
Through Somaliland and around and South of Lake Rudolf: Discussion

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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Apr., 1898), pp. 394-396

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1774710>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 03:36 UTC

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Before the reading of the paper, the PRESIDENT said: We are to be occupied this evening with one of the two great undiscovered and unexplored regions of Africa which I referred to in my first address to this Society. Since that time a great deal has been done in the first and most interesting of those two regions; nothing in the second. Only two years ago we had a most interesting paper here from Dr. Donaldson Smith, who had penetrated far into that region, and solved one or two of its problems. Since that time we have news of the important expedition of Captain Bottego, whose death we all deplore, for he was a most distinguished traveller; and now we welcome here for the first time the young traveller Mr. Cavendish, whose expedition has gone far to solve other problems connected with that region, and has brought us to the very edge of the still undiscovered portion. I will now request Mr. Cavendish to read his paper.

After the reading of the paper, the following discussion took place:—

MR. S. L. HINDE: I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Cavendish in East Africa when he was nearly at the end of his journey. What struck me most, on seeing the caravan arrive, was the good state of his transport animals; those that were brought through were in excellent health. In the paper to-night he said that the only time his transport animals were ill was after they had been starved. I think this point worth noticing. They came into the fertile country after having been partially starved for some time; then, being hungry, they probably ate of some of these poisonous bush-plants, which under ordinary circumstances they would not have touched. There have been great difficulties in finding transport animals in Africa; many people attributed this to the tsetse fly. For my own part, I don't think the fly, as a rule, dangerous. I fancy it only exists for two months in the year in any part of East Africa. The probable cause of many transport animals in East Africa dying is starvation; they never get proper food on a great part of the road during the dry season. When the wet season commences, all kinds of plants grow rapidly, and many animals overeat themselves. I have known twenty or thirty die in a day after going into the fertile country, though they were in perfect health along the dry ground in the desert. I think this is a point that might be noticed and looked into in regard to our transport in East Africa. I don't think that I can say anything more about the other points; there are other gentlemen present who know more about them.

MAJOR F. D. LUGARD: As one who has been connected with East Africa, I am very glad of the opportunity to offer my very hearty congratulations to Mr. Cavendish on his plucky journey, which, I think you will all agree with me, was very remarkable—and the more remarkable and the more pleasing to us because he is the first Englishman who has traversed that country—his predecessors, one of whom we welcomed here, were Dr. Donaldson Smith and Sigñor Böttego, the Italian explorer. They have done excellent work, but they are not of our own nationality. The country explored is part of our own British East African Protectorate, and therefore, I think, the more British explorers that go into the country the better, provided they work in the way Mr. Cavendish worked. He was very reticent about those who had gone before him, but we gather that he met with less hostility than they had done.

Among the Borani Gallas he was welcomed, and says that he could go from village to village and get a drink of milk anywhere, for which the natives refused any payment—a country in which they could go out singly shooting without fear of attack, and yet a country where the last explorers had to fight continually. Further on were the Hamerkoke, on the west of Lake Stefanie, and with these he again established friendly relations, where the last traveller had had a serious battle. Even in the Turkana country, in which British travellers have been (Mr. Jackson

was there, but the first to enter the country was Count Teleki) and had continual fighting, Mr. Cavendish was attacked, but established friendly relations before he left. I think the more that British travellers go into that country, willing to risk their lives and spend money on these explorations, the better for British interests, provided they are undertaken on these lines.

We have heard lately—I don't know whether the statement was made on his own authority—that Mr. Cavendish is planning a second expedition. There remains a good deal of country, still further to the west, which is still unexplored by our own nation or any other, and if he elects to go into that country, we shall all agree in wishing him as great a success as in his previous expedition. That country is undeniably British, and therefore every one of our nationality has a primary right to go into it.

With regard to Mr. Cavendish's interesting paper, I noticed one point in particular—the discovery of coal. I hope before long we may see an extension of the railway to the north, when that coalfield may become valuable to the steamers on the lakes and to the railway. Another point struck me—he incidentally mentioned that the camels died of rinderpest. I have lately come from South-West Africa, where the epidemic has been raging, after having traversed the rest of the continent. I have been unfortunate in that I have followed the steps of the epidemic in both East and South-West Africa, where it destroyed the cattle and a great many species of antelope, but it is quite new to me to hear that the camel suffers.

