

The PRESIDENT, in referring to the first Paper to be read, reminded the Meeting that it had been lately called in question whether the Albert Nyanza was directly connected with the Nile, for the actual communication had never been traced. Thanks, however, to Colonel Gordon and the enterprise of those under him, boats conveyed several years ago by Sir Samuel Baker to Gondokoro on the White Nile, and left there by him, had been launched upon the Lake, and had thus settled the point which neither the Egyptian, the Ptolemaic Geographers, nor any succeeding nations, had been able to clear up. The Nile had now been distinctly traced into the Albert Nyanza, and that lake had been circumnavigated. When Sir Samuel Baker was upon it, he saw towards the south only a water horizon, and with the natural tendency of the human imagination to extend all that is unknown, it had been laid down on maps as much longer than it really was; but *en revanche* it would be remembered that at the last Meeting it was announced that Lake Nyassa stretched 100 miles farther north than was supposed, so that what was lost by one lake was gained by the other.

The following was then read by the Assistant-Secretary:—

Letter on the Circumnavigation of Lake Albert Nyanza. By General STONE, Chief of the General-Staff, Cairo.

Ministère de la Guerre,
Cairo, June 10, 1876.

DEAR GENERAL RAWLINSON,

An Arabic despatch (telegraphic) from General Gordon Pacha, dated 29th April, 1876, seems to state the following:—

“On the 8th of March, Mr. Gessi left Duffé with the two iron life-boats and the steamboat *The Khedive*, with their crews, numbering twenty-two officers and men, with their arms, ammunition, &c., carrying also certain other supplies.

“They went to Magungo to make the reconnaissances already indicated to his Highness as to be made.

“They arrived at Magungo (which is indicated on the map of Baker Pacha) on the 31st of March. There they missed the way, and returned to the island of Fori, known as the Cataracts of Aufina. There they were met by Mohammed Aga-Wat-el-Mek, accompanied by several officers and soldiers, and the Chief Aufina. After the proper ceremonies of reception were over, they raised and saluted the flag of the Government.

“After several days of rest, they left and went to Magungo, where they arrived on the 12th of April; and on the same day they hoisted the flag there, on the banks of Lake Albert, in the presence of the officers, soldiers, and natives; and all the assemblage prayed for long life and continued victory for his Highness the Khedive, and the Princes, his sons; and all those regions and their inhabitants came under the rule of the Khedival Government.

“Mr. Gessi left Magungo on the 15th of April, with the two iron

boats, to explore Lake Albert, and did not stop until he reached its extremity. On the 19th of April he was able to state that the Lake is 140 miles long with a width of 50 miles; but he was not able to make the entire circuit of the shore. He states that the Lake is bounded on the south by great trees (forests?), and that in that portion the water is only leg-deep; that it is bounded on the west by high mountains and great forests, so that passage there was impossible.

“On the east there is a river which empties into the Lake, but the forests form an obstacle to its ascension, and the current is so strong that it could not be navigated without great danger.

* * * * *

“By the next mail I will transmit a map of this reconnaissance, and the corresponding reports to be laid before his Highness the Khedive.

“P.S.—Mr. Gessi, in going beyond Magungo, was accompanied by the Ensign Said-Aga and twelve soldiers.”

The above telegram tells us much; but the report and map therein promised will soon be here, and then we shall have something more satisfactory than a twice-translated telegram.

With great respect, I remain,

Dear General Rawlinson,

Very truly yours,

(Signed) C. M. P. STONE.

Major-General Rawlinson, London.

The PRESIDENT said the Albert Nyanza was first heard of by Captain Speke in 1862, and was introduced into his map under the name of the Luta Nzige. He laid it down as a small lake compared with the Victoria Nyanza. It received its present name from Sir Samuel Baker, who, at the instance of Speke, visited the Lake and embarked on its waters. He (the President) had received a letter from Sir Samuel Baker bearing upon the subject, which he would read to the Meeting.

MY DEAR SIR RUTHERFORD,

25th June, 1876.

Mr. Bates has kindly forwarded me the news our Society has received of Mr. Gessi's voyage upon the Albert Nyanza in the steamer which cost me so much trouble in conveying from Alexandria to Gondokoro, together with the two steel life-boats, in 1870.

The difficulties that Colonel Gordon has experienced for two

years in transporting them over the comparatively short distance between Gondokoro and Appuddo is a proof of the impossibility of effecting a great enterprise in Africa without much patience and delay.

It is a great triumph for the Khedive of Egypt that such a feat should have been accomplished during his reign, and, as I originally planned the expedition, I am truly gratified at the present result, which proves the accuracy of the discoveries of Speke, Grant, and myself.

