

Correspondence.

—:0:—

Mr. STANLEY AND THE VICTORIA NYANZA.

To the Editor of the "GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE."

SIR,—I heartily congratulate the *Daily Telegraph* upon the choice of its gallant commissioner, and I only hope that the latter may succeed in carrying out the grand exploration which he has so worthily begun.

Nevertheless, it is my duty to warn your readers, as I did nearly three years ago, against accepting, without the gravest consideration, the statements put forward by Mr. Henry M. Stanley in the *Daily Telegraph* (Oct. 15th and 18th, 1875). The letters are evidently written in haste, and after much weariness of mind and body; and mature reflection combined with further experience, may introduce important modifications into the more permanent record of travel.

At length after ten years we are stripping the garb of fable from the Victoria Nyanza. I will not write the word Nyanza or Neeyanza, because the latter forms are hardly in accordance with the rule of the great South-African families of language, and because Mr. Stanley, although strong in the vernacular, proved in his first work (*How I Found Livingstone*) that he ignored the minutiae of the speech, and that his ear must not be relied upon.* Far more competent scholars, Messrs. Wakefield and New, prefer to write the word Nyánja, even as Mr. Stanley would convert Mazita, into Majita. It is the same with "Mkali" for "Mk'hali;" nor must we accept "Ituru" until we are enabled to decide whether it is the "Utaturu" of Captain Speke's first map, a name which afterwards unaccountably disappeared from the charts. We must hear more before we adopt the "mangroves" twice mentioned as growing in sweet water; and, a far more important point, we cannot for a moment admit the dictum, "I am sorry to say that, if I am right, Speke is about fourteen miles wrong in his latitude along the whole coast of Uganda." My late companion's observations have been carefully checked by the highest possible authority, Lieutenant Cameron, R.N., and the gallant young officer found them generally right within a mile. In the same paragraph Mr. Stanley seems not only to trust in aneroids, but also to think that the longitude is an easier matter to settle than the latitude; while he has evidently not reflected upon the immense and variable amount of mirage and refraction which would result from using at noon the sea horizon of a "quiet lake" situated directly under the equator.

The Victoria Nyanza, I have said, is now assuming an intelligible topographical shape. We hear nothing of the three great outlets, the Napoleon Channel, the Luajerri, and the Mwerango (Merango) which for the last decade have disfigured our maps. We read for the first time of the important north-eastern influent, the Ugoweh, and of the great south-eastern feeder, the Liwumbu-Monangah-Shimiyu. These absolute gains to geography, one of them numbering 350 miles in length, are simply due to the energetic explorer. We find Mazita or Majita converted from an island to a headland by Mr. Stanley, who approached it from the east, whereas Speke's terminus Muanza (1858), was to west; and the reader of my *Lake Regions* (vol. ii., p. 214) will remember the doubts concerning its insular nature, which the accounts of the Arabs awoke in my mind. From information I was able to state that the "Jezirah," an ambiguous term, meaning equally *insula* and *peninsula*, can scarcely be called an island; and in my map Mazita is dotted towards the mainland. We are also relieved from having to believe in a sheet of water whose level was nearly 500 feet higher in the

* My article appeared in the *Geog. Review*, of May, 1873.

south (3740 feet) than in the north (3308 feet).* My friend Captain C. George has ably shown (*Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 18th) the provisional value of the last measurements, and this practised calculator states that "Mr. Stanley's result (3808 feet) agrees so closely with Captain Speke's that it must create a favourable impression on scientific geographers."

On the other hand, we are absolutely non-plussed by the statement of the Anglo-American Expedition that during fifty-eight days their brave little boat, the 'Lady Alice,' "had surveyed over 1000 miles of lake shores." And the editorial article (Oct. 18) adds that the "sea of rhomboidal outline" measured about 230 miles long by some 180 broad.† Of course these are round numbers and general assertions; but they are not the less puzzling. Mr. Stanley after leaving Kagehyi and embarking on the lake, bends for a short distance to the east and then turns directly northwards; thus cutting off a huge eastern slip, at least one-third, from Captain Speke's "dodo-like" form. In this matter his course nearly corresponds with the line which I laid down in 1859 (*Journal R. G. S.*, vol. xxix). The whole western and southern shores must remain they were, for here we have the careful latitudes and longitudes of the Speke and Grant Expedition (1860-63); and, finally the northern cannot, according to the explorer's observations, be removed far north. Yet Mr. Stanley gives his lake 1000 miles, when the whole circuit of Captain Speke's is only 680 miles (direct geographical); and the area of the new Nyanza 32,515 square miles (230 and 180), nearly equals that of the old, (40,000).‡ Here, then, is something wrong, unless the explorer, including every little projection and indentation of the shore, "bends, curves, inlets, creeks, bays, capes and debouchures of rivers," prolonged to 1000 miles what his map reduces, we will say, to 550.

