sheltered places. The prevailing flowers were white, cream-coloured, and pink balsams, blush-tinted, yellow-centred begonias, mauve and white *Labiatae*, and large white *Commelinæ*; also a strange-looking liliaceous plant, with red, wax-like, tubular blossoms, seemingly allied to the well-known "Golden Rod" (*Kniphofia*) of our gardens. Hereabout the forest scenery had reached the climax of its beauty, and an appropriate *genus loci* presented itself in the handsome "touracos" (*Turacus*), which hopped and flitted among the foliage of the loftiest and most umbrageous trees, feeding in a desultory manner on the ripened fruits. These birds, beautiful alike in shape and in the colour of their plumage, seemed the embodiment of some graceful wood-spirit who had chosen a form in harmony with its surroundings. The particular species found in these forests is coloured thus: body, grass-green; beak, yellow; ridge of head-crest, crimson; wings, purple, with scarlet pinions; and the long tail a deep rich blue. It thus presented an epitome of the prevailing colours of the forest scenery—the tender green of the foliage, the purple-blue shadows of the forest depths, and the yellow and red of the young leaf-shoots and the blossoming trees. However, the touracos were indignant at our intrusion, and paid no count of my out-spoken admiration at their vivid beauty as they flapped their blood-red pinions in lazy flight from tree to tree, but would ever and anon hide beyond some screening tuft of foliage and scream loudly and harshly their accents of warning and dispraise; while the other denizens of the woodland—squirrels, birds, and little antelopes—would take heed to their cries and scurry away from our dangerous vicinity. Desiring to obtain a specimen for identification, I shot one of

these touracos, and this, of course, amply confirmed their previous suspicions. The forest now resounded with the clamour of the indignant birds, which rang in our ears until we had mounted to a higher elevation than they cared to follow.

Above 5000 feet in altitude the temperature was sensibly lower, and we soon found ourselves in heavy mists, which blotted out for a while all the surrounding scenery. The wet mist at first covered us with tiny spicules of water, and then changed into thin driving rain, and at last became a steady downpour, which percolated in heavy drops through the foliage. We were all soon so miserably wet and cold that none cared to stop anywhere for food and rest, but all pressed on to reach our camping-place and arrange our shelter for the night. As we continued to ascend, the forest trees exhibited increasing quantities of white orchilla lichen (known in America as "Spanish moss" and "old man's beard"), hanging in frosty-looking festoons from their trunks and branches; and brambles, nettles, clematis, geraniums, forget-me-nots, and other plants of the temperate zones, made their appearance.

At about 7000 feet altitude we emerged from the forest on to rolling grassy downs, dotted here and there with patches of woodland, and occasionally sprinkled with huge isolated boulders of rock, or furrowed with the half-concealed corrugations of a lava flow. Here forms of life entirely strange to the tropical *fauna* and *flora* of the lower country made their appearance. Stone-chats, wheatears, larks, and buntings flitted, chirped, and sang about the lichen-covered rocks and the stretches of fragrant heather. Clover, dandelions, sowthistles, campanulas, and hemlocks grew amid the wiry grass at the path's side. Against the sky-line rose the bold outlines of the broken-down craters; while the billowy sea of undulating forest land lying on the lower slopes of the mountain side was partially concealed and severed from our surrounding scenery by the long wreaths of white mist, which were really lazy clouds reposing on the tree-tops.

After some seven hours' walking from Mapanja, we left the open grass country, and entered a dense and somewhat majestic forest, which was an outlying tongue of the woods below, that, owing to favourable conditions of soil, had penetrated higher up the mountain-side. Soon after penetrating this woodland we heard the trickle of running water, and, further on, the path was crossed by a tiny stream. Then, in a cleared space under trees of great girth and spreading branches, we saw a small tumbled-down shanty, the last remains of the former encampment of some Swedish travellers, whose names, in common with those of some German and English travellers, were deeply cut into the bark of the biggest trees.

The first evening of our arrival we could do little but put up the tent, and the men had but scanty shelter in the patched-up shanty; but on the morrow I set to work industriously building, and in a few days we had made a little orderly village of five substantial houses, constructed with stout poles and withes, thatched and lined with grass. Such protection as this was really necessary to the men, who, although clothed by me in warm jerseys, and provided with blankets, felt keenly the cold and damp.

Our encampment was situated at an altitude of 7350 feet, and the temperature ranged between 50° and 65° Fahrenheit; moreover, for the first week of our stay, we lived in a perpetual rainfall.

"Man's Spring" is one of the few ascertained sources of water which issue from the sides of the main peak of the Cameroons Mountains. Although known from time immemorial to the native hunters, it was first discovered to Europeans by Mr. Mann, a botanist of repute, in the service of the British Government, who ascended the Cameroons with Captain Burton. Mann's Spring has since been very frequently visited, and is generally the goal and limit of the ordinary ascents of the mountain. The number of travellers who have penetrated further, and ascended to the summit of the High Peak, is very limited as yet.

The forest round this tiny rivulet has a very fantastic though beautiful appearance, with the trees all wreathed and hung with long lace-like drapery of orchilla lichen, the colour of which is a pale greenish-white. When the mist or rain has permeated the forest, the great hanging, swaying curtains and scarves of lichen are all glittering with diamond-drops of water, and then some straying sunbeam comes and lights them up, and makes them sparkle, while it also turns to vivid golden-green the large-leaved foliage of the forest recesses to which these lichen hangings act as *portières*. When there is a further vista of purple-blue, indefinite shadow which the sunlight fails to reach, and the black, twisted boughs and gnarled tree-trunks, heavy with parasitic ferns, frame the scene, then it is most fairy-like, and I commend it as another theme for a thoughtful *Féerie*, or pantomime, to be called "The Dryad's Home."

Mann's Spring is a favourite resort of birds, who always affect the vicinity of water, and here especially they make the air musical with their twittering songs and mellow love-calls. As man is a rare visitant here, the birds are very bold and fearless, and appeared to welcome our coming for the chance scraps of food thrown in their way. Alas! they soon had to rue their over-confidence. They had put themselves in the power of one whose natural tender-heartedness and love of living things are overborne by his interest in science. Of all the pretty bird-forms which came to drink and sport and bathe by the brooklet, or which hovered about the balsam-blossoms, some of every kind must die to illustrate the ornithology of the Cameroons. And so my native collector and I were soon engaged in skinning black and golden shrikes, metallic-green and crimson-breasted sunbirds, ruddy chats, olive-green warblers, dull grey grosbeaks, and tiny, indefinite, insect-eating birds of blue grey and russet-brown.

In this forest, too, I shot flying squirrels and small vole-like rats. These were the only mammals we saw, except when, very rarely, we got a hurried glimpse of a red-coated, white-striped *Tragelaphus* antelope.