You will remember that upon the map which poor Speke gave to me when at Gondokoro (and which I delivered upon my return home to the Royal Geographical Society) he had very correctly laid down from the hearsay of natives the position of the Albert N'yanza, and of the White Nile issuing from its northern extremity. Upon that portion of the river between the embouchure and Appuddo, n. lat. $3^{\circ} 32'$, Speke had written, "River navigable here."

Although I never actually passed down that portion of the Nile from the Lake, I saw sufficient during my first expedition to feel justified in asserting positively that Speke was correct, and that no obstructions existed between $3^{\circ} 32'$ n. and Magungo on the Albert N'yanza, lat. $2^{\circ} 15'$ n.

Upon this conviction I based the arrangements for the Khedive's expedition, and the steamers and boats were to be carried in sections above all cataracts, and constructed on the navigable Nile at n. lat. $3^{\circ} 32'$.

Many cavillers asserted that the Nile did not issue from the Albert N'yanza; therefore the Lake could not be reached by the river from Appuddo.

Dr. Schweinfurth, as President of the Egyptian Geographical Society, only recently published this opinion. The steamer and two large sailing-boats have now passed direct from Appuddo to the Lake, as I always asserted they would.

The following short extract from the 'Albert N'yanza' will recall to the memory of many who may have forgotten the opinions I then expressed:—

"The newly-discovered Albert Lake opens the centre of Africa to navigation. Steamers ascend from Khartoum to Gondokoro in n. lat. $4^{\circ} 55'$. Seven days' march south from that station the navigable portion of the Nile is reached where vessels can ascend direct to the Albert Lake."—2nd edition, p. 445.

My definition of the two lakes of the Nile was as follows:—

"The Victoria gathers all the waters on the eastern side, and sheds them into the northern extremity of the Albert; while the

latter, from its character and position, is the direct channel of the Nile which receives all waters that belong to the Equatorial Nile Basin. Thus the Victoria is the first source; but from the Albert the river issues at once as the great White Nile."—2nd edition, p. 439.

I have always considered that if Speke had not assisted me by the gift of his invaluable map when at Gondokoro, I should never have succeeded in the discovery of the Albert N'yanza. He was wonderfully correct in the information that he obtained, and the great success of the present is a result entirely due to the pioneers Speke and Grant, who first opened the road to the Nile sources.

Very sincerely yours,

SAMUEL BAKER.

The PRESIDENT continued: When it was recollected that only fourteen years had elapsed since Speke first heard of this lake, and that now it had been actually circumnavigated, no complaint could be made that the progress of Geographical discovery was slow in our days. He had had no hesitation in reading the letter, because it contained a just and generous recognition of the great services of the previous travellers, and was no less honourable to him than to them. A letter had also been received from the Foreign Office, which would now be read, as it gave authentic intelligence regarding Colonel Gordon's recent movements. And here he would remind the Meeting that the chief merit of the circumnavigation of the Albert Nyanza was not so much due to M. Gessi as to Colonel Gordon, who planned the expedition and made it possible. He would take this opportunity of informing the Fellows that he had received a letter from Her Majesty's Treasury announcing that the Government had granted a sum of 3000*l.* towards meeting the expenses of Lieutenant Cameron's Expedition. The Fellows must feel very grateful to the Government for thus having come to their aid in an undertaking which had been very costly to the Society.

The following was then read:—

SIR,

Foreign Office, June 22nd, 1876.

I am directed by the Earl of Derby to request that you will communicate to the President and Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society the following summary of information which has reached Her Majesty's Government in regard to the movements of Colonel Gordon, and the results of his recent expedition to the neighbourhood of Lakes Victoria and Albert, in Central Africa.

According to the latest intelligence received in Cairo, Colonel Gordon has penetrated as far as the banks of the River Somerset, in the district of M'rooli.

A station has been established at Masindi, the capital of Unyoro; the king of which country, Kaba Réga, who had invariably shown himself hostile to the Egyptians, has been obliged to seek safety in flight.

Aufina, the rival of Kaba Réga, has been called to succeed him as representative of the Egyptian Government.

Rionga, who had been expelled by Kaba Réga, and who for many years past had sought the protection of Egypt, has been re-established at M'rooli in a capacity similar to that of Aufina at Unyoro.

The surrounding native population is represented to be quiet and submissive.

Colonel Gordon has despatched a body of troops under the orders of Noun Agha, a trustworthy officer well acquainted with the country, with the design of establishing two military posts, the one at Urondogani, and the other on the borders of Lake Victoria, near the Ripon Falls.

He has occupied the position of Magungo, on the banks of Lake Albert, near the mouth of the Somerset River, and established communications between Magungo and Duffé, a station on the White Nile, near the mouth of the River Astesa, where the iron vessels and a steambot have arrived.

In this manner all the territories surrounding the Victoria and Albert Lakes have been annexed to Egypt; these lakes with their confluent and the River Somerset opening to Colonel Gordon a vast field, which he is understood to be about to explore with as little delay as possible.

