

THE UGANDA RAILWAY

QUEER FEATURES OF TRAVEL ON ENGLAND'S TRUNK LINE TO CENTRAL AFRICA.

Copyright, 1908, by Frank G. Carpenter. AIROBI, British East Africa.—Traveling by railway through the wilds of central Africa. Steaming for hundreds of miles among zebras, gnus, ostriches and giraffes!

Rolling along through jungles which the rhinoceros haunts and where the lion and leopard wait for their prey!

These are some of my experiences during a trip I have just taken over the Uganda railway from Mombasa to Nairobi!

THE UGANDA RAILWAY.

This gives you some idea of the Uganda railway, which the British completed only about five years ago. The road begins at the Indian ocean and extends over some of the roughest parts of the African continent before it ends at Victoria, the greatest fresh water lake of the world. Leaving the seacoast, the line of the road is almost continuous until it reaches the high plains of British East Africa. Here at Nairobi I am more than a mile above the sea, and about 15 miles further on at the station of Kilgoris, the road reaches an altitude 700 feet above that at Mount Washington. From there the climb is steady to a point a mile and a half above the sea, and then there is a great drop into a wide ditch valley 2,000 feet deep. Crossing this valley the road again rises until it is as high as any mountain in the United States east of the Rockies. It attains an elevation of 8,000 feet, and then falls down to Lake Victoria, which is just about as high as the highest of the Alleghenies. The road was built by the British government in less than five years and has cost altogether over \$25,000,000. It has a gauge of 40 inches, rails which weigh 50 pounds to the yard and its tracks are well laid and well ballasted. Last year something like 40,000 tons of goods and 180,000 passengers were carried over it, and its earnings were about \$500,000 more than its operating expenses. It does not yet pay interest on the capital invested, but it is of enormous value in the way of opening up, developing and protecting the country.

TWENTY-SEVEN AMERICAN BRIDGES.

Among the most interesting features of the road are its American bridges. They cross all the great ravines between here and Lake Victoria, and every steel bar and every bolt and rivet in them were made by American workmen in American factories and taken out here and put up under the supervision of American workers. The way it happened was owing to John Bull's desire to have the work done quickly and cheaply and at the same time substantially. While he had been laying the tracks and erecting the bridge companies had surprised the English by putting up the steel viaduct across the Athara river in the Egyptian Sudan within a much shorter time and for much less money than the British builders could possibly do. Therefore, when the British government asked for bids for these Uganda bridges they sent the plans and specifications to the British and to some of our American firms as well. The best British bids provided that the shops should have two or three years to make the steel work, and longer still to erect it in Africa. The American Bridge com-

pany offered to complete the whole job within seven months after the foundation work was laid, and at a charge of \$20 per ton, to be paid when all were in place and in working order. This price was about half that of the British estimates and the time was less than one-third that of the British. The bridges already constructed had been built, so the American company got the contract. It carried it out to the letter, and had the government done its part the work would have been completed in the time specified. Owing to delays of one kind or another it really consumed five months longer, but it was all done within the space of one year, which was just about half the time that the British contractors asked to get their goods ready for shipment.

HOW THEY WERE BUILT.