We obtained from the wild bees that hived in hollow trees quantities of the most delicious honey, that, whether from cold or age, had become crystallised and nearly white. Flavoured as it was with the fragrance of the heather, it seemed to me the nicest honey I had ever tasted. Unfortunately I could only eat it with comfort at night-time, because during the day the bees would always find me out, and throng round the

dish which contained the sweet store of which they had been robbed. If I attempted to dispute its possession they would buzz about me in a very threatening manner.

Protected with a mackintosh and knee-boots I sallied out in all the hours of daylight, no matter what the weather might be. Just behind Mann's Spring rose the bulk of a very remarkable crater, looking so exactly like an artificial fortification that Captain Burton christened it "The Earthwork." From its summit we had two very interesting views. One stretched right away over cloudland to the sea, whence, like the ghost of a mountain, or like the suspended Island of Laputa, rose the blue pyramid of Fernando Po. When the white mists suddenly parted, and this distant island was unexpectedly revealed to sight, right up in the sky, seemingly unattached to the earth, it appeared rather as some huge phantasmagoria, some celestial mirage, or land of Fata Morgana, than as an island of actual, terrestrial existence, encompassed by a watery ocean. For often it would rise above an ocean of clouds: a vast, rolling sea of grey billows, with here and there a fleecy crest of white overtopping the furrowed plain.

The other view to be seen from the summit of Earthwork Crater was of a different character and interest to the evanescent scene I have just described. It appealed but little to the artistic sense, while scientifically it was of great interest. One looked up the broad back of the highly volcanic mountain ridge in the direction of the invisible summit, the culminating triple crown of craters. Meandering through the groups of minor eminences was a broad stream of congealed lava, seeming almost to have been suddenly petrified in the middle of its tumultuous flow. It was like the instantaneous photograph of a torrent in motion. Here were small islands of trees and herbage which the flood of molten matter had capriciously left untouched, there the flow had been smooth and unruffled, yonder in the defiles between the hills it must have boiled and churned, and risen in long, swelling billows, whose tortuous crests still traced themselves in wavy lines along the neck of the stony stream. But the wonderful thing about the aspect of this lava-flow was the appearance it bore to having suddenly cooled and hardened as it swept down the back of the mountain. Melted sealing-wax, boiling hot, and suddenly poured over a sheet of rusty iron, would doubtless assume the same aspect in miniature. The edges of the lava-flow rose about four or five feet uniformly above the untouched ground, just as any liquid poured over an unreceptive surface is seen to have retained unabsorbed the elevation of its borders. Throughout the whole descent of the lava stream were scattered jagged fragments of rock, and stones and boulders of various sizes, standing on end at every angle, or lying half-submerged in the congealed floor, suddenly arrested, as it were, whilst being whirled along, by the rapid petrification of the torrent. But that mosses, lichens, a scanty herbage, and a few stunted bushes had begun to speckle the surface of the black lava and grey *scoriæ* (these latter like the froth or foam of the torrent), and that this slight overgrowth had given a more stable aspect to the arrested flow of molten matter, one could have almost awaited its continued movement and renewed descent, and have hoped to

witness from this secure elevation the rolling downwards of the imprisoned boulders, once more whirled round and round by the irresistible avalanche of boiling lava.

In the rare intervals of sunshine, generally in the afternoon, it was very pleasant to lie on the flattened edges of this Earthwork Crater, amid the wiry grass and sweet, fragrant heather, listening to the English songs of the larks, the stonechats, and the buntings, while the busy bees droned and buzzed amongst the flowers.

One side of the crater, as is generally the case, was decayed and broken down, and over this collapse of the rim the ejected lava had evidently flowed out, but at a much earlier date than the mighty lava-flow I have just described. One could see but faint traces of its course, which mainly consisted in an irregular line of rocks in the ravine or valley that cut through one side of the crater slope. These rocks and ridges of lava had been so worn and decayed by the action of wind and rain that their triturated fragments had formed in sheltered crevices the richest soil, and here had been created the loveliest rock-garden you could conceive. Masses of brilliant flowers, delicate tapestries of fern, patchwork carpets of moss and lichen, diversified, but did not wholly conceal, the scattered rocks, which here and there reared jagged pinnacles above the ferns and flowers. In the deep hollows, cracks, and crevices, oozing moisture dripped continually down conduits of moss into unknown depths, and flat symmetrical fern-fronds concealed the black matrix of the rocks with wreaths, flounces, and skirts of green lace. In some places there were cups and hollows in the stone from which a tall fern, or a luxuriant chervil, or a graceful hemlock, sprang in selfish solitude, thriving in the exclusive possession of its own niche. There were thick bushes of *Hypericum* (St. John's-wort), with large yellow, many-stamened flowers, in whose shelter the black-and-gold buntings and their brown, dowdy females perched, and sang, and twittered. There were blazing yellow clusters of sunflower-like *Coreopsis*, and the pale pink crowns of crassulaceous plants like houseleek, and azure-blue blossoms of a creeping monocotyledon like the blue spider-wort, and the ruddy-gold *Helichrysum*, and a pale white blue-lined crocus. The place was alive with birds. Besides the buntings already alluded to, there were pied stonechats of black, brown, and white, chocolate-brown swallows, grey grosbeaks, and speckled larks. One day from the summit of the crater I saw a herd of four large antelopes crossing the lava-flow. Their coats were a light yellow-brown, and the hair was long. The male carried a fine pair of horns. From what I could see through my binocular-glass, they belonged to the genus *Cobus*. As soon as they got our scent, they were off with a rapidity which rendered fruitless any attempt to follow them on foot.

When we had sufficiently explored the vicinity of Mann's Spring, we began to move nearer towards our goal, the culminating peak of the ridge, and for this purpose transferred our camp to a place known as "Hunters' Hut." This was a small shanty of sticks and grass, a night shelter for the native hunters—principally men from Bwea—who crossed the mountain on trading excursions, or for an antelope hunt. The walk from Mann's Spring to Hunters' Hut was of a most interesting character,

and the general aspect of the scenery called to mind the Scottish hills rather than African volcanoes. The fresh, crisp air, the misty sunshine, the grassy downs, the heather-clad hills, were strangely like the Highlands. Yet when one looked downward towards the south, there was Equatorial Africa spread in a living map at one's feet. There was Ambas Bay with its two islands, Ndami and Mondole (on Mondole my white house was clearly visible), and the long peninsula of Monanga; then came the indented coast of Bimbia, and then the mighty estuary of the Cameroons river with its vast mangrove swamps canalised by a silver network of swamps, and its many tributary rivers with their distant courses clearly traceable for miles and miles by lines and flashes of light amid the dull purple-blue of the forested plains.

The coast as far southwards as Batanga was clearly visible, and along the southern horizon rose blue, jagged ranges of mountains that no white man has ever visited. On the main stream of the Cameroons River the white houses of the trading settlements were clearly made out, and one could even see ships lying at anchor thirty or forty miles away. To the eastward the eye rested on the unknown, on a land as yet blank on the maps, but beyond, here and there, the glint of a river, or the indistinct blue sierra of a mountain-chain, little could be distinguished in the vicinity of the hazy horizon.

