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Exploration of Lake Tanganyika: Letter from Lieut. V. L. Cameron, Describing the Discovery of an Outlet

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The President then read the following letter from Lieut. Cameron :—

“ SIR, “ Kawele, Ujiji,  
May 9th, 1874.  
“ I have just returned from a most successful cruise round the south end of the Tanganyika, and send herewith a map of the same on the scale of 5 miles to the inch.

“ I have been fortunate enough to discover the outlet of the Tanganyika, which is said to flow into the Lualaba; the current is small (1·2 knot), as might be expected from the levels. It is believed, or rather I should say I believe it, to flow into the Lualaba between the lakes Moero and Kamalondo, but the accounts I got were vague to a degree. I went 4 or 5 miles down it, when my farther progress in large boats was stopped by the floating grass and enormous rushes; however, as soon as I can get smaller canoes, I intend to return there and work it out.

“ The chief at the mouth was very friendly and intelligent, and has promised all assistance in cutting a way through the grass; he seems fully alive to the importance of having a road for trade pass by him, instead of being left out in the cold, as he now is, between two routes.

“ The River (the Lukuga) is about 25 miles south of the group of islands Captain Speke explored, and as none of the Arabs knew anything of it, he missed it; Dr. Livingstone, when he first came to Ujiji from Casembe's country, passed the entrance at night in a canoe, and when he went to Manyema never went far enough south to come across it.

“ I had intended to ask Sir H. Rawlinson to allow it to be called Rawlinson's Lualaba after him, but I have just received letters with the news of the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage (or the announcement that it was to happen), so I hope that the river may be called after the Princess Marie Alexandrovna, as the wedding gift of Central Africa.

“ You will see by my map that the form of the south end is quite different from what has previously been laid down. I would have completed the survey of the whole, had I not on the 3rd instant discovered this river, when, thinking no useful purpose could be served by going over ground most of which had already been visited by exploring expeditions, I made my way here at once, in order to pick up the men and stores I had left, and intend to return as soon as possible. I propose buying three canoes, which will hold all I intend to take, and then where that river goes, D.V., I go too. I leave this now for the present, and will continue when I have time; but I have much to do, including finishing my map for transmission.

“ *May 15th.*—Since I wrote the above I have abandoned the idea of proceeding down the Lukuga, as such a journey would be most expensive and require a very long time, as cutting the grass for a way would be hard work, and we should most likely require the assistance of the natives, for which one would have to pay heavily.

“ I can also say almost positively that the Lualaba is the Congo. I heard the Arabs talking about Congo, but I said nothing about it, but only tried to ascertain where the Lualaba went, asking if it did not go into the ‘Bahari Unyoro’ (Albert Nyanza), and they said it went into Ugarowowa. I asked where; then, at last, one said he had been 55 days down it from Nyangwè, and had arrived at the sea where ships came and white men had large houses and traded in palm-oil and ivory; that the Ugarowowa was called the *Congo*, was very large in many places, as wide as the Tanganyika (a vague definition, but pointing to a breadth of 13 or 14 miles), had many islands in it, some of them large, having as many as 600 *men* living on one. I consider this to be conclusive, as far as I can judge, as it was in opposition to the drift of my questions, and a man could hardly invent such a story, the distance given being roughly 500 miles from

Nyangwè, tallying well with the distance of the mouth of the Congo. I shall be able to write again from Nyangwè *viâ* Zanzibar, but I hope to be the bearer of my own news thence. I venture to hope that you will request the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to direct the senior naval officer on the West Coast of Africa to order the officers commanding ships and vessels of war under his command to give me what assistance it may lie in their power to do, should they hear of my being near the coast, and also to supply passage and rations to my men to a point from whence they may be forwarded to Zanzibar; also to request the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to send instructions to Her Majesty's Consuls, &c., to send me their help if I should need it. The Portuguese Government, I am sure, would comply with a similar request, in case I should have to leave the Congo and strike the sea in their territories. Of course this is written without any precise knowledge of the time or place where I may, if successful, emerge. Under favourable circumstances, if the whole march has to be made on foot, I should be near the Yellala Falls in six months, as there are only 100 marches from the shores of the Tanganyika to the other side; first, 45 to Nyangwè, and, second, thence 55 to the sea, following the course of the river, and this latter portion may be done in even less, if I succeed in obtaining water-carriage. In addition to what I have asked for above, the West African mail steamers might also be instructed to render me assistance if it may be necessary.