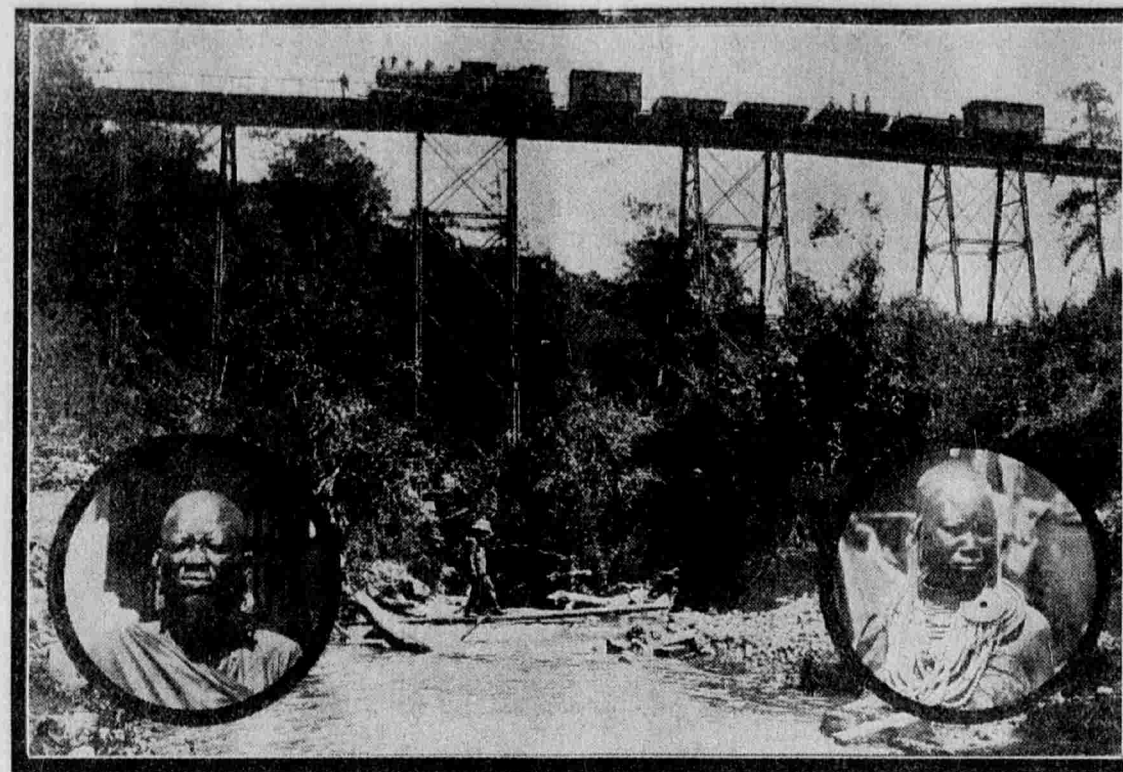
The British were surprised at how easily and quickly the Americans carried out their contract and how little they seemed to make of it. The civil engineers who were sent out in charge of the construction were little more than boys. His name was A. B. Leuder, and he had graduated at Cornell university only a year or so before. In addition to his degree as a Pennsylvania man named Jarrett who acted as superintendent of construction, and about 20 bridge builders and foremen from different parts of the United States. These men arrived at Mombasa in December, 1900, and they had completed their work before the following Christmas. They acted merely as superintendents and fancy workmen. All the rough labor was done by East Indians and native Africans, furnished by the British. When the road was started the government planned to use only Africans, but they found this impossible, and therefore imported 20,000 coolies from India. These men came on contracts of from two to five years, and their wages were from \$4 to \$15 a month and rationed. The native laborers were paid about 10 cents a day.

Before the American workmen arrived here a large part of the bridge material was already in Mombasa. They left for it, and there were some additional materials were forwarded promptly, and came at once to the seat of action. They put up the bridges at the rate of something like one a week, and constructed the longest viaduct in 604 working hours. Had it not been for the enforced delays on the part of the government they would have undoubtedly completed their work in seven months.

WHERE LION EATS THE PASSENGERS.

It was difficult to build this road on account of wild beasts. There are a hundred places along it where one might get off and start up a lion. Rhinoceroses have butted the freight cars, and the train has been stopped in the country through which it goes. I was shown a station yesterday where 29 Hindus were carried off by two man-eating lions. The man-eaters came night after night, and took away

Where Lions Sometimes Eat the Passengers, and Antelopes, Zebras and Gnus Race With the Trains—How the Road Was Built and How its American Bridges Surprised John Bull—From Mombasa To Nairobi—Queer Passengers—The Natives at the Stations—Where Telegraph Wire is Used For Bracelets, and Corks and Jelly Glasses For Ear Plugs.



AMERICAN BUILT VIADUCT ON MAU ESCARPMENT.

Photographed for the "News" by Frank G. Carpenter.

one or two of the workmen from the construction camp. They were finally killed by an English overseer, who sat up with his gun and watched for them. It was not far from this station of Nairobi that a native hunter found a special car by a lion while it stopped over night on a side track. The windows and doors of the car had been left open for air, and the three men who formed its only inmates, had gone to sleep. Two were in the berths and the other, who had sat up to watch, was on the floor with his gun on his knees. As the night went on he fell asleep, and woke to find himself under the belly of a lion. The beast had slipped through the door. He seized the man in the lower berth, and jumped out of the window, carrying him with him. The other two men followed, but they failed to discover the beast that night. The bones of the man, picked clean, were found the next day.

