

life; he is never discontented, or irritable, or sharp-tempered. His men adore and fear him - he seems to read their very thoughts, and though he seldom interferes with them, and treats them with every consideration and genuine kindness, he punishes them with great severity if they do wrong. I wonder when we shall part - I wish we could continue together, but Scott tells me it is most unusual for Pole ever to camp near others, and that he never travels with any white companion.

9th August: Pole and I go out together every day now. He knows and sees every detail of nature as a naturalist and hunter; I, as an artist. It interests us both to compare notes. We saw a curious and beautiful sight to-day; we had wandered in the direction of the desert over the border of the waterless tract, into a grey mist of leafless thorn trees, the only colours, the brilliant red sand of the caravan road and the blazing, hard blue of the sky. We were both of us silent. I felt strongly the cruelty of this strange land, and yet its mighty attraction: ~~it all seems so relentless~~ - one is caught by its many ^{snags} ~~thorns and creepers~~ and held fast, held to one's own destruction, and yet is empty of all desire or effort to escape. Looking up ~~my eyes had been fixed on the burning, yet yielding track~~ I saw just off the path one tree standing out from amongst its grey brethren. It was a brilliant mass of ^{variegated colour -} ~~reds, yellows, purples, greens, and~~

~~whites~~ its branches clothed in, living and moving, colour, for the strange thing was that the colours shifted, rising and falling and changing places. We both stood still - I filled with amazement, Pole with interest. In a second his alert mind grasped and explained the problem. Occasionally ^{on} these leafless trees ~~burst into flower~~ at least a few handfuls of blossom appear, as if tied to their withered-looking branches. These blossoms are wonderfully sweet _{to} and sometimes, as in this particular case, attract insects with their penetrating odour from many miles distant. This tree was alive with butterflies and moths - ~~literally~~ thousands of them covered it entirely, some quiescent, some hanging to the blossoms, and some hovering up and down: a sudden blot of decoration and life in the grey sleeping wilderness.

11th August: Pole has gone off shooting. I am lonely and ~~uneasy~~ and depressed. ~~Something is pulling me towards the desert~~ When I go out I find my foot-steps almost unconsciously leading me in that ^{of the desert} direction. I am anxious to start on our journey, ~~and yet I feel as if some great trial lay before me.~~ The doors of some great adventure seem to be opening, but what lies beyond them is hidden in a veil of mist. ~~I long to enter, and yet fear~~ Will those doors close on me as I cross their threshold, and will the mist swallow me up, or will the mist roll back as

I touch it making my way plain and easy?

12th August: How different the African sky is from the sky away from the tropics - especially at night. The sun sets at 6 o'clock, and having stained everything with colour and life, penetrating into and illuminating the darkest corners of the earth for a few golden moments, it sinks, and the landscape becomes cold and dead. By 6.30 darkness has the world in its grip and the stars are already faintly showing. Later the sky seems to drop down, almost to within touch, it hangs ~~brooding~~ over the quiet earth, dark yet brilliant, ~~shining and~~ glistening with myriads of blazing stars, silent spectators of the "terrors that fly by night."

Suddenly as I watched, a star larger than the others fell, and cleaving a silver way for itself across the sky, disappeared. It shed such a bright light as it raced from horizon to horizon, that for a second it made distinct what had previously been but shadow. In the momentary ~~light~~ ^{gleam}, the skulking form of a hyaena stood sharply defined. As the light revealed the hideous scavenger, he slunk away, and later his horrible laughter tore the soft velvet of the night, as he continued the search for his unholy meal.

The night sounds of Africa are a thing apart. With the darkness they awake. The background of all ~~the sounds~~ is the

high, ceaseless shrilling of the ciccalas. It is a monotonous and continuous blurr of sound, like voices in constant protest. Across this ~~sound~~, but never silencing it, the other sounds start into sudden relief: the squeal of a mongoose, the strident call of the hyaena, the dreary note of an owl, the heartrending shriek of a caught bird, and the cry of a human child, followed by the sharp bark of a dog. ~~These sounds cut the night and seem to shake the hanging sky~~

20th August: Pole is back again and a weight seems gone from about my neck. We had a long talk last night as we sat round the camp fire while all the world (the day world) was sleeping. It seems that he and I have had one of those inexplicable attractions for one another; that I fell under the spell of his unique personality is not to be wondered at, but that he, the hero, the mighty one, should ~~steep to~~ interest himself in me is wonderful, and I am strangely elated.