"In the country which may be thus opened up by placing steamers on the river above the falls of Yellala, every, or almost every product of the tropical regions is to be found, together with many of those of the south of Europe. Ivory, gums, millet, maize, rice, palm-oil, cotton, ground-nuts, coffee, sugar, sennese, castor-oil, pepper, nutmegs, and indiarubber are found here. Wheat grows here at Ujiji; wild grapes also are found; and as the climate is much the same as that of the Canary Islands, no doubt the vine could be cultivated with advantage. The vast importance of opening such a region to European trade cannot be over-estimated, and so doing, would put an end to the internal slave-trade, which is, I believe, larger than that carried on by sea. I cannot believe but that a little judicious pressure would remove all the difficulties with the chiefs near the Yellala Falls, and enable the trade to be opened at once.

"I hope to leave this in two or three days, and trust to make a successful journey. The roads are said to be good and the country healthy.

"The country here is decidedly healthy, and I think I have now shaken off the Unyanyembe fever which pursued me up to here; the last severe attack of fever that I had was just after leaving here on my cruise round the lake, and was, I think, a continuation of an attack which I had had before leaving. One great thing is that in front I hope to be spared long halts, which are always bad for one, as employment does not allow the mind to prey on the body as it did during our long detention at Unyanyembe, where I was constantly fretting myself at the delay and expense.

"I now come to what is always disagreeable to me, the question of expenses. I told you that I hoped I had stores for a year, when I wrote from here, and so I had, according to all that calculation could tell me, but theft has been going on, and I have lost ten loads by it; and, owing to the supineness and stupidity of Bombay and the askari, the thieves, with one exception, remain undiscovered. My brass, which I was told was valuable here, has proved the reverse, sinking to half its value with regard to other goods, and being, I am told, utterly valueless in Manyema, where the people obtain copper in plenty from Katanga and do not value the white brass (as brass is called in contradistinction to copper, which is called red brass) at all, and will have nothing to do with it. I lost heavily in the hire of my boat, and have had to exchange the remainder at a great discount. Ten loads which I had to leave

behind on account of the desertion of porters, never arrived, nor have the men I sent for them from here, although I have heard of their having been in Unyanembe for a long time. Under these circumstances, I have been obliged to purchase again to the amount of 920 dollars. I have lost 34 loads out of 62; 24 by theft, and 10 by desertion of pagazi. I have used 12, so that I was right in my calculations if I had not been robbed.

"The dishonesty of the Zanzibar men is something appalling. I have, however, announced my intention of flogging and discharging at once any man convicted of thieving, and I hope this may have the effect of stopping it on ahead; if it goes on, and I don't detect the offenders, I see no prospects but gloomy ones for the fate of the Expedition. Starvation will be our end; but it is no good being down-hearted about it. God, who in His great mercy has spared me hitherto, will, if it be for good, no doubt bring us safely to our journey's end.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"V. LOVET' CAMERON.

"Lieut. nant, R.N.

"P.S.—There was an error in my calculation of height by mercurial barometer when last here; it should have been 2710 feet by mercurial barometers, the same as the aneroids, whilst the thermometers give 2510 or 200 feet lower.

"P.P.S.—I have drawn two bills here, one for 1173 dollars, and one for 325 dollars."

