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NARRATIVE
OF AN
EXPEDITION TO THE ZAMBESI
AND ITS TRIBUTARIES;
AND OF THE
DISCOVERY OF THE LAKES SHIRWA AND NYASSA.
1858—1864.

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With Map and Illustrations.

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.
1866.



WOMEN WITH WATER-POTS, LISTENING TO THE MUSIC OF THE MARIMBA, SANSÁ, AND PAN'S PIPES.

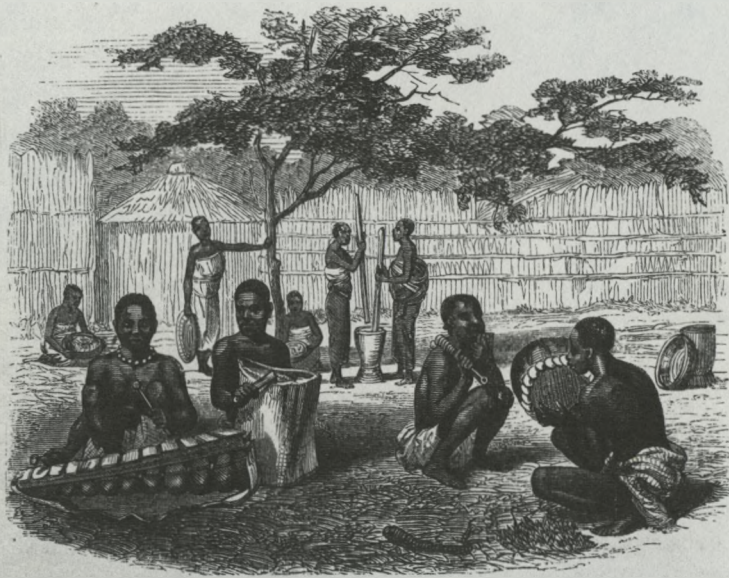
CHAPTER III.

Return from Kebrabasa.—Native Musicians and their Instruments.—Ignorance at Tette.—Changes produced by Rain after the hot Season.—Christmas in tropical Dress.—Opinions modified by early Associations in Northern Climes.—The Seasons at Tette.—Cotton-seed not needed.—African Fever.—Quinine not a Preventive of.—The best Precaution and Remedy.—“Warburgh's Drops.”—Expedition turns from Kebrabasa toward the River Shire in January, 1859.—Reported Barrier to Navigation.—First Intercourse with unknown People.—Navigation of Shire.—Progress prevented by Murchison's Cataracts.—Return to Tette.—Second Trip up the Shire in March, 1859.—Chibisa.—Nyanja Mukulu.—Maniac Guides.—Discover Lake Shirwa on the 18th of April, 1859.—Mountains.—Return to the Vessel.—Severe case of Fever.—Return to Tette on the 23d of June.—Vessel found to be built of unstable Materials.—At Kongone in August.

A BAND of native musicians came to our camp one evening on our way down, and treated us with their wild and not unpleasant music on the marimba, an instrument formed of bars of hard wood of varying breadth and thickness, laid on different-sized hollow calabashes, and tuned to give the notes: a few pieces of cloth pleased them, and they passed on.

As our companion had told us, the people were perfectly willing to sell us provisions on our way back. When we arrived at Tette the commandant informed us that, shortly after we had left, the river rose a foot and became turbid; and on seeing this, a native Portuguese came to him with a grave countenance, and said, “That Englishman is doing something to the river.” This, we regret to say, is a fair sample of the ignorance and superstition common to the native-born, and, unfortunately, sometimes shared in even by

the Zambesi entered the sea at Quillimane. His excellency had been making inquiries of him respecting the correctness of Dr. Livingstone's map in this particular. This is mentioned because lately the Portuguese have seriously attempted to show that the Kongona was previously well known to their slaves. Paul is of mixed breed, but seems to thrive, being the only really fat man of the descendants of the Portuguese in East Africa. It is a pity that a certain class of diseases, self-induced and inherited, have become so universal among half-castes that no conclusion can here be drawn as to their permanence as a race.



CHAPTER IV.

Up the Shire again, August, 1859.—Mount Morambala.—Hot Fountain.—Chase by a Buffalo.—Nyanja Pangono, or Little Lake.—Nyanja Mukulu, or Great Lake.—Ancient Portuguese geographical Knowledge unavailable.—Chikanda-kadze.—Accident from unsuitability of Steamer.—Hippopotamus Traps.—Musquitoes.—Elephants.—View of the Shire Marshes.—Birds.—Palm Wine, or *Sura*.—Salt-making.—Brackish Soil and superior Cotton.—Dakanamoio Island.—A loving Hornbill.—Chibisa.—Child sold into Slavery.

