



On the frontier of the Western Shire, British Central Africa

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circumstances, and with very paltry encouragement from the British Government, Richard Lander with his brother John went out again to West Africa, landed at Badagry, a place near Lagos, and thence reached Yauri on the Niger. The brothers Lander navigated the river down stream till its junction with the Benue, and thence southwards into the fierce Pagan cannibal country of the Lower Niger and its delta. After overcoming tremendous difficulties, they issued from the main stream of the Niger through the Brass River to the breakers of the Atlantic Ocean. They had completed Mungo Park's exploration down to the sea.

There then only remained to trace the main stream of the Niger to its source. The sources of the Niger were perhaps actually discovered by two French explorers, Zweifel and Moustier, and by the English traveller, Winwood Rede, in the sixties of the nineteenth century.

The ultimate history of Niger exploration has been a division of glories between Britain and France, with some share also to be attributed to the eminent German, Flegel. The region drained by this great river is partly under French and partly under British administration. The great names—so far as Britain is concerned—in this work are also Scottish in descent, if not always in birthplace. Amongst them must be mentioned MacGregor Laird, who practically founded the British navigation of the Lower Niger, and that fleet of trading vessels now belonging to Messrs. Elder Dempster, with its shipbuilding yards at Glasgow; Joseph Thomson, who made the most important treaties that extended British influence over Northern Nigeria (and who has written an admirable *Life of Mungo Park*); and Sir George Taubman Goldie, whose family, I believe, originated not far from Selkirk, who was the political founder of the British dominions of vast extent which lie between the Niger, the Benue and Lake Chad. Perhaps also I may venture to attach my own name with due humility to the long list of "Nigerians," as also being one of Scottish descent, for to your lecturer of to-night fell the lot of organising the beginnings of the British Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, in that Delta of the river which Mungo Park very nearly succeeded in tracing to its outlet in the ocean: that river with which his name must remain for ever connected, like that of Speke with the Nile, Stanley with the Congo, and Livingstone with the Zambezi.

ON THE FRONTIER OF THE WESTERN SHIRÉ, BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA.

(*With Map.*)

By H. CRAWFORD ANGUS.

THOUGH the boundaries of the Western Shiré have been defined upon the map, and several of the more important rivers and mountains have been approximately denoted, yet very little seems to be even yet known

of the country through which the frontier line passes, and several errors are apparent in the course of rivers, the position of mountains, and names of places, on the latest maps, which facts lead me to conclude that, though the country has been roughly triangulated, no more detailed survey has been executed, the significant words "from native information" being often noticed on recent surveys.

Having lived in that portion of Central Africa for nearly two years, engaged in hunting and trading, I acquired a very intimate knowledge of its geographical features, and it is therefore my purpose, while describing the lesser characters of this frontier country, to point out some of the omissions and errors which are noticeable in the current maps of that locality.

At the time that I first penetrated into this district, it was practically unknown, and, as far as I could ascertain, I was the first European who had ever travelled in that region. None of the chiefs, and hardly any of the inhabitants, had ever seen a white man, and no intercourse was held with the neighbouring tribes. There were no routes or paths leading to the country, and the only way of reaching it was to travel through the jungle.

There were several reasons for this state of things, the chief of which were the evil reputation which the inhabitants had acquired from their warlike habits and their use of poison, which facts caused trading caravans to avoid the district and proceed to the Zambezi or Shiré by other routes, and the constant warfare in which the inhabitants were engaged with the Angoni in the North, the Makololo in the South Shiré districts, and the Portuguese and their ally Chinsinga in the Zambezi districts north of Tete. This state of war was responsible for the absence of the ordinary native paths, which in that country act as means of intercommunication, the people being in the habit of avoiding making defined tracks through the jungle in order that their enemies might have no clue to their strongholds. Finally, another cause is the suspicious and turbulent character of the inhabitants themselves. At the time I write of, the Anglo-Portuguese boundary, though laid down in theory, had not yet been defined, and the Central African Administration being elsewhere engaged in "peaceful penetration," had not taken any steps to bring the district on their side of the frontier under their rule, while the Portuguese, on their side, had been powerless to make their rule acknowledged.

These, then, were the reasons to which were due the unexplored state of the district, which is an important district, being the watershed of the Shiré and Zambezi rivers.

The columns of a geographical magazine are not the place to discuss anthropological subjects, but the effect of geographical surroundings has such an important bearing on the lives and customs of the inhabitants that I must permit myself a short reference to them.

There are two tribes inhabiting this country, the one occupying the mountainous region between the Revubwi and Mwanza rivers, and the other the country lying between the Revubwi and the Kapochi. My observations concern mainly the former, who are termed "Azimba,"

and my acquaintance with the latter, termed "Achipeta," was less intimate.

