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A JOURNEY THROUGH NORTHERN UGANDA.*

By Major P. H. G. POWELL-COTTON.

I GOT my caravan together at Mombasa, and, starting on February 22, 1902, went up the Uganda railway to Stony Athi station. Our route† lay across the thorn-dotted Athi plain and along the western side of Mount Doinyo Sabuk, on whose grassy slopes the eye could follow the course of many streams, marked by the band of trees and scrub that edged their beds. Then, fording the Athi and Thika rivers, we left their shady banks to cross a succession of grassy plains till the

MOUNT SIRGOI, GWASHENGESHU PLATEAU.

Tithara was reached, beyond which the country grows more hilly and villages are numerous.

At Mbirri, or Fort Hall, as it is officially called, we strengthened our caravan before proceeding north-west through a thickly populated district of the Kikuyu country. This region is well watered and very fertile. In every valley we passed extensive stretches of banana and sugar-cane cultivation, while along the slopes lay fields of Indian corn and other cereals, interspersed with occasional patches of tobacco. The villages were generally hidden in dense vegetation, no doubt with a

* Read at the Royal Geographical Society, February 22, 1904. Map, p. 128.

† This is fully described by Captain B. Dickson, R.A., in the *Journal* for January, 1903.

view to concealment from the eye of possible raiders. From here we made our way to the western slopes of Mount Kenya, across a rolling grass plain, which at that time of year (April) was almost devoid of game. Camping at an elevation of 6900 feet, in the long grass on the edge of the forest which clothes the lower slopes of the mountain, we spent some time in a vain attempt to find bull elephants. We pushed our way through the dense belt of jungle which forms the outer edge, and entered a primeval forest, where perpetual twilight and an impressive stillness reigned. As we rose higher, the forest gave place to bamboo brakes, and at an elevation of 8900 feet I noticed the first tree lobelias (*Lobelia Deckeni*?), which are from 10 to 12 feet in height.

INTERIOR OF CAVE, MOUNT ELGON.

When, however, we had climbed to an altitude of 9400 feet, and found ourselves still in the midst of thick bamboo, with no recent signs of elephant, we determined to turn back without having reached the rocky slopes which we had examined with the telescope from our camp.

We now set our faces westwards through a series of washouts, cut deeply into rotten sandstone and mud. Nearly the whole way across the plains of Laikipia the country was well wooded and appeared to be an ideal district for cattle-grazing, judging from the vast herds of antelope, apparently in the pink of condition, that roamed over it; while the belts of trees and little copses would provide a plentiful supply of timber and firewood. Crossing the Marmanet hills that

form the watershed between the tributaries of the Gwaso Nyiro (which, flowing northwards and then eastwards, loses itself in the Lorian swamp) and the inland basin of Lake Baringo, we passed through a tract of forest land extending to the edge of the escarpment. This steep declivity, which forms the western edge of the great plateau lying at the foot of Mount Kenya, descends to the plain in three great steps or terraces, making in all a drop of some 2800 feet. A winding path led us over these terraces, down slopes covered with thorn-trees, to the Baringo basin below. I spent some two months in the neighbourhood of the lake, the water of which is quite fresh, even close in shore, except at the southern end, where, when a north wind is blowing, the mud brought in by the river Molo is stirred up.

Nearly in the centre of the southern half of Lake Baringo lies a little group of islands, on the eastern side. of the largest of which a number of hot springs extend down to and under the surface of the lake. In all there are nearly fifty; the water in the largest is so beautifully clear that, although 20 feet in depth, you can see the bubbles rising from the bottom. Some of the smaller ones throw out only an intermittent jet, while others are continually on the boil. I found the water, which has but a very slight smell of sulphur, useful to cook my dinner in. Among the tumbled rocks of the hillside, behind the springs, there is a steam blow-hole, which hisses and booms continually. The neighbourhood of the springs is a favourite resort of the hippo, with which the lake abounds. Whether volcanic agency is responsible for the considerable fluctuations in the level of the bed of the lake in recent years, I am unable to say. The natives report that at times the steam blow-hole is very much more active, while the hot-water springs throw up jets incessantly. Judging by the water-mark along the eastern shore, the level must, at some comparatively recent date, have been much higher than at present, while the partially submerged trees on the island prove that either these have sunk, or that the water has at one time receded to an even lower level than its present one. Some of the older natives told me that they could remember the time when it was possible to walk from the southern shore of the lake to the islands, where now there is comparatively deep water. On the other hand, the north end is said to be much shallower than formerly. The lake swarms with crocodile, but they are so mild-mannered that, when my companion, Mr. Cobb, stepped on one, it merely wriggled out of the way.