The PRESIDENT, in commenting on the above letter, said that from the barometrical and thermometrical observations which had been made, it had always been understood that Tanganyika was about 1000 feet above the Lualaba; but that only referred to the Lualaba at the point where Livingstone measured it, and as the river which Cameron had discovered flows apparently from the lake to the upper Lualaba, the difference of level may not be so great as 1000 feet. When Livingstone was with Stanley, at the northern end of the lake, making enquiries about the outlet from it, he heard, as he noted in his 'Journal,' that the waters found an outlet probably by the Longumba River into the Lualaba, but he stated that it could not be regarded as anything more than a theoretical discovery. This Longumba was the very name which, on his map, he applied to the river which is the real outlet, but which Lieut. Cameron calls the Lukuga. The only error was that, on his map, Livingstone made the river flow in instead of out; but he had evidently thought there was an exit at that very aperture. Several difficulties suggested themselves on reading Lieut. Cameron's account. In the first place, as far as had been hitherto known, and as far as Lieut. Grandy's information went, the Arabs do not call the river the Congo, which was the name applied near its mouth. It seemed very strange that any one at the Tanganyika should know the river as the Congo, which is a Portuguese name. In the next place, 55 days seemed a very small allowance for the route from Nyangwè to the coast. Lieut. Cameron expected to take 45 days from Ujiji to Nyangwè, and, if that calculation were correct, he would take at least double that time to reach the western shores. Again, the name Ugarowwa recalled an appellation which was often applied to the Albert Nyanza. The whole question was thus left in considerable doubt and obscurity. The balance of evidence certainly shewed that the Lualaba must be the Congo, but Cameron's description rather tended to throw doubt upon that conclusion than to confirm it.

The Rev. HORACE WALLER expressed his admiration at the pluck and courage which Lieut. Cameron had displayed. He had shaken himself free from a great many embarrassments, had reached Tanganyika, and had set

himself a task which already smacked of something like completeness. Lake Tanganyika had not previously been coasted all round. Livingstone did his best; but in his last days he was failing, and could not settle the question of the outlet, although in his journal, and on the map which had come home, he stated his belief that there was an outlet from the lake on the western side. Lieut. Cameron seemed to have set about his work in the right way. First of all, he had gone down the East Coast, and then passed on to that portion of the West Coast which he knew the Doctor had not surveyed. As the letter stated, when Livingstone sailed along that coast it was in the night, and he was so prostrate that he was unable to take any observations or even to put questions to the natives. Still there were difficulties to be met with in Lieut. Cameron's account. The letter was written on the 15th May, when he had returned from exploring the outlet, just at the very time when the heaviest rains had prevailed. Tanganyika, after all, is but a large cistern, and must at that time have been as full as it could be. The outlet through a mountain gorge therefore ought, according to all physical probability, to have been what was called in Scotland "in spate," with a great rush of water out of it. Instead of this, Lieut. Cameron found it choked up with weeds and grasses, which he could not cut his way through. When Livingstone, in a burning state of fever, passed along that part, the Arabs anchored their canoes every night in one of the numerous bays, which in many cases extended 4 or 5 miles in amongst the mountains. So far Dr. Livingstone's account tallied with that of Lieut. Cameron, but the 1000 feet fall was a great difficulty to Livingstone. He knew, as far as he could know from native report, that a river did flow from Lake Tanganyika through the mountains, and eventually found its way into the Lualaba. It was a long time before he found his way out of the difficulty of the great difference of level; but he was at last told by the natives that the river, after leaving the lake, fell over cataracts. This would solve the difficulty connected with the altitudes. With respect to the Lukuga River, it should be remembered that unfortunately the same or nearly the same name was applied to many streams. Livingstone made one large river flow in on the lake's western shore, and that was the nearest river to the point where Cameron had found his Lukuga. Livingstone marked it the Lofuku River, and placed it to the south of the Logumba, which flowed into Tanganyika, he was as certain as he could be about anything. There was also a river Loŋgumba, and the similarity of the names tended to beget some confusion. With regard to the name Ugarowwa, it should be remembered that the "R" and the "L" in all these names are interchangeable, and Chumah and Susi both stated that the Lualaba when it gets to the North is called the Ugalowwa. It might therefore, after all, be the Lualaba into which Cameron's river runs. There was still a great deal to be learned on this question, and it was a very fortunate thing that a young officer, full of zeal, in good health, and thinking nothing of hardships, was out there engaged in solving the problem.

*Report of the Proceedings of the Livingstone Congo Expedition.* By  
Lieut. W. G. GRANDY, R.N., Commander of the Expedition.

The PRESIDENT, in introducing Lieutenant Grandy, said the Meeting would remember that, when it was supposed that Dr. Livingstone must be in great distress in Central Africa, a relief fund was instituted by some of his friends for the purpose of affording him assistance from the East Coast; while one of Livingstone's old friends, Mr. James Young, of Kelly, came forward, and, in the most munificent manner, offered to defray the whole expenses of an expedition which should proceed up the Congo from the West Coast, and endeavour to meet and afford relief to Livingstone, if he should return to his