I am very much inclined to think that the origin of these two tribes is different, though some persons have considered them to spring from the same source, but this I do not think likely; and while, so far as I can ascertain, the Azimba are directly descended from the original inhabitants of the country which they at present inhabit, the Achipeta I consider a tribe originally living beyond the Loangwa river, who were forced east by the Zulu emigration northwards under Kazunga-ndawa. Though I have stated that the Achipeta country lies between the Kapochi and Revubwi rivers, yet kindred tribes inhabit all that country beyond the Kapochi as far as the Loangwa, and have their strongholds wherever there is a rocky eminence or mountain. Under various names, as Asenga, Avisa, the country inhabited by them stretches far north, circling round the borders of Northern Angoniland. But the Azimba are only to be found in that small portion of territory bounded by the Shiré on the east, the Revubwi on the west, Central Angoniland on the north, and Makanga country and Mikolongo on the south.

The customs of the two tribes are also distinctly and unmistakably different. Their initiation ceremonies, their funeral and marriage rites, their mode of dress and hair-dressing, their weapons, all differ, and their language and intonation are also so different, that the two people can hardly understand each other.

One important point is, that though the Azimba have knowledge of various poisons which they use for the capture of game and fish, and to mix in the food and water of their enemies, yet they have no knowledge of the poison with which the Achipeta smear their war arrows, and look on the custom with horror. Indeed I have seen them cry out with fear and bolt precipitately on occasions when these arrows have been used against them.

I was at some pains to go into the history of the Azimba tribe during my residence amongst them, and what I gathered I shall relate as briefly as I can.

When I first came in contact with them, I found that they were split into five portions or small clans. The one under Ndifula and his brother inhabited the Mount of Zobwi and Nyamba-chikopa—the place of torn shields, named from a fight which took place there with the Angoni, in which the latter were beaten—and claimed all the country as far as the banks of the Mwanza river on the east and the river Nkombedzi on the west. Another clan, the most powerful, under Kasuza, inhabited Mount Ntapassa, and claimed territory from the banks of the Nkombedzi river as far north as the borders of Angoniland, and as far west as the rear side of Mount Ntapassa, where the country of Mombusa commences, and goes west as far as the Revubwi river, both countries reaching south as far as Mikolongo and Makanga. Further northwest was another chief, Goruza, who claimed from the northern boundary of Mombusa's country to the banks of the river Dwembi northwards; eastwards to Kasuza's boundary, and westwards to the Revubwi; and still further north, beyond

Goruzá's boundary, on the Dwembi, was Matiweri and his mother, Nyangu, the real chief, with boundaries on the Dwembi, the Revubwi, Angoniland, and Kasuza's country.

These were the five clans, and it is interesting to see how a people, once evidently powerful and united, came to be split up into factions always warring with each other.

I may as well give the tribes' history by the mouth of Goruza, the man who related it to me:—

"Long ago we were a powerful people, and all that country you passed through, all across that plain where runs the Nkombedzi, our villages were thick, and instead of trees was all maize fields and millet. In those days the elephants used to come in herds to trample our corn, and we used to kill many, and get much ivory; now there is nothing to fill even one elephant, and I have to catch monkeys and sell their skins to buy powder. But all this was long ago, before I was born, or before my father's father was born. Then we were under one chief, and were strong in war, so that all the people about us gave us peace, and we sold them our ivory for many slaves; now we live like mice in holes, and are harried by every one. Do not the Angoni call us 'the mice that God has given them to kill—Zimbewa za malunga.'

"Along the Mwanza were tobacco fields, and at Chuwali (on the Revubwi) we grew rice, so you may see how big a land we ate up, and right as far as Nsanganu we made new gardens. To-day you can see the marks of our rubbish heaps at the head of the Makurumadzi. Wasn't that a big land to cover? but we covered it as easily as I cover my body with this little piece of bark cloth, which is so old that even the lice cannot hide in it any more, not like the thick cotton cloth the white man has in his tent. .

"But all this was swallowed up, washed away like the Nkombedzi in flood washes the dead leaves, when the Angoni came. For first we had trouble with the Achipeta, with whom we used to barter iron and ivory, which they sold to the Arab traders, who came down the Loangwa. For they came to us and wanted to take our land, as they had been beaten in war by a great tribe, whom we did not then know were the Angoni. And they wanted to come into our place, but it is ill making room for a beaten people, as when the lion wounds his prey he follows it and then he kills where he goes. So we refused them, and fought and beat them beyond the Revubwi. For a long time we heard tales of men armed, with the skins of cows and with goats' hair on their heads, but they never troubled us till after I was born. I was born at Zobwi, and my father had all the land down to the Makurumadzi. And then one day the news came that fire had been put to our villages at Nsanganu, and a strong tribe was eating up our people there; but we did not fear, for we did not then know these Angoni. So all our men went out to meet them, and we fought a great fight all from Nsanganu down to Kalangombe.¹

¹ The resting place of oxen—named so from the fact that the Angoni halted there when taking their cattle to Tete; the name is, therefore, evidently subsequent to the Angoni invasion.