ABOUT the middle of August, after cutting wood at Shamoara, we again steamed up the Shire, with the intention of becoming better acquainted with the people, and making another and longer journey on foot to the north of Lake Shirwa, in search of Lake Nyassa, of which we had already received some information, under the name Nyinyesi (the stars). The Shire is much narrower than the Zambesi, but deeper and more easily navigated. It drains a low and exceedingly fertile valley of from fifteen to twenty miles in breadth. Ranges of wooded hills bound this valley on both sides. For the first twenty miles the hills on the left bank are close to the river; then comes Morambala, whose name means "the lofty watch-tower," a detached mountain 500 yards from the river's brink, which rises, with steep sides on the west, to 4000 feet in height, and is about seven miles in length. It is wooded up to the very top, and very beautiful. The southern end, seen from a distance, has a fine gradual slope, and looks as if it might be of easy ascent; but the side which faces the Shire is steep and rocky, especially in the upper half. A small village peeps out

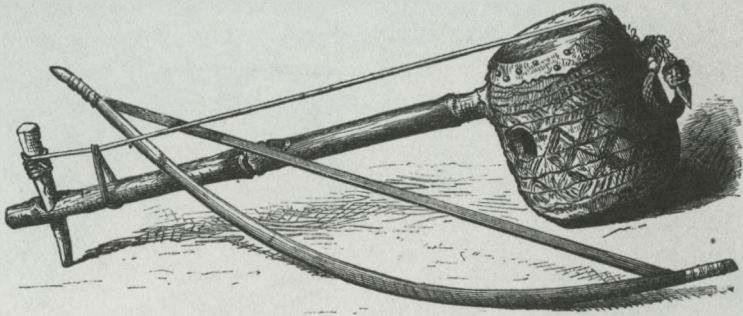
commercial policy of his contemporaries. One of the Jesuits formerly made a business-like proposal to explore Lake Maravi, but nowhere is it stated that it ever was carried into effect. This, we regret to say, is all the information we have been able to gain on this subject from the Portuguese. If we had been able to discover more particulars of their explorations, we certainly are not conscious of a desire to dwarf them.

Late in the afternoon of the first day's steaming, after we left the wooding-place, we called at the village of Chikanda-Kadze, a female chief, to purchase rice for our men; but we were now in the blissful region where time is absolutely of no account, and where men may sit down and rest themselves when tired; so they requested us to wait till next day, and they would sell us some food. As our forty black men, however, had nothing to cook for supper, we were obliged to steam on to reach a village a few miles above. When we meet those who care not whether we purchase or let it alone, or who think men ought only to be in a hurry when fleeing from an enemy, our ideas about time being money, and the power of the purse, receive a shock. The state of eager competition, which in England wears out both mind and body, and makes life bitter, is here happily unknown. The cultivated spots are mere dots compared to the broad fields of rich soil which are never either grazed or tilled. Pity that the plenty in store for all, from our Father's bountiful hands, is not enjoyed by more.

The wretched little steamer could not carry all the hands we needed; so, to lighten her, we put some into the boats and towed them astern. In the dark one of the boats was capsized; but all in it, except one poor fellow who could not swim, were picked up. His loss threw a gloom over us

all, and added to the chagrin we often felt at having been so ill-served in our sorry craft by one of our own countrymen. Few would have acted thus toward us: we had received the assurance that the steamer would carry from ten to twelve tons, and about thirty-six men; but we found that this made her draw so much as to be near sinking, and we adopted the expedient mentioned, with the unfortunate result described.

Next day we arrived at the village of Mboma ($16^{\circ} 56' 30''$ S.), where the people raised large quantities of rice, and were eager traders; the rice was sold at wonderfully low rates, and we could not purchase a tithe of the food brought for sale.



African Fiddle of one String.

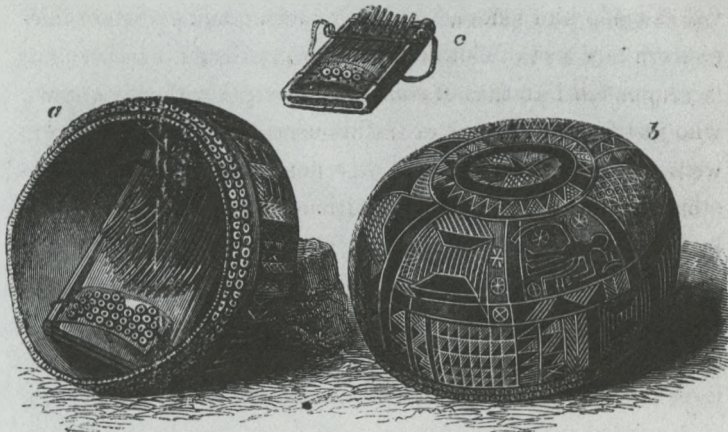
A native minstrel serenaded us in the evening, playing several quaint tunes on a species of one-stringed fiddle, accompanied by wild, but not unmusical songs. He told the Makololo that he intended to play all night to induce us to give him a present. The nights being cold, the thermometer falling to 47° , with occasional fogs, he was asked if he was not afraid of perishing from cold; but, with the genuine spirit of an Italian organ-grinder, he replied, "Oh no; I shall spend the night with my white comrades in the big canoe; I have often heard of the white men, but have never seen