At Baringo Mr. Cobb left me on his return to England, while I marched south-west to the Ravine station. From there I followed the route so fully described by Mr. A. C. Hollis in the January number of the *Journal*, through the Mau forest, across the Gwashengehu plateau, to Mount Sirgoi, or, more correctly speaking, Mount Sirgoit. For a considerable distance round the mountain the plain is covered with fine pasture, which is kept cropped by the numerous

herds of game in the district. To the north-east, situated in an abrupt dip in the plain, is a small salt lake, fed by a fresh-water stream. During my stay of nearly a month in this district, I had the opportunity of examining a number of the stone ruins mentioned by Mr. Hollis, but cannot agree with his description of their shape, as all those I found were circular, or nearly so, some 30 to 50 yards in diameter, and built of large unhewn stones, often at a very considerable distance from any apparent outcrop of rock. As a rule, they are situated on the top, or on the slopes, of rising ground; the interiors are dish-shaped, and contain smaller circular walls marking the sites of the old huts.

After entering the thorn country to the north-west in search of

ROCK CONE PEAK, MUROSOKA.

giraffe, I turned southwards, and made my way to the Government station at Mumia's, whence I visited the cave-dwellers on the eastern slopes of Mount Elgon. I was fortunate enough to find several groups of caves still inhabited, and was able to examine the homes and mode of life of the Wongabuney, as well as to get a number of photos of them. From Sir Harry Johnston's description, I had expected to find the inspection of these caves anything but an enjoyable experience, owing to their alleged filthy state. I was, therefore, agreeably surprised at the absence of fleas and at the general cleanliness, which was far greater than in most of the native villages. The interior of the caves is very irregular, as the harder part of the rock has been left jutting out in most inconvenient corners, while the softer stone has

been cut away. That the whole inside surface of these caves has been hewn by the hand of man I have no manner of doubt, but the present owners are quite incapable of having executed such a stupendous task, and have apparently no knowledge of who the actual workers were. I think that a systematic examination of a number of these caves would result in some interesting light being thrown on their original inhabitants.

Following the mountain northwards, I crossed the Kiboko river. It is to this perennial stream that the Karamoja bring their herds and flocks for many days' journey from the north in the dry season. Between this river and Mount Debasien there are several cone-shaped hills, on one of which stands a curiously shaped monolith, which is doubtless a natural formation, but which, from a distance, has all the appearance of being the handiwork of man. Passing round the western side of Mount Debasien, I commanded a grand view of this most striking mountain, which from this side presents an amphitheatre of jagged red rocks and precipices, contrasting grandly with the dark-green foliage of the well-wooded valleys below. My search on the northern side for Lake Kagate was absolutely fruitless. No trace of its present or past existence could be found, nor had the natives ever heard of it. When I finally rejoined the usual caravan route, which passes to the east of the mountain, I turned northwards towards the Karamoja plateau.

At Murlinga, a place visited by Colonel Macdonald's expedition, I was obliged to spend some time procuring a fresh supply of donkeys and flour, and from here I made a day's march to the neighbourhood of the striking group of hills, Kizima, Kamalinga, and Nopak, which lie to the south-west. The two former have been rent asunder from top to bottom, the sheer sides leaving but a narrow rift between them, while the northern flank of Nopak and the western flank of Kizima present almost unbroken walls of rock. They are said to be uninhabited, and, in fact, no traces of either villages or cultivation were observable. On the way to Mount Moroto, in a north-easterly direction, I passed several large dams, which the Karamoja construct in this part of the country to collect and hold the small streams of water which flow only during the rains. These were now nearly dry, and I met whole villages setting out on their march southwards to the Kiboko river.

My camp was pitched in the Lea valley, at the foot of Mount Moroto, in order that I might visit the Tepeth, a curious tribe who only inhabit the top of this mountain and of Debasien. Their huts are two-storeyed, the only examples I have seen of such dwellings among African tribes. Although they are numerically very weak in comparison to the Karamoja of the plains, and, owing to the higher altitude at which they live, are able to raise corn and find grass for their flocks when the plains are parched with drought, they are held in such respect by the latter on account of their supposed magical

powers that they are never molested. At first they were extremely suspicious of my intentions, and even more so of my camera; but when I took to butterfly-catching, they apparently concluded that I must be harmless, and so I was able to secure some pictures of them and of their dwellings.