"For weeks we fought, but always the Angoni brought up fresh men, and we were compelled to fall back. And so it went on for years, until at last we were driven to the hills, and even then we had to hide in caves, and grow our maize in hollows of the rocks, and many of us were caught and killed, and many made slaves, until very few of us were left. When it came to that—I was a grown man then, and had a wife and a child—we saw that to stay on here was simply to give our bodies to wash the Angoni spears in sport, and Kasuza's father called us all together, and after burning our houses and breaking our pots, we went down and offered submission to Kankuni, the father of Chinsinga, who was a friend of the Portuguese, and owned Makanga country. We had always fought them till then, but now, even though we were a weak people, he wanted us, as we were good hunters, and he knew we would bring him ivory. Also he was at war with the Angoni and needed help. We may have been slaves to go to him, but at least we could carry on our dances and initiations in the proper way; when living like rock rabbits, we could not teach the young girls and boys, and we had only water enough to drink, and none to make the proper ablutions with.

"So we went to him and he gave us welcome for a time, and good came to him from our friendship, for we killed many elephants, and always sent him the ground tusk.¹ But at last a talk arose that we were too strong, and Kankuni's mind began to fear that we might at last come to rule in his land, for our chief Kasuza's father was a wise man, and Kankuni resolved to cut at our strength. So when the first fruit offerings, which are made when the corn is ripe, came round, he called our old people together to do them honour and make a big feast, and they all went, and he gave them much cloth and beer, so that their hearts, which at first shrank from him, turned, and they all praised him; but when night of the second day of the feast was come, he mustered all his own following, and confusing our old people by mixing hemp in their beer, he gave them all to the spears of his people. Young and old, women and children, all suffered; only I, having been warned by Kasuza's mother, fled, taking with me Kasuza and his brothers and mother. That was a great killing, and the shame of it still rests on Kankuni's son Chinsinga. Right northwards I fled with the mother and the sons till I rested at Chuwali, where I found shelter, for the people of Chuwali did not eat from Kankuni's hand because of trouble about a ground tusk, and they lived in too strong a place for Kankuni to come at them.

"Then I being a hunter, left there the mother and her sons, and went to hunt elephants. Much I hunted, and many elephants I killed, but at last I was caught by a party of Angoni; see the marks on my body of the wounds they gave me; and for years they held me a slave, however, treating me well, as I was known for a big hunter. So I lived and was in peace with Chikusi their chief, who gave me wives. But

¹ When an elephant is killed the tusk next the ground when the elephant lies dead is the right of the chief on whose land it was killed.

with one chief I was not friends, for he desired 'ka nyanda nyangu,'¹ whom I had lately acquired. And he being powerful, one day when I was away hunting he took my wife, and Chikusi would not give me redress. So I brooded over this till news reached me that there was a talk of people living in our old land, and I thought of Kasuza and his mother whom I had left at Chuwali, whom I discovered, from fear of Kankuni, had left Chuwali and gone back to the old place. When our people heard of this, gradually one by one they turned to her, and soon villages sprang up on the mountain of Ntapassa, the people preferring to live in war rather than eat the poison of their hosts. So I resolved, too, that I would also go home. But before I left Angoniland, I waited for my revenge upon the man who had stolen my wife; and one day, he being called to Chikusi's village, I gathered my people, for I had a following, and burning the village of my enemy, and taking all his cattle and pots and women I fled south to Ntapassa. That was a big blaze which I made, and when my enemy came back and found the fire in his thatch and all his women gone, he followed me, and we fought on the road, but my people having knowledge of guns beat off the Angoni, whose weapons are the spear; and whereas in olden times an arrow could not pierce a shield, a bullet now goes clean through it and hits the man behind. So I came to Ntapassa and found Kasuza and his mother, but even then there was no peace, for many small headmen arose each wanting power, and one climbed into that hill and said, 'I am a chief'—a chief of what, of rock rabbits—and another into that hill, and all quarrelled about gardens and ground tusks, as if the Angoni were not at our doors. And now you see how we are, with fire all round us (Fire is a polite term for war). In the north are the Angoni, but with them since the fight at Nyamba-Chikopa, where we beat them and gathered a heap of shields, so high, we have had very little trouble. In the south are the Portuguese, who want us to eat Chinsinga's grain, he whose father killed us like rats. In the south-east to Mikolongo are the Makololo, who want our country; and in the west the Achipeta, who use poison on their arrows and who know no decency. And now our only hope is that the white man will give us peace, and then our gardens will stretch to Nsangnu again, for we bear many children, at present food for spears."

