WILEY

Review: Across Central Africa

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (Dec., 1908), pp. 613-614

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1777531>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 03:59 UTC

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(spelt, it may be presumed, as it came from the writer) by President Roosevelt, at whose instigation the Mr. Selous cast these notes into book-form. Mr. E. Caldwell's illustrations are excellent.

ACROSS CENTRAL AFRICA.

'From Ruwenzori to the Congo: a Naturalist's Journey across Africa.' By H. F. R. Wollaston. *With Illustrations.* London: John Murray. 1908. Price 15s. net.

This volume is accurately described by its subtitle. It records the impressions of a naturalist in a journey from Mombasa by way of Uganda, Lakes Albert Edward, Kivu, Tanganyika, to the Congo and the West Coast, and during a sojourn under the snows of Ruwenzori. There the author joined for a time, as doctor, an expedition organized by Mr. Ogilvie Grant, of the Natural History Museum. Owing to their unfortunate lack of light tents or any mountaineering equipment beyond an ice-axe borrowed from a predecessor, the English party were unable to explore the highest portion of the range. But they brought back rich results, both botanical and zoological, which have been or will be described in detail in the appropriate Transactions. In these pages Mr. Wollaston confines himself to a popular narrative. His eloquent descriptions of the charms of Lake Naivasha and the natural beauties of Entebbe should attract the tourists for whom provision has now been made by Messrs. Cook. To geographers the most interesting portion of his book is the account given of the relatively little-known highlands lying about Lake Kivu and the Mfumbiro volcanoes. This district is apparently one of the most promising in Africa for European colonization, and it is likely to be opened up in the future by the progress of the Cape to Cairo railroad. Mr. Wollaston describes scenery better than most travellers. He writes rather from an artist's than a topographer's point of view. The dreary belts, the swamps, or the arid monotonous plains so familiar in early books of African travel appear in his book only as interludes between noble tracts of hills and lakes, where every prospect pleases, and man, but for tick-fever and sleeping sickness, might live and prosper. Of the ravages of the latter disease as far south as the shores of Tanganyika, the author gives a most appalling account. The pestilences of the middle ages can hardly have surpassed its horrors. Mr. Wollaston is inclined to attribute the absence of crocodiles in Lake Kivu to the saltiness of the water. But they are also absent from Lake Albert Edward, with the dwellers on which bathing is consequently a frequently enjoyed luxury.

Into purely political matters we cannot follow Mr. Wollaston here; we may note, however, that he agrees in the suggestions put forward in these pages as to the best scientific frontier between the Congo State, and the British possessions. We must also note that in his attempted correction of a passage in the Duke of the Abruzzi's lecture (*Geographical Journal*, vol. 29, p. 131), he convicts himself of a double inaccuracy. He writes that he told the Duke, "not that the high peaks were 'to the west of the watershed'—it was exceedingly unlikely that such high peaks should be away from the watershed—but that they stood on the west side of the range and sloped steeply down into the Semliki valley." The two particular statements would seem to most mountaineers to be identical; they do not usually speak of a peak on the watershed of a range as "on its side." And the general proposition is untenable. In the Alps, or the Caucasus, it would be easy to mention many conspicuous examples that disprove it. It may prevent in the future confusions similar to that recorded by the author (p. 124), if we point out, what is conclusively shown by Signor Sella's panorama, that in the view from Butiti on the Toro high-road the highest peak of Mount Stanley is seen immediately over the top of Johnston's Duwoni (Mount Speke), so that their snows are hardly

distinguishable in morning light. It is very possible that Mount Speke may, as Mr. Wollaston suggests, be the Saddle Peak of some early travellers. What has been disputed and disproved is the existence of the peak inserted by mapmakers under that name from 12 to 20 miles to the north of the central group and equal to it in height. Mount Speke is barely 2 miles from Mount Stanley. The volume is provided with excellent photographs, but once more we must protest against the haphazard way in which publishers have taken to insert illustrations without reference to their place in the text. A sketch-map of the country round Lake Kivu adds something to our knowledge.

AMERICA.

LABRADOR.

'A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador.' By Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard, junr. London: Murray. 1908. Pp. xvi, 338. *Map and Illustrations.* 10s. 6d.

The death of Mr. Leonidas Hubbard on October 18, 1903, in the interior of Labrador, evoked additional sympathy owing to its occurrence when the explorer was within a short distance of safety. His wife determined to complete the work he had undertaken. She started from North-West river post on July 27, 1905, travelled up the Nascaupée river and down the George, and on August 27 reached Ungava bay, having covered 576 miles in this short time, by canoe, with four men. In the present volume we have not only her own narrative, but the diary of her husband, and an introduction, dealing generally with Labrador, by Mr. W. B. Cabot. Mrs. Hubbard's account of the journey is purely narrative, and forms very interesting reading; moreover, with the assistance of excellent photographs, her descriptions give an unusually clear idea of the scenery of the country she traversed. She made certain notes on the geology, flora, and fauna (in the last connection she had the almost unique experience, for a white, of encountering vast numbers of herding caribou). But she also made a running survey, and an examination of the map, in which a reproduction of the outline of the Stieler map of 1905 is overprinted with the course of the two rivers as observed by her, shows the value of her work, especially in the extraordinary divergence between her observations of the course of the Nascaupée and its course as previously conjectured. Mrs. Hubbard's laudable determination in carrying out the journey can only be inferred, but it can be inferred clearly, from her simple narrative. As to Mr. Hubbard's diary, and the account of his companion, George Elson, who with another left him in order to reach the caché of food which would have saved him from starvation, every circumstance combines to give them pathos, from the enthusiasm obvious in every line of the diary at the beginning, to the knowledge of the nearness of relief and the impossibility of reaching it, at the end. In short, this is a book which, while claiming no great scientific value, cannot fail to interest those who like to read of the doings of pioneer travellers.

CLIMBING IN ALASKA.

'To the Top of the Continent. Discovery, Exploration, and Adventure in Sub-arctic Alaska.' By Dr. Frederick A. Cook. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 1908. *Sketch-maps and Illustrations.* Price 12s. net.

A narrative, written in a style presumably popular in America, of journeys and explorations on both sides of the Alaska range in the neighbourhood of Mount McKinley, the highest mountain in North America, 20,390 feet, and an account of its ascent. The author states that it was made by himself and a single companion in September, 1906, in eight days from a base camp at a height of 1000 feet, mainly