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The East Central African Question

Arthur Silva White F.R.S.E. ^a

^a Royal Scottish Geographical Society

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of about six millions can be divided into fourteen or fifteen different races, which constitute not less than eighty distinct nationalities, without taking into account a far greater number of tribes. The Caucasian aborigines—such as Georgian, Armenian, Kurdish, Lesghian, Ossets, and other highlanders—constitute almost one-half of the entire population, the other half being equally divided between Asiatic and European races.

The highly interesting and complicated question of whence all this diversity of nationality and language in the Caucasus resulted, and in what way it came about, has occupied many scientists, and especially Baron Uslar, who, of all philologists, has acquired the largest practical knowledge of the Caucasian languages, and has expressed his views and facts concerning the ancient history of the Caucasus in his great work entitled *Drevneishia Skasania o Kavkase* ("The Most Ancient Narratives concerning the Caucasus").¹ He has advanced in this work the hypothesis regarding the origin of language which resembles in many respects that published quite recently by Regnaud, Professor of Sanscrit in Lyons, in his work *Origine et Philosophie du Langage*. It is quite impossible for me, in this short and imperfect sketch, to enter into the particulars of so vast a question, which was not only raised but also partly solved by Baron Uslar; and I can do no better for the satisfaction of the reader, who has had the patience to follow me thus far, than to conclude my remarks by expressing a hearty desire that this work of the Caucasian savant, who has so greatly contributed to the knowledge of so many unknown idioms—the highest product of the intellectual activity of quite as many unknown nations—should be translated into English, and be thus more largely known and better appreciated than it is at present.

THE EAST CENTRAL AFRICAN QUESTION.

Read at Meeting of Society, Edinburgh, 14th May 1888.

By ARTHUR SILVA WHITE, F.R.S.E.,

Secretary to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

THE question which has arisen in East Central Africa, as regards the safety and prosperity of our missionaries and traders in the Lakes Region and the Shire Highlands, may be treated apart from the larger issues at stake in considering the whole continent as a field for commercial enterprise and philanthropic effort. In my recent paper on "The Partition of Central Africa" (vol. iv. p. 152), I ventured to call the attention of the Society to the action of European Powers and private associations in partitioning off all the unclaimed lands into "spheres of influence." The maps which accompanied this paper were intended only as provisional: they served their purpose for the time; and, I hope, on some future occasion, when rival claims have been adjusted, to give a more accurate delimitation of the territories possessed by the European Powers.

¹ It forms volume xii. of *Sayiski of the Cauc. Sec. Imp. Russ. Geog. Soc.*, 1881.

In the meantime, whilst the larger question at issue must remain "under consideration," that in regard to Nyassa Land has recently been asked and partly answered. If the answer is not altogether a satisfactory one, it is at least reassuring. Her Majesty's Government are prepared to interfere on behalf of our missionaries and traders to the extent of their power, and as far as international obligations will admit; they will not go back from their engagements with friendly Powers, but they recognise their responsibility in safeguarding the interests of British subjects. I can conceive that those whose interests are bound up in East Central Africa may think that Her Majesty's Government are willing to take only half measures, but it should be borne in mind that responsibilities incurred on behalf of the nation must be restricted to those involving national interests.

The East Central African Question may be briefly stated under the following heads:—

I. PORTUGAL ON THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA.—Although the Portuguese have been established on the Sofala and Mozambique coasts for centuries, they have taken no practical steps to develop the country or to check the slave-trade. Portugal has, however, been obliged to declare the holding of slaves within her territories as illegal. She has held the East Coast and the Lower Zambesi at a few isolated spots as penal settlements, the administration of which has shown a heavy annual deficit. No Portuguese travellers, previous to Serpa Pinto and Cardoso (1885), explored the interior. The action of Portugal on the East Coast and in the Zambesi region has, in short, tended to cripple commerce and native emancipation. In the words of Dr. Livingstone: "The Portuguese pretence to dominion is the curse of the Negro race on the East Coast of Africa, and it would soon fall to the ground were it not for the moral support it derives from the respect paid to it by our own flag." Dr. Livingstone adds: "Only by the aid of English sailors has the Government of Mozambique, on more than one occasion, been saved from being overturned."

