

To secure its prompt delivery in Scotland, Ireland, and the Provinces, THE READER is published every Friday afternoon at Two o'Clock.

THE READER. SATURDAY, 27 JUNE, 1863.

CONTENTS.

LEADING ARTICLES: THE SOURCES OF THE NILE 615. REVIEWS: CURRENT LITERATURE. Life of Victor Hugo 616. Memoirs of a "United Irishman" 617. New Australian Exploration 618. "Respectable Sinners" 619. Washington Irving and his Second Love 620. "Ghilo Malatesta" 620. South-American Scenes and Sketches 621. Danish Literature 622. The Thibingen School 624. NOTICES: A Tour in Tartary Land, by Guthbert Bede... 624. PUBLICATIONS OF THE WEEK 625. MISCELLANEA 626. CORRESPONDENCE: PETRA AND THE SINAITIC INSCRIPTIONS 628. SCIENCE. RECEPTION OF CAPTAINS SPEKE AND GRANT 628. SCIENTIFIC SUMMARY 629. LEARNED SOCIETIES 630. ART. BRITISH INSTITUTION: OLD MASTERS 630. ART NOTES 631. MUSIC. NATIONAL CHORAL SOCIETY 631. RECENT CONCERTS 632. MUSICAL NOTES 632. CORRESPONDENCE: WAGNER'S MUSIC 632. THE DRAMA. MADAME RISTORI, M. WALTER MONTGOMERY, AND THE "GHOST" AT THE ADDELPHI 633.

THE SOURCES OF THE NILE.

THE other day Punch, in one of his best cartoons, gave his comically poetic version of the great fact of the discovery of the sources of the Nile by Captains Speke and Grant. Old Nilus, figured like one of the ancient colossal statues of Egypt, was sitting deep in the impenetrable jungle of rush and swamp where he had been sitting undisturbed for thousands of years, dreamily smoking a long clay pipe, and thinking of nothing in particular—an urn by his side pouring out the water which was, and had been from time immemorial, the beginning of the great mysterious stream. But, lo! to his horror, he was at last troubled with a visitor. Pushing aside the bushes, and detecting the old gentleman for the first time in his cherished solitude, was the impudent figure of Miss Britannia; at the sight of whom Nilus, in his astonishment, had opened his mouth, and ceased to suck his clay, gazing wildly at the intruder. You saw that it was all over with him—that he was to enjoy his quiet pipe and his solitary reverie no more; and you expected that his next movement would be to rise in disgust, let his pipe fall, kick over his urn, and dash away through the jungle to seek some other hiding-place, whither Sir Roderick Murchison could not send Britannia to find him out, and where he might preserve a little longer his threatened bachelorhood. Nothing could be better than this cartoon. The execution was rough and sketchy; but the idea was capital. Let humour mingle with imagination, and Art could not hit off more exactly the sort of feeling we all had when we heard that the sources of the Nile had been discovered. And yet it is one more instance how independent Art must often be of the realities which it represents, that this cartoon, hitting off though it did the exact fact of the solution of the great African mystery to the jocosse fancy of all London and of all Britain for the moment, differs entirely from the reality as we gather it from the

