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the Royal Geographical Society

Under the impression that the Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society appreciate attempts made by our countrymen for the benefit of their fellow men, I may mention before proceeding to detail the operations of our own mission on Lake Nyassa, that we had the pleasure of shewing the Oxford & Cambridge missionaries, the way from Dakanamoio Island a few miles below Murchison's cataracts to the highlands of the Manganja South of Mount Zomba. We left the ship in their company on the 15th July and in two marches reached the edge of the plateau of some 3000 feet on which geographers will agree that, with common sense, the missionaries are more likely to enjoy good health while pursuing their benevolent enterprise than they would be on any of the adjacent lowlands. Here we were mortified to find that advantage had been taken of the route followed by Dr Kirk from the Shire to Tette to institute an extensive system of slave hunting in the very country to which the bishop and his associates had come. the first party met had eighty four captives. As it was possible that they might have been bought, they were asked how they came to be bound and led in that way towards Tette. It turned out that a marauding party of a tribe named Ajawa or Ajauwa had been incited by the Tette people to attack village after village of Manganja, kill the men and sell the women and children to them. During the course of the enquiry the adventurers escaped into the forest, and the best thing that could be done was to present these and the captives of three other Portuguese parties to the bishop to try what he could make of them. Altogether they numbered about one hundred and forty souls -
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chiefly women and children. After all who choose to have the Mission have departed, a little flock probably of a hundred will remain free from parental control and from contamination with heathenism. No modern mission has been more auspiciously

commenced. Not even the London Mission in
Madagascar when King Radama presented a
large body of youths for instruction, for the
instruction was to subserve his own political
ends. the new mission may therefore well be
upon its metal to shew fruits at least equal to
those of which the Independents can tell, and which
long after all the departure of all the missionaries
from Madagascar, have stood the test of bloody
persecutions. Placed as they are in the Centre of the
slave market with all our hearts we wish them
success. *see narrative of Johns & Freeman; Ellis insists.

The spot selected for a temporary residence is,
to the eye, about 15 miles south [the middle of] Mount Zomba. It
is on the banks of a stream about 10 yards wide called
Magomero - and will serve ~~better~~[more extended] acquaintance
with the country enables them to choose a better. The
Manganja - (pronounced Mañ-nja never
Manggganja) have so little organization that
the destruction of one village after another produced
no union for mutual defense. Their paramount
chief, who lives on the Shire, did nothing but
help those who were carrying off his people across
that river. The nation seemed in no ways sur-
prised at his supineness. the only effort made
was to send for a chief who is believed to ensure
victory by his sorceries - and the bravery of the
Manganja of which we recievedsuch
highly coloured accounts from the Portuguese,
shewed itself in universal flight before the Ajawa
It was plain that if these marauders were not
induced to desist the fine fertile country would
[0003]
soon be inhabited by the missionaries alone. With
a view to stop the effusion of more blood we set off
to hold a parley with the Ajawa, and found them at the
base of Mount Zomba. Unfortunately we came
upon them in the very moment of victory for they
were burning three villages, and a long line of
captives laden with plunder were moving along to
the temporary residence of the plunderers. Here the
bishop offered up a solemn & fervent prayer &
with the accents of his prayer we could hear the
sad wail for the dead, and the shrill screams of joy
over the victory - a panic seized the captives [or carriers] as
we first appeared in sight - all dashed down their
loads and fled. but the Ajawa soon demanded
if we came peaceably. Our assurances in the
affirmative were neutralized by some Manganja
followers calling out, "Our Chibisa (the great sorcerer)

has come". And most unfortunately the effect
of this foolish call in depriving us of the protection
of our English name was not realized until after-
wards. Elated too with continued success they
probably thought that a small party of about twenty
would prove such an easy prey, that they began
to shoot us with their poisoned arrows. Even
slowly retiring from their village was considered
only evidence of fear, and they crowded round
to within fifty yards, and but for recourse to
our firearms in self defence would soon have
cut us all off. ~~We~~ So little did we anticipate this,
the English name having hitherto served to
ensure respect, that we had barely ammunition
to serve our purpose. the Manganja followers
alone suffered from the arrows and guns of the
Ajawa. After this small band of sixty or eighty
robbers were driven off other bodies of Ajawa
have been employed by the people of Tette and
~~to me~~ it seems evident that it is intended to
root out the mission without the authorities
being in any way compromised. We have
some reason to believe that the guns were handled by Portuguese
[slaves]
[0004]