passed several villages in the course of a day's march. In the evening came deputies from the villages at which we could not stay to sleep with liberal presents of food. It would have pained them to have allowed strangers to pass without partaking of their hospitality; repeatedly were we hailed from huts, and asked to wait a moment and drink a little of the beer, which was brought with alacrity. Our march resembled a triumphal procession. We entered and left every village amid the cheers of its inhabitants; the men clapping their hands, and the women lullilooing, with the shrill call, "Let us sleep," or "Peace." Passing through a hamlet one day, our guide called to the people, "Why do you not clap your hands and salute when you see men who are wishing to bring peace to the land?" When we halted for the night it was no uncommon thing for the people to prepare our camp entirely of their own accord; some, with hoes, quickly smoothed the ground for our beds, others brought dried grass and spread it carefully over the spot; some, with their small axes, speedily made a bush fence to shield us from the wind; and if, as occasionally happened, the water was a little distance off, others hastened and brought it, with firewood to cook our food with. They are an industrious people, and very fond of agriculture. For hours together we marched through unbroken fields of mapira, or native corn, of a great width; but one can give no idea of the extent of land under the hoe as compared with any European country. The extent of surface is so great that the largest fields under culture, when viewed on a wide landscape, dwindle to mere spots. When taken in connection with the wants of the people, the cultivation, on the whole, is most creditable to their industry. They erect numerous granaries, which give their villages the appearance of being large; and, when the water

of the Zambesi has subsided, they place large quantities of grain, tied up in bundles of grass, and well plastered over with clay, on low sand islands for protection from the attacks of marauding mice and men. Owing to the ravages of the weevil, the native corn can hardly be preserved until the following crop comes in. However largely they may cultivate, and however abundant the harvest, it must all be consumed in a year. This may account for their making so much of it into beer. The beer these Batoka or Bawe brew is not the sour and intoxicating boala or pombe found among some other tribes, but sweet and highly nutritive, with only a slight degree of acidity, sufficient to render it a pleasant drink. The people were all plump and in good condition; and we never saw a single instance of intoxication among them, though all drank abundance of this liting, or sweet beer. Both men and boys were eager to work for very small pay. Our men could hire any number of them to carry their burdens for a few beads a day. Our miserly and dirty ex-cook had an old pair of trowsers that some one had given to him; after he had long worn them himself, with one of the sorely-decayed legs he hired a man to carry his heavy load a whole day; a second man carried it the next day for the other leg; and what remained of the old garment, without the buttons, procured the labor of another man for the third day.

Men of remarkable ability have risen up among the Africans from time to time, as among other portions of the human family. Some have attracted the attention and excited the admiration of large districts by their wisdom. Others, apparently by the powers of ventriloquism, or by peculiar dexterity in throwing the spear or shooting with the bow, have been the wonder of their generation; but the total absence of literature leads to the loss of all former experience,

and the wisdom of the wise has not been handed down. They have had their minstrels too, but mere tradition preserves not their effusions. One of these, and apparently a genuine poet, attached himself to our party for several days, and, whenever we halted, sang our praises to the villagers in smooth and harmonious numbers. It was a sort of blank verse, and each line consisted of five syllables. The song was short when it first began, but each day he picked up more information about us, and added to the poem until our praises became an ode of respectable length. When distance from home compelled his return, he expressed his regret at leaving us, and was, of course, paid for his useful and pleasant flatteries. Another, though a less gifted son of song, belonged to the Batoka of our own party. Every evening, while the others were cooking, talking, or sleeping, he rehearsed his songs, containing a history of every thing he had seen in the land of the white men, and on the way back. In composing, extempore, any new piece, he was never at a loss; for if the right word did not come, he halted not, but eked out the measure with a peculiar musical sound meaning nothing at all. He accompanied his recitations on the *sansa*, an instrument figured in the woodcut (c), the nine iron keys of which are played with the thumbs, while the fingers pass behind to hold it. The hollow end and ornaments face the breast of the player. Persons of a musical turn, if too poor to buy a *sansa*, may be seen playing vigorously on an instrument made with a number of thick corn-stalks sewn together, as a *sansa* frame, and keys of split bamboo, which, though making but little sound, seems to soothe the player himself. When the instrument is played with a calabash (a) as a sounding-board, it emits a greater volume of sound. Pieces of shells and tin are added to make a jingling accompaniment, and the calabash (b) is also ornamented.



(a) Calabash sounding-board. (b) Calabash ornamented with figures. (c) Sana.

In musing over the peculiar habit indicated in the name "Baenda pezi" (Go-nakeds), we conjectured that it might be an order similar to that of Freemasons; but no secret society can be found among the native Africans. A sort of brotherhood, called by the Portuguese "Empacasseiros," exists in Angola, but it only enjoins community of right to food in each other's hut; and the qualification for admission is ability to shoot the empacasso (buffalo or gnu). This is very much the same thing as that which distinguishes the bands into which the young Makololo are formed on circumcision. They thenceforward consider each other as in a state of perfect equality, and bound to keep up the discipline of their troop, and, in case of cowardice, to inflict punishment. No good, as far as we could learn, would result to any one in this country from his knowledge of Freemasonry. A noble specimen of the Baenda pezi order once visited us and gained our esteem, though the full dress in which he stood consisted only of a tobacco-pipe, with a stem two feet long wound round with polished iron. He brought a liberal present.