25th August: Pole has suggested that we travel together to Mt. Kololo. I felt this suggestion coming, but now that he has made it I can hardly believe my good fortune. I was beginning to realize what a ~~dreadful~~ wrench separation from him would be, and I walked in dread. It comes over me that his and my lives are in some manner interlaced - in what way

I do not know. Certainly no one previously has entered into my life and taken possession of my mind and heart in the way he has.

August 25th: We are to start in about a week. The men are due back roughly in three days and will rest for the remaining ~~few days~~ ^{time}. I am so much better that I am to be allowed to walk. Since we camped here I have been training, and can ^{now} manage three or four hours without any undue fatigue. ~~now~~ We shall travel mostly before the sun is up, to lessen the desire for water. Unfortunately we just miss the moon, but Pole thinks that, as we have been here so long, it is wiser to push on. He has imperceptably taken command of everyone, and everything — we are in good hands.

September 2nd. We broke and shifted our camp to-day - just two-and-a-half hours further on to the very last water. We are now on the edge of the waterless desert; tomorrow we enter its ~~exact~~ thorny mazes. What awaits us on the further side? ~~The air seems heavy with the portents of the future.~~ And yet in Africa, more than in any other place, one lives solely in the present — the future does not exist; to-day is all that counts. Why then does the future now seem to threaten, to push itself forward, intruding on the peace and plenty of to-day?

From the rise above the river, the great dreary expanse of the Kibo plains stretches away and away, as far as the eye can see. It lies unrolled but unreadable - an endless grey waste looking like the dense smoke of some mighty fire, the bright red earth showing here and there ^{my} flame-like gleams. The heat as one approaches might be the blast from some huge furnace. ~~The dense thorn bush stifles all air. Space lies bound under some malign spell - grim and distorted.~~

3rd September: Last night all the vessels, barrels, tins, gourds and bottles, were filled with water. To-day each man carries his own drinking supply, and every drop must be hoarded as a miser hoards his gold for we have cast loose from all ^{reinforcement} supplies. The road is a narrow native trail, so like the numberless game trails which diverge from it in all directions, that one wonders what instinct it is which keeps the guide on the right track. To lose the "small and narrow way" spells certain death; the game tracks, distinct in places, split up and fade away as one pursues them; one is left bewildered in a veritable labyrinth; all sense of direction gone. Yet the guide - a man so primitive that he is hardly man, a creature devoid of brain and mind-unerringly follows the only track which can lead us in safety through this wicked wilderness. Does he possess some sixth sense, a sense, more subtle and refined than those we know, a sense which guides his feet, and guiding them makes him know he is right?

We broke camp at 3.30 by the fading light of a pale moon, a moon so wan that it intensified the darkness. One by one we filed out of camp, the noise of packing and loading up falling away and echoing into a threatening silence as we entered the precincts of the desert. A panting suppressed cough, the screaming tear of thorns against a load of garments, and the ceaseless pad, pad of ^{naked} ~~native~~ feet, were the only sounds which broke the heavy quiet - the only distinguishable thing the faint shadow of the man you followed. Above, below, on either side, a black, thick, suffocating darkness. Time stood still as we wandered, turning and twisting on and on, enshrouded in this silent blackness. Gradually a ^{Curious} sensation of expectant fear grew in me and roused me from the lethargy in which I had previously been sunk. I looked up; the sky, no longer black, seemed receding from the earth. As the blackness faded, the distance widened and increased; a sensation of something opening came over me. Dimly the trees and bushes took shape - at first a mere blurr, later definite forms cut against the sky. A shadow light had succeeded the darkness, a gradual awakening of nature, of the bound spirits of the wilds. Not a joyous awakening into light and life, but a stealthy arousing as if by an unseen and warning hand. ~~Though now awake, the world was standing still, motionless and silent, held in the iron grip of fear - a fear which spread and grew and covered all in a great stifling wave~~

