The Owen Stanley Range, New Guinea
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CORRESPONDENCE.

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In a despatch addressed to his Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Sir William Macgregor, the Administrator of British New Guinea—to whom I am indebted for a copy—has given an account of his arduous and most successful ascent of Mount Owen Stanley.* My own experiences in New Guinea place me in a position to know the difficulties and dangers he had to overcome, and to appreciate the perseverance, endurance, and skill with which the expedition was carried out. While envying him the honour of being the first to reach the goal I had ardently aspired to, there is no one to whom I could grudge it less than to an old class-mate and fellow-townsmen, and I beg to offer him my cordial congratulations on the perfect success of the undertaking.

There are several points in the Administrator's despatch on which I should like to offer a few remarks through the pages of the 'Proceedings' of the Royal Geographical Society.

Sir William Macgregor writes, "I regret that neither myself nor Mr. Cameron could identify many of the places named by Mr. Forbes." This must necessarily be so from the route taken by him, which lay far to the north of mine, and roughly at right angles to its direction. Only when he crowned the range could they be seen by him, and even then with great difficulty from his altitude above them. My route traversed no ground of any great elevation; nor did the heights bordering it exceed anywhere 5000–6000 feet. Many fewer points along my route, I regret, were fixed, and these with less exactitude, than would have been the case but for the losing of my depot camp on the Goldie river, when I lost one of my most important angle books. From the deserted village of Madillo, on the river Naoro, as far as Ginianumu, my route has been laid out on my map in the 'Scottish Geographical Magazine' by dead reckoning; for during nearly all that way we were buried under deep forest, through which no outlook was possible. Otherwise my positions were fixed by sextant angles and prismatic compass bearings established on coast points determined during the recent marine survey there. During the whole time of my last journey there was no single night clear enough to obtain stellar observations. As Mr. Cameron is a professional surveyor, his plotted work should be more accurate than that of any other previous traveller in the interior of New Guinea. What instruments besides a prismatic compass were used by Sir William Macgregor, who took his own positions after his separation from Mr. Cameron, does not appear from his narrative; but if the position of that portion of Mount Owen Stanley named Mount Victoria by him, has been fixed by compass bearings alone, greater accuracy may not probably have been attained by him than by other careful but non-professional observers. This may account for some discrepancy which somewhere exists between the positions around "Mount Victoria" laid down in the Administrator's map and those taken by me at Ginianumu. My station there commanded a clear outlook on Mount Owen Stanley. My nearest approach to Mount Victoria, by my own map, is between eight and nine miles. The distance certainly did not look nearly so far. Distances estimated by eye in the tropics,

