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The Question of Mr. Johnson's High Camp

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I still hold to my statement that the lake is divided into two, and in view of this fact and of the alteration made by us in the north-eastern shore-line, I see no reason why I should depart from my words which said that the work of our expedition "has considerably altered the idea previously held of the region, and has made the lake into two."

I am not so ill content that Major Close should keep "A. K." company; while I am proud to know that the honour which the Royal Geographical Society is giving this year in recognition of the work of our expedition, is identified by that body with our record on Lake Chad.

Kaddai was longitudinally determined by sextant observations.

BOYD ALEXANDER.

### The Question of Mr. Johnson's High Camp.

In some remarks in the *March Geographical Journal*, p. 345, under the title of "Mr. Johnson's Ascent of E 61," Dr. Longstaff says a statement of mine, made in reply to an incorrect statement of his in the *Journal* of January, 1908, "ought not to pass unnoticed."

I would call Dr. Longstaff's attention to the desirability, when criticizing the statements of others, of defining his own position with more precision than he has done in this case. On p. 41 of the *Geographical Journal* of January, 1908, he states, as he has elsewhere stated, that Mr. Johnson "spent a night at over 22,000 feet in the Kuen Lun when surveying beyond the Changchenmo in 1864." It was to this statement that the passage criticized referred, which was intended to show the improbability of a high camp, such as Dr. Longstaff alleges, having been made in this region or district.

On p. 345 of the *March Journal*, Dr. Longstaff again says, "Johnson's high camp was made in 1864, on his way to the Yarkand road from the neighbourhood of the Shayok river," and adds that "he ascended E 61 *many miles to the east in 1865*." It will be noted that E 61 stands in the region in which Dr. Longstaff says the high camp was made in 1864. To this second statement the passage criticized did not refer.

To which of these statements is one to understand that Dr. Longstaff adheres? The two regions mentioned are, as he points out, a considerable distance apart, and quite different in character, the latter being far more inaccessible, and its mountains higher. It is evident that Mr. Johnson could not have made the high camp in both regions at the same time.

Now, the only thing connected with Mr. Johnson's explorations that my paper concerned itself with was the question whether Mr. Johnson claimed to have camped at over 22,000 feet, and, if so, where this claim is recorded. Dr. Longstaff asserts as a fact that he camped at this altitude, and gives several references, presumably in support of this assertion, in three of which, containing accounts of Mr. Johnson's explorations, I was unable, as I stated, to find any mention of such a camp.

The identity of E 61 with K<sub>5</sub> or the "Muztagh," and Mr. Johnson's building of "masonry platforms" at 21,500 feet are interesting items, but they throw no light on the question at issue.

If I have overlooked Mr. Johnson's statement of his claim, or if Dr. Longstaff thinks I am in error in declining to accept his own statement as to the camp in question without adequate evidence, it is a simple matter for him to point out where Mr. Johnson's claim (not that of other persons for him) can be found, and describe the method he employed to determine the altitude of the camp, so that an

opinion may be formed as to the correctness of his conclusion. In doing this it is not necessary to cite any of his collateral achievements.

WILLIAM HUNTER WORKMAN.

Lucknow, March 31, 1908.

### Surface Forms in Western South America.

Northwood, Middlesex, April 20, 1908.

In the April *Journal* appears some interesting matter relative to snow-formations, or *nieve penitente*, also sand-dunes. The west side of South America offers—especially in Peru—an exceptionally interesting field for the observance of desert and mountain phenomena, especially those induced by æolian action and peculiar climatic conditions. As regards the pillars, or *penitentes*, as they have been fancifully termed, they are not confined to snow, but in the foothills of the western Andine desert region are to be seen in earth, and might be called *tierras penitentes* with equal reason.\* I have observed singular pillars of this nature here, generally consisting of a tapering cone of soil capped at the top by a large pebble, or even a rock. I have also noted similar but much smaller structures on the plateau of Anahuac, Mexico. The surrounding level has, of course, been worn down by the action of wind, sun, and rain (although parts of these regions are rainless); the stone forming a sheltering and consolidating covering. In the Chilean Andes of Tarapacá there exists in a certain place some remarkable series of pillars of earthy mud, formed by disintegrated rock. These strange pillars, which look like groups of statuary, often are of 10 to 30 feet in height, formed of material impregnated with sulphate of lime. During the day and under the heat of the sun they become soft and with a muddy-appearing surface, but at night become exceedingly hard, like frozen mud—the effect of temperature upon the sulphate of lime which they contain. The elevation is more than 14,000 feet. In the Peruvian Andes very remarkable gravel and conglomerate pillars are encountered at high elevations of the most weird forms, also due in some cases to action brought about by mineral impregnation.

A word as to sand-dunes. The coast plains of Peru and Northern Chile form an absolutely rainless region, and here æolian action plays strange pranks with the fine drifting sand. I have observed the singular *médanos*, or travelling crescent-shaped dunes, here in a most perfect form, especially near Camaná and on the deserts west of Arequipa. I made careful observations of some of these dunes, with measurements, but at the moment have not my notebook at hand. I observed an “army” of hundreds of them in their slow movement across the plain. Of course, the movement is not visible without close observation, and depends upon the force of the wind. It might amount to 1 or 2 feet in an hour when the breeze blows briskly. On the sea verge I observed them being “born”; that is, they evolved out of a bank of fine dry sand, took their characteristic crescent form on a flat upper beach, and were strung out away inland, all of similar shape and proportion, but of varying sizes. The æolian ripples on their backs—which, of course, is the cause of movement by the constant changing of place of the particles—reminded me of the quivering of the skin of an animal. I have spoken of these dunes and the region generally in a recent book—the ‘Andes and the Amazon.’

C. REGINALD ENOCK.

\* The parallelism between the *penitentes* and the well-known earth-pyramids has also been suggested by Dr. S. Günther (cf. *Journal*, vol. 26, p. 91).