...negatives of Captains Speke and Grant, neglects all the particulars of that reality, and substitutes a whimsy of the mind for what Geography and History must set down in their registers of the same event. In Geography there is no pure, single head-fountain of the Nile, gushing forth secretly in some deep jungle of trees, pipy hemlock, and other strange undergrowth, penetrating into which to the right spot one could say, "Here the Nile begins," but, instead of this, there is a great flat sheet of shallow water, the Lake Nyanza, covering hundreds of square miles, in that part of Africa which lies on and immediately under the Equator, at a considerable distance from the east coast, and more than 8000 geographical miles south from the familiar termination of the Nile in the Mediterranean. This great fresh-water lake is 3553 feet above the level of the sea; and from it, as from a great elevated reservoir, escape, by more than one outlet, those waters which, seeking lower levels, and sometimes forming falls, compose the long stream of the White Nile, to which the Blue Nile, rising more to the east, is a tributary, and the entire course of which, from its origin in those hitherto unknown regions to its famous Egyptian mouth, measures nearly a tenth of the circumference of the globe. That the Nile breaks by one great outlet, and by others yet unknown, from this Lake Nyanza, and that, consequently, but for obstacles which may be yet removed, one might walk or boat from this lake on and on northwards along that main stream which at last becomes the Nile of Egypt—such is the real discovery. But, in a sense, it leaves the sources of the Nile still to be sought for. The Nile issues or escapes from Lake Nyanza; but this lake itself is but a great reservoir of water, fed, like other and smaller lakes in the same region, by rivers and rivulets which drain the country round, especially from the west. Nay, the Nyanza Lake is connected with other smaller lakes, and is part of a lake-system. The other lakes, according to Captain Speke, are "all mere puddles compared to the Nyanza;" but from one of them, called the Luero-lo-Ungi, which Captain Speke reached by mistake in his last journey, before he reached the Nyanza, comes "a noble river, sunk low in the earth, like a canal," and called the Kitangule, which, draining that lake and other lakes, flows into the Nyanza, and is apparently its chief feeder. What of this Kitangule river and of the other rivers and rivulets which feed the Nyanza? Shall the name "Nile" end at the Nyanza Lake, or shall it be carried farther back and applied to those feeders of the Nyanza? Are the sources of the Nile to be sought for in the miscellaneous streams from the west, and perhaps from the east too, which make the lakes? Captain Speke did not avoid this question. "The question arises," he said at the Geographical Society on Monday evening last, "what forms these lakes without number?" To which question he replied—"The Mountains of the Moon, from whence they derive their water, are in the middle of the rainy zone, where I observed, in 1862, that no less than 233 days out of the year were, more or less, wet days." No absolute primordial head therefore has been found, or can be found, to the Nile; its real sources lie in rains and mists among the Mountains of the Moon; and the real solution of the African mystery, over which Geography is now rejoicing, is that the Nile originates in the rain-drainage of a certain region of Equatorial Africa, of which rain-drainage Lake Nyanza and other lakes are a visible accumulation and intermediate representation. One might defy Art to give any such rendering of the fact of the discovery of the Nile's sources as should keep to this truth that the Nile begins in the rain-drainage, by rivulets, rivers, and an apparatus of lakes, of an elevated equatorial region of Africa. A map, indeed, could do it. While we write a map has come into our hands, prepared by Captain Speke himself, and published this week by Stanford of Charing Cross, which does it very effectively. There you see I,ured

the Lake Nyanza, or, more fully, Victoria Nyanza, so-called after our Queen, the level of the lake marked as 3553 feet above the ocean, and the greater part of its extent under, though part is above, the equatorial line. There, to the west of Nyanza, are several other lakes, of which the most important is the Lake Tanganyika, which, of higher level than the Nyanza, issues the river Kitangule, flowing into the Nyanza. You can conceive numberless other streams, not marked, flowing into the Nyanza. From the northern shore of the Nyanza, just above the Equator, you see at least three outlets marked—the chief of them called the Napoleon Channel, in honour of the French Emperor—whence issue northward-flowing streams which, converging at length, form the upper course of the White Nile. The map may yet be improved; but, at present, a glance at it is the best means of obtaining the essentially new geographical information that Captains Speke and Grant have brought home. This is the true head of old Nilus—accumulated rain-drainage at a high level.