MR. LORT PHILLIPS: I have very few remarks to make, except to agree with Major Lugard's remarks on the paper read by Mr. Cavendish. As one of the first explorers in Somaliland in company with my late friend, Mr. James, and others, I naturally take a very great interest in the country. In those days we got no further than the Webbe Shebeli, now a route traversed and retraversed by sportsmen who have met with kindness from the natives, and I was very glad to hear to-night that Mr. Cavendish received the same treatment during his journey. I have only to agree with Major Lugard's remarks regarding Mr. Cavendish's journey.

DR. BOWDLER SHARPE: Before this meeting separates, I would like to say, as an officer in charge at the British Museum who has had to receive Mr. Cavendish's collection, that I am sure you will be proud to hear that in all my experience we have never had such a caravan full of things come into the Museum, as the result of one expedition. I am sure Mr. Cavendish will acquit us at the British Museum on the point in his paper to-night, in which he seemed to make a reflection on us for not having worked his collection out; but since his return he has been so busy that he has not been able to give us the time necessary to help us in getting his collection into order. It occupies one side of our whale-room, and only Mr. Cavendish himself can sort this enormous mass of skulls and skins, and bones and limbs. When I do get him there, he will not be allowed to leave in a hurry, until we have got this mass of things into some sort of order, and we will then tell him the names of the animals he has brought home. Mr. Oldfield Thomas, in charge of the mammalian section, considers the collection to be of great interest, and it is interesting to hear from Mr. Cavendish's own lips to-night of the difficulties of the journey he has made, and to see the collections of horns and skins of mammals prepared by this young traveller, and brought down to the coast under such exceptionally difficult circumstances. I would merely add one remark that I have made before in this room. I do think, and I hope it will be urged in every possible quarter where any influence can be brought to bear, that it is a national disgrace to England that all our great natural history expeditions depend upon private enterprise, and that our Government does absolutely nothing in the matter. There-

is no country that has interests in Africa like ours. We see little principalities annexed by the Germans, and larger ones by the French, and at once a naturalist is set to work out the fauna. Our Government should insist on scientific men being appointed, and on collections being made. No sooner was Uganda taken possession of and occupied by England than German naturalists overran it, and now our naturalists can only send us what has been already described by the Germans. This is an absolute disgrace to a country like England, and we should be entirely out of the race if it were not for the private enterprise and pluck of our own men, who go out and spend their own money in bringing home these collections.

Those of us in this room to-night who have heard Major Lugard, know that he is always trying to do something for science. Mr. Lort Phillips brings back grand results at his own expense, as also do men like Sir Harry Johnston, Dr. S. L. Hinde, and Mr. F. J. Jackson, who you will be glad to hear is recovering from his wound, and is now out of danger. But one of the best results we may hope for is that a scientific expedition, under Mr. Cavendish's direction, will now, in the same way as the expeditions of Russia and France, go in the search of science. I hope that, though he has not brought back any birds this time, I shall have great results to announce to you later on.

The PRESIDENT: It is now my pleasant duty to propose to you a vote of thanks to Mr. Cavendish for his paper. He has thrown a great deal of light on this most interesting country in several ways. In regard to Lake Stefanie, as Major Lugard mentioned, he has discovered an important feature—the existence of coal. He has confirmed correctness of the work done by Captain Bottego and Dr. Donaldson Smith in settling the question of the Omo river. He has discovered a most interesting volcanic country to the south of the lake. Perhaps the most gratifying part of the paper he has read to us was that which showed us what friendly relations he was always able to establish with the tribes he met in that wild part of Africa, and also quite as much we feel gratified at what we heard from Mr. Hinde regarding the condition of his animals when he met him on the Uganda road. These two things show that Mr. Cavendish is an excellent traveller. The most interesting photographs he showed us were the views of the unknown country to the westward of Lake Rudolf, which he described as mountain after mountain covered with forest. For it is quite unknown. I believe he heard that it was entirely uninhabited and had no water, but that is not the least likely from the description he gives of the country. We must remember that a little further north Captain Bottego penetrated still further into the unknown region, and reached the valley of the Sobat, and I think descended one of its main tributaries for a considerable distance, but he was unfortunately murdered. Well, that vast region is entirely unknown, and it is within the sphere of British influence. We therefore look forward with the greatest interest to its discovery, as we have done for the last few years. Our friend here only reached his majority last year; he is probably the youngest man who has ever read a paper before this Society. I think we may trust he has a long and useful geographical career before him, and that under his auspices that unknown region down to the mouth of the Sobat, in the upper Nile, will not long remain unknown. We have to thank him for all his interesting information, for the admirable photographs which enable us so well to understand the nature of the country, and also for the large number of curiosities and trophies of the chase which he has brought here, and which you will find in the next room. For all these things I am sure you will pass a vote of thanks by acclamation.