II. BRITISH ZAMBESI EXPEDITION.—About thirty years ago the British Government despatched an expedition under Dr. Livingstone, with the object of opening up the interior of Africa by the highway of the Zambesi, and of introducing legitimate commerce. Dr. Livingstone thus refers to the expedition:—

"The main object of the Zambesi Expedition, as our instructions from Her Majesty's Government explicitly stated, was to extend the knowledge already attained of the geography and mineral and agricultural resources of Eastern and Central Africa, to improve our acquaintance with the inhabitants, and to endeavour to engage them to apply themselves to industrial pursuits and to the cultivation of their lands, with a view to the production of raw material to be exported to England in return for British manufactures; and it was hoped that, by encouraging the natives to occupy themselves in the development of the resources of the country, a considerable advance might be made towards the extinction of the slave-trade, as they would not be long in discovering that the former would eventually be

a more certain source of profit than the latter. The expedition was sent in accordance with the settled policy of the English Government ; and the Earl of Clarendon being then at the head of the Foreign Office, the mission was organised under his immediate care. When a change of Government ensued, we experienced the same generous countenance and sympathy from the Earl of Malmesbury, as we had previously received from Lord Clarendon ; and, on the accession of Earl Russell to the high office he has so long filled, we were always favoured with equally ready attention and the same prompt assistance. Thus the conviction was produced that our work embodied the principles not of any one party, but of the hearts of the statesmen and people of England generally.

"Though collections were made, it was always distinctly understood that however desirable these and our explorations might be, Her Majesty's Government attached more importance to the moral influence that might be exerted on the minds of the natives by a well-regulated and orderly household of Europeans, setting an example of consistent, moral conduct to all who might witness it, treating the people with kindness and relieving their wants, teaching them to make experiments in agriculture, explaining to them the more simple arts, imparting to them religious instruction, as far as they are capable of receiving it, and inculcating peace and goodwill to each other."¹

This expedition was undertaken with the full concurrence of Portugal ; it cost British tax-payers £30,000, exclusive of the cost of the s.s. *Pioneer*, and of the *Lady Nyassa* which Livingstone himself purchased for £7000.

The Earl of Clarendon, in a despatch written to Sekeletu (who, at that time, was considered the paramount chief on the Zambesi), which was sent by the hands of Livingstone, said :—

"Ours is a great commercial and Christian nation, and we desire to live in peace with all men. We wish others to sleep soundly as well as ourselves : and we hate the trade in slaves. We are the children of one common Father ; and the slave-trade being hateful to Him, we give you a proof of our desire to promote your prosperity by joining you in the attempt to open up your country to peaceful commerce. With this view *the Queen sends a small steam-vessel to sail along the river Zambesi, which you know and agreed to be the best pathway for conveying merchandise, and for the purpose of exploring which Dr. Livingstone left you the last time. This is, as all men know, 'God's pathway' ; and you will, we trust, do all that you can to keep it a free pathway for all nations, and let no one be molested when travelling on the river.*

"We are a manufacturing people, and make all the articles which you see and hear of as coming from the white men. We purchase cotton, and make it into cloth ; and if you will cultivate cotton and other articles, we are willing to buy them. No matter how much you may produce, our people will purchase it all. Let it be known among all your people, and among all the surrounding tribes, that the English are the friends and promoters of all lawful commerce, but that they are the enemies of the slave-trade and slave-hunting."

This despatch is held by our missionaries and traders as a direct invitation from Her Majesty's Government to open up to civilisation by British enterprise the Lakes Region of Africa by way of the Zambesi. It must, however, be borne in mind that, at the time this despatch was

¹ *The Zambesi and its Tributaries*, p. 9.

written (February 1858) public opinion in this country was excited to the utmost by the deeds and discoveries of Livingstone, and the interest of other European Powers (including Portugal) in Africa was of no account. The expedition was recalled mainly for financial reasons.

III. RESULTS OF THE ZAMBESI EXPEDITION.—The expedition succeeded in its object. It discovered the Shiré route and Lake Nyassa, and it investigated the causes and results of the slave-trade at its sources. The Portuguese at that time were quite ignorant of the geography of the region traversed by the expedition.

IV. SUBSEQUENT BRITISH EXPLORATIONS AND DISCOVERIES.—Dr. Livingstone, in a subsequent expedition, unaided and alone, discovered Lakes Bangweolo and Moero, and the head-waters of the Upper Congo (Lualaba), and fixed the true orientation of Lake Tanganyika. Thomson, Consul O'Neill, and other British explorers, have assisted in mapping out and making known the Lakes Region of Africa. No Portuguese travellers have added to their knowledge.