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however, I have found very delusive, as objects appear to approach and recede from hour to hour according to the state of the atmosphere. I have learned, therefore, to place no reliance on apparent distance. That I was looking out on Mount Owen Stanley there can be no doubt. I had too often “shot up” and sketched its peaks from crowds of places to be possibly mistaken. Sir William says truly that I was looking out on the “highest crest, the great and rugged mountain mass,” forming “the south-east end of Mount Victoria,” but certainly no great mountains or mountain spurs intervened between me and it. Nor was I looking up the deep dark glen that separates Mount Knutsford from the central ridge, as will be evident from the bearings I give below. From Ginianumnu, on descending to and crossing the Warumi river below us, access could at once be obtained to several spurs, some of them very broken and rugged, leading directly to the summit. The south-easterly spur was the one I should most probably have attempted. Its extreme termination was hidden from us by the nearly perpendicular buttress of Miago, a mountain of no great altitude, rising close to us on our right, which projected into and on our side of the river. But it was evident that it could be reached by ascending the Warumi for a short distance. If, from the Admiralty chart in which Mount Owen Stanley is depicted, it had been possible to decide with certainty the crest or its summits on which I had taken bearings, it would have been easy to fix, by reverse bearings, my Ginianumnu station. The general silhouette outline of Mount Owen Stanley from its southern aspect is very constant in appearance from all points, to one travelling from the coast eastward as far as I reached. Sir William describes “Mount Victoria” as composed of six peaks; from my points of observation, five seemed more prominent than the rest—three to the eastward of a marked central back or depression, and two to the west of it. Of the three easterly I have named two—Mount Walker, the most easterly of all, crowning the spur up which I intended to ascend, and Abercromby Peak, the other end of the easterly half. Huxley Pinnacle, which appeared to me to slightly excel the others, is the eastern top of the western half, while Wharton Summit is the most westerly end of Mount Owen Stanley. Coutts-Trotter Crag lies close to the western end of this crest, and slightly (to appearance) more southerly. It is a sharp-pointed cone, visible from all southern stations, and once seen, too remarkable to be forgotten or confounded with any other. It is evident from the following bearings that my position was more to the north and east of that assigned to it in my map already referred to. From Ginianumnu, Mount Walker (the most south-east peak) bore N. 5° 50' W. (an observation repeated many times). The sextant angular distance between Mount Walker and Abercromby Peak I read as 2° 54', Huxley Pinnacle 5° 48' (its prismatic bearing N. 11° 38' W.); Wharton Summit (which lies somewhat out of the line of the other tops and towards my station) is 6° 25' (prismatic N. 15° 15' W.), and Coutts-Trotter Crag, which is a sharp-pointed cone, visible and remarkable from all stations to its southern side, 10° 23' (prismatic N. 16° 45' W.) Coutts-Trotter Crag seems to stand at the north-west end of the crest of Mount Owen Stanley, and is probably separated from it. This fact it was impossible, from my position, to decide with certainty. I do not consider it, therefore, as part of the true crest. It is probably either Macgregor's Mount Morehead or his Mount MacIlwraith; while Slater's Needle, whose angular distance from Mount Walker is 24° 50' (prismatic bearing as recorded, N. 31° 50' W.), will perhaps prove to be the other of these two. Its form is very distinctive, being sharply pyramidal, with a precipitous western slope. Mount Walker, Abercromby Peak, Huxley Pinnacle, and Wharton Summit, are peaks of the “block,” which I erroneously imagined to be isolated, not from any observation it was possible to make from Ginianumnu, but from a view of Mount Owen Stanley I obtained on a
particularly clear day from Holnicote Bay, when with Sir Peter Scratchley, on board the Governor Blackall. Some streak of cloud, which, while it so often demarks with great distinctness, can equally blur at other times, the topography of mountain spurs seen from a distance, may have deceived me. It was on the same occasion that I detected so distinctly the great gap or pass between it and the Mount Obree Range, by which I offered to conduct the expedition to the north-east coast, which his Excellency the then Special Commissioner (the Hon. John Douglas) promised to subsidise, if the rest of the Australian colonies would have shared the expense. Through part, as least, of this gap, I believe it will be found that the Warumi river flows.

Sir William Macgregor further states, "that there were such (i.e. mountain spurs between Mount Forbes and Mount Victoria), is plain from the position he assigns to the Brown river." I beg leave to say that I have not given any position to the Brown river. That the river crossed near Madilo, called the Naoro Nguma in my map, is the Brown I have no means of knowing, nor should I like to venture to affirm that it is the same that enters the Warumi under Ginianumu. The northward turn of the Naoro to join the Warumi is inserted on information extracted from the natives, if I did not misunderstand them and they us, and which I considered not unlikely to be true. It must be remembered that we could see nothing of the country after entering the forest at Madilo till our reaching Uburukara. What I do know from observation is that we crossed the Naoro on our outward journey as a muddy river running more or less westerly at an elevation of 2000 feet. On our return journey we recrossed at the spot marked cataracts; but being unable to follow its further course, I know nothing of its whence or whither, outside the mile and a half, perhaps, of its banks we traversed. I conjectured that the Naoro might be the Brown, because that was the river north of the Goldie, generally credited with stretching up towards the main ranges. It is not at all improbable that that river (the Naoro of the map) holds on its course westerly towards the sea without turning northward, and that the river branch we saw below Uburukara and traced to join the Warumi under Ginianumu may be quite distinct, and have its sources in the Archer Range. As to the Warumi and its branches, I have indicated them as I saw them. The Warumi flowed north-westerly from us—a direction in which it became lost to view behind a great spur of Mount Owen Stanley. After studying Sir William's map, I am disposed with some confidence to believe that the Warumi is indeed a branch of the Vanapa.