Many other stories the old man told me of the past glory of the tribe, and it was easy to see from their customs and ceremonies that they had once been an important people. Many degradations had, however, from necessity of their changed mode of life, crept into their ceremonies, such as the use of clay instead of water for certain ablutions, due to a scarcity of water in the caves where they lived, and immoral relations due to a scarcity of womenkind; the structure of their dwellings; and their mode of life, also deteriorated by their confinement to the hills. When not at war with their neighbours they were always fighting amongst themselves, and killings were of daily occurrence. Poison was freely

¹ A domestic term for a wife, only used in Azimbaland, literally "my little piece of bark cloth," derived from the phrase applied to a wife, "the little piece of bark cloth that keeps my back warm," from the fact that the man lies next the fire in the hut, his wife sleeping at his back between him and the wall.

used to get rid of an enemy, and slaves were harshly treated and given no benefit from the slave laws that usually govern their existence. During my stay with this people I gained their confidence to a large extent and managed to put a stop to the Angoni raids which harassed them, so that before I left them they had to a certain extent left the hills and begun to cultivate the plains again. They also evinced more cohesion among themselves, and many matters over which they used formerly to fight were referred to a council of chiefs for settlement. I have, however, though the history of the tribe and a description of their customs would fill no small volume, already devoted too much space to this subject, and I will now turn to the geographical features of the country and the errors which I have noticed in the current maps of that district.

In a map by Mr. Daniel Rankin, made in 1892, his route is marked as passing through part of the country I refer to, but as none of the chief mountains or rivers are marked, and some places now definitely fixed are erroneously located by him, I am inclined to think that he passed south of Azimbaland, and that his route was not so far north as he has placed it on his map. He evidently did not cross the Makuramadzi, and only followed the Mwanza up a little above Mikolongo.

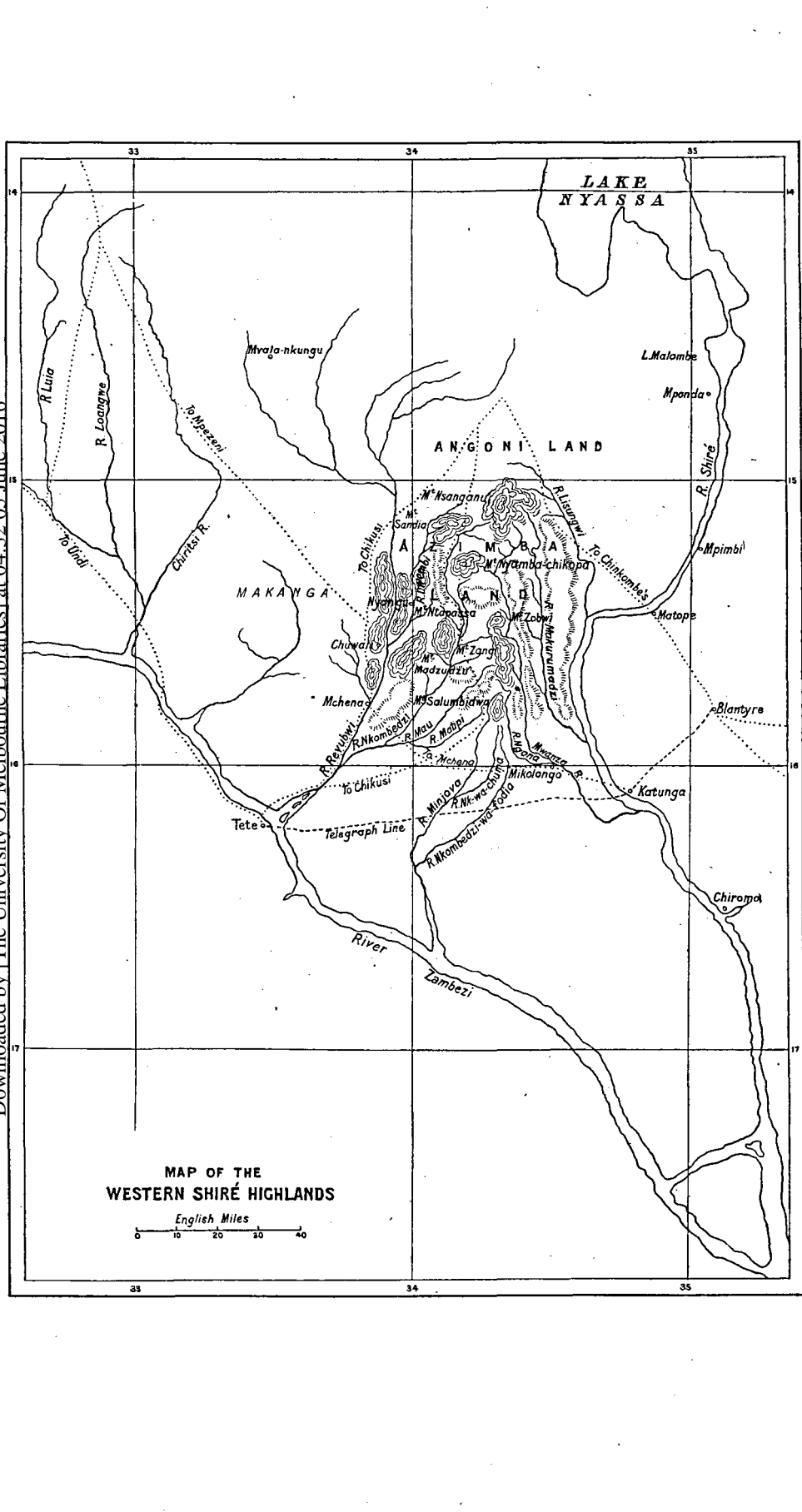
To turn first of all to the trade routes and means of intercommunication in and surrounding that district:

On the east there is the Shiré river, impassable at that portion on account of the Murchison cataracts, and thus the route to the north from Chinde and the sea lies *via* Blantyre to Matope on the Upper Shiré. The Shiré river makes a wide circle between Matope and Katunga, the landing place for Blantyre and the north, the greater portion of which circle is broken by rapids. This route *via* Blantyre is the only route to the north on the east side.