This view unfolded itself most often in the mellow afternoon, when a flood of yellow light would throw the forested slopes descending to the river into the most vivid relief of golden-green and sombre purple, while the blue smoke from the native villages and plantation-clearings rose straight into the clear atmosphere; but, ordinarily, during morning and noon-tide this beautiful picture was shut out by heavy tiers of massive cumulus clouds, or only remained dimly discernible through drizzling mist.

Along the track from Mann's Spring to Hunter's Hut there were many of those beautiful rock-gardens which I have previously described, and other interesting botanical features made their appearance. Large bushes of yellow *genista* grew on the hill-sides, and among the grass a pretty pink gladiolus (a dwarf species) threw up its stiff blue-green blades and rosy flowers.

The forms of the many craters we passed were very interesting; so also were the strange gulfs and clefts in the earth visible in some places. We also noticed many isolated pinnacles of rock stranded in the valleys between the hills.

"Hunters' Hut," our new encampment, was situated at about 8300 feet in altitude, in a narrow peninsula of forest pushed up the mountain-side. A nearly dry ravine ran through the little settlement, half-choked up with ferns and creepers. Some rain-water, collected in pools amid the stones, supplied us with that necessary element. This great ditch was crossed in several places by natural bridges of fallen trees, some of them beautifully fringed with ferns and violets.

As is my custom everywhere, I set myself to work to make our new settlement comfortable and tidy. I directed the building of four new houses for my men, and four neat little huts soon arose on the cleared

ground. They were built of poles, and thatched with grass, and the doorways were prettily framed with branches of flowering *genista*. Then the next consideration was our food supply. The provisions we had brought with us from Mondole were nearly exhausted, and unless we could induce the mountain people of Bwea to supply us with food, we were threatened with starvation. So I despatched the cook on an embassy with tobacco, cloth, and many tempting gauds of finery. Fortunately, before he got far on the road, he met a troop of Bwea people, men and women, coming of their own accord with supplies of provisions for sale. They had heard from a Swedish gentleman travelling through Bwea that I was likely to be encamped hereabouts, and so they had hurried up to do a little lucrative trade, and see a new kind of white man. They carried neat folding baskets, crammed at present to their fullest extent with bananas, yams, and cobs of Indian corn, and on their heads they poised a strange pent-house of palm-thatch, to protect themselves from the rain, a thing which certainly formed a most effective umbrella, though it took the form of a portable roof, about four feet long. Most of the men carried, in addition to this equipment, a musket and a bag made of antelope-skin, which contained their ammunition, their snuff-box, and their flint, steel, and tinder, besides a multitude of small packets, neatly tied up, and no doubt consisting of necessities and luxuries for the road.

The women carried the heaviest burdens, and whenever a husband or brother wished to relieve himself of some tiresome article among his paraphernalia, he cast it on to his sister, cousin, wife, or sweetheart, and she meekly added it to her previous load. It is, of course, the custom here, as throughout savage Africa, for the woman to carry the man's luggage. What an admirable arrangement! Man does the fighting, hunting, talking—all the dangerous and difficult work, in fact—and the woman quietly carries out the more humdrum, routine labour of everyday life.

Having well provisioned my settlement, I began to make a start for the ascent of the high peak, the loftiest summit of the chain. The way in which my Krumen and coast carriers suffered from the cold would not permit of my keeping them long at a great elevation and in a low temperature; accordingly I resolved to encamp halfway between "Hunters' Hut" and the summit (a distance of some two hours and a half), and send my men back to the main settlement to sleep, while I remained up the mountain with one attendant. We left "Hunters' Hut" at eight in the morning, and reached my intended camping-place (at an altitude of 10,500 feet) by eleven. During the whole climb (which was very arduous, as we had to cross some fields of lava and *scoriae*) it rained incessantly, and my unfortunate Krumen turned slaty-blue with misery and cold. Arrived at our destination, I distributed grog with a lavish hand, and the men regained a little warmth, and were able to use their benumbed fingers in erecting my tent. As soon as this was done, I dismissed them, and remained alone with my guide (a Mapanja man named Esuka) and my natural history collector. By noon the sun had dissipated all the clouds and shone out warmly. Then, in a moment, as if some giant's hand had

rent the cloud veil asunder, the mighty peak I was desirous to ascend appeared before me with startling nearness and distinctness.

He was truly an emperor among mountains, clad in robes of red, gold, and purple, like an emperor of ancient days or modern pantomimes. There was no difficulty, with this clear atmosphere, in distinguishing him from the crowd of lesser craters which surrounded his towering bulk like a retinue of courtiers, for not only were they below him in altitude, but while he exhibited such gorgeous colouring, they were all uniformly clothed in unvarying brownish green. In my previous experience of great and celebrated mountains I have seen some renowned for their imposing height, or strange shape, or mighty bulk, and others remarkable for their extent of perpetual snow, or their ice-fields and glaciers; but I never encountered any mountain yet which could vie with the High Peak of the Cameroons in unusual beauty of local colouring.

Beginning with the central and highest peak of the triple crater, its left-hand slope at the top of the ridge had a broad strip of vivid Indian red (formed, in reality, by a layer of brick-red clinkers); then below this came a band of bright yellow (moss); this was succeeded by a large, irregular piece of purplish mauve (fine cinders), quite uniform in tint. On the right-hand side of the middle crater the prevailing colour was greenish grey (grass), dotted here and there with patches of gold and purple. The actual peak of the summit was purplish red, with a very thin gold edge. The lower portions of the middle crater near its base were bright green, streaked with greenish grey where the long grass or the *genista* bushes predominated over the tender herbage. The crust of the crater lying to the right of the loftier central peak was a greenish grey in colour, streaked with red, while the crater rising on the left hand was purplish black in its peaks and upper rim, and a clear slaty-blue round its base, with a few green streaks down its furrowed sides. As before remarked, the minor subsidiary craters lying apart from the main peak were uniformly clad in brownish-green, and therefore offered a complete contrast to the vivid tints of the triple-crowned summit.

I took advantage of the clear sky and bright sunshine to photograph the peak, and then, equipping myself with various instruments, and throwing over my arm a mackintosh, I resolved to make my first ascent of the mountain that same afternoon, for I did not know when I might be favoured with such beautiful weather again, nor even how long this bright sunshine and clear sky might last. I found it unavailing to attempt to persuade either of my two followers to accompany me any nearer to the peak; their teeth chattered with fright at the very suggestion.

"Is it only the cold," I asked, "that you fear? Because it won't be cold on a day like this."

"N—no," they replied in their Negro English, "we no fear for them cold too much. We fear for them ghost-man, Ehwasu. Bakwiri¹ people say Ehwasu fit to kill any black man, 'pose he go for top of mountain (!)"

"Well, then, won't he kill a white man, too?"