As Art cannot convey the literal geographical truth of such a discovery as that of the Nile's sources, so it could but dimly image forth the real history of the process of the discovery. Miss Britannia, in Punch's cartoon, is a brisk young lady, with her helmet on, and all tidy and smiling, surprising old Nilus as if in sport. But the real Britannia, in the persons of Captains Speke and Grant, coming upon the accumulated rain-drainage known as Nyanza, and ascertaining it to be the origin of the Nile—how should Art depict in their faces and gestures the fatigue, the care, the courage, the perseverance, the prior reasonings and calculations from data furnished by former records in the possession of the Geographical Society, that led them successfully thither? It was the consummation of a long series of speculations and explorations. From early ages, it now appears, the speculation existed—brod no one can tell by what vague communication and telegraphing from the spot through intermediate African populations—that the Nile had its origin in a great lake or inland African sea. Such a lake, it is said, is actually found figured in old Arab maps and in old European maps derived from them. In later days the speculation had been revived; and, since the return of Captains Speke and Grant, Dr. Charles Beke has published a pamphlet, claiming for himself the credit, on account of the precise way in which he had presented the speculation some years ago, of having been the first theoretical discoverer of the sources of the Nile. But, to the world, Captain Speke is, and will be, the man. In his former journey in 1858-59, leaving his companion, Captain Burton, sick at Kaxé, he had actually reached the southern shores of the Nyanza, and had become convinced, from all he heard, that from the northern shores of that lake the stream or streams of the Nile had their issue. Insurmountable difficulties in the way of advancing north prevented him from then settling the matter; but, from the time of his return to England, he was bent upon a new expedition in order to settle it; and, having taken counsel with Sir Roderick Murchison and the Geographical Society, he set out on this new expedition, along with Captain Grant. Starting from Zanzibar, on the east coast of Africa, in October 1860, and toiling their way inland through all sorts of difficulties, they disappeared for a time from all human ken, till, at length, only the other month, they were again heard of, and heard of in circumstances which assured us that their enterprise had succeeded—i. e., sailing towards Egypt down the river whose course they had gone to trace. Within this interval of two years and a half they had reached the Nyanza by a new route, skirted a portion of its western border, stood at points on its northern shore and seen its waters escaping in at least one of their northward streams, ascertained that these northward streams converged, and that their united current, though they durst not keep by its side all the way, was indubitably the river

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27 JUNE, 1868.

which, after receiving other tributaries, became the White Nile. And now the two travellers are in England. Twice this week they have told their countrymen and countrywomen some particulars of their story—at an open-air meeting of the Geographical Society on Monday evening; and at the Royal Institution on Tuesday evening. Other meetings will be held in which they will tell more; but for their complete story we must wait for their promised book.

The most interesting portions of what they have told us yet, next to those main geographical statements which we have here reproduced, are their accounts of some of the native African nations who have their territories round and near Lake Nyanza. In the map we count quite a cluster of such states or kingdoms surrounding the reservoir of the Nile—Uyamwezi; Uzina, Uha, Urundi, Usige, Buanda; Karagwe, Uganda, Ulumbi, Uiyoro, Usoga, Uvuna, Amara, Ukori, Ukidi, Ohopi, &c. Captain Speke's general account of the populations of these states, at the meeting of the Geographical Society, was that they are physically and intellectually superior to most of the African populations, and disposed to be friendly and honest when their confidence is won; but that they "have a great distrust of the white men, owing to the enormities committed by the slave-traders," and that, as their kings are continually at war with each other, travelling among them is highly perilous. At the Royal Institution he entered more into details—giving his ethnological views of the various Nyanza populations as a whole, and speaking especially of the two kingdoms of Uganda and Karagwe, situated on the western margin of the lake. The following is from the report of his lecture in the *Times* :—

Judging from the physical characteristics of those tribes, Captain Speke considered them to be descended from the ancient Abyssinians—an idea confirmed by the traditions of the people, who, when questioned about their origin, always replied that they came from the north. These ancient Abyssinians came down by degrees from the north, carrying all before them, and founding the great kingdom of Kittara, which was now split up into several minor kingdoms through continual internal wars. A singular tradition of the double origin of these people was repeated to him by one of the chiefs, who gravely told him that at one time the inhabitants of Kittara were half black and half white, one side of their heads having curly hair, the other straight. The largest portion of Kittara consists of the kingdom called Uiyoro.