At the southern extremity of the mountain I crossed a low spur, which formed a narrow divide between the streams flowing to Lake Kirkpatrick and those which go to feed the Turkwel. An abrupt descent of over 2000 feet from the Karamoja plateau led me into a large valley which drains into the Nakokoh, a tributary of the Turkwel. The northern flank of Moroto was formed by a great wall of rock, over

NEAR THE TARASH RIVER, TURKANA.

which two fine waterfalls gushed. Striking across the western side of this valley, I searched the eastern slopes of Murosoka for the headwaters of the Tarash, which are marked on the map as rising on that side, but found that the whole of the drainage flowed towards the Turkwel. At that time of year the region was practically waterless, except for a few pools far apart, hidden in the clefts of the rocks. These were very difficult to discover without a local guide, whom we had not been able to obtain, as the country was quite deserted. After a good deal of fruitless search, during which I lost one man, while the rest of my party suffered severely from thirst, I at last found a road over the hilltop, and struck a tributary of the Tarash river, which cut through

a rocky gorge at the foot of the western side of the mountain. This soon led me into the Tarash valley, where the dry bed of the stream was from 50 to 150 yards in width. The valley was populated by Turkana, who owned large herds and flocks, and drew their water-supply from pits sunk in the sandy bed of the river. For three days I continued along the valley in a north-westerly direction, the elevation being between 2300 and 2500 feet. I then visited another valley, lying one day's journey due west, whence I again returned to the Tarash at a point further north, and, after following it for a day, struck off north-north-west to Mt. Zunut, while the river trended north-east. The natives reported that, within four days' journey, the Tarash reached a lake or swamp, called Loarding, which also received three other rivers, and that, during the rains, a big river carried the overflow waters to Basso (one of the many native names of Lake Rudolf).

At the foot of Mount Zunut lay a series of brackish pools, and in the neighbourhood the ground was dotted for miles with elephants' bones. Following the range, as it trended west-north-west, I crossed a low pass into a plain, called by the Toposa, Kotane, and to the north-west of it we found water at the foot of Mount Locorina. We again made across the plain in a south-westerly direction, left Mount Marangole slightly to the east, and traversed a low pass on its north-western flank: this led us into a broken country of small hills and ridges, extending in a westerly direction to the foot of the Dodinga hills. Here we drank running water for the first time since leaving the Kiboko river at the north of Mount Elgon, for hitherto we had had to content ourselves with pools in the clefts of rock, pits sunk in the sandy beds of rivers, or brackish puddles fouled by every beast for miles round. The south-eastern end of the Dodinga hills is bounded by Mount Lotuke, which is uninhabited. Mount Lokinya, about half-way along the range, forms the limit of the country occupied by the Dodinga race towards the north-west, the remainder of the chain of hills being inhabited by a tribe called the Oboya, who are in close relationship with the Dodinga. The hills consist of three parallel ridges running approximately north-west and south-east, and are intersected by numerous small precipitous valleys densely wooded. The villages are situated on the hilltops and on the shoulders of the upper slopes, the elevation being nearly 6000 feet, or 3000 above the plain below. On the low passes amongst the hills I noticed little cairns of quartz, of which rock there are numerous outcrops.

Descending the Dodinga hills to the south-west, I marched for three days across a plain covered with coarse grass and scattered thorn-trees to the river Kedef. Along the banks stretched a belt of country covered with sweet grass, palm trees, and thickets of tropical vegetation. It was a splendid grazing-ground, and was visited by every sort of animal found in that district. The sandy bed of the stream was from

LOBU VALLEY, MOUNT EGADANG.

70 to 200 yards in width, water being found in clay pockets along its edge. This was the first river I had come across that flowed direct to the Nile. One day's journey south-west brought me to Mount Cartebong, where I met an independent hill tribe called the Mielli, the first natives I had met with in the possession of firearms. They had extensive and well-cultivated fields at the foot of the mountain, and they derived their water-supply from rocky pools in the bed of a stream rising near the top. Their villages were perched on the upper slopes, and approached by steep, narrow paths, easily defended against an invader.