V. BRITISH OCCUPATION OF THE LAKES REGION.—In obedience to the last wishes of Livingstone, our countrymen established the African Lakes Company, Limited (Glasgow), and took up the work he had initiated, and for which he died; and British Missions sprang up in his track. British subjects have thus invested large sums of money in developing the resources of the Lakes Region, and have freely given their lives in the cause of native emancipation. No other nation has laboured in the same field. According to official estimates, no less a sum than £400,000 has been thus expended. The Zambesi Expedition cost over £30,000; the Scottish Missions have expended some £100,000; the English Universities Mission about £50,000; the Commercial Companies some £200,000; and the balance of £20,000 is probably not in excess of the expenditure of private individuals in these parts. The Scottish Churches have 50 representatives in actual and lawful occupation of land, the English Universities Mission some 18 representatives, and the African Lakes Company over 25. The Church of Scotland has its centre of operations at Blantyre; the Free Church of Scotland in Nyassa Land; the English Universities Mission, with its headquarters at Zanzibar, joins the Missions on the Lakes; Messrs. Buchanan Brothers have plantations at Zomba (where the British Consulate is situated); and the African Lakes Company have stations throughout the entire Lakes route, from the coast to the southern shores of Tanganyika. The Scottish Churches have been at work there for twelve years, and the English Universities Mission for twenty-six years. A British Consul is attached to Nyassa.

The result of these agencies has been (1) to open up a fine route into Central Africa; (2) to create legitimate commerce, and to employ native labour; (3) to ameliorate the condition of the natives; and (4) to check the slave-trade, tribal wars, and barbarous practices.

VI. PORTUGUESE ACTION.—Portugal, though she has done nothing to bring about the better state of affairs in the Lakes Region, has benefited by her possession of the Zambesi mouths, since the only practical route to the Lakes is by this entrance. The *ad valorem* import duty, up to within quite recently, was 3 per cent.; though the treaty of February 26, 1884, was never ratified. Portugal has now raised the tariff to 10 per cent., without showing in justification any commensurate or increased facilities to her customers. She has announced that in future only vessels owned and manned by Portuguese subjects shall be permitted to navigate the Zambesi; though it is understood that this restriction is now withdrawn. She lately seized the *James Stevenson*, a stern-wheel steamer belonging to the African Lakes Company; but, in consequence of the diplomatic intervention of Her Majesty's Government, she has restored the vessel to her owners. I conclude that Portugal will in future abstain from further action of this sort, since the Marquis of Salisbury, in his letter to the Council of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (*see* Appendix), says that "Her Majesty's Government have already succeeded in obtaining a promise from the Portuguese Government that vessels now navigating the Zambesi shall not be interfered with."

VII. GERMAN ACTION.—Germany has lately acquired an immense sphere of influence on the East Coast, and has established a Protectorate over the territories of Usagara, Useguha, Nguru, and Ukami, which are situated within this sphere of influence. Its western limit, as defined by the London Convention, is shown on the maps published with the March (1888) number of our Magazine. It stops short of Lake Nyassa, at the confluence of the Msinje with the Rovuma, from which point it extends in a direct line to near Kavirondo, on the Victoria Nyanza. It will thus be seen that German interests are made to stop short of the Lakes. German influence at Zanzibar, however, would appear at the present time to be paramount. I understand that Germany has had her agreement with the late Sultan ratified by his successor. She has sent out missionaries and explorers, is establishing plantations, and appears to be earnest in her efforts at colonisation. Germany, however, is too young a colonial power, and has not the means, to check the slave-trade, though her co-operation as a Christian State must always be relied upon.

VIII. COMBINED ACTION OF GERMANY AND PORTUGAL.—Germany and Portugal, without reference to Great Britain, have divided the Lakes Region between them. (See "Partition of Central Africa," vol. iv. p. 152.) It is clear, from the terms of their mutual agreement, that neither intend to act on the Lakes, in a political sense. Should this surmise prove correct, and should British enterprise thereby be checked, it is evident that the relapse of the Lakes Region into its former state of barbarism would be a question of time only.

IX. BRITISH AND GERMAN DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS.—In view of the unexpected vigorous colonising movement of Germany on the East

Coast, it is to be regretted that British interests have not sooner been made the subject of diplomatic representation. Unfortunately, our Foreign Office has entered into a distinct engagement with Germany, as regards the limit of our sphere of influence on the East Coast, which raises a fresh barrier against British claims to the Lakes Region. In the exchange of Identical Notes between the Earl of Iddesleigh and Count Hatzfeldt (Blue Book, Africa, No. 3, 1887), the following passage occurs:—"Great Britain engages not to make acquisitions of territory, accept Protectorates, or interfere with the extension of German interests to the south of this line [viz. line of demarcation between British and German spheres of influence on the Zanzibar coast]; and Germany makes the same engagement as regards the territories to the north of this line." Whether "south of this line" includes the Lakes is not at all clear; but if it does, British interest must stop at the German-Portuguese boundary on the Nyassa.