On the most fertile part of the shores of Lake Nyanza is Uganda, which is the most interesting of all the nations of equatorial Africa, being better cultivated and better governed than any other. Here when a king dies all his sons are burnt except his successor and two others, who are kept, in case of accident, until the coronation, after which one is pensioned off and the other banished. Untidiness in dress is a capital crime, expiated only by an enormous fine. Ingratitude, or even neglecting to thank a person for a benefit conferred, is punishable. The court-customs are also curious. No one is allowed to stand before the king; and to touch him or look at one of his women is death. They believe implicitly in magic and the evil eye; and the kings are always attended by a certain number of women crowned with dead lizards, and bearing bowls of plantain wine in their hands. . . . On arriving at the capital, Captain Speke found it necessary to wrap up all his presents in chintz before sending them to the king, as nothing bare or naked could be looked at by his Majesty. He found the place to consist of hundreds of conical tents, spread over the spur of a hill. Thousands of courtiers and attendants were to be seen engaged in every conceivable occupation, from playing on musical instruments to feeding the royal chickens. On sending word to the king that he wished for an interview, that monarch sent back a sharp message that he was to sit on the ground and wait until he was at liberty. Captain Speke declined, and sent back word that he was a prince. A courtier followed him, prophesying all kinds of evil from his presumption. Captain Speke, however, terrified the whole court, king and all, by opening his umbrella, which they took to be a deadly weapon; and a chair was allowed him. He was received by the king surrounded by his

court, and having by his side the women crowned with dead lizards to ward off the effects of the evil eye. After an hour's silence, his Majesty said, "Have you seen me?" and retired to another tent, where the same process of staring was followed by a similar inquiry. The king went into a third tent, and Captain Speke followed. This time, however, the monarch deigned to examine Captain Speke's Whitworth rifle. Captain Speke told him that it was the custom of the inhabitants of the country of which he was a prince to make presents of everything that they possessed to any king into whose country they entered. He accordingly left him several rifles and watches, and a quantity of gunpowder. It was a long time, however, before he gained his confidence. On leaving, the king presented him with numerous very valuable presents.

The King of Karagwe (whose name is Rumanika) is the most civilized of these native chiefs. Before entering Uganda Captain Speke spent many days with him. In manners and enlightenment he might be compared with many Europeans. He owes much of this to the influence of an Indian merchant named Moussa Mzouri, who helped him also by his advice to conquer his brother, with whom he was at war. Captain Speke was much entertained with many of his questions, some of which were certainly sufficiently curious—such as what became of the old suns, and why the moon made faces at the earth. He also wanted to know whether England, of which he had heard from the ivory traders, could blow up the whole of Africa with gunpowder. When the king heard that he was desirous of going north he sent messengers to the King of Uganda to prepare the way for him. While at the palace the king took him yachting on Murchison Creek for several days; and he frequently went shooting with the princes, who, when he had shot anything, would rush up to and shake him heartily by the hand—a custom little known in that part of Africa.

We do not know that all this is very hopeful. As the thorough exploration of Africa is perhaps the last problem of geographical enterprise reserved for the leading portion of the human race, so, probably, the complete subjection of its miscellaneous native populations to civilization and its influences is the last and farthest-off moral problem. If we were to make a beginning round Lake Nyanza, how should we set about it? Commerce and fair dealing, with missions to aid—these are the strong and standard recipes (and, by the bye, if Captain Speke is correctly reported, and has not misrepresented himself, was he quite true to the second recipe in his talk with the King of Uganda?) Those philanthropists who may be called cotton-maniacs—inasmuch as they never hear of a new place but they want cotton to be grown in it, reason or no reason—would, of course, add their favourite suggestion. Meanwhile, at least, Captains Speke and Grant have increased our knowledge. They have solved the great African mystery and uncovered the head of Nilus.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

LIFE OF VICTOR HUGO.