Mr. Stanley has successfully proved, versus Major Long, that the Nyanza is even larger than I made it in 1859 (250 by 80 miles); it has become, in fact, one of the finest of inland seas in the world; but he has by no means been equally successful in establishing the theory that Captain Speke's Nyanza is a lake and not a lake region. He tells us baldly "They (the natives of Muwanda) gave us all the information we desired"—a very usual phenomenon amongst Asiatics and Africans. "Baringo" he continues, "they said, is the name applied to the people of Uganá to Nduru, a district of Ugeyeya, and the bay on which our boat rode, the extreme end of the lake; nor did they know, nor had they heard of any lake, large or small, other than the Nyanza." The Lake Baringo of Dr. Krapp and of Messrs. T. Wakefield and C. New (1865 and 1866-67) and the Bahári yá Ukára (Sea of Ukára) laid down by the two latter gentlemen, are not to be disposed of by the chance words of a few blacks. Mr. Stanley evidently knows nothing about the Baringo, except what he has seen in Captain Speke's map, the work, I may say it without indiscretion, of my friend Mr. Trelawney Saunders. In an earlier letter of more sober style, the traveller tells us, "I have questioned the natives of Uchambi closely upon the subject at issue, but no one can satisfy me—though they speak positively—whether the lake is one piece of water or more. I hear a multitude of strange names, but whether they are of countries or lakes it is impossible to divine, for the people's knowledge of geography is

* A wall-map in the Royal Geographical Society makes the absolute altitude of the Nyanza 4700 feet: this is a mere error, as it applies to the eastern water the correction of 1000 feet which my late friend Mr. Alexander Findlay added from a pencil note by Captain Speke to the Tanganyika Lake.

† The reader will remember that from Arab information I made the sea of Ukerewe (Nyanza), 240 miles long by 80 broad (see *Lake Regions* ii. 212).

‡ Captain George has calculated the rhomboid at this figure upon the data of the axes, 230 and 180 miles.

naturally very superficial." Every African traveller well knows that the tribes with few exceptions are ignorant, except by hearsay, of the lands lying a few marches from their doors; and experienced men attach very little value to the term "boundless." We freely accept as truth all that Mr. Stanley sees, but by no means all that he hears. Indeed the shape of the Nyanza itself must greatly vary with the seasons. The traveller informs us, "The descent to the lake is so gradual that I expect to find upon sounding it, as I intend to do, that, though it covers a vast area, it is very shallow." And in another place we are assured, "In Iramba, between Mgongo Tembo (T'hembo)* and Mombiti, we came upon what must have been in former times, an arm of the Victoria Nyanza. It is called the Lumamberri Plain, after a river of that name, and is about 40 miles in width. Its altitude is 3775 feet above the sea, and but a few feet above (read *below*) the Victoria Nyanza. We were fortunate in crossing the broad, shallow stream in the dry season, for during the *Masika* or rainy season, the plain is converted into a wide lake." What more do we want to show that this is a lake- or a lagoon-region?

It appears to me then that the controversy which has lasted for so many years can hardly be held finally settled. The Nyanza has certainly been proved to be a vast sweet-water sea, but the collection of minor features cannot be said definitively to have disappeared. On the contrary, when the whole region has been carefully surveyed, we shall probably find large and wooded tracts which, in the wet season, cause the lands about the Eastern-head reservoir of the Nile much to resemble the parts lying near its mouth.

Of the Tanganyika we can only repeat that the mass of evidence, as it lies before us, suggests a dead lake during the aries, drained at times of flood by a northern affluent feeding the "Luta Nzige," and by a western outlet, the Lukuga, falling into the Lualaba. The latter question may even now have been settled by the gallant Lieutenant Cameron, concerning whom we may safely quote the old saw *point de nouvelles, bonnes nouvelles*. Ill tidings fly fast even in Africa, and the long silence of the last months fairly entitled us to hope, even as we wish, for the best.