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I looked furtively from side to side expecting I know not what. ~~empty of everything but a clinging terror.~~ Suddenly, like the bursting of a bomb, the sun shot up. Shafts of gold tore the shadows from the sky, and melted the fears from earth and man. To-day was here; yesterday's forebodings had fled - tomorrow was yet in limbo and unthought of. ~~With the advent of the sun a spell seemed broken; the men chattered and laughed, birds flew across the path calling and scolding one another, cheerful sounds of life and movement surrounded us.~~ What was that curious ^{apprehension} ~~fear~~ which had fallen on us in the shadow time and fallen from us with risen sun; for all of us had been held by it? ~~Was it a sudden dread of what the new unborn day held for us? Or~~ Was it the unseen nearness of some evil - something vile which had stolen on us in the darkness, something waiting, watching and ready for the slip which would have made one of us its prey? // The tension gone, ~~fled with the hurrying shadows before the glowing sun,~~ I looked around me once more. The relief of the sunlight had in the first instance ^{blinded} ~~blunted~~ me to the details of our surroundings - now they were suddenly smitten on to my eye and brain, ~~where they burnt and danced like a fire.~~ In the darkness we had entered into a new world and the doors had swung to behind us. No trace of the past remained with us and the present was one of horrible monotone. We walked in a veritable wilderness, burnt and arid, the absence of water apparent

everywhere. We were hemmed in on every side ~~by~~ ^{big} strange mal-formed thorn trees, none of them large, though many were thick ^(and) ~~and stunted~~ and obviously old. They were curiously similar in shape; ~~and~~ twisted, blotched trunk rose upwards, gradually spreading into a canopy of withered branches, and these branches all grew and pointed downwards, curved like the clawed fingers of countless hands; ~~hands ready to seize, hold, and tear.~~ Every tree was a replica of its neighbour, the only variation being their size and the colour of their trunks. The trunks, strangely enough, were here and there delicately tinted in ^{in shades of} green, blue, mauve, ^{saffron} yellow, and pink; while the branches were all a uniform grey. ^{was} Not a leaf (to be seen anywhere; nothing to relieve the eye. The hot red earth beat upwards to meet the ^{burning} blue sky; the grey, shadeless travesties of trees blotted out all the world, and held and stifled the furtive breezes. A blight lay on everything. We seemed to have strayed into some sinister nightmare. ~~the earth appeared stricken and diseased. Hour succeeded hour with no change of landscape. The trees seemed whispering fearful threats, the more fearful because they themselves were moveless, their cruel, greedy fingers distended and about to shoot down and seize us.~~ Here and there a huge ^{distorted} ~~erapulous~~ gourd lay like a bloated, emerald-green toad at the foot of one of the thorn trees, sending up bright, fleshy ~~thorn covered~~

tendrils which enveloped and hid the tree itself in a prison of uncanny greenery. Occasionally a handful of ^{vivid} ~~bright~~ flowers hung among the leafless thorns; ~~but~~ more often bunches of brilliantly coloured pods, of all shapes and sizes, nodded and rustled in the trees, looking in the distance like flocks of brightly plumaged birds. At intervals a tree gave the appearance of being covered with snow: a leper among its brothers, standing out white in the distance. As we approached ~~it~~, we saw that its countless thorns were swollen and white, their numbers being so great as to hide the branches altogether. // The path rose and fell and twisted and turned, but there was no change - we were swallowed up, ~~buried~~ in ^{this} hideous and malignant waste. The sensation of being closed in - imprisoned - was overwhelming: ~~There seemed no possibility of escape~~ we could not even see where we were going, for all sense of direction was obliterated in the monotony of our surroundings. A hornbill, wailing like a child, flapped over our heads, to be answered with a similar wail by his mate; a mongoose scurried across the path; a partridge screamed in the bush; a broad band of red or black ants lay like a living ribbon in our tracks. These were the only signs of life, though occasionally there was a crash in the bushes, ^{followed by} ~~and~~ the retreating ~~and fading~~ rustling of some beast as it broke away, startled by our footsteps.

