



**To Abyssinia, Through an Unknown Land: An
Account of a Journey Through Unexplored
Regions of British East Africa by Lake Rudolf to
the Kingdom of Menelek**

Chauncy Hugh Stigand

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Chauncey Hugh Stigand (1877–1919) was a British army officer, colonial administrator and big game hunter. He was killed in action while attempting to suppress a rebellion of Aliab Dinka. Theodore Roosevelt wrote that "Captain Stigand is one of the most noted of recent African big game hunters and explorers, and he is also a field naturalist of unusual powers. ... Captain Stigand has written a book which ought to appeal to every believer in vigor and hardihood, to every lover of wilderness adventure, and to every man who values at their proper worth the observations of an excellent field naturalist."

Captain Stigand started his venturesome journey from British territory by way of Lake Rudolf to Abyssinia (Abyssinia, spanned a geographical area covered by present-day Eritrea and the northern half of Ethiopia). . . broke new grounds, almost untouched by Europeans. He encountered many different primitive tribes. His experiences alike in the not very hospitable country of the Reshiat, the Kerre, and the Wallamu and in crossing the mountains and the Nerl desert, are set out with serious purpose of adding something to our knowledge of the country between Uganda and Abyssinia.

Captain Stigand's route lay between the highlands of British Africa and the mountains of Southern Abyssinia. On ordinary maps this region is as blank as the Libyan Desert because it has been unexplored by European travelers. In fact, it is shunned even by the natives, as being inhabited by devils. A more material deterrent lies in the fact that it is waterless, providing no food for man or beast. A great part of it is not even sandy, but gray and blank with volcanic and basaltic fragments and with ashes. The author betrays that-real passion as an explorer, which tempted him to this journey. He writes: "Many dark patches and corners still exist in the dark continent for the would-be explorer who wishes to break new ground. It has long been one of my favorite recreations to sit with the map of Africa before me and plan out exploring and hunting expeditions, traversing such unfrequented spots. There can be few unexplored patches still remaining, which I have not, in imagination at least, traversed and retraversed."

He hit upon the unknown tract north of the administered portion of British East Africa, Uganda, and South Abyssinia as most suited for this purpose of original exploration. As he started from the lakes the thirty five porters and a headman despaired of ever reaching their journey's end, and they required much persuasion before they would accompany him.

The work will undoubtedly be interesting to those who love books of adventure.

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