¹ Bakwiri is the generic name of all the mountain people dwelling in the Cameroons Mountains.

"P'r'aps," was the laconic reply.

I questioned them further about "Ehwasu" as I stood eating my lunch (for I was anxious to lessen my burdens as far as possible before starting, and preferred carrying my lunch inside me), and I elicited that "Ehwasu" was a gaunt spirit inhabiting the summit of the mountain. He was only *half* a man ("Ehwasu" means "half" in the Bakwiri language). In front he was terrible to look at, for he had a black face with fiery eyes, a hook nose, an enormous mouth, bristling with jagged fangs, white wool, ears down to his shoulders, and a body of gaunt nudity and more than human stature. Behind, however, you only saw a stick supporting a hollow mask, and it would seem that Ehwasu was so justly ashamed of his incomplete nature that, provided you could get behind him and expose the fraud, he vanished and troubled you no more. But the difficulty *was* to complete your tour of inspection, for Ehwasu was not only an artful dodger, but warded off a too near approach by brandishing an enormous club. Moreover, all Ehwasu's utterances took the form of the loudest thunder, which was naturally discomposing to one's nerves—indeed, as a matter of fact, all the local thunder and lightning were respectively the result of Ehwasu's soliloquies and his attempts to light a fire with flint and steel.

Ehwasu, my informants went on to relate, had a standing grievance against white men, inasmuch as they had several times invaded his domains, and yet had never presented him with a gun, although it was the ardent desire of his spiritual nature to possess that weapon, so that he might be on a level with the leading mortal chieftains of the day.

My guide therefore feared for me, knowing my obstinate disposition, and strongly advised me to surrender my rifle, should Ehwasu demand it. I told him, however, that as he would not accompany me I should leave my gun behind, having quite sufficient to carry with my aneroids, my boiling-point thermometer, my compasses, sketch-book, and botanical portfolio. Intending to be absent but a short time, I only carried enough water to boil my thermometer, and also in my sudden hurry left behind my packet of provisions. Various delays had deferred my departure till three o'clock in the afternoon. I could not hope to reach the summit before five, and I must rely on the light of the crescent moon to guide me back to camp.

With the grand peak rising before me, brightly coloured by the afternoon sun, I hurried on towards my goal, traversing a series of grassy undulations with ease, but soon hindered in my progress by having to cross a wide extent of grey *scorie*. These winding beds of loose ashes and lava-rocks present a different appearance in the upper parts of the mountain-chain from that which they bear in lower altitudes. They are evidently more recent in origin or superficies the nearer one approaches to their source; that is to say, they are less and less overgrown with vegetation, and do not exhibit so much trace of being worn or decomposed by the action of weather. At the base of the High Peak you would imagine these great layers of ashes had only been scattered there a few months since, and that just sufficient time had elapsed for a grey moss to have grown here and there in patches, where moisture had

accumulated. This moss offers a most peculiar aspect. It is a light grey in colour, and crumbles in the hand like loose soil. At first it only spots the *scoriae* like an eruption, and gives a mottled appearance to the deep purplish slate-colour of the cinders. Then, a little lower down, it gradually overspreads their irregular surface, until the whole extent of the bed is a uniform light greyish-green. To this sad-coloured overgrowth succeed brilliant golden green and orange mosses of a higher order, then small ferns begin to lurk in the crevices of the harsh *scoriae*, and they are followed by grasses and an increasing variety of flowering plants, among which may be noted a beautiful blue flower (a kind of *Veronica*), yellow "everlastings" (*Helichrysum*), tall *Senecios*, with mauve or yellow flowers, and most of the rock plants, which I have previously described, in the vicinity of Mann's Spring.

It was both difficult and dangerous walking over these furrowed fields of loose *scoriae*, especially at this altitude. Lower down the mountain the greater abundance of vegetable growth bound their loose fragments together, and one only suffered from the sharpness of their weather-hardened surface; but here a chance step would send a whole ridge of piled-up cinders crumbling, and in an avalanche of their rasping fragments one was launched on a dangerous descent into some deep and jagged crevice. Although preserving a uniform average level across the whole width of their bed, these rivers of *scoriae* were deeply furrowed with long ridges and ravines which ran longitudinally with the course of the descent. The edges of the flow of cinders—if I may apply such a word as "flow" to solid, stationary matter, which bore the appearance of an arrested stream—rose about five or six feet above the ground outside its limits, and were often so abrupt and perpendicular as to be unscaleable. Nearly all the soil in the plains and valleys between the craters was covered with the meanderings of these streams of lava and *scoriae*, but where hillocks or mounds or the paps of the craters arose, the ground was free from *scoriae*, and densely clothed with short turf, and in some places immense tussocky grasses, resembling roughly the pampas grass in their mode of growth. When I had scrambled over the narrowest portion of the cinder-beds, I found myself walking the sides or round the bases of a large group of craters, and my progress was even more impeded than it had been among the loose *scoriae*, for I had to wade through a dense mass of closely-growing clumps of this bushy grass which completely concealed the soil, and was at least two feet in depth.

At last I struggled out of the rank herbage on to a clear ridge, on which large shrubs of *genista* and an arboreal heath were growing. Here the ground was covered with the finest black cinders, looking just like coal-dust, but for their bluer colour and larger particles. Here the walking was pleasant and firm. I was now at the actual base of the High Peak, and directed myself towards the central and highest point of the triune crater. Its slope was too steep to climb in a direct line, so that I had to attempt to scale it in a zigzag. The sides of the peak were covered with many diversely-coloured soils and growths, which accounted for the brilliant colouring I have previously alluded to.

There were wide extents of blue-black, finely granulated cinders,

uniform in surface, and often exhibiting a large area free from even a blade of grass; there were other sections of the slope clothed with a thick refulgent carpet of golden moss; then would come tracts thickly clothed with dull-green wiry-grass dotted with bright blue flowers, with here and there a disagreeable ridge of *scoriæ* spotted with grey lichen. In many sheltered niches, or on little shelves jutting out from the steep slopes, grew handsome clumps of silver-leaved "everlasting" flowers and mauve *Senecios*.