X. THE RECENT DISTURBANCES IN NYASSA LAND.—Our missionaries and traders on the north of the Nyassa have recently sustained what would appear to be a concerted invasion of the slave-traders. These enemies of civilisation and legitimate commerce are conveniently called "Arabs," but a gentleman who took part in the attack on the "Arab" stronghold (Dr. Tomory) assures me that there were not more than four or five Arabs among them: they were composed of the sweepings from the coast—Zanzibaris, Swahelis, and Rovuma men. However this may be, it is clear that they settled on the north of the Nyassa, as far as the watershed dividing this lake from Tanganyika, instigated a quarrel with the Wa-Nkonde natives, and, in the disturbances that ensued, butchered the Wa-Nkonde and destroyed their villages, attacking also the African Lakes Station at Karonga. Here they were held in check by our countrymen, who had intrenched themselves within a stockade, and subsequently turned the attack against them. Our space will not admit of even a bare summary of these events. We have alluded to them (vol. iv. p. 163) in the Magazine, and the newspapers have given ample details. The most recent news (27th April 1888) received by the African Lakes Company states that a fresh attack is anticipated. That there has been a fresh impulse to the traffic in slaves in this region cannot be denied, and it has been asserted that the seat of this mischief is to be found in Zanzibar itself. The slave-trade cannot be carried on without guns and ammunition, and we are assured that these have been regularly supplied from Zanzibar. The Lakes Route, so called, is now temporarily closed, nor can it be reopened and secured to European settlement until the present difficulties are swept away. Our missionaries and traders are in danger of losing their lives and property, and the natives are threatened with extermination or enforced slavery.

XI. THE SLAVE-TRADE.—The British Government at one time spent £70,000 on arresting the slave-trade on the East Coast of Africa, and her squadron is still active in this service to humanity. A glance at the map prepared by Mr. James Stevenson of Largs, who has himself brought

up to date the Slave-trade Map originally constructed for him by Mr. E. G. Ravenstein, will show that the caravan routes ordinarily used by the slave-traders in this region are all intersected by the Lakes Route. We know how futile it is to hope to check the slave-trade by watching the coasts. A single gun-boat or fortified steamer on the Nyassa (not to speak of Tanganyika) would be more effective, in conjunction with the operations of the trading companies and missions, in stamping out the slave-trade at its sources than the most vigilant squadron on the coast. This is no new solution of the question. Dr. Livingstone, writing on this subject twenty-eight years ago, said:—"By means of a small steamer, purchasing the ivory of the lake and river above the cataracts, which together have a shore-line of at least 600 miles, the slave-trade in this quarter (Nyassa Region) would be rendered unprofitable; for it is only by the ivory being carried by the slaves that the latter do not eat up all the profits of a trip. . . . It is only by cutting off the supplies in the interior that we can arrest the slave-trade on the coast. . . . The slave-trade, like every other branch of commerce, is subject to the law of supply and demand." The slave-trade in itself does not pay: only about one-fifth of the victims, who escape slaughter from the attacks made on them by the slave-raiders, and are led away in captivity, ever reach the coast, and it is not worth taking them there for sale unless they carry the ivory, which is the chief support of the slave-trade as a commercial venture.

XII. SUMMING UP the question, we perceive :—

(a) That the Lakes Region of Africa has been discovered and developed mainly by British means and British lives.

(b) That European enterprise on the Lakes depends for its maintenance on an easy access by way of the Zambesi.

(c) That Portugal, who has done nothing to explore or develop the Lakes Region, but has profited by the labours of others, by placing obstacles in the way of the free navigation of the Zambesi, cripples commerce, checks commercial and missionary enterprise, and withdraws from others the means of protecting themselves, their property, and the natives whom they are endeavouring to shield and elevate.

(d) That Germany is powerless to intervene effectively, and that Portugal has, judging from the past 300 years, no intention of doing so.

(e) That if our missionaries and traders were obliged to withdraw even partially from the scene of their long and earnest labours, the Lakes Region of Africa would relapse in course of time, unless others took up their work, into its former state of barbarism and misery.

It is therefore clear, from the above considerations, that there need be no grounds for dispute with Germany, but that Great Britain has title-deeds to Nyassa Land which no other Power can show; and that Portugal, although she holds the coast, possesses no right or powers to close the interior of Africa to its legitimate and lawful owners. Whether Great Britain, in order to secure her rights, should accept the responsibilities that

would be involved in declaring Nyassa Land, from the Ruo northwards, as a sphere of British influence, is another matter. A "sphere of influence" is not necessarily a Protectorate, though it may lead to one. It means simply that, within a prescribed district no other Power shall make acquisitions of territory, accept a Protectorate, or compete in commercial pursuits. As an illustration of this, we see on the East Coast a German Protectorate (Usagara, etc.) *within* a German sphere of influence.