RICHARD F. BURTON,

ATHENÆUM CLUB, October 19th, 1875.

THE ATTREK BED OF THE OXUS.

SIR,—Excuse my saying a word on your remark,† that in all probability the Tejend is the Ochus. In the first place, there is, I think, scarcely room for two rivers, *i.e.* Oxus and Tejend, to enter the Caspian between the great and little Balkhan Mountains *in separate beds*.

To this, of course, it may be replied that Strabo, xi., c. 7, states that according to some authors "Ochus is only to be regarded as an affluent of the Oxus," and that consequently the Tejend or Ochus probably joined the Oxus before that river reached the Caspian.

On the other hand, Strabo's remark that some geographers said "the course of Ochus was more southerly than, and entirely distinct from, that of Oxus," points to the Attrek as being possibly the Ochus. This also I think is indicated by Appollodorus styling it "the nearest river to the Parthians;" a description applying still more to the Attrek than to the Tejend. Then again, the lower course of the Ochus watered Hyrcania, and though it may be said the waters of the Tejend would have also passed through this country, by the Oxus-Attrek bed, its name should have been absorbed in that

* Not to be confounded with Mgongo T'hembo the "Elephant's back," in the desert of Mgunda Mk'hali, a place far South. (See *Lake Regions*, &c., i. 290.)

† In *Geographical Magazine* for October, 1875. Editorial note at page 304.

of the Oxus, which it must have met as an affluent, to the north of Hyrcania, and before it reached this country. On the other hand, since water would *in all probability* have only flowed from the Oxus into the Attrek, during the epoch of the summer floods, the Attrek would have flowed as a separate stream during six months of the year, and, in this manner the doubt which Strabo reports regarding the lower courses of Ochus and Oxus would be explained. During the low-water time, Oxus I conceive would have sent its waters directly to the Caspian; for the canal into the Attrek would have to be closed yearly (precisely as is done in Khiva to-day), and allow of the deposited sand being excavated and the bed being so kept clear for the reception of the fertilising water, at the date of the succeeding flood. Then again, in Strabo xi. c. 10, we have a complete knowledge of the rivers Tejend and Murghab (Arius and Margus). "The plains of Aria and Margiana are crossed by two rivers, Anus and Margus, which water them very abundantly," and then a reference is made to the deserts "which surround the plain watered by the Margus." This knowledge of the country in these localities is therefore directly contradictory of the doubt which existed regarding the lower courses of the Oxus and Ochus. And I cannot help thinking that the doubt only arose from the very curious way in which a canal was led through a narrow defile in the Kurrendagh, to alight the head-waters of the Attrek, or rather of its affluent the Sumbar.—Yours faithfully,

HERBERT WOOD.

P.S.—There is a circumstance which if followed up might assist in tracing the identity of the Attrek with that river. Strabo xi. c. 9, says, "In the neighbourhood of Ochus now it is said the Macedonians discovered a spring of oil by digging."

Compare this with Mr. Delmar Morgan's *resumé* of Stebnitzky's Report on Turkomania *Journal R.G.S.*, vol. xlv. for 1874, p. 221. "Twenty-four versts beyond there is another ford across the Attrek, *Yagly-Olum* (Oil Ford)."

H. W.

Proceedings of Geographical Societies.

BERLIN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

WE have received the "Proceedings" of this Society at their meetings of the 3rd April, 8th May, and 2nd June. At the first of these an interesting paper was read by Freiherr von Troschke on the hydrographical changes which the coast lands of Holland have undergone. These he pointed out have been greater than those of almost any other land. For instance, at the time of the Cimbrian invasion the mainland was far more extensive than at present, and the Zuider Zee was an inland lake of moderate size, called Fledo, a name still recognizable in the island Vlieland. In the thirteenth century the greater part of this coast land was swallowed up by the sea, and in 1272 a similar fate overtook the land at the mouth of the Ems, where the Dollart is now situated. Since the flood of 1421 when the Biesbuch near Dordrecht was formed, no violent change has taken, and, owing to the increase of works of reclamation, the inroads of the ocean have been more regularly compensated for. As, however, the new land is in many cases as much as 12 feet below the level of the ocean, strong embankments have become requisite to guard against inundations. The Haarlem Sea, which the Prussians sailed across in the campaign of 1787, is now an extensive plain, with well cultivated and populous villages. A beginning has been made of the great scheme for drying up the Zuider Zee by the adoption of measures for drying up the Y. In its place there will be