September 4th: Again we started in the dark - a repetition of yesterday: a repetition rather augmenting than diminishing the acute sensations of foreboding. We seem lost to the world - souls wandering in limbo While it is still dark ~~one~~ enters zones of delightful and delicate odours. What these scents come from it is impossible to say, for the risen sun kills them - they belong to the dark night and the dusk of early morning, fading as the dew dries. A wave envelops one for a few seconds, ceases, and rises again later on. That anything so sweet should emanate from this drear wilderness, seems impossible. Can it be that those poor handfuls of flowers keep hidden in their small hearts such an unfailing store of sweetness, a store which is as balm applied to the wounded?

Shortly before the sun had risen, ~~before all the clouds had been chased and melted away,~~ we climbed a gentle though prolonged slope. From the summit of this slope we gazed awe-struck at the wonders which lay at our feet. The desert rolled from us, even and grey, clinging like a ^{layer}~~cloud~~ of thick smoke to the earth. Beyond it, rearing its great snow-crowned head into the clouds, towered Mt. Kololo. The whole picture was a ^{symphony}~~mono-~~ ~~tone~~ in ^{half tones;} ~~grey~~ the huge mountain was outlined in a neutral tint; the sky was pale and clear, as if lighted from below; the mists lay rolled at the base of the slopes, shrinking as we watched them. ^{The} one alien note was the shimmering white of

the snow which covered the higher of the two peaks, and stood out in sharp relief against the sky. We stood ~~spell bound~~, our eyes feasting on the exquisite beauty of the scene. As we gazed, a faint flush of ~~colour~~ ^{pink tinged} ~~trembled across the sky~~ slowly the ~~white~~ snow, ~~blushed pale pink and then deep, deep rose~~ ^{and deepened into a vivid}; the grey mass of the mountain ~~deepened~~ ^{glowed} into purple; the curtains of cloud at its feet ~~thickened~~ ^{changed} into an opalescent whiteness. Black bands of shadow lay across the still sleeping desert, varying for some moments its pale, toneless colour. We had but time to realize the beauty of it all, and then the sun flared up, beating everything down before him, ~~filling earth and sky with his gold and crimson beams~~, ^{filling} belittling the whole landscape. Kololo shrank and faded, the clouds ~~parted~~ ^{melted} and hurried away on either side, the desert lost its shadows. The bright, hard light flattened ~~and dulled~~ everything - mystery fled ~~and hid~~ before the prosaic and searching sunlight. As the sun rose higher, ~~shrunk~~ Kololo veiled his peaks, ~~in the clouds~~. The whole of the rest of the sky remained ~~hard~~ ^{staid} and cloudless, but the mountain mass was covered with heavy, motionless piles of clouds. Occasionally the upper layers parted, and one or other peak showed clear for a few seconds; then the veil again was drawn, obliterating the great form. Just before sunset Kololo burst his cloud bonds finally, and the whole range stood, great and glowing, in the dying sunlight, once more possessing

the landscape. The sun dropped away: the colours paled; the moon rose, red and languid, flooding the earth in mysterious half-lights and deep shadows. Kololo stood brooding in lonely majesty - alien from both earth and sky.

September 5th: . Kololo loomed pale and wan from his night watching as we started in the moonlight of 3 a.m. After the first hour we saw him no more; the desert, as if resenting our sight of what lay outside its precincts, closed in upon us again. We seemed to be descending rapidly, and as we descended the air grew more and more stifling. The path quivered and danced in front of us; the thorn trees shook as if smitten by the sun; we were immersed in trembling, throbbing heat-waves. No sound, no sign of life broke the suffocating silence. The trees seemed assuming living forms, hanging and writhing over us like huge, evil-eyed octopi. Leering faces, distorted and mutilated bodies, countless skeleton arms, approached and receded - approached from the distance and receded as we ^{drew near} ~~approached~~ - and all indistinctly seen and blurred by the ever-increasing heat. Exhaustion and fear were writ large on every face; only the native guides, who kept their eyes fixed on the path, seemed unmoved, though each step appeared to be leading us more hopelessly into the semi-living maze; ^a gloating triumph seemed to hold the desert.

The sun beat upwards watching us with a hard and brilliant eye, mocking us as we stumbled forward.