From Matope and Mpimbi higher up the Upper Shiré there are several well-defined paths leading to Northern and Central Angoniland, and the southernmost path of all, the one leading from Matope to Chinkombe's in Central Angoniland may be taken as the northernmost boundary of Azimbaland.

On the south a well defined track from Katunga on the Lower Shiré to M'chéna, marked Muchéna on Rankin's map—M'chéna means "white" or "whiteness"; Muchéna would mean "in whiteness"—*via* Mikolongo on the Mwanza, forms a rough boundary between the Azimba and their southern neighbours, though the villages of the tribe are many miles north of this.

On the west a fairly well beaten path leads from Tete to Makanga, M'chéna, and Central and Northern Angoniland, keeping, however, west of the Revubwi river and avoiding the boundaries of Azimbaland, and after leaving M'chéna passing through Achipetaland. Still further west there are two more routes, both starting north from the Karoabassa rapids on the Zambezi, the one crossing the Kapochi, Luia, Loangwa and Chiritsi rivers, and leading to northern Angoniland and the lake, and the others, following the Kapochi to Undi, and from thence proceeding north to the Loangwa river. It is this last route which is followed by the Arab trading caravans coming down to Tete and the coast from



.Bangweolo and Tanganyika. Between this route and the Revubwi river, which is the boundary of the Azimba, the country is hilly, covered with a low "Masuko" scrub and badly watered. There are few hills of any size until Chuwali on the banks of the Revubwi is reached, and the country is cut up by numerous dry ravines and barren gorges. The few hills and prominences which are scattered over the face of the land are inhabited by the Achipeta, who live in a state of constant warfare and whose hostile attitude to strangers causes them to be avoided. I had some dealings with them, not always of a friendly nature, and found their customs repulsive and their standard of life and morals very low.

It will thus be seen that Azimbaland is comparatively isolated from the surrounding country, none of the big trade routes passing through it. The only route traceable, which at one time traversed the country, and which is now hardly distinguishable, is that leading from Tete to Central Angoniland. This route, evidently at one time of importance, runs from Tete to Mount Salumbidwa, and skirting the western slopes of that mountain heads north until the Nkombedzi river is reached, then follows the Nkombedzi north to almost its source near Mount Nsanganu, to a slope which Mr. Rankin has marked as the Bondeka mountains, but before reaching this point the path turns off and cuts over to the Dwembi river, a tributary of the Revubwi, which it crosses and enters Central Angoniland. This route, now disused, was made by the Angoni in driving their cattle to Tete for sale, and must have been followed and regularly traversed in the early days of the Angoni-Zulu invasion, but since their power weakened has been neglected through fear of the Azimba, who used to attack and cut up the caravans.

Inter-communication between the villages of this district is infrequent, intercourse being held between them by means of elephant and game paths. There is no path, connected with any of the aforementioned trade-routes, leading to the country, and the only way of reaching it is to steer a course through the bush. To approach the country from the Shiré the best way is to leave the river at the Murchison Falls and follow the Makurumadzi river until it turns northwards, and from this point it is a distance of not more than ten miles to the Mwanza river, which is found running parallel to the Makurumadzi. The country traversed is very broken, the soil being a reddish brown, interspersed with quartz veins and quantities of schist. A gradual rise over a series of low ridges takes place after leaving the Shiré river until the highest point between the Marurungwi mountain and the Shiré is reached, which is the dividing ridge between the Mwanza and Makurumadzi rivers. The whole of this country is covered with a low bushy scrub, mingled with huge baobab trees, and is very sterile, only the banks of the rivers being at all well wooded or possessing any luxuriant vegetation. From the dividing ridge between the two rivers country of the same nature can be seen stretching away north and south, the formation running in ridges parallel with the course of the river, *i.e.*, north and south. To the west the peak of Mount Zobwi begins to be visible, and the shoulder of a long low mountain a little to the south of it named Zangi, the

eastern slope of which is washed by the Mwanza river, which continues its course right northwards, and does not rise at Mount Zangi as mapped by Mr. Rankin. Leaving the banks of the Mwanza river the country rises more sharply, and the low scrub gives place to forests of well-grown "Masuko" with luxuriant foliage, which tree provides the bark cloth universally worn throughout this district.

