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CONTENTS :

DARKEST AFRICA.....	<i>Captain Stairs, R.E.</i>	HER MAJESTY'S MAIL.....	<i>The Editor.</i>
MRS. MAYBURN'S TWINS.....	<i>John Habberton.</i>	CALENDAR PRIZE.....	<i>Edward R. Macdonald, Fredericton.</i>
SECRET OF CANADA'S GREATNESS.....		OUR FIRE BRIGADES.....	<i>Industria.</i>
TALKS ON INSECTS.....	<i>W. Hague Harrington.</i>	WILD FLOWER CLUB.....	
THE BIRTH OF SPRING.....	<i>Gowan Lea.</i>	POST BAG, &C., &C.....	

LIFE IN THE GREAT FORESTS OF CENTRAL AFRICA.
FROM THE ALBERT NYANZA TO THE INDIAN OCEAN.

WITH THE REAR GUARD OF THE EMIN RELIEF EXPEDITION.

BY CAPTAIN W. G. STAIRS, R. E.

PART III.

Shortly after leaving Majamboni we saw the edge of our old enemy the Forest, black and deadly. It seemed like some huge monster with outstretched arms, ever on the alert to seize and crush any passing travellers.

On the 10th May we got another glimpse of Ruwenzori, the highest peak of the mountains of the moon, and ten days later were abreast and camping under the shadow of the huge mountain. Here at last is the giant we had talked so much about.

For centuries the mountains of the moon have been supposed to exist somewhere in that hitherto unattainable region, the head waters of the Nile. Two thousand years before Christ were they talked of and sought after in the same way as the sources of the Nile. Many a Pharaoh had sent out his leaders to search for, and bring him back the solution of, the problem. But all failed, and many lost their lives in the attempt.

And here we found ourselves camping at the foot of the very mountains, and drinking of that water which supplies the people of Khartoum and Cairo alike. We were nearly 3,000 miles from the Mediterranean. The mountain behind us is what Cambyses sought to find and failed. I think therefore, that having stumbled across it, we are now to be pardoned for a little fling of honest pride.

From observations, we made the highest point of Ruwenzori to be nearly 17,000 feet above the sea. I was enabled to ascend to an elevation of 10,670 feet, and, from a distance of two and a half miles, got a good

glimpse of the snow, and what appeared to be a huge crater at the summit. The mountain side was inhabited by a fierce and noisy people revelling in large plantations of the most beautiful bananas, and evidently fond of the beer made from this fruit, judging by the number of troughs and pots for brewing this article that we found.

About the 20th June we got our first glimpse of the Albert Edward Nyanza, and soon after this, camped on its shores. We again met with our old enemies the Warasura, or raiders of Kabba Rega the King of Unyoro. They thought to smash us with their flint locks and tower muskets, but were discomfited, and they retired in bad order. A small and very salt Lake called Katwe, of about half a mile long and a quarter of a mile across, affords salt to many surrounding tribes for miles, and the possession of this was much prized by Kabba Rega.

We cleaned his men out, and handed them over to Antari, King of Ankori, who became our fast friend for this kindness.

The water of the Albert Edward Nyanza is like that of the Albert, namely, brackish and unpleasant to the taste. It is of a browner colour, though, than the latter. The Lake is about sixty miles long and twenty at its broadest, as far as native report goes. It is drained by the River Semliki, starting from its north west end and running into Lake Albert. This Lake then is the most southern of the western branch of the Nile.

All day long, while we were at Katwe, streams of