My opinion is, that should Her Majesty's Government be debarred from declaring Nyassa Land a British sphere of influence, the interests of British missions and commerce there would be greatly supported by claiming the free navigation of the Zambesi to the flags of all nations. To such an arrangement Germany doubtless would be ready to agree. If Her Majesty's Government were unable to substantiate our claims on the free navigation of the Zambesi, in consequence of our interests in Nyassa Land, there is still another way to secure it. Sooner or later our possessions in South Africa will include the territories of Khame and Lobengula, and thus find their northern limit on the banks of the Zambesi. I have pointed out elsewhere that our commerce in South Africa has an inevitable extension northwards, and, as Mr. Mackenzie claims, the natural northern boundary of our possessions is the Zambesi. Khame has already given his consent to being placed under British protection, and the consent of Lobengula has, I understand, also been obtained. It is therefore only a question of time; and probably we shall soon hear of the northern boundary of our possessions in South Africa being drawn at the Zambesi River. Germany and Portugal, it is true, have advanced their claims to this unattached territory: Germany from Damara-land and Portugal from Sofala have made a feint of joining hands at the Victoria Falls, on the Zambesi (see *Scottish Geographical Magazine* for March 1888: "Claims" Map); and, if they relinquish their pretensions in these parts, it is not improbable they may demand compensation in the Lakes Region. But German claims might be satisfied, and Portuguese claims should be overlooked, in securing the free navigation of the Zambesi to the flags of all nations. By thus proclaiming the Lakes Region a free-trade area, or No-man's Land, the limits of the Congo Independent State might be extended so as to include it. Such an arrangement, however, would be scarcely satisfactory; and it is still hoped that Her Majesty's Government may see their way to securing, in spite of diplomatic engagements, the whole of Nyassa Land or the Lakes Region, from the Ruo northwards, as a sphere of British influence.

As regards the slave-trade, it cannot be doubted that prompt and vigorous measures must be taken to keep it within bounds, and that the most effective would be to arrange for a gunboat to be placed on the Nyassa. The British Consul on the lake is empowered to use only moral force, but unless he has some substantial physical power behind his back (such as a small Consular police) and a vessel of his own, he cannot be expected to have the influence he might otherwise exercise. If, on the other hand, our Government refuse to take action, the same results might be obtained by granting a

Royal Charter to the African Lakes Company. If the Company is to exist at all, and our Missions to flourish, on the Lakes, it is evident that some strong guarantee of their independent position must be furnished to them.

At the same time it must not be forgotten that Her Majesty's Government could not enter this region except at considerable expense to British taxpayers, nor could the honour of the British flag be exposed by them to reverses against which only an efficient Government administration could guarantee protection; whereas the same national responsibilities would not be incurred by a trading company. Hence it is clear that our traders and missionaries must themselves, failing Government support, take up a firm position of defence against all comers.

By request of the Society's Council, I attended, as their representative, the influential public meeting which had been convened by the Scottish Missions for the discussion of this question in London, on 24th April last; and, in company with Mr. William C. Smith, member of Council, joined the deputation to Lord Salisbury on Friday the 27th April.

The resolution, as finally agreed to and adopted by the meeting, ran as follows:—

“(1) To secure free or favourable transit for British goods in British vessels from the coast into the interior; (2) To impress on the Government facts as to the increase of the slave-trade in connection with political changes in Zanzibar, and to take such action as may be required to check the slave-trade; and (3) To take what measures seem best to them to secure the safety of British subjects and British interests in Nyassa Land.” The third and last clause originally read “to declare Nyassa Land from the Ruo northwards a sphere of British influence;” but it was altered to a less definite demand to satisfy the objections of certain Members of Parliament who were ignorant of the exact meaning of the term “sphere of influence,” and had not the time to remain at the meeting in order to be instructed. It is to be regretted that the conclusion of the Conference was so hurried, because, although the first two clauses have partly been secured, the last and most important clause will have to be defended on other and less important platforms.

The Society has taken up this question on national grounds, and earnestly hopes for an early and satisfactory solution, by which the Lakes Region of Africa will once more be thrown open to the civilising agencies that, up to the present time, have done such excellent work.