The gradual upward ascent ends abruptly in a broad well-wooded plateau twenty miles in breadth, which is mapped under the name of the Marurungwi range, at the portion I refer to, and further north as the Kirke mountains. But it is in reality two distinct ranges divided by the plateau. Mount Zangi, Mount Zobwi, and Mount Nyamba-chikopa are the only hills of any prominence on the eastern side—the side nearest the Shiré. Neither are they continuous, being isolated and separated from each other by broad plains and deep gorges.

None of the three mountains gives birth to any stream of importance, though several small burns find their source on their slopes, and all run to join the Mwanza river.

On the other side of the plateau the character of the range is very different, being much more rugged and precipitous, but even here there are only two mountains of any prominence. The first of these is Mount Ntapassa, and the second Mount Madzudzu, which both rise to a great height above the plain, and are scarped and terraced for hundreds of feet. Mount Madzudzu, which is the stronghold of Mombusa, lies a little to the south and rear of Ntapassa, Kasuza's seat, which faces the plateau.

Further west the country descends to the Revubwi river in a series of well-defined rolling shoulders and dales, much more prominent than the approach on the eastern side of the plateau, and to the north and south merges into a compact mass of low rounded hills, well-wooded, which gradually descend to join, in the north, the open plains of Angoniland, and in the south the barren country stretching to the Zambezi.

The whole distance between the Mwanza and the Revubwi rivers is about fifty miles, the plateau being about twenty miles in breadth, and the two confining ranges and the ascents to them accounting for the remaining thirty miles.

Between the two ranges, but nearer the western than the eastern one, runs the river Nkombedzi, a tributary of the Revubwi river, and this is the only stream of importance which traverses the plateau. The river Minjova, finding its source on the southern slopes of Mount Zangi far south of Mount Zobwi, and the Lisamodzi river which rises at Nyamba-chikopa and joins the Nkombedzi, are at this point dry except during the rains. The Nkombedzi and the Minjova being tributaries of the Zambezi, it will be seen that the eastern range confining the plateau is the true division between the watersheds of the Shiré and Zambezi, all the streams rising in the western range on the slopes of Makzudzu and Mount Ntapassa running to swell the waters of the Zambezi either through the medium of the Nkombedzi or the Revubwi. Mount Ntapassa gives birth to several strong burns, all of which go to join the Nkombedzi, on the other hand those streams rising

on the slopes of Madzudzu mountain all seek the Revubwi river. It will be seen from the foregoing description that this plateau running north and south is confined by two ranges, the one of which is bounded by a tributary of the Shiré, and the other by a tributary of the Zambezi, and the plateau itself is traversed by the Nkombedzi, a sub-tributary of the Zambezi, and that north and south both ranges flatten out to merge into the rolling plains from which they rise. The plateau is thickly wooded with Masuko, but in the vicinity of Mount Zobwi and Mount Ntapassa is badly watered, and it is not till its more northern portion is reached that the many small burns, which intersect it and run to join the Dwembi river, are crossed.

Seen from the plateau Mount Ntapassa has a very striking appearance, the slopes of the foot-hills rising gradually to the foot of the first precipitous upward leap, and then follows leap on leap of black slimy rock till the ragged edge of the summit stands out against the skyline. The mountain in length is about five miles from end to end, and has a basal breadth of nearly three miles. Behind it, a little to the south, Madzudzu mountain raises a round capped head, as distinct from the flat irregular-shaped summit of Ntapassa, and to the north the low hills pile themselves one on to the other till they fade into the distance. These foot-hills are much intersected by small burns which feed the Revubwi river on the one side and the Nkombedzi on the other, though the greater number flow into the former river.

The descent from Mount Ntapassa to the foot-hills about the Revubwi is very sudden, the ravines between the low long parallel ridges being precipitous in nature; and thus the journey from Ntapassa to the Revubwi is a tiresome one, many steep ascents and descents having to be accomplished, as the dividing ridges run north and south.

But to give a detailed description of this district it will be better if I begin at where I consider the mountainous region commences, a little north of Mikolongo, and work north to its termination at Nsanganu, describing as I go along the chief characters of the country and the points on which I differ from the originators of the existing map.

But first it must be understood that from Mikolongo in the south a gradual rise of the whole plateau takes place till an elevation of 6093 feet is attained at the northern termination at Mount Nsanganu, whence the country again falls to the plain of Angoniland; also it must be understood that this district is not of a continuously mountainous character throughout its extent, but that the upward ascent is very gradual, almost imperceptible, and is composed of low ridges and gentle slopes amid which there are only a very few hills of any prominence, and they, from the unprominent nature of the surrounding country, seem to rise abruptly from the ascending plateau.