Returning to the ship at Dakanamoio Island
we began the carriage of a boat past Murchison's
Cataractson the 6$^{\underline{th}}$ of August. And in three
weeks placed her on the Upper Shire in Lat. 15°15 20
S. The cataracts begin in 15° 55 S. So we have 35
or 40 of land carriage. The Western bank was
followed that being smoother than the Eastern
In the worst parts a few small trees cut down
opened a path for our shouting assistants who
kindly considered the boat as a certificate of
peaceful intentions to them at least. Launched
on the Upper Shire we were virtually on the Lake,
for there is but little difference of level. It has
little current, and is all of good depth. Before
entering the Lake proper in ~~£15~~[14°] 25 we pass
through the Lakelet Pamalombe - ten or twelve
miles long and five or six broad. It is nearly
surrounded by a broad belt of Papayrus
so densely planted we could scarcely find an
opening to the shore. the plant is eight or ten
feet high ~~and~~ air is excluded where it grows
and so much sulphuretted hydrogen gas
evolved the white paint o~~f~~[n] the bottom of the
boat was blackened. Myriads of Mosquitoes
shewed, as I think they always do, the presence

of malaria, and warned us off to the more
healthy shores of the Lake Nyassa. We sailed into
it on the 2^{d} September and felt refreshed
by the greater coolness of the air in contact
with this large body of water.

the depth was the first point of interest and
while skirting the Western shore about a
mile out, we found, as the Upper Shire was
from 9 to 15 feet, the Lake deepened from 9 to
fifteen fathoms. then as we rounded the
grand mountainous promontery, Cape
[0005]
Maclear, we could feel no bottom with our leadline
of 35 fathoms or 210 feet. as we subsequently wended
our way along the Western shore which is just a sucess[ion]
of bays, we found that where the bottom was sandy
at a mile from the land the depth varied from
six to fourteen fathoms. In a rocky bay about Lat.
11° 40 S. we had bottom at 100 fathoms, but a
mile out of it we found none with a fishing line
of 116 fathoms or 696 feet, but this was un-
satisfactory as the line broke in coming up - according
to our present knowledge a ship could find
anchorage only near the shore.

Reverting to the Southern end we found the tongue
of the Lake from which the Shire flows to be about
30 miles long and ten or twelve broad. Rounding
Cape Maclear Westwards we enter another arm
which stretches Southwards some 18 miles, and is
from 6 to 12 miles broad. these arms of the Lake
give the Southern [end] a forked appearance, and
with the help of a little imagination it may be
likened to the boot shape of Italy. It is
narrowest about the ankle - 18 or 20 miles
From this it widens to the North, and in the
upper third or fourth it is fifty or sixty miles
broad. It's length is over 200 [(or) (225)] miles. But we
were there at a very unfavourable period of
the year. the "smokes" filled the air with an
impenetrable haze, and the Equinoctial gales
rendered it impossible for us to cross to the
Eastern side. As the sun rose behind mountains
sketches and bearings of these at different Latitudes
enabled us to secure approximate measurements
of its width - there are several crossing places
as at Tsenga and Molamba and about the
beginning of the upper third they get over by
taking advantage of the island Chizumora, but
further north they go round the end instead, though

that takes several days. Like all narrow seas
surrounded as this is by mountains, tremendous
swells get up very suddenly. On one of these occasions
[0006]
we were caught a mile from the shore and could
neither advance nor recede - the men all became
so sea sick & they could scarcely be made to keep the
boat's head to the sea. Terrific rollers with per-
pendicular sides, and hairy heads came across the
Lake, but fortuntely broke either before they reached
or had passed us. We were riding at anchor in
seven fathoms. the boat behaved admirably during
the six weary hours we were detained there, but
one roller breaking on her would have ended our
exploration. After this we trusted implicitly to the
opinions of our seaman John Neil, and often sat
cowering for days together waiting for the surf to go
down. We had to beach the boat every night to
save her from being swamped at anchor - and did
we not believe that the frequent storms were peculiar
to that period of the year would call Nyassa "the Lake
of storms". No current could be detected. the sounding
line shewed no deflection from the perpendicular.
The boat swing at her anchor whenever the slightest
breath of wind blew her - and patches of water loving
grass which the natives anchor over fishing creels
to attract the fish by the shade, invariably shewed
the direction of the wind alone - the natives are
aware however that a long continued gale raises
the water a few inches on the shore to which it blows,
and then of course it must return to its level. We
tried hard ~~for~~[to] find a current, for we hope to -
navigate the Lake ourselves, and "an unknown
current" is the plank by which many lubbers
who lose their ships are saved. the height of the
water varies between the wet and dry seasons
about three feet. Five rivers flow into it from
the West. they are from 15 to 30 yards wide and
some require canoes in crossing. but unitedly
they do not account for [evaporation and] the Shire's perennial
flow. A large river may come in further north,
but great was my disappointment in not
finding a river that would lessen the longitude
towards the country of the Makololo. Many
torrents - stagnant when we passed - discharge
much water in the rainy season. the water
[0007]
is fresh, but somewhat earthy tasted and hard - this
may not be the case when the Lake is full - the water
never becomes hot as in the Shire & Zambesi. We
were there during the hottest period of the year - and