On the conclusion of the Paper,

Dr. J. KAY TOMORY said:—

In regard to what Mr. Silva White has said as to Portuguese possessions on the coast, I should merely wish to emphasise the fact that their authority does not extend any distance inland—in fact, in some cases they cannot with any degree of safety leave the islands for the adjoining mainland except they go in strong force. Their tariff arrangements are very elastic. Nominally an *ad valorem* duty of from 3 to 10 per cent. is imposed, but on some articles as much as

30 per cent. is charged. Their presence there is simply an example of the "dog-in-the-manger policy," as far as the interior is concerned.

With reference to the now historic siege of Karonga, I only wish to state that, in my opinion, had it not been for the extraordinary influence of the Rev. Mr. Bain of the Free Church Mission, and Mr. Monteith of the African Lakes Company, over the natives, we should never have escaped from Karonga alive.

After leaving Karonga on the 29th November we were engaged first in "removing" the village at Kanyole, about 25 miles north of Karonga, the inhabitants of which had proved friendly to the Arabs; and we suspected that the latter would make this place a base of operations against us, our new camp being only 10 miles distant. On the 9th of December reinforcements arrived, including Captain Hawes, H. M. Consul for Nyassa. It was decided then that we should again invoke the aid of the natives who had relieved the siege, and accordingly Captain Hawes and Mr. Monteith went to the various chiefs and obtained their consent. A little delay occurred owing to the death of one of the said chiefs, but on December 22d we started to attack the Arab position at Mlozi's village, 12 miles inland from Karonga. The natives here showed how utterly undisciplined they were, for while we drove back the Arabs from their stockade they were engaged in looting ivory, cloth, etc. We returned to our camp satisfied that only with a much stronger European force could we effect any permanent good.

Such is the present position of affairs in East Central Africa, and I consider that the question is now a political one, and therefore any measures that are taken must be taken by the British Government, and by the people of this country. Is the work for which Livingstone died to be abandoned to that curse of Africa—the slave-hunting Arabs? Are we to withdraw from a soil enriched by British money and British lives also?

In regard to the improved state of the country I may affirm that much has been done. Let me give one example: mails are now received at Lake Tanganyika in 2½ months after leaving England, and caravans often come from Zanzibar to Ujiji in three months, under sole charge of a Zanzibari.

As regards commerce, I shall only say two or three words. The uncertainty of labour is the chief drawback, and has become quite a problem. The solution, I believe, has been found by the Mozambique Produce Company, Limited, who have established themselves at the head of the Kwakwa River (80 miles from the coast). They have introduced over fifty coolies from India under the superintendence of a thoroughly trained Parsee agriculturist. In time the natives may learn to work regularly, but at present they certainly cannot be relied on.

In conclusion, let me say that from the health point of view the route by the Zambesi and Shiré is *the* route to the Central African Lakes, and when properly developed will no doubt be very extensively used by the various settlers in those regions.

Mr. EWING, Secretary to the African Lakes Company (Limited), said:—

I am sure that we have all listened with interest to the remarks which have been made by Dr. Tomory, and while we will all join warmly in our thanks to Messrs. Bain and Monteith for their action in the defence of Karonga (which they have so nobly merited), I think that one of the first duties of a meeting such as this will be to accord also to Dr. Tomory our thanks for the part which he himself has taken in the gallant defence of that station.

The political position of East Central Africa is a very complicated one. It is difficult to define exactly the precise limits or bearings of the treaties which have been made between England and Germany on the one hand, and Germany and Portugal on the other. Indeed, it may be questioned whether those who drew up those treaties can forecast or foresee the far-reaching issues of the ultimate settlement of that region, or the final evolution of the general lines roughly sketched out in the necessarily vague and general terms of these agreements. The various aspects of this question have already been laid before you by Mr. Silva White, and I would desire now to concentrate your attention upon two leading and vital points, upon which I think there can be no divergence of opinion, either in this hall or throughout our land.

You are aware that for the last ten years we have been steadily developing the resources of Nyassa Land. We were encouraged to do so by the legislation of the Mozambique tariff of 1877, which expressly stipulated that on our imports into Nyassa Land (which have to pass through the coast-strip of Portuguese territory in their transport to the interior), we should only be subjected to a transit duty of 3 per cent., and during all these years we have been freely navigating the rivers Zambesi and Shiré without let or hindrance.¹

Now that we have developed the resources of Nyassa Land, and have invested large sums of money there, the Portuguese authorities have summarily set aside this express provision of a transit duty of 3 per cent., and are insisting on our submission to their levying much higher rates of duty. Not content with this, they suddenly arrested our stern-wheel steamer the *James Stevenson* and peremptorily placed before us the alternatives of at once selling our steamers to some Portuguese, or of becoming ourselves naturalised Portuguese subjects, and running the vessels under the Portuguese flag.