Victor Hugo raconté par un Témoin de sa Vie, avec Œuvres inédites de Victor Hugo, entre autres un Drame en Trois Actes—"Inez de Castro." (Bruxelles et Leipzig: Lacroix, Verboeckhoven & Cie.)

NEW countries have produced such a generation of literary men as that which "flamed out its thoughts" in France during the fifteen years of the Restoration and the reign of the Citizen-king. Such historians as Guizot, Thiers, Michelet, and Thierry, such preachers as Lacordaire, such song-writers as Béranger, such poets as Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and Alfred de Musset, such novelists as Balzac, are not born every day; and yet these names represent but a very few of the men who earned distinction during that wonderful period. There can be few more interesting subjects than the life, character, and education of a man who occupied, as Victor Hugo did, a distinguished position among such a generation, and was foremost in many of its battles. We have

said "a distinguished position:" in many respects it was the most distinguished; for, as a poet, he stands, in our judgment, unquestionably the first, and the force and originality of his prose is certainly not inferior to the best, even to that of Michelet himself.

The method adopted for giving the world a history of his life possesses some novelty. There are many autobiographies more or less sincere, and there are innumerable biographies written with every degree of friendliness and hostility; but this book professes to be written by a "witness of Victor Hugo's life"—and report says it is the production of his wife. As the work, which is without a preface, is utterly silent on the subject of its authorship, we are not in a position to speak with any degree of certainty on the point; and we will only say that, if Madame Victor Hugo be indeed the authoress, she has scarcely taken advantage of the knowledge she must possess to give us a full insight into her husband's character. We should have liked a more complete account of the successive phases through which his mind has gone, and of the formation of his opinions; and we would willingly have spared for such a purpose the whole of the seventy-eight pages devoted to the question of the abolition of capital punishments. Not that the arguments which are there brought forward have no weight; on the contrary, in their own sphere they are very powerful—though it is characteristic of the eloquent poet that he nowhere in any of the letters and speeches printed in that chapter discusses, or attempts to discuss, the practical arguments usually brought against his favourite measure. But then, besides that we have read much of it in his former works, all this dissertation is not Victor Hugo's life, nor, except in a distant way, the history of Victor Hugo's mind.

It will be easy to explain what we mean, and to point out the want which we think exists in this book. Victor Hugo began life a staunch royalist, and many of his earlier poems are in honour of the Bourbons; he is now a republican, and on many points an ultra-democrat. This is a very great and a very radical change, and it is important that we should know by what causes it was effected, and what were its successive phases; yet the book scarcely gives us any answer to these very natural questions. Another similar want, and one which can be remedied still less, inasmuch as we can to a certain extent gather Victor Hugo's own mind from his books, is the absence of any definite character of his mother. We are told, indeed, that she was a Voltairian in religion and a royalist in politics, and, further, that she exercised an enormous influence over her sons, who were devoted to her. But this is not enough; it gives us, indeed, a bare outline, but it does not constitute a mental portrait, such as Titian or Vandyke would have given of the body—a portrait by which we might know the persons as if we had lived with them.

Having made these remarks, we have nothing further to say in disparagement of the book. It is often eloquent, occasionally amusing, and generally interesting; and the style shows by many affinities that the author has not only been a "witness of Victor Hugo's life," but a constant student of his methods of thought and of writing. His first literary labours, his early efforts, his travels, his relations with literary men and artists, and the failures and successes of his dramas, are well described; and, as there are few of the notables of the period with whom he did not in some way or other come into contact, there are naturally many pleasant anecdotes and scraps of information to be given concerning them. The following was his first introduction—if introduction it may be called—to the great liberal journalist Armand Carrel :—

Victor Hugo was calling one day on M. Rabbe (the sub-editor of the *Tablettes Universelles*). A discussion arose between them on the subject of