Lastly, he is said to have expressed the hope that within a year or two from the present time the means of communication between the different stations which he has established will be sufficiently secure to allow both merchants and travellers to traverse the country in perfect safety.

I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,
(Signed) T. V. LISTER.

The Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society.

The PRESIDENT said no doubt the concluding portion of the letter would appear to many a very sanguine estimate; but when it was considered what great things had been done within the last three or four years, even since Livingstone ended his life in the effort to open up Central Africa, how much Stanley and Cameron had accomplished, and Mr. Young was still doing on Lake Nyassa, it really seemed no dream of the imagination that within a very few years, if the necessary efforts were made, it might be possible to traverse Equatorial Africa from the Congo to the Zambesi, and establish stations upon each of the inland seas from whence might radiate all the blessings of civilization.

Colonel J. A. GRANT said he was delighted to hear of the great success which Colonel Gordon had met with, and he knew from his own correspondence that his efforts had been untiring to get the steel boats and the steamer up to Duffé, where the cataracts of this section of the Upper Nile cease. Although Captain Speke did not visit the Albert Nyanza, he obtained its bearings from the chiefs so far south as Karagwe, and from those on the north of Victoria Nyanza, and he was thus able to lay down its position and size to within 30 or 40 miles of Gessi's circumnavigation. He could not say that he put much confidence in M. Gessi's measurement, at present, for Lieutenant Watson, who had been with Colonel Gordon, had told him that probably the rate of travelling by boat would be the only means by which M. Gessi determined the size of the Lake. Colonel Gordon had now completed a chain of military posts all along the Upper Nile from Gondokoro to the Albert and Victoria Lakes, so that now there was postal communication all the way from London, and a gentleman near him had said that no doubt Cook's tickets would soon be issued for trips to the Albert Nyanza in seventy-five days, within which limits it was stated by Colonel Gordon to be possible now to reach it. He, however, rather doubted the statement of the last letter as to the perfect safety of such a trip. He thought Captain Speke was quite right in regarding the Albert Nyanza as merely a backwater of the Nile, formed by the floodwaters from the Victoria Nyanza filling the plain and then descending in full stream to Gondokoro. That this was the case was proved by the fact that on reaching Gondokoro two months after seeing the river in high flood below the

Victoria Nyanza, Speke and he found that the water had not then got down so far as Gondokoro. It must therefore have been retained in the Albert Nyanza as a backwater, or as an enlargement of the Nile at this particular spot, for the Albert does not add any perceptible quantity of water to the Nile which flows from the Victoria Nyanza. The native name of Loota-Nzige, signifying "Dead Locust," indicated to him that the waters of the Lake had the character and appearance of dead or backwater.

Lieutenant CAMERON said he met at Nyangwé and elsewhere many men who had been on the Mwuta 'Nzigé (as they termed it), and from their reports he had gathered that the Lake was not of such great extent as Baker had marked it on the map. The Arabs of Nyangwé stated that after about thirty-five days' marching n.w. by n. they came to extensive forests, in which they travelled for days without seeing the sun, and there they heard of people wearing white clothing, who were, no doubt, the Egyptians working down from the north, but they heard nothing of the Lake. On his maps he had pencilled down his idea of the Lake from these reports, and he found that it corresponded almost exactly with Speke's description.

Mr. F. GALTON asked if the Lake was widely known by the name of Mwuta 'Nzigé.

Lieutenant CAMERON said the Arabs always spoke of it by that name.

Mr. F. GALTON said if that was the case it seemed almost a pity that so well-known a native name should be superseded on our maps.

The PRESIDENT believed that all would agree in considering it very undesirable to change a native name; but the change had already been made, and it would now be difficult to alter it back again.

Captain Hay was then called upon to read his Paper:—

On the District of Akem, in West Africa. By Captain J. S. HAY.

[EXTRACTS.]

DURING the late war between the Asantis and Djaubins, in the latter part of 1875, I received orders from the Governor of the Gold Coast to take command of the field-force sent up to the frontier of the British Protectorate, to prevent the neutrality of our territory being violated by the Asantis, the Djaubins having been driven to take shelter in our territory of Akem. Starting from Accra, on the 17th of November, I reached Kyebi, the capital of Akem, after five days' heavy march, having walked 150 miles chiefly through mud and water, on the 21st; and here, during a period of three months, I had occasion to make my headquarters. Having thus had ample opportunity to make myself acquainted with an interesting district—hitherto almost unknown and unexplored, I have undertaken to describe as clearly and briefly as possible what I was able to observe during my stay.

The District of Akem, in West Africa, lies between 6° and 7° north latitude. A series of mountain ranges, densely covered with primeval forests, occupy the whole extent, except a small portion of the south-east, and a still smaller portion of the western part. The towns and villages are mostly situated on or near the tops of