On representations being made to our Foreign Office, we received intimation from Lord Salisbury that the Portuguese Government have sent out instructions to their authorities at Quilimane to take no further action in the matter of the *James Stevenson* in the meantime. But, in reply thereto, while thanking his Lordship for having kindly secured us this respite, we have pointed out to him that we cannot consider this satisfactory as a permanent settlement, and we have earnestly urged upon him to insist upon the free navigation of the Zambesi as an international highway. In this we feel sure that his Lordship will command the support of the people of this country. Not only so, but we need no argument to convince us that, in a matter affecting so many international rights, he would have the hearty co-operation of other European Powers.

During the past few months we have all been deeply pained to learn of the recent Arab raid upon Karonga, at the north end of Lake Nyassa. We must remember, however, that when we first entered that land, we did not expect that it would be all sunshine and no showers; and, looking back upon the years that we have been there, I think we have reason to thank God that we have enjoyed up till now so much immunity from hostile influence. We went into that country with the avowed object of exposing and of suppressing the slave-trade by peaceful intercourse and the civilising influences of legitimate trade, and we have surely reason for thankfulness that this is the first time that we have come practically into *forcible* collision with the slave-trade leaders. Furthermore, deeply to be regretted as the recent outbreak at Karonga must be,

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¹ The treaty with Portugal, signed 26th February 1884, by Lord Granville, was not ratified, and therefore never has been in force.—EDS.

its result thus far can, I think, only be looked upon as encouraging, and it ought only to add fresh energy to those who are labouring so nobly for the amelioration of our down-trodden fellow-men in Africa. We knew when we entered Africa that we must be prepared for many reverses, but on our first collision with the slave-trading influence of Central Africa the native people have rallied around us, have sought our aid, and have willingly given us theirs, whilst the slavers have been driven back, and we have gained a victory. Although, on account of want of ammunition, our people deemed it prudent to fall back upon Mandala to procure further supplies, it was only to return again; and it will be gratifying to all here to know that we have received telegraphic information from Africa to the effect that Karonga is again occupied and defended by our people, who are now waiting instructions from home. And I am sure it will also be a satisfaction to all here to learn that instructions have gone out to re-occupy the district between Lakes Tanganyika and Nyassa, and to take such measures as may be necessary for the restoration of peace, for the defence of our stations, and for the development of the resources of that district.

The people there are a fine race, peaceful and friendly, and in our time of trouble they have shown themselves ready to render us their assistance. I am sure that the sympathy of the people of Scotland will go out to that gallant little band who are now taking up their position between the Lakes in the vanguard of African civilisation.

But what will you say when I tell you that last week we received advices from Quilimane to the effect that the supplies and ammunition which had been ordered up from Natal and Zanzibar to enable that brave little party to defend their lives and their property, had been stopped at Quilimane by the Portuguese officials there, who refused to allow them to pass through their custom-house or be sent up-country! Nay, more, we are advised that the Portuguese authorities had even forbidden the other merchants in Quilimane to sell to us arms or ammunition. I need hardly assure you that we at once addressed Lord Salisbury, praying him most urgently to take immediate measures to secure to our fellow-countrymen at least the means and the right to defend their lives.

The Rev. J. M'MURTRIE, Convener of the Church of Scotland's Foreign Mission Committee, in referring to the recent deputation to the Prime Minister, at which both he and Mr. Silva White were present, said that as it was held in private it would be unfair to divulge anything that had been stated officially, but he thought he was not betraying confidence too far in stating that the deputation came away with a feeling of hopefulness with regard to the Zambesi navigation—a hope that, in the long-run, the missions and the trading companies would not be hindered by the action of the Portuguese.

Mr. A. L. BRUCE recommended, in the event of Her Majesty's Government taking no active steps, the establishment of an independent government to "Sarawak" the Lakes Region, and to organise the native tribes for their self-protection.

Mr. William C. Smith, Dr. Thomas Muir, Councillor Maclaren, Mr. W. B. Blaikie, and the Chairman, Dr. George Smith, also joined in the discussion.

APPENDIX.

THE following is a copy of Memorandum drawn up by the Council of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and submitted to the Marquis

of Salisbury, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs :—

"The Council of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society would respectfully point out to Her Majesty's Government—

"That thirty years ago our countryman, David Livingstone, whose services to the cause of humanity and to African exploration had even then made his name famous throughout the civilised world, was despatched by Her Majesty's Government to the Zambesi, with the full consent of the Portuguese Government, to open up the interior of Africa to commerce through the Zambesi and its tributaries.