I did not find the ascent of the High Peak so trying as some of my predecessors, nor did I suffer in the least from mountain sickness, swimming in the head, deadly faintness, or loss of voice as they appear to have done. In fact I should not call the climbing of the High Peak of the Cameroons (provided you have reached its base, in which lies the real difficulty) a more serious matter than the ascent of Dunkerry Beacon, or some of the North Devon hills. It took me about half an hour to reach the topmost peak of the summit, and here I found myself standing on a narrow ridge (perhaps ten feet in least width) with a yawning descent on each side. All along this ridge there was a complete covering of vegetation to the very apex of the Peak, consisting principally of the pretty blue flower, which I took to be a kind of *Veronica*, "everlastings," and *Senecios*, with several short grasses, and a perfect wealth of golden moss, which formed a soft carpet for the feet. Looking over the edge of the Peak, I saw that there was a bare descent of purple-red clinkers lying for some distance down its outer side. This it was which formed that strange red belt in the colouration of the mountain, noticeable even from a distance of 15 miles. On the very summit of the Peak I noticed two small cairns of stones. Under one, close to the edge of the precipitous slope, was a big champagne bottle half-imbedded in the earth. I could read through the glass the writing on the paper it contained, which turned out to be an announcement in Latin that "Stephanus Rogozinski, Leopoldus Janikowski, Poloni, et Hugonus Zöller, Germanus," had ascended the mountain on some day (date illegible) in December 1884. In the other cairn was a tin box, wherein was placed a paper announcing in Swedish, German, and English, that Messrs. Ljungstedt and Knutson had also made the ascent in February 1886. Not having a tin or bottle handy, I did a rather cuckoo-like trick, by writing my name, nationality, and the date of my ascent on a piece of paper, and putting it away in the Swedes' tin, in company with their own proclamation. Then I replaced the tin under the cairn, and proceeded to business. The air was delightfully still, and the temperature, at 5.45 p.m., 48° Fahrenheit, so I had little difficulty in boiling my thermometer, which, for greater accuracy, I did twice. Water boiled at 188° Fahrenheit, which, properly computed, with the corrections for temperature, gave the height above the sea of this summit of the Cameroons Mountains as 13,508 feet. This estimate was a careful one, and although it makes the altitude of this great volcano less than previous estimations (13,760 feet being the accepted one), I am inclined to believe it is more likely to be exact, as the other calculations of the height were very hurriedly made.

When I had finished my observations for altitude, I proceeded to make a rapid sketch of the strange triple crater which formed the culminating height of the Cameroons Mountains. Roughly speaking, this great mass consisted of one large central crater and two subsidiary ones, with possibly others traceable on the slopes of the northern sides. Round the big central crater ran an irregular ridge or rim of greatly varying breadth and elevation, rising into three principal summits of almost equal height, the central one, facing nearly due south, being considered the highest to all who have yet ascended it. It is just possible that the western peak of the crater may be found, by accurate determination, to exceed in elevation the central summit, but to judge by appearances it is not so. I should have liked on this occasion to have decided the question, but by the time I had finished my work on the central peak it was six o'clock, and the sun was setting; I therefore feared to be benighted on these precipitous heights if I attempted to visit the western summit, consequently I deferred the attempt till another opportunity, intending to return on the morrow.

From the summit of this mountain I had a view which, in magnificence and extent, can hardly be paralleled in the world. The sun, too, was just setting, and his rays bathed all the vast expanse of earth, sea, and sky, in a tender, rosy mist, while the mossy slopes of the mountain side were turned to a refulgent gold. As I commenced my descent over this thick carpet of moss it really seemed as though my feet were plunging through some Oriental fabric of priceless value, woven of gold thread, and I felt some compunction at the long tear made by my headlong course. If I had taken over half an hour to ascend the peak, I think I occupied but little more than five minutes in the descent. It was a most exhilarating sensation, this rapid gliding, sliding, striding over soft moss, and clean, crisp cinder-dust down the steep slope, and the momentum acquired was so great, that I seemed to take flying leaps over any obstacle involuntarily, as though I had no control over my limbs. At length, when the incline grew more gradual, I plunged into a virgin bed of cinder-dust, and on this unstable soil my speed was soon slackened.

By the time I had reached the base of the High Peak the glow of the sunset had faded, and all surrounding nature was steeped in a dull drab obscurity, which, however, when the crescent moon gained in power, changed into the confused light and shade and dim outlines of a badly-taken photograph. I congratulated myself on the clearness of the sky, as, if I had been surrounded by mists, it would have been almost impossible to find my way back into camp. As it was, I hurried over cinder-beds, and tussocky grass, and the crumbling ridges of the lava streams, in a desperate longing to regain the cheerful surroundings of my encampment, picturing to myself—as an incentive to a rapid progress—the splendid supper and the sound sleep with which I would crown this adventurous day.

As a matter of fact, my expectations were doomed to disappointment. In the growing darkness I lost my way among the multitudinous craters, and wandered about the slopes of the mountains for nearly twenty-four hours, and never found my upper camp at all. I was ultimately fortunate

enough to meet some Bwea hunters, who led me back to my permanent camp of Hunters' Hut—or rather carried me back, because from long fasting and excessive fatigue I had become too exhausted to walk. A day's rest, however, set me right, and I soon resumed my explorations of the more western and northern aspects of the mountain, with which, however, I will not detain you now, as I am anxious to pass on to a consideration of the Cameroons River. I might, however, mention before quitting the subject of this grand mountain, that my six weeks' sojourn on its upper slopes had as beneficial an effect on my health as if I had had a holiday in England, and for months afterwards I felt the better and stronger for its bracing air. How and why this magnificent sanatorium for the West Coast of Africa has been so long and persistently ignored and neglected by the different European Governments which rule the Guinea Coast is more than an ordinary person of common sense can understand. I trust the German Government will now endeavour to utilise it as a health resort. It only needs a decent road to be cut from Bonjongo to Mann's Spring through the forest, and a few log huts to be built from the local timber, and then the crews of the many vessels of war on the station, the Government officials, missionaries, and traders could climb up in two days to a European climate and recruit their enervated systems.

From the magnificent heights I have just attempted to describe to the broad area of the mangrove swamps that skirt the flanks of these huge volcanic peaks to the south and east is an abrupt and depressing change, for the eye, after dwelling on fantastic summits draped in the soft white wreaths of diaphanous cloud and revelling in the gorgeous colour of the billowy forest on the swelling uplands where the trees are crowned with their summer blossom, wearies with gazing on the monotonous labyrinth of muddy creeks where the unvarying defile of the mangrove trees exhibits a melancholy study of dull grey-green foliage, white trunks, brown roots, and black mud. This is the aspect of the vast swamps which surround the large delta of the Cameroons River. Like many of the streams which flow into the Gulf of Guinea, it has an estuary apparently out of all proportion to the length of its course, and big enough to serve as the outlet of a first-class river, but in reality this estuary is an old gulf or bay that has served as the common receptacle of many independent streams which in course of time have filled it up and choked it with sand-banks and marshy islands, by means of the accumulated detritus washed down from the crumbling hills and plateaux of the interior.

The name "Cameroons," as you are no doubt aware, is an English corruption of the Portuguese word "Camaroes" (plural of Camarao), meaning "shrimps," or prawns, and it was applied to this estuary by the early Portuguese adventurers on account of the abundance of these little crustaceans, which frequented the brackish water and formed such a favourite item in the native dietary. I only recall this fact to the remembrance of those who may have forgotten it, in order to justify the accepted English orthography of the name applied by Europeans to this important African district. Certain German geographers appear to have

imagined that "Cameroons" was a word of local origin. They therefore docked it of the final "s," and spelt it phonetically as "Kamerun." This, in my opinion, is a mistake. Inasmuch as there is no native name of sufficiently comprehensive character to cover the entire district, it seems more suitable to retain the old Portuguese designation, and spell it as near the original as possible.