we could bathe in its delightful water whenever
we chose, for the alligators though enormous fellows,
are well fed on fish and seldom kill men. they
capture people in the Zambesi chiefly when the water
is discoulloured and they cannot see their natural
prey. Fish abound in Nyassa and the vast
population on its shores all engage in catching them
with trawling nets - creels, hooks, torches or
poison. As the sun declines groups of natives
in hundreds sit and gossip under the shady trees
near the water's edge waiting till the surf goes down.
then launching their canoes they commence traw-
ling, and often continue their labours most of the
night. Toiling in a state of nudity they too suffer
from fever, but their skins are much more
torpid in function than ours - our beards grow
as much in a week as their wool does in a month.
Hence "conformity to the customs of the natives"
which people sometimes enjoin, would require
a modification of our highly excitable skins - the
son of the celebrated traveller Mungo Park is said
to have gone about Sierra Leone in a sheet like the
Fulahs and conformity to native customs soon
terminated fatally.

the numbers of people we saw on the Lake
exceeded all I have observed elsewhere. Probably
the rains will draw off many to their agriculture.
In the South West we have the Maravi. then as we
go North we come among the Marimba - then
the Matumboka or Atimboka - Makusa
and Mañkambira - they are essentially one
people - with one language, and much the same
appearance. All like the Manganja are marked
with circatrices in straight lines which crossing
each other form lozenge [or triangular] shaped devices - but the Matumboka raise the skin
[into] heart like lumps,
and file their teeth to points - there is a slight
difference in the dialects spoken, but all understand
[0008]
each other: and the Manganja language serves every
where. The name Marimba might be applied to them
all. We never heard the name Wanyassa except among
Arabs. The prefix Wa belongs to the North - the Abisa
or Awisa[or Babisa] never call themselves Wabisa. there
are Marimba on the East coat and Auguru.
We heard Ajawa firing cannon on that side
near the Southern end. they are probably marauders
engaged in slave hunting.

the people are all clothed with the inner

bark of a species of acacia, steeped, & beaten till
it is soft. the fair sex are to use the very mildest
term, really very plain. the lips, large enough if let
alone are pierced and distended with quartz stones
till they are hideous - the men are better looking
than the women. We were quite as great curiosities
to them, as the hippopotamus was to the highly
civilized who live on the banks of the Thames.
They were upon the whole civil. At one village
only were they impudent, and they were a little
"elevated" by beer. Twice they went the length of
lifting up the edge of our sail which we used
as a tent as boys do the curtains of travelling
menageries at home. but they did not cross
the line I made on the sand when we were at
meals. they spoke of us indeed as "Chirombo"
- wild beasts, but they had no idea that they
were understood. no fines were levied nor
dues demanded.

When about half way up the Lake an Arab dhow
lately built to carry slaves across fled from us to the
Eastern shore. In the sphere to which this vessel's
operations extended the people were worse - expert
thieves possibly from the East coast crept up to
our sleeping places about 4 oclock in the morning
and made off with what clothing they could lay
their hands on - no food was to be had except
what we could shoot. Fortunately elephants and
hippopotami were tame. At 11° 40 we entered the borders
of a a tribe of Zulus called Mazitu or Mazite who
came originally from
[0009]
the South opposite Sofala or Inhambane.
Here the shores of the Lake were strewed with skeletons
and putrid bodies of the slain. Our land party
dreaded meeting the inflictors of the terrible vengeance
of which the evidences everywhere met the eye,
without a European in their company. So
I left the boat, and a mistake separated us
from it three days - the country is mountainous
and the spurs of the mountains come sheer down
to the Lake. While toiling along up and down steep
ravines, our most strenuous efforts could
not make five miles a day [in a straight line] - the boat had
gone on twenty miles and a storm prevented
its return. We met seven Mazite who
seemed as much afraid of me as the men
were of them. I went to them unarmed - they wished me to sit in the sun while they sat in
the shade, and rattled their shields, (a proceeding
that inspires terror among the natives) when