Having carefully read Sir William's description of his route, I cannot help
thinking that the road that I traced by eye from one of the hills in the Sogeri region on my first arrival in New Guinea has great advantages over his. It is far shorter and far easier. The eminent feasibility of the route decided me not to think of any other locality than Sogeri for my headquarters. That described by the Admin-
istrator would still not tempt me from my own. The route taken by the party I led on behalf of the Protectorate Government was adopted at the desire of the Special Commissioner. Mr. Douglas had been assured by a miner named Gleeson, then in the Protectorate service, that a party of miners of which he was a member, had, while prospecting on the Goldie river in 1879, conducted pack-horses without great difficulty far up towards Mount Owen Stanley. Accordingly, I accepted his guidance up the Goldie Valley to the point he had formerly reached. After fourteen days of toilsome trudging, sometimes on the abrupt spurs, sometimes and oftener in the middle of the river bed, Gleeson’s “furthest for horses” was reached, and to my surprise was within shouting distance of my own furthest northward march from Sogeri to the mountain the year before. All the hill country we yet know in New Guinea is exceptionally rough, and difficult for parties to traverse; but this point can be reached from Sogeri by parties—but not by horses—with comparative ease in good weather in three days at the most. Sogeri is distant from Port Moresby three comfortable marches, while the interval between my main camp on the Goldie and my Ginianumu station can be bridged by another three. There is an excellent native path every foot of the way; none of the rivers which intercept it present any difficulty as to crossing; nowhere throughout the route does the path rise higher than 3000 feet, on an average very much lower. Only on descending from Ginianumu to the Warumi (of whose fords I cannot speak), would the tough ascent of Mount Owen Stanley commence. The Sogeri and Kaukari natives have long been on the most friendly terms with the nao or foreigner, and for some years now have been accustomed to porterage duties. The natives of Ebe, on the Goldie river, who looted my camp—being doubtless too sorely tempted by the wealth of barter of the most coveted kinds, left as they thought insufficiently guarded in our open camp—are not really an ill-disposed people. I would not hesitate to venture alone among them again to-morrow. The Origanumu villagers, though during that disastrous march from the village to our Goldie camp their labour was enforced at the points of our revolvers, cannot be said to have behaved other than well under the circumstances, and the day before they had been our most hospitable entertainers. The people dwelling on the Archer Range would be, I am sure, equally well affected after a short acquaintance with the white foreigners, if just and considerate. I am confi-
dent that, with a little expenditure of graciousness, there could be safely established in the village of Origanumu, under a small guard, a dépôt within easy communica-
tion with Port Moresby, via Sogeri, on the one hand, and on the other with an exploring party working for a season on the flanks and summits of Mount Owen Stanley.

The precedent set by Sir William Macgregor in the matter of nomenclature is to be regretted. He has bestowed the name of Mount Victoria on a portion of the main range which has for nearly 40 years been known as Mount Owen Stanley, and reduplicated the names Mount Scratchley and Mount Douglas, within a few miles each other. If the precedent be allowed that succeeding travellers may change or transpose the names bestowed by their predecessors, there will be no

finality to geographical appellations, nor end to the confusion that must arise. Nor can it be fair to rob a predecessor, by removing his names from the landscape he was the first to mark out, of this his very often sole reward, simply because in his pre-
decessor’s estimation the feature to which he had applied the exalted name was less worthy to bear it than another more newly discovered. It would appear to me that
the honour conferred on a name by its commemoration on an imperishable geographical feature, lies not altogether in the prominence of that feature, for the attain- ment of some high, remarkable, or further-off peak may often be a less notable exploit in after days, than the reaching of, say, a nearer and lower elevation in the face of all the difficulties and dangers of a virgin traverse; the right to bestow a worthy name on the "furthest" or any feature fixed in some such arduous exploration would be a reward to compensate for many toils, and an honour for the commemorated to be proud of, and on both sides one to be jealously guarded. Why should not some future traveller presume to change Mount Gordon Bennett in Africa to Mount H. M. Stanley; or in New Guinea attempt to dethrone Mount Knutsford from its secure elevation? If the long-established name of Mount Owen Stanley must, for any more sufficient reason than appears at present, give place to another, the name of Huxley Pinnacle, that has been bestowed on the central peak of the crest (even should it prove lower instead of higher, as supposed, than the others), would, according to the rules of priority applicable in scientific nomenclature, fall to be applied to it, and surely no appellation, not even that of our Gracious Sovereign in this instance, could be more appropriate or deserving than the name of the (now illustrious) surgeon of H.M.S. Rattlesnake, who first sighted and named it. Where the native names of natural features can be ascertained, the Admiralty instructions are, I believe, that they should be adhered to as rigidly as possible; and that when the native name becomes known it should be substituted for the foreign designation, and the latter inserted in smaller type beneath the former, as has been done in the new survey of the Louisiade Archipelago, recently made by Commander Field, R.N.

