
THE NILE SOURCES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In your leader of the 19th of September there is an allusion to the discovery of the Nile sources, on which, perhaps, you will allow me to remark.

The sad event to which your excellent article refers must seal my mouth concerning many things. But without disrespect to the memory of Captain Speke I may say that the popular version of the discovery of Lake Nyanza and of the "settlement of the Nile sources" is in advance of fact.

On our return to Kazeh I was preparing a march up on the Nyassa Lake, since laid down by our great African, Dr. Livingstone. My journals were also to be written up. For these reasons I despatched my second in command, Captain Speke, to prospect a water—"the Nyanza"—of which dubious tales had been reported by Arabs and Africans. This most energetic explorer returned with a conviction that he had discovered in it the sources of the Nile. Now, the sources of rivers are not in lakes?

After his return to England Captain Speke was enabled by the recommendation of the Royal Geographical Society and the liberality of Her Majesty's Government to organize another expedition for the purpose of deriving the Nile from the Lake Nyanza. My project was to set out from Mombas and march to the N.E., but two explorations at the same time were not considered necessary.

Captain Speke succeeded in striking the N.E. shoulder of a water which many geographers think is a broadening of the Kitangule river, not his original Nyanza. On the other hand, the Asua affluent, coming from the S.E., is according to most foreign geographers the true Nile. Again, Drs. Livingstone and Kirk, after visiting the Nyassa lake, and finding no affluent from the Tanganyika, compel us to believe that the latter drains into the "Luta Nzigè," and is thus the western lake reservoir of Ptolemy,—Nyanza being the eastern.

Being about to publish a pamphlet upon this subject, I will trespass no more upon your valuable space. You will, however, perceive that in recounting the last brilliant episode of Captain Speke's brief but useful and eventful life the discovery of the Nile sources can hardly be held a thing settled in all future time.

I am, Sir, &c.,

RICHD. F. BURTON, F.R.G.S.

British Association, Bath, Sept. 21.