About twenty miles from the sea, up the main stream of the Cameroons River, the firm soil begins to intrude on the mangrove mud-flats, and forms low cliffs along the water side on the south bank of the broad river. Here are situated a long succession of populous native towns inhabited by different clans of the well-known Duala tribe, a people of fine physical development, and a character for enterprise, intelligence, and commercial shrewdness, which goes far to explain their long-sustained position of middlemen between the European traders on the coast and the tribes of the interior. Most of the Duala towns are situated on the banks of the Cameroons River, near the apex of the delta. About a century ago the Duala people emigrated from the interior to their present settlements, pushed towards the seaboard by one of those tribal conflicts which in Africa are perpetually forcing wave after wave of the interior population towards the coast. In their turn they ousted the Basa, who had previously occupied the southern shores of the delta, and drove them away from the river. In process of time the Duala split up into different clans under the headship of chiefs supposed to be the descendants of an ancestral ruler, and now there exists considerable divergence of interest and feeling between the different sections of the tribe. The principal chiefs at the present time are "King Bell" (recognised by the German Government as the paramount chief), "King Akwa" and Chief "Lock Preso." Bell Town is perhaps the largest and most important of the native settlements, and it is here that the majority of the merchants are established, and that German authority is concentrated. The Germans have already effected many improvements in the sanitary conditions of the place, and have reared some really handsome and suitably designed public buildings. I should also mention here that the German Government has accurately surveyed and buoyed the once very difficult channel of the Cameroons River, and has simultaneously abolished all pilotage dues, actions which have very greatly benefited our large shipping trade with the Cameroons. I need scarcely detain you with descriptions of other improvements which German rule has conferred on the Cameroons, because it is only to be supposed that a civilised power can hardly take over the administration of a once savage district and fail to show the advantages of an enlightened energetic rule.

As King Bell exercises considerable influence over the main stream of the Cameroons River—namely, the large stream flowing from a north-easterly direction through Budiman and Wuri, it was to him that I applied for a guide when I resolved to make an excursion up this interesting river. King Bell sent his son Beba to accompany me as interpreter, and also furnished an efficient pilot to guide us through the mazy channels of the lower river.

We left Bell Town at eleven o'clock on an unusually sultry morning,

and kept close to the south bank of the river, which above Akwa Town broadens into a lake-like expanse, studded with mangrove islands. It needed some knowledge on the part of the pilot (whose name I ought to mention was Muluti) to steer the boat through the most direct channel, and sometimes we passed through creeks so narrow that the high thickets of *pandanus* nearly joined their branches above our heads, and frequently lashed our faces with their long spiny leaves. This was not, of course, the route that boats of any size or burden would follow, and, like most short cuts, seemed to me less expeditious than the longer and simpler way; for what we gained in directness we more than lost in running aground. However, as branch after branch rejoined the main stream, it recovered its simplicity and amplitude, and at the head of Jibare Island, where the river flows in a single channel, it presented at this season of the year (the middle of June) the appearance of a noble stream, varying from 700 to 1000 yards in breadth.

The monotonous mangroves ceased at the distance of about twenty-four miles from the mouth of the river; but long before they disappeared they had no longer remained the chief components of the swampy forests. *Pandanus*, or "screw pine," began to mingle with the mangrove low down in the delta, and gradually became the dominant feature by the riverside, being skirted, however, along the swampy shore by a fringe of tall *Lissochilus* orchids, which grew to a height of six feet from their base, and reared many a lovely head of large mauve blossoms. As the soil grew firmer and higher the *pandanus* dwindled and gave way, crowded out by lofty forest trees, acacias, albizzias, parinariums, bombaxes, eriodendrons, and sycamore-figs, while *raphia* palms were striking objects, with their mighty plume-like fronds and orange-red midribs, and the oil-palm grew in graceful clusters, often leaning forward over the water for want of space to expand, and the little *calamus* palm scaled the top-most trees of the forest with its hooked fronds, and when it had clambered to their summits, burst into grey-green blossom, and in some places already exhibited its scarlet, ripened fruit.

It was a pretty sight in this portion of the river to see the trading canoes sailing up stream with the sea-breeze, and sticking into the prows of their narrow craft a huge feather-like frond of the *raphia* palm. This was mast and sail all in one, and its graceful filaments would spread out before the wind, while the curling apex nodded helplessly to the rude buffets of the breeze, and the canoe, impelled by this novel substitute for mast and canvas, glided over the water with a gentle swaying motion. The great palm frond, so like a monster feather in appearance, recalled to me the joint discovery of Sir John Kirk and Colonel Yule, how Marco Polo had been shown by the Arabs the dried frond of a *raphia* palm (which would be of a light grey in colour), and had believed that he was gazing on a *bonâ fide* feather of that mysterious and three-quarters mythical bird, the "Rukh" (the "Roc" of our childhood's edition of the *Arabian Nights*); a very natural deception when one considers how this palm frond—the biggest leaf in the world—resembles an ostrich plume in its quill-like midrib and its light curling filaments.

After passing the mouths of the Yabiang River, which descends from

the country of Abo, we stopped for a night at a little village on the outskirts of Wuri. This was under the rule of a young chief who is related by marriage to King Bell of Cameroons; but although a tidy, prosperous-looking village, it was too much under coast influence to be a pleasant resting-place. The inhabitants could not see a white man in their town without continually plaguing him for rum, which spirit they call "bilam," having first of all changed "rum" into "lam" to suit their own pronunciation, and then stuck on a Bantu prefix, thus thoroughly nationalising the name of this ardent spirit. On the whole, however, I am glad to observe that the reign of these coarse and noxious forms of alcohol is no longer undisputed. Sweet wines, such as those called "ginger" and "orange," are rapidly usurping the place of rum and gin in native estimation, and it must be admitted that the change is for the better. And we may hope that in time ginger wine may give place to ginger beer.

Shortly after leaving this place, where we had passed the night without much discomfort, we began to enter upon really lovely scenery. About Bosambo, a turn in the river disclosed a widening lake-like expansion, where the water was of glassy stillness. The banks rose into nearly perpendicular cliffs of one or two hundred feet in height, and these were clothed from top to bottom with the richest forest. The crowns of many of the trees must have risen another hundred feet above the summit of the cliff. What made these wooded heights so beautiful was the fact that they offered a perfect African arboretum, exhibiting in orderly array a great variety of handsome trees and flowering shrubs.

The river in the country of Wuri seemed to have many affluents and branches, few or none of which are marked on any map. Many of them were, I was informed, artificial canals cut by the natives to facilitate communications with the adjacent lowlands, and to divert the superfluous water of the river in flood-time. At one place we actually witnessed a troop of men busy cutting a canal through the bank of red clay which rose some six feet above the stream.

