

ARTICLE II.—OPENINGS FOR CHRISTIAN EFFORT IN  
CENTRAL AFRICA.

*Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile.* By JOHN HANNING SPEKE. New York: Harper & Brothers. 8vo. pp. 590.

*Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries; and of the Discovery of the Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa.* 1858–1864. By DAVID and CHARLES LIVINGSTONE. With Map and Illustrations. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1866. 8vo. pp. 638.

*The Albert Nyanza; Great Basin of the Nile, and Explorations of the Nile Sources.* By SAMUEL WHITE BAKER. London: Macmillan & Co. 1866. 8vo. pp. 509.

*A Journey to Ashango-Land; and Further Penetration into Equatorial Africa.* By PAUL B. DU CHAILLU, Author of *Explorations in Equatorial Africa.* New York: 1867. D. Appleton & Co. 8vo. pp. 501.

THE recent frequent travels in Africa have an interest for the Christian world, and not for Royal Geographical Societies alone. That country has long been the centre of curiosity, and the cause of numerous expeditions, both public and private, undertaken for the purpose of unraveling the mysteries connected with its formation and natural history. That land of torrid heat has for many years divided the attention of explorers with the regions of Arctic cold. By a sort of fascination men have been led to tempt, first the dangers of frost and then of fire. One week, a stout bark sails from its port for a two or three years' cruise among icebergs and ice-fields, perhaps to leave its splintered hull among them; and the next, a single stout-hearted man leaves his home for a three years' struggle with the fevers, the thorns, the reptiles, the wild beasts, and the society of the degraded natives of interior Africa. Which has the easi-

are also known, together with their means of livelihood. The track of the slave-trader is frequently crossed by these lines of travel, and misery and want and terror are found wherever he has gone. So that Africa in her afflictions and degradation, as well as her capacities for good, is being better understood.

What now do these discoveries teach the church of Christ as to its own duties and prospects of success in respect to that land? What shall be the means employed? In what manner and by what agencies shall it work? and what may we hope for that long-tortured continent in a brighter future that we trust is before it?

1. In the first place, all the discoveries show that Africa is possessed of *commercial* advantages that will sooner or later be improved, and give it the basis of a permanent importance and prosperity. From whatever side it is approached, there are found a richness of soil, and water privileges, and choice products, sufficient to warrant at length the prospect of a remunerative trade, apart from the horrors of slave-driving, and after that has been wholly rooted out. Many tracts are found indeed to be desert, and comparatively worthless; but there are also valleys teeming with the richest stores, and rivaling in wealth, if not extent, that of the Amazon. The Niger and its tributaries, in all their course, flow through the richest lands, even now set with cotton and sugar-cane, and promising in the future the largest returns in those profitable products. Their banks in some places are lined with precious woods, and palm-oil, ivory, rhinoceros horns, indigo, rice, wax, and hides are only a part of the stores that would find their way to other countries in case of the establishment of a regular trade.

This question, of the prospects of *commerce* in that land, is intimately connected with its future civilization and Christianization. This will determine how soon and how thoroughly Africa will be brought under better influences. Trade itself will not *convert*, but it will open the way for the missionary. Dr. Barth, in his minute descriptions, speaks in the highest terms of the fertility of the country on the Bénouwé—the chief eastern branch of the Niger—and of all that section to the south and west of Lake Tsád. Corn and cotton fields abound, magnificent tamarind and tulip trees rise in majestic beauty,

and the butter-tree and giant *Asclepias*, with a multitude of other varieties, fill the valleys, while the luxuriant pastures support large herds of milk-white cattle. Birds of every hue fill the air with music; and in many cases the tilled fields, the groups of fowls and domestic herds, great bowls of milk, and dishes of butter and honey, testify to the generosity of the earth, and show that one day that region may rejoice in material wealth and happiness.

DuChaillu also, after long journeys in the dense forests of western equatorial Africa—forests of ebony and other valuable timber—would often come out on great prairies pasturing their immense herds of buffalo. Animal and vegetable life fill that region in surprising affluence. And along the Zambesi and its branches, traversed by Dr. Livingstone in his iron steamer, lay valleys filled with cotton, and sugar-cane, and the indigo plant, while *lignum-vitæ*, ebony, and other valuable trees abounded on every side. Captain Speke, also, once beyond the coast line west of Zanzibar, and especially around the Victoria Lake, found a soil of remarkable depth and fertility, ready to repay labor most amply,—the natives almost living on its spontaneous productions. Of the country on the Kitangulé River, which flows into the lake on the west, Captain Speke says that it is “a perfect garden of plantains.” Sweet potatoes, yams, sugar-cane, Indian corn, and rice also abound; and goats, fowls, pigs, sheep, and cows, together with great quantities of wild game, the buffalo, the rhinoceros, and several kinds of antelope—some extremely beautiful—are found on every side. The same he found to be true in Uganda, a kingdom on the north border of the lake, where he made a long forced stay with King Mtésa.

This varied testimony from all sides assures us that Africa, under the proper influences, may at length support in comfort an immense population, and pour its wealth through its rivers into foreign ships, to be amply repaid in the treasures of civilization.

2. The *character of the native population*, again, is an important item in the future prospects of that country. Among the great number of tribes there is of course a great diversity of character. *Position*—whether on the coast or in the inte-