

HANDBOOK
TO
BRITISH EAST AFRICA
AND
UGANDA

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women, as is most usual among African tribes, whilst the men herd cattle, sheep, and goats.

Religion.—Here again as at Taita—and I make bold to say among most African tribes—though the rites and ceremonies differ as in England—there is a religion of spirit-worship, with an element of sacrifice and baptism with blood.

Labour.—The Government station in this district has done untold good by drawing the people and chiefs together, and showing them that the presence of the Europeans has meant their protection, peace, and general welfare. Confidence has been inspired, prosperity increased by the Government and traders employing labour for buildings and portorage at regular rates of pay; but one would be glad to see the women left at home, instead of accompanying their men-folk on long journeys, and carrying the heaviest loads under the most trying physical circumstances.

The Athi Plain.—From Ulu we cross the Athi Plain, which runs north and south in one long unbroken level stretch of beautiful grazing ground, used by the Masai for their cattle, but shared also by every beast of the field: rhinoceros, giraffe, zebra, mpala, wildebeest, hartebeest, wart hog, and an abundance of Grant's and Thomson's gazelle. I have seen some of these animals, not only in ones and twos, but in thousands, being "driven" by a

hunting party of lions. Part of this plain has recently been made a game preserve.

Kikuyu.—We enter Kikuyu, the home of the most insolent and turbulent of natives.

The country stretches from Mt. Kenia on the north to the Kapite Plain on the south, and from the springs of the River Athi to the edge of the Kikuyu Escarpment, which rises to a height of 9000 feet.

There are vast forests of juniper trees enclosing clearances where the Wakikuyu build their beehive-shaped huts, and cultivate the usual African products of Indian corn, sugar cane, yams, and millet.

People.—These people are a similar tribe, with customs and language akin, to the Wakamba, but are of inferior physique, though they ape the dress and manner of the Masai, using insolence to make up for the lack of majesty in their bearing. They raid their weaker brethren for cattle, sheep, and goats, and with loathsome treachery fall upon passing caravans, thus coming far short of the chivalrous Masai, who give you fair and timely warning of their blood-thirsty intentions.

In Kikuyu, as in Ulu, the climate is all that can be desired for Europeans, for though the temperature at noon may be up to 100° Fahr., it is tempered by cool breezes, and compensated at night by a fall in the glass to 50° Fahr. Experiments have been made in both districts to cultivate European produce, with satisfactory results, vegetables attaining the highest