I refused, and came & sat down beside them,
they refused to take me to the boat or to their chief -
thought that my note book was a pistol, and
on parting sped away up the hills like frightened
deer. the country had been well peopled,
but new skeletons lay in every hut among
broken pots - and other utensils - no food could
be found and, but for four goats we had with
us, we should have starved. On the second
day the land party gave in, but taking two
of the best, I pushed on after the boat, and
on the morning of the fourth day met it
coming back. the last Latitude taken was
Lat. 11° 44 S. the boat had gone about 24 North
of that. the Northing made on shore was less
than that, but from elevations of over a
thousand feet, and from the boat at least
20 miles more were seen. So we may venture
[0010]
to assert that the Lake extends into the southern
borders of the tenth degree of South Latitude - our
provisions were expended - the land desolate
except a few pirates on detached rocks off the
coast. the people inhospitable - our land party
had turned, and without ~~them~~[it] an accident to
the boat would have proved fatal to us all.
This was the first time I [had] turned without accom-
plishing what I [had] set out to do - but turn we
must though in sight of the large mountain
masses looming in the distance in which
the Lake probably ends. We pulled back in the
boat in one day what [on land] with the most heart-
breaking toil, I had accomplished in three -
and a good fellow called Marango laded us
with all the different kinds of food he had,
and regretted that we could not spend a whole
day with him drinking beer.

The information collected about the Rovuma
affords a good illustration of the instability of the
foundation on which [much] speculative geography
stands - one intelligent native, with apparently no
motive for misleading us, asserted most positively
that our boat could sail out of the Lake into the
river. Another - that it must be carried a few
yards. While a third would maintain that the land carried
was at least fifty miles. It would at that season
of the year [have] been foolhardiness to cross the Lake,
~~and~~ to gain certainty for ourselves. In three out of
four storms our little boat could not have lived.
We met two Arabs who had come down from

Katanga in the far interior to buy calico with
ivory at the Lake. One had lived in the interior
14 and the other 16 years. They drew Nyassa discharging towards the South and Tanganyika towards
the North - which last we know from Major
[0011]
Burton to be nonsense. they reported another Lake
called Moelo, and say that the Loapola[or Luapula] flows
into it. I wonder who will be set down as the
discoverer of that after the English have been there.

the fish in the Lake are very abundant. this
may be the reason why the alligators are so tame.
They are [as already remarked] always most destructive to human life
when the Zambesi is discoloured, and they
cannot procure their usual diet of fish -
One fish shaped like trout ascends the rivers
to spawn. It is very good, having somewhat
the flavour of herring - clouds exactly like
columns of smoke floated over the Lake
and led us to conjecture that they arose
from the burning of grass on the opposite
shore - but passing through one of these
clouds we found that it consisted of insects
no larger than our smallest gnats - they
are called Kungo and are collected and boiled
into cakes which reminded me by their flavour
of roasted locusts, but the taste is fishy.
this is probably the smallest winged insect
used as food by man. Locusts are here
unknown.

the only trade there on the Lake is in slaves. the
people do not attempt to kill elephants or hippo-
potami with their bows and arrows, and
both animals are remarkably tame - slaves
were often offered to us for sale. the cotton
grown on the upper part of the Lake is of a
remarkably fine quality. We could only ~~reply~~[state]
that we should soon come in a larger vessel
and purchase their cotton. and judging
from the quantity we have purchased
from a small portion of the Shire and that
[0012]
not in crop time the produce from Nyassa
with its remarkably extended coast line will in
the course of a year or two be very considerable.
The actions however of the Portuguese slave
hunters on our footsteps have a more depressing
effect on our spirits than all the physical
obstacles we have to encounter or than the

Fever itself.

David Livingstone

P.S. On returning to the Upper Shire we had
a good view of the country East of it and I
suspect that we have been misled as to the
length of the Lake Shirwa or Tamanda for
the country near the Lake Nyassa is all mountainous
a level patch however exists from about 14° 40
to 40° 50 S. and it is probable that here the hippo-
potami cross from the river to the Lake -
the native information was correct enough
I believe only they looked on the Upper Shire
as part of Lake Nyinyesi or Nyassa
while we took the Lake proper as its real
beginning. We never have had time to
examine the Lake Shirwa, but think that 20
or 30 miles may have to be cut off its length
in the maps.

When we reached the upper most cataract
we slung our boat to a branch of a fine
shady tree about ten feet from the ground -
the elephants which abound there may disturb
it but nothing else will. We then walked past
the cataracts having completed our trip of
600 miles going & coming in three months.
Our next work is carrying a steamer which
we expect in pieces by a road made by ourselves
past the cataracts.
D.L.