Suddenly, and without any preparation, a field of emerald grass lay spread at our feet. ^{To me came as} ~~Was~~ (it a mirage? ^{my} ~~Had our~~ minds ^{had I thought,} wandered into the green fields of England, while ^{my} ~~our~~ bodies were we, still toiling in the grey wilderness! But ~~no~~ the grass was real, as were also the bright blossoms which sprang among it; and, bounding the waving grass, stood a line of dense tall trees, the edge of the Veto forests. We rushed forward, each one anxious to enter those grand, green aisles - sanctuary was reached at last! What an enormously dramatic contrast! The burning, blinding sun, and cruel leprous thorns were behind us - in front, stretched the cool dim light, and shaded leafy paths of the forest; the two just separated by that emerald field. We were in a different world - A stream murmured to our right, while as far as the eye could penetrate, fertile, green depths extended. Our fatigue fell from us as a dropped burden; our parched lips smiled and spoke; beauty and plenty enveloped us. //

We camped in a quiet glade just above the river. ^{Our} carpet was woven of endless varieties of ferns and mosses; our walls were built of the red and grey tree-trunks; and our ceiling was painted with festoons of shining leaves, picked out with subdued sunlight. The wilderness sank out of sight - the land of promise was at our feet.

September 9th: We have been living days of delight. Scott and Pole go off in opposite directions shooting, and I wander in the forest, never wearying of its green monotony. A considerable number of natives live among the trees, and are thus protected from their raiding neighbours who live on the open plains. They know every inch of the forest, and as long as they are within its precincts, they are safe - the plain-dwellers never dare enter it.

September 14th. The natives seem to like me, and one or two invariably follow and accompany me wherever I go. We talk with the fewest words and the simplest signs, and we understand one another perfectly. Like all who dwell in the shade, they are timid, reserved, and imaginative. They try to tell me tales of the trees, rivers, and beasts; and I try to paint them. They regard me as a wizard because of my painting. Most of them see my pictures perfectly, particularly those of the river.

September 20th: The natives tell me, and Pole says he believes it to be quite true, that at the top of a hill which we can see from a rise across the river, there is a lake. It does not seem very far away, possibly a two hours march, so Pole and I are going tomorrow. He has not ^{explored} ~~been in~~ that direction yet, as he has been hunting elephants in the more distant parts of the

forest. There seems to be something mysterious about the lake; the natives speak apprehensively of it and say that they seldom approach it - in fact, only one or two men among all I have met have ever seen it. This is curious as it is so near. They do not even know whether it is fresh water or salt - one must not, they say, drink or enter the water. It is called Lake Ipi.

September 21st: We cannot go to Lake Ipi to-day as I am ^{ill.} ~~seedy~~. It is a great disappointment to me, as since the natives first told me of it I feel curiously drawn towards it. All last night I dreamt of it, and, waking, I cannot throw off my dreams. I dreamt that I stood before the final door of my fate. I had previously passed through many doors and had wandered for a lifetime in the mazes of the earth. This door was different from all the others: it was made of a solid sheet of crystal, and above it was a warning hand pointing me backwards. Through its brilliant transparency I saw myself - myself in a shifting series of events: my life in dumb show. As I looked, one event faded into the next, and finally I saw myself standing knocking at the crystal door. The atmosphere seemed heavy with portents - the hand above the door urgent in its warning. In my dream I felt myself ^{impelled} ~~urged~~ forward; I could not accept the warning.

~~whatever lay beyond, I must pass through the door. I felt I had arrived at the turning point of my whole existence;~~

Beyond that door lay what I had been living for, half expecting all my life - ~~the reason of my life,~~ the solution of the problem of my being. I ~~lean~~ against the cold crystal pushing with all my strength. I felt the door yielding, and as it gave, a voice uttered these words - "The closing of the circle of life is the perfecting - Death." I stumbled on the threshold and fell forward ~~in a swoon.~~ Before my eyes closed, I saw dimly a stretch of turquoise water; my lips touched its cool brink, and I became unconscious. I awoke shaking with fear - it had all been so real, and the scenes from my life had been painted in every detail. I felt as if a compelling hand lay upon me. The feeling which has been haunting me for months, seemed to take final, because definite, possession of me. I know now that fate ^{has} ~~had~~ woven the web of this African ^{journey} ~~trip~~ because the ultimate solution of my life lies in the neighbourhood of the blue Lake. I am quite certain of this - it is the goal towards which I have been working; my fulfilment is there. Shall I find Death, the perfecter, on its shores? Whatever awaits me I cannot now go back. ~~I fret at the delay caused by my seediness, and I dare not tell the others what I feel.~~