THROUGH EAST AFRICA BY RAIL.

But come with me and take a trip on that part of the Uganda railroad over which I have been traveling. We start at Mombasa, a little coral island in the Indian ocean. Our train carries us across a great steel bridge to the mainland, and we climb through a jungle up to the plateau. We pass baobab trees, with trunks like hogsheads, bursting out at the top into branches. They make one think of the frog who tried to blow himself to the size of a bull and exploded in the attempt. We go through cocotus groves, by mango trees loaded with fruit, and through plantations of bananas, whose long green leaves quiver in the breeze made by the train as it passes. Now we see a gingerbread palm, and now strange flowers and plants, the names of which we do not know. As we rise we can see the straits which separate Mombasa from the mainland, and higher still the broad expanse of the Indian ocean comes into view.

For the first 100 miles the climb is almost steady, and we are about one-third of a mile above the sea when we reach the station at Voi. Here the country is more open; and far off in the distance one can see a patch of snow floating like a cloud. That patch is the mountain of Kilimanjaro, and its top is more than 19,000 feet above the sea. It is about the highest mountain on the continent, and still is not much higher than Mount Kenya, the other giant of British East Africa, which rises out of the plateau some distance north of Nairobi.

After the jungle of the coast line, the country becomes comparatively open; and it soon begins to look like parts of America where the woods have been cut away and the brush allowed to grow up in the fields. Here the land is a single up to the plateau. We pass so high, and thousands of square miles of such grass are going to waste. I saw no stock to speak of, and at that place but little wild game. Without knowing anything about the tsetse fly

and other cattle pests, I should say that the pastures just back of the coast might feed many thousand cattle and hogs. The soil seems rich. It is a fat clay, of the color of well burnt brick, which turns everything red. This dust filled our car, it coated our faces, and crept through our clothes. When we attempted to wash, the water soon became a bright vermilion, and the towels upon which we dried were brick-red. My pillow, after riding all night through such dust, had changed from white to terra-cotta; and there was a Venetian red spot where my head had laid.

AMONG THE ANTELOPES AND ZEBRAS.

It is a strange thing to go to sleep in the woods and to awake finding yourself traveling over a high, treeless country, with game by the thousand gamboling along the car tracks. We awoke on the Kapiti plains, which are about a mile above the sea, and 288 miles from Mombasa. These plains are of a black sandy loam and they are covered with a thick grass. They look much like Iowa, Kansas or Nebraska, did when the railroads were first built through them and when the buffaloes galloped along with the cars. The same conditions prevail here, save that the game is of a half dozen big kinds, and most of it is such as you can see only in our zoological gardens at home. According to law no shooting may be done for a mile on each side of the track, and the road has be-

come a great game preserve two miles in width and about 600 miles long. The animals seem to know that they are safe when they are near the railroad, and most of them are as quiet as our domestic beasts when in the fields.

Let me give you some notes which I made with these wild animals on all sides of me. I copy: These Kapiti plains are flat and I am riding through vast herds of antelopes and zebras. Some of them are within pistol shot of the cars. There are 50-odd zebras feeding on the grass not 100 feet away. Their black and white stripes shine in the sunlight, and they are round, plump and beautiful. They raise their heads as the train goes by and then continue their grazing. Further on we see antelopes, some as big as a two-year-old calf, and others the size of a goat. The little ones have horns almost as long as their bodies. There is one variety which has a white patch on its rump. This antelope looks as though it had a baby's bib tied to its stubby tail or had been splashed with a white wash brush. Many of the antelopes are yellow or fawn colored, and some of the smaller ones are beautifully striped.

WILD GNUS AND OSTRICHES.

Among the most curious animals to be seen are the gnus. As I write this there are some galloping along with the train. They are great beasts as big as a moose, with the horns of a cow and the mane and tail of a horse. They are sometimes called white-beeste; they make very good hunting.