After a three days' journey in a north-westerly direction along the valley of the Kedef, or Kedepo, as the Mielli call it, I turned due west into the Lori valley, which stretches from the eastern slopes of Mount Egadang. It was a beautiful little fertile valley, watered by the stream from which it takes its name. Hills almost surrounded it, and the villages were dotted about the lower slopes of the twin peaks called Lourruer. Beyond the shoulder of the mountain lay another cultivated valley called Lobu. This was not so much shut in as the Lori, and the villages here were situated at the foot, not on the slopes, of the mountain. My route now lay past Mount Lohido to Obira, through much cultivated ground, with villages scattered here and there on the hillsides. From there I marched to Logguren, the present headquarters of Limoroo, the Latuka chief. His own village was situated at the foot of an isolated mass of rock, the sides of which were so steep that I could

not walk up it without assistance, although it is dotted with groups of huts built on ingeniously devised platforms. The whole country round was thickly populated, great stretches of cultivation surrounding the villages, while the flocks found pasturage further afield. From here I made my way in a south-westerly direction along the lower slopes of that mass of mountains which is topped by Agoro. The way for the most part lay through well-timbered country, with tracts of swampy ground and tall reeds, following the courses of the numerous small streams. I spent some time hunting elephant at Obbo, on the upper waters of the Gomoro river, and then reached the Nile at the mouth of the Assua, across which an iron ferry-boat has been established. From there to Nimule the Nile flows through a series of narrow rocky channels, the tumbling water forming the most picturesque bit of scenery I saw in the 1400 odd miles of the river's course which I traversed.

From Nimule I marched to Wadelai along a wretched track, having to cross numerous unbridged streams, the depth of which varied from a foot or two to over a man's head. At Wadelai I passed to the western bank, and proceeded southwards to the Congo Free State station of Mahagi, which I found situated five hours from the shore of Lake Albert, at the foot of the main ridge. Here considerable progress was being made in the making of roads, the bridging of streams, and the construction of rest-houses for travellers. On my return to Wadelai,

A LATUKA VILLAGE AT LOGGUREN.

I was fortunate enough to get a passage in one of the two Uganda Government sailing-boats to Nimule, whence I marched to Gondokoro along an even worse path than that between Nimule and Wadelai. At Gondokoro I caught the monthly Sudan Government steamer to Khartum, and found the 1081 miles one of the most monotonous journeys I had ever undertaken, owing to the papyrus and long grass, which absolutely shut out all view. The hearty welcome accorded us, and the progress to be seen, first at the Congo Free State, and then at the Sudan Government stations, formed the only bright spots on the way.

BATHYMETRICAL SURVEY OF THE FRESH-WATER LOCHS OF SCOTLAND.*

Under the Direction of Sir JOHN MURRAY, K.C.B., F.R.S., D.Sc., etc., and
LAURENCE PULLAR, F.R.S.E.

PART V.—LOCHS OF THE MORAR BASIN.

By Dr. T. N. JOHNSTON.

IN this paper it is proposed to deal with the results obtained by the Lake Survey in the fresh-water lochs lying in the basin of the river Morar, viz. Loch Morar, Loch Beoraid, and Loch an Nostarie. There were a number of other small lochs in this catchment basin, but as there were no boats on them, they could not be surveyed. Loch Morar is the principal loch in the basin, and it gives great interest to the whole area from the fact that it is not only the deepest lake in Scotland, but in the British Islands; indeed, the bottom of this loch forms the deepest hole in the continental plateau on which our islands are situated.

From the accompanying sketch-map (Fig. 1), it will be seen that Lochs Morar and Beoraid are parallel to each other, and run in an east-and-west direction. The overflow from Loch Beoraid, which lies about 3 miles to the south of Loch Morar, enters Loch Morar about its centre by the river Meoble, while the overflow from Loch an Nostarie, which lies to the north, enters Loch Morar at its western end by the river Loin.

The west end of Loch Morar is only about 500 or 600 yards from

* During the present season six or seven members of the Lake Survey staff will be engaged in the detailed study of the chemical, physical, and biological conditions of Loch Ness, and Prof. Bachmann, of Lucerne, Prof. Wesenburg-Lund, of Denmark, and other foreign naturalists, are expected to take part in the investigations.

The larger Scottish lochs have all been surveyed, and several members of the Lake Survey staff are now engaged in sounding the smaller lochs throughout the country. Much difficulty is being experienced in getting boats to the smaller hill lochs, and Sir John Murray will feel much obliged to any highland or other proprietors or tenants who can assist him and his staff in the survey of these remote lochs. Plates, p. 128.