

Paper Prepared for the Royal Geographical Society by Dr Livingstone, January 1862

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

the Royal Geographical Society

Under the impression that the Fellows of the Royal Society appreciate attempts made by countrymen for the benefit of their fellow men, may mention before proceeding to detail the operations our own mission on Lake Nyassa, that we the pleasure of shewing the Oxford & Cambridge, the way from Dakanamoio Island few miles below Murchison's cataracts to the of the Manganja South of Mount . We left the ship in their company on 15th July and in two marches reached the edge the plateau of some 3000 feet on which geo-will agree that, with common sense, missionaries are more likely to enjoy good while pursuing their benevolent enterprise they would be on any of the adjacent low-. Here we were mortified to find that ad-had been taken of the route followed by D^r from the Shire to Tette to institute an extensive of slave hunting in the very country to which bishop and his associates had come. the party met had eighty four captives. As it possible that they might have been bought, were asked how they came to be bound and led that way towards Tette. It turned out that marauding party of a tribe named Ajawa Ajauwa had been incited by the Tette people attack village after village of Manganja, kill men and sell the women and children to them. the course of the enquiry the adventurers into the forest, and the best thing that be done was to present these and the captives three other Portuguese parties to the bishop to try he could make of them. Altogether they numbered about one hundred and forty souls -

[0002] women and children. After all who choose have the Mission have departed, a little flock probably a hundred will remain free from parental and from contamination with heathenism. modern mission has been more auspiciously . Not even the London Mission in Madagascar when King Radama presented a body of youths for instruction, for the was to subserve his own political . the new mission may therefore well be its metal to shew fruits at least equal to of which the Independents can tell, and which after all the departure of all the missionaries Madagascar, have stood the test of bloody . Placed as they are in the Centre of the market with all our hearts we wish them . *see narrative of Johns & Freeman; Ellis insists.

The spot selected for a temporary residence is, the eye, about 15 miles south [the middle of] Mount Zomba. It on the banks of a stream about 10 yards wide called Magomero - and will serve better[more extended] acquaintance the country enables them to choose a better. The - (pronounced Mañ-nja never) have so little organization that destruction of one village after another produced union for mutual defense. Their paramount , who lives on the Shire, did nothing but those who were carrying off his people across river. The nation seemed in no ways sur-at his supineness. the only effort made to send for a chief who is believed to ensure by his sorceries - and the bravery of the of which we recievedsuch coloured accounts from the Portuguese, itself in universal flight before the Ajawa was plain that if these marauders were not to desist the fine fertile country would

[0003] be inhabited by the missionaries alone. With view to stop the effusion of more blood we set off hold a parley with the Ajawa, and found them at the of Mount Zomba. Unfortunately we came them in the very moment of victory for they burning three villages, and a long line of laden with plunder were moving along to temporary residence of the plunderers.

Here the offered up a solemn & fervent prayer & the accents of his prayer we could hear the wail for the dead, and the shrill screams of joy the victory - a panic seized the captives [or carriers] as first appeared in sight - all dashed down their and fled. but the Ajawa soon demanded we came peaceably. Our assurances in the were neutralized by some Manganja calling out, "Our Chibisa (the great sorcerer) come". And most unfortunately the effect this foolish call in depriving us of the protection our English name was not realized until after-. Elated too with continued success they thought that a small party of about twenty prove such an easy prey, that they began shoot us with their poisoned arrows. Even retiring from their village was considered evidence of fear, and they crowded round within fifty yards, and but for recourse to firearms in self defence would soon have us all off. We So little did we anticipate this, English name having hitherto served to respect, that we had barely ammunition serve our purpose. the Manganja followers suffered from the arrows and guns of the . After this small band of sixty or eighty were driven off other bodies of Ajawa been employed by the people of Tette and ~~to me~~ it seems evident that it is intended to out the mission without the authorities in any way compromised. We have reason to believe that the guns were handled by Portuguese [slaves]

[0004]

Returning to the ship at Dakanamoio Island began the carriage of a boat past Murchison's on the 6th of August. And in three placed her on the Upper Shire in Lat. 15°15' 20" . The cataracts begin in 15° 55' S. So we have 35 40 of land carriage. The Western bank was that being smoother than the Eastern the worst parts a few small trees cut down a path for our shouting assistants who considered the boat as a certificate of intentions to them at least. Launched the Upper Shire we were virtually on the Lake, there is but little difference of level. It has current, and is all of good depth. Before the Lake proper in ~~£15~~[14°] 25' we pass the Lakelet Pamalombe - ten or twelve long and five or six broad. It is nearly by a broad belt of Papayrus densely planted we could scarcely find an to the shore. the plant is eight or ten high and air is excluded where it grows so much sulphuretted hydrogen gas the white paint of[n] the bottom of the was blackened. Myriads of Mosquitoes , as I think they always do, the presence malaria, and warned us off to the more shores of the Lake Nyassa. We sailed into on the 2^d September and felt refreshed the greater coolness of the air in contact this large body of water.

the depth was the first point of interest and skirting the Western shore about a out, we found, as the Upper Shire was 9 to 15 feet, the Lake deepened from 9 to fathoms. then as we rounded the mountainous promontory, Cape

[0005] , we could feel no bottom with our leadline 35 fathoms or 210 feet. as we subsequently wended way along the Western shore which is just a sucess[ion] bays, we found that where the bottom was sandy a mile from the land the depth varied from to fourteen fathoms. In a rocky bay about Lat.