But look, there are some ostriches. The flock contains a dozen or more birds, which stand like interrogation points away off there on the plain. They turn toward the cars as we approach and then spread their wings and skim away at great speed. Giraffes are frequently seen. They are more timid than the antelope, however, and are by no means so brave as the zebras.

We see more and more wild animals as we go onward. The whole region is a zoological garden; and the beasts are so protected that they are fast increasing in number. All hunting here must be done by licenses, and as I shall show later, it costs \$250 for the right to shoot a certain number of elephants and other big game. The only animals which one can kill without government permission are lions and leopards, and the danger is that the lion or leopard and not the man will do the killing.

One of the great troubles that the British government had while building the Uganda railroad was to keep the natives from stealing the telegraph wires. The women use such wire as jewelry. They bind it around the legs from the ankle to the knee. They wrap it in great coils around their necks, and they make it into round disks, which they tie to the lobes of their ears. They steal all sorts of railroad bolts and nuts for personal ornamentation, and brass wire and pieces of bronze are so much in demand that they will pass current as money. All the way here I have seen natives loaded with wire of one kind or another. Some had little more than the wire on them, and the clothes of most were conspicuous by their absence. About the only clothing worn along the Uganda road is small pieces of cotton. Some of the men wear breech cloths, and some of the women have short skirts. Farther up the line I understand they wear nothing, and at the terminal stations both men and women go about as naked as when they were born.

SOME QUEER JEWELRY.

It is wonderful how these people mutilate themselves in order to be what they consider beautiful. The ears of many of the women are punched like skeins, in order that they may hold rings of various kinds. At Voi I saw a girl with corks, each about as big around as my little finger, put through holes in the rims of her ears. She

had a great cork in each lobe, and three above that in each ear. There was a man beside her who had two long sticks in his ears, and farther up the road I saw one who had a stretched lobe hole that a good sized tumbler could have been passed through them. Indeed, I have a photograph of a man carrying a jam pot in his ear.

As I write I can see an ebony African with a brass collar around his neck and anklets on his legs. His only garment is a strip of calico about the waist. With him is a man with a no-ring not unlike that we use to keep pigs from rooting; and further on is a giddy naked dandy who has through coils of galvanized telephone wire each of his ears.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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STAR ACTOR IS NOW A CLERGYMAN

(Continued from page thirteen)

was to be the scene of his virgin labors in the mission field he had a placard struck off in big type which he posted up over the front door. It read:

"St. Michael's Mission will shortly be re-opened under new management."

"Business carried on during alterations at the Parish church."

The churchwardens rubbed their eyes when they saw that and wondered what this new curate would be up to next. They had not long to wait, for a placard was replaced in a few weeks by another with the inscription:

"St. Michael's mission, Whitefriars Lane."

"Smoke and chat, 2:45 to 3:15 p. m."

"Service ends at 4 p. m."

"Come and bring your pipe."

"Hymn books provided."

The biggest type was reserved for the invitation to smokers. Pipes at a church service! Pious respectability gasped when they heard of it. It was shocking; it was a sacrilege; something ought to be done to stop it. Pious respectability tried to stop it and they got a worse shock. The curate was backed not only by his vicar but by the bishop of the diocese, the Right Rev. Dr. Gore, a learned and saintly man, who, when he accepted the bishopric, stipulated that he should not be compelled to live in an episcopal palace. He wanted the new-fangled curate to be given a free hand and was going to stand by him and see that he got a fair show.

PARSON WITH A CIGARETTE.

I attended that re-opening meeting. The sort of folk one usually sees at religious gatherings were conspicuous by their absence. But the smokers were there in force—nearly 200 of them—and the room fairly reeked with the aroma of coarse and pungent tobacco. In their midst stood the Rev. Everard Digby clad in cassock and biretta, a fat cigarette between his lips and a broad smile on his clean-shaven face that seemed to penetrate the narcotic

fog like a ray of sunshine.

At 3:15 sharp "lights out" was the order and with martial precision all pipes, cigars and cigarettes were downed and the genial ex-actor became the fervid priest. He spoke well and his stage training has given him an excellent delivery. No theological student fresh from a seminary could have got home in a congregation of that kind as he did. It was about brotherhood that he talked. How effectively may be inferred from a remark addressed to me by a hard-fisted son of toil at the conclusion. "I had more along with me than a lot of us folk would be very different from what we are. Most parsons make us working chaps feel that there ain't anything in common between us. This fellow don't. He's the right sort, he is. He's one of us."