The natives seen by Sir William Macgregor on Mount Musgrave would seem to belong to the same tribe as those I met with at Ubumkara. In this relation the following notes from my journal may be of interest:-- 27th October, 1887. We met a crowd of natives (whom I had sent forward to summon) from the village (they said) of Bogara, whose chief's name is Kaimadaiva. Our new carriers—whose broad nostrils are very noticeable—are distinguishable from our Urava men by their wearing a covering round their waists of short grass petticoats, from the band of which a piece of bark cloth (angüd) ornamented with red and black ochres hangs down behind. In front they wear over it, if married, one or more bags (yago), in coloured patterns, blue (tage-tage tage), yellow (bová), and brown. We understood them to say that these colours were extracted from the bark of trees (ao). These bags are woven of two coloured threads by two bone needles, worked between the first and second fingers and twisted off on to the little finger and thumb. In their hair are worn also tails of small cucuses and wreaths of cassowary feathers, while round their foreheads were fixed coronets of dog and wallaby teeth and small shells, probably received from the coast tribes in barter. In some cases the men wore their hair in plaits, with shells hung at the end, or the crania of minama—probably a large species of eel. No tattooing was observed on any of them. Their villages, to judge from Ubumkara, are really very poor; the houses, raised on poles, are miserably built and kept. Most of the men wore on their arms, or had hanging in their girdles behind, coils of rattan rope, which are used by them for 'making fire.' For this purpose the operator, first selecting a dry fragment of wood, makes in it a split, in which he inserts a peg to keep it agape: into this split he places loosely a morsel of tinder plucked out of his girdle or skirt. He next cuts from his dry coil of rattan a short length, lays it on a dry leaf on the ground, and places over it the tinder plug in the cleft stick; then placing his knee or foot on the end of the stick, he pulls the rattan cord rapidly to and fro under it till the tinder ignites, when, by blowing gently through the cleft, he fans the spark into a flame. The whole operation is the
most effective and rapid of any native fire-producing contrivances that I know. Their spears are of palm-wood, devoid of ornament, and their shields have the shape and rough ornamentation seen among the Koiazi."

Between Ubumkara and Ginianumu we crossed the only quartz-reef I saw on the journey. It ran in an east and west direction, and measured 18 inches across.

H. O. Forbes.

Note.—In my map in the 'Scot. Geog. Magazine' already referred to, "Pullen Summit" is a mistake inserted through some oversight on the draughtsman's part. I may also remark here that Mount Horsley was inserted after I had corrected the proof, and for whose position I assume no responsibility. The depicting of the spurs and summits of Mount Owen Stanley is not satisfactory. Their delineation being beyond my technical skill, I had to leave the task of representing my outlines and descriptions to the cartographer; but the picture produced is, through no fault of his, not that which I tried and failed to convey to him, and which I carry so vividly in my recollection.

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Obituary.

Major-General John Charles Fremont, U.S.A.*—When, in the course of a lecture which I had the honour of delivering before the Society in March last, I had occasion to allude to the personality and services to geographical science of one of our distinguished Honorary Fellows, Major-General John Charles Fremont, United States Army, I little thought that, in a few brief months, I should, as his friend and countryman, be assigned the task of writing his brief obituary for our 'Proceedings.'

He made the long trans-continental journey with me only last summer; and, although he had passed considerably beyond the allotted age of man, he was a hale and active veteran, and bade fair to survive—as the old monk in the Escorial expressed it to the painter Wilkie—"all who were his predecessors, all who were his contemporaries, not a few of those who were younger than was he."

In his person has passed away the last of the United States pioneers, the heroes of the border, the men who have made possible the maps of to-day, have helped to abolish the "Great American Desert," have given us a domain stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Such services deserve a commemorative monument, and they have a splendid one in "Frémont's Peak," standing just where the great parallel ranges of the Northern Sierra Madre break down to form the elevated plateau which is crossed by the Pacific Railroad.

John Charles Frémont came of excellent stock: that of Huguenot exiles. He was born at Savannah, Georgia, January 21st, 1813. His mother, left a widow in 1818, removed to Charleston, South Carolina, and the young man was educated at Charleston College. In 1833, he began a cruise on a naval vessel as teacher of mathematics; then he served as assistant in several railroad and military surveys in Georgia, Tennessee, and the two Carolinas. In 1838-9, he accompanied M. Nicollet in two exploring expeditions to the upper Mississippi region, having been appointed in 1838 a second lieutenant in the corps of Topographical Engineers. In 1841 he had the great good fortune to win the affections, and secure, after much

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