11° 40' S. we had bottom at 100 fathoms, but a out of it we found none with a fishing line 116 fathoms or 696 feet, but this was un-as the line broke in coming up - according our present knowledge a ship could find only near the shore.

Reverting to the Southern end we found the tongue 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 stretches Southwards some 18 miles, and is 6 to 12 miles broad. these arms of the Lake the Southern [end] a forked appearance, and the help of a little imagination it may be to the boot shape of Italy. It is about the ankle - 18 or 20 miles this it widens to the North, and in the third or fourth it is fifty or sixty miles . It's length is over 200 [(or) (225)] miles. But we there at a very unfavourable period of year. the "smokes" filled the air with an haze, and the Equinoctial gales it impossible for

us to cross to the side. As the sun rose behind mountains and bearings of these at different Latitudes us to secure approximate measurements its width - there are several crossing places at Tsenga and Molamba and about the of the upper third they get over by advantage of the island Chizumora, but north they go round the end instead, though takes several days. Like all narrow seas as this is by mountains, tremendous get up very suddenly. On one of these occasions

[0006] were caught a mile from the shore and could advance nor recede - the men all became sea sick & they could scarcely be made to keep the 's head to the sea. Terrific rollers with per-sides, and hairy heads came across the , but fortunately broke either before they reached had passed us. We were riding at anchor in fathoms. the boat behaved admirably during six weary hours we were detained there, but roller breaking on her would have ended our . After this we trusted implicitly to the of our seaman John Neil, and often sat for days together waiting for the surf to go . We had to beach the boat every night to her from being swamped at anchor - and did not believe that the frequent storms were peculiar that period of the year would call Nyassa "the Lake storms". No current could be detected. the sounding shewed no deflection from the perpendicular. boat swing at her anchor whenever the slightest of wind blew her - and patches of water loving which the natives anchor over fishing creels attract the fish by the shade, invariably shewed direction of the wind alone - the natives are however that a long continued gale raises water a few inches on the shore to which it blows, then of course it must return to its level. We hard for[to] find a current, for we hope to - the Lake ourselves, and "an unknown " is the plank by which many lubbers lose their ships are saved. the height of the varies between the wet and dry seasons three feet. Five rivers flow into it from West. they are from 15 to 30 yards wide and require canoes in crossing. but unitedly do not account for [evaporation and] the Shire's perennial . A large river may come in further north, great was my disappointment in not a river that would lessen the longitude the country of the Makololo. Many - stagnant when we passed - discharge water in the rainy season. the water

[0007] fresh, but somewhat earthy tasted and hard - this not be the case when the Lake is full - the water becomes hot as in the Shire & Zambesi. We there during the hottest period of the year - and could bathe in its delightful water whenever chose, for the alligators though enormous fellows, well fed on fish and seldom kill men. they people in the Zambesi chiefly when the water discoloured and they cannot see their natural . Fish abound in Nyassa and the vast on its shores all engage in catching them trawling nets - creels, hooks, torches or . As the sun declines groups of natives hundreds sit and gossip under the shady trees the water's edge waiting till the surf goes down. launching their canoes they commence traw-, and often continue their labours most of the . Toiling in a state of nudity they too suffer fever, but their skins are much more in function than ours - our beards grow much in a week as their wool does in a month. "conformity to the customs of the natives" people sometimes enjoin, would require modification of our highly excitable skins - the of the celebrated traveller Mungo Park is said have gone about Sierra Leone in a sheet like the and conformity to native customs soon fatally.

the numbers of people we saw on the Lake all I have observed elsewhere. Probably rains will draw off many to their agriculture. the South West we have the Maravi. then as we North we come among the Marimba - then Matumboka or Atimboka - Makusa Mañkambira - they are essentially one - with one language, and much the same . All like the Manganja are marked circatrices in straight lines which crossing other form lozenge [or triangular] shaped devices - but the Matumboka raise the skin [into] heart like lumps, file their teeth to points - there is a slight in the dialects spoken, but all understand

[0008] other: and the Manganja language serves every . The name Marimba might be applied to them . We never heard the name Wanyassa except among . The prefix Wa belongs

to the North - the Abisa Awisa[or Babisa] never call themselves Wabisa. there Marimba on the East coast and Auguru. heard Ajawa firing cannon on that side the Southern end. they are probably marauders in slave hunting.

the people are all clothed with the inner of a species of acacia, steeped, & beaten till is soft. the fair sex are to use the very mildest, really very plain. the lips, large enough if let are pierced and distended with quartz stones they are hideous - the men are better looking the women. We were quite as great curiosities them, as the hippopotamus was to the highly who live on the banks of the Thames. were upon the whole civil. At one village were they impudent, and they were a little

"elevated" by beer. Twice they went the length of up the edge of our sail which we used a tent as boys do the curtains of travelling at home. but they did not cross line I made on the sand when we were at . they spoke of us indeed as "Chirombo"

- wild beasts, but they had no idea that they understood. no fines were levied nor demanded.