STRENUOUS INTERVIEW.

A few weeks later when he had got things working "a bit ship-shape" as he expressed it, he called upon him at the Mission house for an interview. I received a welcome that smote me like a powerful nor-wester. I was whisked into a sitting-room hustled into a study and plunged into a room to the accompaniment of a loud, cheerful voice that boomed at me in lusty cadence.

When I recovered from the vigor of my reception I looked upon my host and saw a stalwart, muscular figure surmounted by a healthy, smiling face beaming with enthusiasm and good nature. He dropped into a chair with a vigor that threatened its stability and swinging round said, "What do you want to know? Boxing in church? Smoking at service? Shocking! That is what they say about us, isn't it?"

"What I want to know is what you say about it," I fenced. "What is your scheme?"

"My scheme is based on the fact that all men are brothers, and ought to know each other as such, and my aim is to bring my people together under congenial and sociable surroundings."

"As a set-off against the attractions of the 'pub' and music hall?"

"Not at all!" he exclaimed energetically. "I see nothing wrong in music halls. I often go myself and enjoy the performance very much. Some of them may be insane, but there is nothing wrong about them. And as for the 'pub' I have been into every one in the district, and I have a great regard for the men who keep them; in fact, I have an idea of forming a tem-

perance society to be run by publicans."

"How are your tactics succeeding?"

"First rate. We started with 10 men and now we have over 400 in the brotherhood, including 200 members of the Gym. Our numbers are already too many for our accommodation and they include all sorts—soldiers, navvies and chaps just out of jail. I am going to start a uniform club, open to all men who wear uniforms from a bishop to a boy in buttons. The police are going in for it strong. We are progressing much faster than I expected. Things are a bit slow occasionally when some real quality folk come in to study us, but that doesn't last long."

"We are tremendously Ritualistic at the mission," he went on, "and the processions and the crucifix and the lighted candles on the altar give our low church friends shocks. They accuse me of being a Romanist and a Papist in their midst, but I don't mind what people say about me. I am fearfully keen on the job."

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.

He conducted me over the mission to see the alterations that had been made by the "new management." The whole body of the large meetingroom, with the exception of a screen, was covered with grass about a foot deep at one end, behind which stood the altar, had been turned into a gymnasium with trapezes, vaulting horses, Indian clubs, boxing gloves, and the rest of the usual outfit for muscular culture.

"On Sundays we clear out all this paraphernalia," he said, "and have the church. On week days it is the gymnasium and we have some rattling good boxing contests, too, to fill in with. I am a bit handy with the gloves myself, refereeing is my principal role now when the mainly art gets an innings."

He pointed out a billiard table to me. "There used to be a baptism tank where it stands," he said. "But," he added regretfully, "it was not big enough to be turned into a swimming bath and I could make no use of it."

At Mr. Digby's invitation I accompanied him to a dinner he was giving "at a jolly old pub" to the working-men who had wrought such a striking transformation in the Baptist chapel. Flung open the door of the public-house smoke-room, he burst upon a company. "Now then, you boozers," he called out, "who says dinner?"

"What'll you have, old man?" This to me. "I'm having a whisky and bitters."

I joined him in a drink and then we adjourned upstairs. From the very beginning he was the life and soul of the party.

"Bring me pork," he said. "It does not agree with me, but I love it." And if anybody calls me 'Reverend' I shall chuck a brick at him. Who says beer?"

ADVOCATES GOOD BEER.

Throughout the dinner he was chaffing, laughing and joking, first in one place and then in another. His merry brown eyes missed nothing, and he was quick to see that the men's glasses were filled up. "Good beer will harm no one," he said as he filled my glass. Dinner over he said grace, crossing himself at the conclusion, and then called loudly for smokes, songs and singers. Members of the Anti-Cigarette league would have been shocked if they had seen him tossing a packet of cigarettes to a boy of 15.

"Now, don't write me up as a converted actor who has a horror of the stage," was Mr. Digby's parting injunction. "I am not a bit ashamed of having been an actor and I don't believe the theater is the favorite haunt of the devil, either."

ELLIS ELSEN.

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