The country of Wuri, which we had now reached, has a prosperous appearance, and seems to be well populated. It is, however, purely a riverine district. The banks of the Cameroons River in this section of its course are one continuous series of villages and plantations. The primeval forest is banished to the interior, where it is just visible in distant lines of gloomy purple-green. The country at the back of Wuri, on both sides of the river, is exceedingly rich in the chief vegetable products of West Africa. The inhabitants, generally known as Basā, bring the palm-oil and sell it to the Wuri people, who again pass it on to the Duala of the lower river, who in their turn sell it to the white men.

On the evening of the second day we reached the last Wuri town on the confines of Budīman—Banyoñ Bosua. Here we met with a most cordial reception from the chief Ngaka, who seemed determined to impress me with the sincerity of his declaration that he longed to see white men come to settle in his town, and that he wished to be regarded as the white man's friend. His house was one of the most comfortable I have ever met with in an African village, and bore witness to the

civilisation of the owner. It was built, like all the houses between Old Calabar and the Congo, on a platform of beaten earth raised nearly three feet above the level of the street. The floor inside was quite hard, like cement, and seemed to be of worked clay, hardened by the action of fire. A native bedstead stood in a recess at each end of the one room, and over both bedsteads gay-coloured mosquito-curtains hung. In the centre of the apartment was placed a huge table, only raised some eighteen inches from the ground, and covered with a white cloth. On this was neatly arranged all my host's collection of pottery and glass ware. This included several big claret-jugs, "Uncle Toby" mugs, and "sitting-hen" butter-dishes. There were also, strange to say, two little jugs of Doulton ware. It seemed a curious thing to encounter these in the interior of West Africa. Along one side of the room ran a massive wooden settle, on which were piled rows of tin boxes containing the proprietor's chief valuables. Near the beds were placed high wooden sideboards, or buffets. All these articles of furniture—table, settle, and buffets—were entirely of native workmanship, and were made from native woods. There was an unusual amount of skill in their construction, and it was remarkable that they were made by joinery, and not merely carved out of solid blocks, as is the usual fashion in Savage Africa. A number of pretty and fancifully-designed stools completed the furniture.

The following day, early in the morning, we left our hospitable Chief of Banyoñ-Bosua with many promises to return, and continued the journey up stream in the direction of Budiman. The river alternately widened and narrowed, and was studded with many islands and sand-banks. At its junction with the Dibomba, an important affluent coming from the north, there was a wide expanse of water which I named 'Hippopotamus Pool' (see following page), from the extraordinary numbers of these huge animals which suddenly made their appearance.

We arrived at the town of Ngale Nyamsi, the chief of Budiman, about noon, and met with an even kinder reception than elsewhere. The same description of tidy house, with home-made furniture and mosquito-curtained bed, was placed at my disposal, and a liberal supply of food was sent, not only to myself but to the Kruboy. After a short rest and a meal I set off with my interpreter and some self-appointed guides to walk along the south bank of the river in the direction of the falls—or, rather, rapids. I left my boat at Ngale Nyamsi's, because it was very slow work pulling up against the strong current. We first walked for two miles through a continuous and pretty town, where fine shady trees alternated with short broad streets running at right angles to the river. Everywhere among the teeming population the same aspect of cheerful industry prevailed, and nowhere did we meet with obtrusive curiosity. Some of the old men rose as we approached, and shook hands with formal greeting, and then returned to their avocations.

When the town had at last come to an end, we went for some distance further, through tidy plantations of vegetables which had very much the look of market-gardens in England. Along the straight path we met a young girl coming from the river, bearing a pitcher of water on her head, and driving a small flock of hairy sheep before her. The aspect

of this peaceful procession and the surrounding landscape, with its abundant crops of maize, edible arums, sweet potatoes, and beans, with here and there the glistening green of the banana-fronds and the swaying plums of the oil-palm, suggested at once a picture entitled 'Peace and Plenty,' which is a scene familiar enough amid these pleasant lands of Wuri and Badiman.

Pursuing our road, we at length entered a fine stretch of forest, where, we were told, a colony of chimpanzees had their abode. The path wound tortuously to a height of about five hundred feet above the river, and then through a break that occurred in the dense foliage we obtained a splendid view, stretching from west to east, embracing the course of the river, and exhibiting a panorama of unknown lands. The afternoon was singularly clear, and I obtained a fine view of a grand chain of peaked mountain lying due north of the river. Lines of white cumulus cloud separated their bases from the horizon, which gave them an added look of height. Placing their elevation above the horizon in conjunction with their alleged distance (three days' journey, according to my native informants) of fifty or sixty miles, I should roughly estimate the height of the two largest peaks in this new chain at between ten and twelve thousand feet; but it is quite possible they may prove higher. My drawing of this unknown range was taken from the marshy plain a little lower down the river.

Plunging again into the cool depths of the forest, we walked through the grey columns and architraves of the mighty trees, under a lofty roof of dim, green foliage. The fruit pigeons fluttered high above us, clustering round the ripe fruit of the sycamore-figs and the sickly-sweet dates of the calamus palms. The grey parrots showed every now and then a bit of scarlet tail as they scrambled round the boles of the tree-trunks, pursuing one another, half in spite and half in play, while every now and then they remembered their nestlings, and dived suddenly into dark holes in the wood. Monkeys, big, middle-sized, and little, swung and dropped from branch to branch, constantly stopping to peer at us through a maze of twigs and leaves, and swearing at us intermittently in guttural tones. Suddenly, in a forest clearing, we came upon the very prettily situated village of Msagha. This lay on a platform of red clay, about 300 feet above the river valley. It embraced the most beautiful views of the surrounding country, and more chains of dim and far mountain opened out to the eastward. The people here had never seen a white man before, at least so they all asseverated, except two slaves from the Ndobo country, in the far interior who somewhat proudly asserted that they had done so in former years before they were sold into slavery, but they added that the white men were bad, and they refused to come near me. Afterwards it appeared that their country had been visited by Mohammedan slave-raiders, who were sufficiently light in colour to be considered white men.

After a long—and to me very interesting—conversation about local geography and natural history, carried on through the interpreter, I rose and walked to the edge of the platform overhanging the river. Hence I could see the hills of Ndokoko, where the stream, passing through its last mountain barrier, descends in a succession of rapids,

which form the usual obstacle between the navigation of its upper and lower course. Whilst looking out over the water three or four black specks rose to its surface. They were hippopotami. Taking out my sketch-book, I signified to those around me that I would make a drawing of the beast that was a mere distant blur on the shining surface of the water. As the protruding eyes, the little pointed ears, the heavy jowl, the great trailing belly, short legs, and four-toed feet grew under my pencil, the admiring clamour of the bystanders gradually sank into awed silence, and when the complete sketch—a tolerably faithful drawing of the hippopotamus evolved from my inner consciousness—was placed before them, all looked scared, and some walked away. “No, this was going *too far*,” was the general opinion. “This was no longer funny, it was wrong.” One old man, a sort of prophet in Israel, came forward, and roundly accused me of being a sorcerer. He moaned and lamented, and foretold that sad days were in store for their village since a white man had come there and “put things on book.” However, the younger section of the populace—scoffers, the progressive party—had recovered from their first shock of surprise, and now began to take my part. It was all right, they maintained, and only white man’s fashion—they were not afraid. The old man knew nothing about white men; he was an old fool, and what he said about harm coming to the village was nothing but “mbamba”—rank foolishness. The prophet then denounced everybody all round, and pursued several gibing youths with a stick. In the middle of this clamour I stole off to a little smithy hard by, where I had caught a glimpse of a curious-looking forge. Of this I made the drawing, and this further example of my powers of delineation caused increased excitement, but, being recognised as a faithful representation of the original, increased my popularity, and when I set out to return to Ngale Nyamsi’s town, I was accompanied by nearly half the population of Msagha.