September 23rd. Pole has given up his hunting since I have been ^{ill.} ~~seedy~~. He says I am suffering from a form of low fever,

~~fever~~, very usual in these parts, and he spends all his time with me. He is a delightful companion. I wish I could tell him of my dream, but somehow I dare not as I feel the solution is very closely ~~mixed up~~ ^{connected} with him. On the first day I am well enough, we are to go to the Lake, and Pole says we will camp there so that I shall not get too tired. I must go soon.

September 24th. To-day Pole had a long talk with the Native Chief, and with a certain amount of difficulty made him speak of ~~the~~ Lake Ipi. The Chief says the Lake is inhabited by a mighty evil spirit, and that anyone approaching the water is seized, dragged in, and drowned. He says a curse was put on the water by the plain-dwellers long, long ago; and at the time of the curse, it was predicted that one day a white man would come and break the magic. All the natives believe that one of us is the magician; and they are awaiting our visit to the Lake with the greatest excitement. The old Chief says that when he was young he knew several men who ventured to the water's edge and were never seen again. Once two men went together, and they returned mad with fear, and sickened and died before they could tell their experiences. Both were badly mauled, ~~as if they had been bitten.~~ Pole says he will investigate the whole thing, that there must be some natural

solution. ^{with him.)} I shall of course go ~~whatever it costs~~ ~~it would~~
~~be too awful if he disappeared.~~

September 26th: To-day we reached my goal. Early in the morning, before the sun was up, Pole and I set out for ~~the~~ Lake Ipi. I was carried in a hammock, and we had previously sent on some men to pitch a tent for us. How can I even try to describe this wonderful place, surely, the most beautiful on earth? We climbed ~~up~~ a steep, stony hill, arid and ugly; we reached its flat summit - and below us lay Lake Ipi. A sheet of such blue that no colour-maker could mix it - brilliant, iridescent ^{and} ever-changing. The Lake lies in the bottom of a cup; it is shoreless and precipitous. Wooded cliffs shut it in on every side, ^{guarding} its blue waters jealously from all approach. These cliffs are some ~~two or~~ three hundred feet in height, and with the exception of two known tracks, there is no means of reaching the water: ~~they~~ they form an impregnable fortress, protecting the lake from all attacks. The cliffs are thickly covered with trees, chiefly euphorbia, whose candalabra-like branches cut the surface of the water and stand out against it and the sky in truculent array. To the north, the stupendous mass of Kololo towers skywards, so near the lake that it looks as if it were about to topple over into the water. The colour scheme is perfect.

The ever-varying dense blue of the water fringed with snow-white rocks — these rocks surmounted with darkest green masses of foliage — and Kololo in his purple grandeur overshadowing everything. But it was the water that held me — it lay absolutely motionless, looking almost solid in its immobility, chained and held by the highest cliffs.

I ^{sat} ~~say~~ with my eyes fixed on it. As I gazed, without any provocation (the air was breathless, and not a leaf or blade of grass stirred) the waters of the lake arose and lashed themselves across its surface with the fury of a whirlwind. The colour faded to slate grey; the waters were upheaved as by an earthquake, white-crested waves hurried on with increasing speed and volume and chased from side to side, beating themselves against the white rocks. I must have called out in my alarm for Pole ran up to me to ask if anything was wrong. I turned towards him and pointed speechlessly to the lake. ~~my tongue refused to move.~~ I could see he was concerned, and ~~I myself~~, feeling secure in his nearness, I looked downwards again at the waters. There they lay silent, smiling ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{peaceful} ~~quiet~~ — only a ripple showing here and there, and one band of dark purple shadow veiling a corner of the blue. I gasped with amazement — had I imagined that sudden mad fury of lashing, wicked waters? ~~Were they a figment of my own brain?~~ If not, what had calmed them so abruptly? Pole had seen nothing.