When about half way up the Lake an Arab dhow built to carry slaves across fled from us to the shore. In the sphere to which this vessel's extended the people were worse - expert possibly from the East coast crept up to sleeping places about 4 o'clock in the morning made off with what clothing they could lay hands on - no food was to be had except we could shoot. Fortunately elephants and were tame. At 11° 40' we entered the borders a a tribe of Zulus called Mazitu or Mazite who originally from

[0009] South opposite Sofala or Inhambane. the shores of the Lake were strewn with skeletons putrid bodies of the slain. Our land party meeting the inflictors of the terrible vengeance which the evidences everywhere met the eye, a European in their company. So left the boat, and a mistake separated us it three days - the country is mountainous the spurs of the mountains come sheer down the Lake. While toiling along up and down steep, our most strenuous efforts could make five miles a day [in a straight line] - the boat had on twenty miles and a storm prevented return. We met seven Mazite who as much afraid of me as the men of them. I went to them unarmed - they wished me to sit in the sun while they sat in shade, and rattled their shields, (a proceeding inspires terror among the natives) when refused, and came & sat down beside them, refused to take me to the boat or to their chief - that my note book was a pistol, and parting sped away up the hills like frightened. the country had been well peopled, new skeletons lay in every hut among pots - and other utensils - no food could found and, but for four goats we had with, we should have starved. On the second the land party gave in, but taking two the best, I pushed on after the boat, and the morning of the fourth day met it back. the last Latitude taken was . 11° 44' S. the boat had gone about 24 North that. the Northing made on shore was less that, but from elevations of over a foot, and from the boat at least

20 miles more were seen. So we may venture

[0010] assert that the Lake extends into the southern of the tenth degree of South Latitude - our were expended - the land desolate a few pirates on detached rocks off the. the people inhospitable - our land party turned, and without ~~them~~[it] an accident to boat would have proved fatal to us all. was the first time I [had] turned without accom-what I [had] set out to do - but turn we though in sight of the large mountain looming in the distance in which Lake probably ends. We pulled back in the in one day what [on land] with the most heart-toil, I had accomplished in three - a good fellow called Marango laded us all the different kinds of food he had, regretted that we could not spend a whole with him drinking beer.

The information collected about the Rovuma a good illustration of the instability of the on which [much] speculative geography - one intelligent native, with apparently no for misleading us, asserted most positively our boat could sail out of the Lake into the. Another - that it must be carried a few. While a third would maintain that the land carried at least fifty miles.

It would at that season the year [have] been foolhardiness to cross the Lake,
and to gain certainty for ourselves. In three out of storms our little boat could not have lived.
met two Arabs who had come down from
Katanga in the far interior to buy calico with 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 North - which last we know from Major

[0011] to be nonsense. they reported another Lake Moelo, and say that the Loapola[or
Luapula] flows it. I wonder who will be set down as the of that after the English have been
there.

the fish in the Lake are very abundant. this be the reason why the alligators are so tame.
are [as already remarked] always most destructive to human life the Zambesi is discoloured, and
they procure their usual diet of fish - fish shaped like trout ascends the rivers spawn. It is very
good, having somewhat flavour of herring - clouds exactly like of smoke floated over the Lake
led us to conjecture that they arose the burning of grass on the opposite - but passing through
one of these we found that it consisted of insects larger than our smallest gnats - they called
Kungo and are collected and boiled cakes which reminded me by their flavour roasted locusts,
but the taste is fishy. is probably the smallest winged insect as food by man. Locusts are here .

the only trade there on the Lake is in slaves. the do not attempt to kill elephants or
hippo-with their bows and arrows, and animals are remarkably tame - slaves often offered to us
for sale. the cotton on the upper part of the Lake is of a fine quality. We could only ~~reply~~[state]
we should soon come in a larger vessel purchase their cotton. and judging the quantity we have
purchased a small portion of the Shire and that

[0012] in crop time the produce from Nyassa its remarkably extended coast line will in
course of a year or two be very considerable. actions however of the Portuguese slave on our
footsteps have a more depressing on our spirits than all the physical we have to encounter or
than the itself.

David Livingstone

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

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

D.L.