"In the words of the despatch written by the Earl of Clarendon to Sekeletu, the paramount Chief in the Zambesi Region, dated 19th February 1858, and sent by the hands of Livingstone—

"‘Ours is a great commercial and Christian nation, and we desire to live in peace with all men. We wish others to sleep soundly as well as ourselves : and we hate the trade in slaves. We are all the children of one common Father : and the Slave-trade being hateful to Him, we give you a proof of our desire to promote your prosperity by joining you in the attempt to open up your country to peaceful commerce. With this view *the Queen sends a small steam-vessel to sail along the river Zambesi, which you know and agreed to be the best pathway for conveying merchandise, and for the purpose of exploring which Dr. Livingstone left you the last time. This is, as all men know, "God's pathway" ; and you will, we trust, do all that you can to keep it a free pathway for all nations, and let no one be molested when travelling on the river.*

"‘We are a manufacturing people, and make all the articles which you see and hear of as coming from the white men. We purchase cotton and make it into cloth ; and if you will cultivate cotton and other articles, we are willing to buy them. No matter how much you may produce, our people will purchase it all. Let it be known among all your people, and among all the surrounding tribes, that the English are the friends and promoters of all lawful commerce, but that they are the enemies of the slave-trade and slave-hunting.’

"That, on that Expedition, Dr. Livingstone discovered Lakes Nyassa and Shirwa, and the River Shiré Route.

"That on a subsequent expedition he, unaided and alone, continued his explorations further to the north and the west, adding to his discoveries the Lakes Bangweolo and Moero, the head-waters of the Congo, and the true orientation of Lake Tanganyika ; that he was the pioneer of the trade-routes from the coast to the Lakes District, and laid down his life for the cause of the oppressed and of civilisation.

"That, in obedience to his last wishes, the African Lakes Company and various important industrial and missionary agencies were founded by his countrymen to carry out his projects of opening up the Lakes Region to civilisation, of checking the slave-trade at its sources, and of inducing the natives to engage in legitimate commercial pursuits ; exactly in compliance with the views expressed in the despatch of Lord Clarendon already quoted, and afterwards warmly supported by the Earl of Malmesbury and succeeding Ministries, and favoured by the Portuguese Government.

"But the system which was then established, and from which the Scot-

tish people, especially, expected the best results, has recently been compromised by events of the gravest significance.

"The Portuguese Government have raised the tariff on all goods imported through the Zambesi. They seized the *James Stevenson*, a steamer belonging to the African Lakes Company, and they threaten to close the Zambesi to all vessels not owned and manned by Portuguese subjects: thus practically closing to our countrymen the only trade-route to their stations on the Lakes.

"In the meantime, with the wane of British influence, a rapid extension of the slave-trade has taken place in the Lakes Region, and recently a serious armed attack has been made on our countrymen in the Nyassa territory by the slave-traders.

"To a country that prides itself on its hostility to the slave-trade, and that formerly spent £70,000 a year on its suppression on the East Coast of Africa, this is grievously disappointing.

"The Council of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society feel it to be their duty to represent to Her Majesty's Government the universal feeling of the Society and of Scotsmen generally, that to submit to the reactionary policy of the Portuguese Government, in practically closing the district discovered by their fellow-countrymen, would be to proclaim themselves unworthy of the traditions they inherit.

"The Council would strongly urge on Her Majesty's Government the necessity of taking practical steps to protect British interests in that region, to open and to maintain open a 'free pathway for all nations' on the Zambesi and its tributaries, from the coast to the Central Lakes District, by which our countrymen may maintain the position they have founded on the principles of the illustrious Livingstone, and may continue to check the slave-trade of Central Africa, and to introduce to those districts the blessings of civilisation.

"SOCIETY'S ROOMS, 80A PRINCES STREET,
EDINBURGH, 23d April 1888."

The following is Lord Salisbury's reply:—

"FOREIGN OFFICE, April 30th, 1888.

"SIR,—I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23d instant, in which you urge on Her Majesty's Government the necessity of taking practical steps to protect British interests in the Zambesi districts, in view of the reactionary policy adopted by the Portuguese Government with regard to the closing of the Zambesi River to all vessels not owned and manned by Portuguese subjects.

"I am to request that you will inform the Council of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society that the question is receiving the earnest attention of Her Majesty's Government, who have already succeeded in obtaining a promise from the Portuguese Government that vessels now navigating the Zambesi shall not be interfered with.—I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

"T. V. LISTER.

"The Secretary, Royal Scottish Geographical
Society, Edinburgh."