Mount Salumbidwa is really the commencement of the range, and is situated as mapped a little to the north and west of Mikolongo on the Mwanza. Here the Minjova, a river which joins the Zambezi at the Lupata gorge, finds its source, and two small tributaries of the Minjova also rise here, but one, the largest of all, circles round the western slope of Salumbidwa and runs north to Mount Zangi. But I am of the

opinion, as I have already stated, that this tributary, marked Nkombedzi-wa-chuma, is really the true stream of the Minjova. Further west runs the Nkombedzi, and on the east further north a few isolated hills rise from the ascending country commencing the broken chain of the watershed. Several small streams, dry except in the rains, find their source in these hills and traverse the plateau to join the Nkombedzi. Further east beyond these hills, in the broken country lying between them and the Shiré, the Ngona and the Mwanza, the former a tributary of the latter, run parallel to each other, and continue thus till the Ngona turns west to its source on the eastern slopes of the plateau at Mount Zangi, mapped as Mount Tambani, the Mwanza continuing its course due north and receiving several small burns from the eastern portion of the plateau. These burns are all of a perennial nature, and thus the Mwanza never fails in its supply of water.

On the western side of the plateau the range leading to Madzudzu and Mount Ntapassa now commences to distinguish itself from the prevailing character of the country, but it is not until opposite to Mount Zangi that the western range attains any prominence, and here Mount Madzudzu is the first height of any importance, after which, further north and east, comes Mount Ntapassa.

On the current map several fair sized streams are given as traversing this plain, running from the slopes of the eastern range to join the Nkombedzi, but none of them are of importance and most of them are dry in the summer months.

Still proceeding north and following the course of the Nkombedzi river, mapped as the Nkondodzi river, the country assumes a more broken character, on the western side falling in a jumble of low wooded hills to the Revubwi river, and on the eastern side still bounded by the Mwanza, to which the country falls steeply. The only hill in this latitude on the eastern side, of any importance, is Mount Nyambachikopa.

The plateau narrows here considerably, and at this point the Nkombedzi begins to flow from the north-west, considerably diminishing the distance between itself and the Mwanza river, a rugged ridge or backbone dividing the two rivers. At the same time further east the Makurumadzi is still pursuing its southern course, flowing parallel with the Mwanza, and divided from it by a similar backbone. Makurumadzi means "big water," and further west of the Nkombedzi the Dwembi is, behind a similar ridge, continuing the like southern course. It is at this portion that there is an error in the present map, the Mwanza being mapped as having its source in this dividing ridge, whereas, though one or two dry ravines join it from hereabouts, the true Mwanza still continues to flow from the northward and finds its source in the conglomeration of low hills and ridges out of which Mount Nsanganu rises. Here also amid these hills, on various portions of these slopes, rise the Makurumadzi river and the Lisungwi; there being thus three important rivers, all tributaries of the Shiré, rising from the north-east, east and south-eastern slopes, and two important tributaries of the Zambezi rising from the north-west and southern slopes, these rivers

being the Nkombedzi and the Dwembi, both of which flow directly into the Revubwi river, the former near M'chéna, and the latter at Chuwali.

There is not ten miles distance between the source of any of these rivers. The Nkombedzi, the Lisungwi, and the Dwembi rise all within five miles of each other, and the Makurumadzi and Mwanza a little further south; and though different names can be given to the sources, Nsanganu Mount is really the head of their watershed.

This is practically the termination of the plateau, and though beyond this point the elevation is still above that of the country lying to east and west, the country is open and unconfined by any definite chain of hills, and the descent to the Revubwi, which continues its course past Nsanganu and rises far to the north, is very gradual.

The features of all these streams are very much the same; none of them have high banks, and the valleys of the Mwanza, Ngona, and Makurumadzi are very narrow, with hardly any breadth of bottom. The banks of the Nkombedzi are much flatter and being unconfined in a valley its current inundates a certain amount of land on either bank when the river is in flood. The vegetation on the banks of all these streams is similar; on the Mwanza and the Nkombedzi the raphia palm grows in great profusion. Bamboo of any size is however scarce, the bamboo thickets which clothe the mountain slopes being of a stunted nature.

Of all these rivers the Dwembi is the most interesting, as at part of its course it passes through a series of caves. I cannot be quite certain whether it is the Dwembi itself or a tributary which runs underground, as I have no means of refreshing my memory.

These caves are of a fair size and are all inhabited, stores of grain being kept there, together with sheep and goats. There are two underground channels, an upper one through which the river seems to have flowed at one time, and a lower one into which it now seems to have subsided.

The country traversed by the Dwembi is very fertile, far more so than any other I have travelled through, the banks of the river being very flat and the bottoms of the valleys being broad and open. The soil is rich, and maize, rice, cotton and tobacco flourish luxuriantly. The natural vegetation is also very profuse, bamboos growing to an enormous girth and forming large thickets low down on the bases of the hills.

The altitude of the Dwembi valley is much beneath the plateau, and nearly on the same level as the Revubwi, of which it is a tributary, and which runs parallel to it a little further west for a great part of its course. There is a certain amount of rubber on the hills in this locality, and at Chuwali, where the Dwembi joins the Revubwi there is a considerable forest of it, the Achipeta inhabiting the mountain of Chuwali doing a fair commerce in rubber and monkey skins. These monkeys are of great beauty, and their skins are much prized by the Angoni for making their war costumes. Leopards also abound hereabouts, and the natives trap great numbers of them in log falls.