The next morning I left Ngale Nyamsi’s town in a perfect gush of friendliness. My little parting-gift was actually received with hearty thanks—a very rare thing in Africa—and, on his part, the chief outdid me in generosity. He put a fat goat, six fowls, bananas, yams, and fresh eggs into the boat, and waded out into the red mud to give a last shake-hands, and impress on me that I must come again soon to his country. Then, with many a “nod and beck and wreathed smile,” we bade good-bye to him and his people, and paddled down the river on our return journey.

The country about Wuri and Budiman struck me as being a particularly *pleasant* land. Apart from the good-humour and contentment which characterised its inhabitants, there is a cheerfulness in the wide landscapes that should exercise a beneficial effect on the temperament of settlers and colonists. Great breezy prairies stretch across the river-basin, marked in some places by the intense verdure of plantations, but mostly an unvarying yellow-green where the rank grass has not been cut. Here and there, a long winding ribbon of purple-green forest indicates the hidden course of a stream. The sameness of the level plains is broken along the horizon by the pale-blue forms of lofty mountains, which lend

an element of grandeur and mystery to the comfortable landscapes of neat pastures of beans and colocasia arums, waving fields of maize and glistening groves of plantains in the immediate foreground.

The people dwelling on the banks of the Cameroons River and its affluents all, as far as I can ascertain, speak languages belonging to the Bantu family. Most of these tribes seem to be considerably removed in culture from mere savages, and show in the furniture and decoration of their homes proofs of the strong artistic feeling that is latent in so many Negro races, and which, let us hope, will some day be drawn out and developed by a wise, fostering civilisation. Judging from what I hear of the kings and peoples dwelling on the upper course of the Cameroons River, I should say they were slightly tinged with the civilisation of the Mohammedan Sudan. The Budiman traders are certainly in touch with the Moslem merchants of the Binué River, for, from all accounts, they seem to meet them at the slave and ivory markets of the interior. Unfortunately, the Fula slave-raiders are yearly extending their ravages over the tribes which lie between the Upper Binué and the Cameroons River, and are devastating districts once prosperous, well cultivated, and densely peopled. Sooner or later, they will come into contact and conflict—nay, in a measure they have already done so—witness Lieut. Tappenbeck's repulse—with the Germans, and then let us hope they will receive the sound punishment they so richly deserve.

I have ascended for varying distances some of the northern tributaries of the Cameroons River, but although these journeys were of great interest to myself, they would seem too much like a repetition of the scenes I have already described if I ventured to detail them to you.

A district I have explored at some length is the Rio del Rey. This is really a huge "unnecessary" estuary which receives a number of streams from the northern versant of the Cameroons Mountains, and the various ranges which form a north-westerly continuation of that mass of elevated volcanic peaks. Three rivers of some volume and navigability are the principal feeders of this large estuary. They are the Mbomanjinga, the Ndiani, and the Akpayafe. Besides which, there are a number of tidal creeks communicating with the Akwa and Old Calabar rivers. The greater part of the district, drained by the component streams of the Rio del Rey, is almost uninhabited, hilly, even mountainous in parts, and covered with the densest forests. This country is chiefly interesting as being the borderland of the Bantu. Here meet the Bantu races and languages from the east and south, and the Niger tongues, and peoples from the north. The Bantu family is represented by the Ba-rombi and Ba-kundu tribes speaking most interesting languages which are thoroughly "Bantu" in type; and the Nigerian groups appears in the Efik, the very pushing energetic inhabitants of Old Calabar. The Efik language I have found to be related to the Ibo tongues of the Lower Niger, and though at first sight of the vocabularies the resemblance is not strongly marked, it is strengthened by the connecting links of the intermediate dialects. Besides the Efik and the Bantu peoples, who approach each other from either side of the Rio del Rey, there are the fragments—timidly lurking in the forest, and perpetually in dread of

slave-raids—of some very interesting peoples and languages, which are neither Bantu nor Efik, but which I have recently found to be related to tribes on the Upper Cross River. Altogether, the district from the Cross River to the Cameroons is, linguistically, one of the highest interest, especially as regards the relations of the Bantu languages to the other linguistic groups of Western Africa. I have collected vocabularies of nearly forty languages and dialects, and have made grammatical studies of the more representative tongues, and as these results will probably be published, I will not weary you with any further allusion to the subject.

With regard to natural history I have sent home several collections from the Cameroons Mountains and the river regions in the vicinity, some of which have not yet been reported on. Among those that have been examined by the Cameroons Committee of the British Association, one mammal, a species of shrew-mouse—almost the smallest mammal known—has been discovered which is new to science, and also four new species of birds, and several new batrachia, land-shells, and butterflies; and I believe there are some plants in my recent collections likely to prove new and undescribed.

In conclusion, I must tender my sincere thanks to the British Association which two years ago awarded me a grant of money that materially aided me in exploring not only the Cameroons, but other and adjacent regions, which I have been unable to refer to in the present paper. I regret that my sense of gratitude should have compelled me to inflict on your patience this very lengthy discourse, but I wished to show that I had endeavoured to turn the resources you granted me to some account.

“LITTLE RUSSIA.”

(Read at Meeting of British Association, Bath, 1888.)

BY E. DELMAR MORGAN, F.R.G.S.

IT is difficult, if not impossible, to say what is meant by Little Russia, which of the provinces of Russia should be included under that title, where Malorossia begins and where it ends. Even among Russians themselves there is a difference of opinion. When I was preparing in Mosco to visit that country, I was told by one of my acquaintance that its centre was Kharkof, and by another that Poltava was the heart of the Little Russian nationality. But at Kharkof, and again at Poltava, I was referred to Kief, and at Kief to Lvof or Lemberg in Galicia, if I wished to acquaint myself with what is known as the Little Russian movement. Any desirous of studying the country and the people thoroughly, and obtaining an insight into the hopes and aspirations of the Little Russians, should visit all these towns, should make some stay in the country, and read attentively the literature on the subject contained in several hundredweight of books.

My claim to be regarded as what is termed an authority on Little