Before I close I would like to refer once more to the characteristics of the Azimba and Achipeta. The former are extremely dark, their skins being thin and of a soft, easily manipulated texture. The majority of the men and women are tall and handsome, thin-lipped and aquiline in feature. They are very long-limbed, active and graceful in their movements, long trunked and slender fingered and toed, the second and third toes being unusually long and not, as I have observed (whether it may be an anthropological fact or not I am unaware), like the hill and cave dwellers of Achipetaland, whose big toes are abnormally spatulated, and whose other toes and fingers are thick and stumpy. The Achipeta are much thicker-skinned, and their colour is not such a deep black, being more a dark, dirty brown. The hair of the Achipeta also is not so dark as that of the Azimba, being browner in colour, whereas the hair of the Azimba is jet black.

The males of the Azimba tribe wear *their hair long and unplaited*, whereas the Achipeta plait their hair and smear it with red clay and white flour.

Some years ago I described the initiation ceremony for girls in a paper I contributed to the German Anthropological Society, I being the first European who ever witnessed this ceremony, which was held under my protection in the open plains for the first time for many years; Angoni raids formerly having deterred the people from venturing from the safety of the hills. The Achipeta ceremony is a very different one, and far more degraded, but I cannot enter into such subjects in the columns of a geographical magazine; and it must suffice that the customs of the two people are very different, the Achipeta dances and initiations being much more complicated, and to Europeans indecorous, though to the anthropologist they afford much new information and have many points of interest.

Of the two tribes, the Achipeta are the more turbulent and treacherous, though not so courageous or warlike as the Azimba. The former are quick to attack unsuspecting strangers; while the latter are hospitable and frank. Of this latter fact I had experience during my travels in Achipetaland, when one evening, having taken up my quarters in the vicinity of one of the Achipeta rock dwellings, I was alarmed by my headman coming to me and telling me that the inhabitants were disposed to attack us, one of their number (though I had been on friendly terms with them for some days) having, after exciting himself with a decoction of hemp, climbed on to a rock with a sheaf of poisoned arrows and commenced to threaten my camp. When I approached the scene I found the man at the distance of about one hundred yards standing on a rock with his bow bent and the arrow pointed at us. He was shouting at the top of his voice in a peculiar sing-song tone. "Na-penya-ulendo—na-penya-ulendo"—"I see strangers," though his cry could not be called parliamentary in any sense, "Lassa-ni-ulembi"—"Lassa-ni-ulembi"—"Wound them with poison, wound them with poison." I recognised that hemp was the cause of his conduct, and not wishing to have to shoot him, as I wanted no trouble with the villagers, I called up his chief, who said he was powerless to control him, and that the best thing

we could do would be to bolt. But this would have been only to incite him to actually attack us, and in the end I decided to wait till dark and then try and capture him. This we effected, getting round him under cover of dusk; though it was not a pleasant wait, literally under fire the whole time; of course had he actually shot an arrow at us I would have had to shoot him to save my men, who were so alarmed that I discovered afterwards that they had all gone quietly and made an offering to their guardian spirit, the offering taking the form of pulling leaves off a tree and laying them in a heap, each man contributing; the action being accompanied by the usual hand clapping and supplications.

This will show how untrustworthy the character of the Achipeta is; in comparison to the Azimba, who once formed a fair sized force and came over 150 miles to my aid when they heard that I was in a tight corner, far over in North Achipetaland.

Another difference between the two people is their mode of dwelling, the Achipeta fortifying all their villages with stockades or mud walls, no matter even if they are living in the recesses of the hills, and the Azimba having no fortified place throughout the whole extent of their country.

In concluding this article I wish to state that in trying to describe the district I have dealt with, while correcting what seem to me to be errors in the current maps, I have rather tried to give a picture that can be understood by the average person than dealt minutely with every feature of mountain and river, and that my observations are not those of the surveyor, but simply those of an ordinary traveller whose knowledge of that district is thorough, having lived and hunted in it, and mapped it in a rough and ready way without such aids as theodolites and plane tables.

THE UPPER ITURI.¹

By J. PENMAN BROWNE, M.E.

(*With Illustrations.*)

As the earlier stages of our journey were over comparatively well-known ground, it may be sufficient to begin the present account at Mahagi, which lies near the shore of Lake Albert Nyanza and almost at the foot of the Luru mountains. We stayed two days here, and on the third morning about 5 A.M. set out north-west to cross the Luru hills, in order to continue our journey to the Ituri forest. We were well up the hills when the sun rose, and witnessed a magnificent sunrise.

After traversing the Luru hills we came to a most beautiful country. From the top of the hills right on to the Ituri forest there are broad rolling plains and fertile valleys, having a plentiful supply of clear, cool water in the many streams that flow through the region, which is in my

¹ The illustrations accompanying this paper are from photographs by Colonel Harrison.