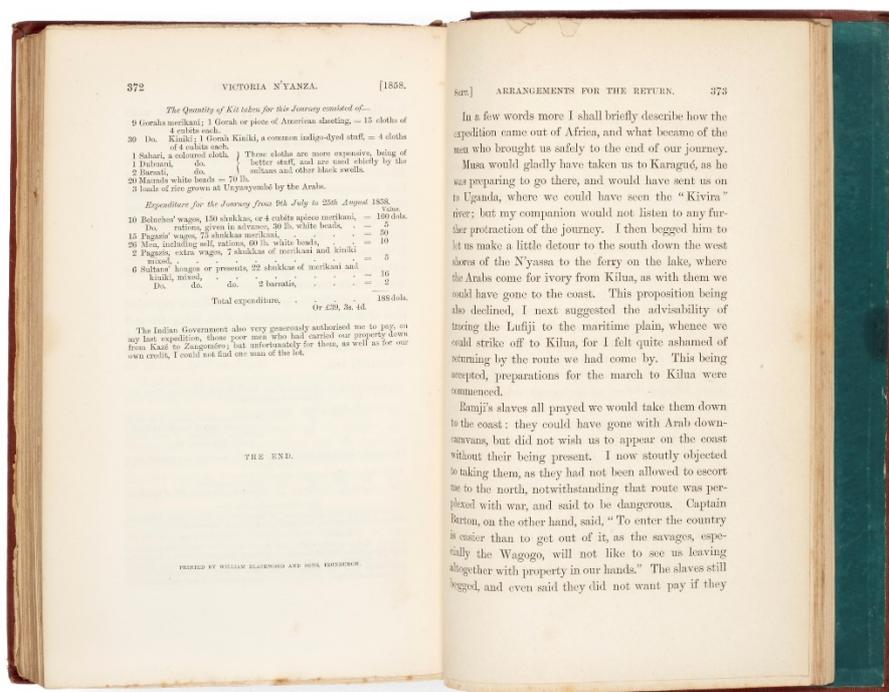


*Antiquarian Booksellers since 1847*

A STING IN THE ‘TAIL’

ONE OF ONLY TWELVE FAMILY COPIES OF SPEKE’S *WHAT LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOURCE OF THE NILE* WITH THE SUPPRESSED FINAL SECTION IS ACQUIRED BY THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND



*To show how the Nile drained the Victoria N’yanza, I got Mr. Finlay (the Society’s mapper) to draw me a diagram, and with that hanging over our heads, I, for the first time, propounded in public my opinion that the Victoria N’yanza would eventually prove to be the source of the Nile (John Hanning Speke)*

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND AND BERNARD QUARITCH LIMITED today announced the Library’s acquisition of one of only twelve family copies of John Hanning Speke’s *What Led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, which includes an additional eight-page supplement, describing Speke’s announcement of his discovery of the source of the Nile to the Royal Geographical Society, as well as details of his feud with Sir Richard Burton – pages which were suppressed from the trade edition at the behest of Speke’s family and his publisher, Blackwood’s.

Speke and Burton’s dispute stemmed from their first joint expedition to Africa in 1854-1855, and continued to blight their second expedition in 1856-1859. During their second expedition they located Lake Tanganika, and Speke, leading a subsidiary party, discovered Ukerewe Lake on 3 August 1858, which he named the Victoria Nyanza. As Speke’s biographer Alexander Maitland wrote, it was ‘in this moment [...] that the inspiration struck him, so clearly henceforward he could never be in any doubt, that here, stretching out before him, was the lake which formed the great reservoir of the White Nile’.

Burton disagreed with Speke’s hypothesis, but Speke travelled back to England before him and lectured to the Royal Geographical Society on the expedition’s discoveries and his (correct) conviction that he had identified the source of the Nile, before publishing an account of the expedition in *Blackwood’s Magazine*. In his final expedition (1860-1863), Speke was able to confirm that the Victoria Nyanza was the source of the Nile, and he returned to England in 1863 to a rapturous reception. Later in the year he published his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of*

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*the Nile* and then in 1864 *What Led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, his final work, which was based on his notes from the two earlier expeditions, and was intended to provide a context to his discovery while also presenting his arguments against Burton.

For nearly 150 years after its publication Speke's final work, published just weeks before his death, held a secret known to very few and unremarked in print: an eight-page supplement, which he called the 'Tail', with a description of his first public announcement to the RGS on the source of the Nile and further details on his feud with Burton. Speke had originally wanted to include the 'Tail' in his book, but pressure from his family and his friend and publisher John Blackwood led Speke to agree to suppress it. By way of a compromise, Blackwood's printed twelve extra copies for the author to distribute to his family, which included the additional material; of these twelve, only five are known to survive.

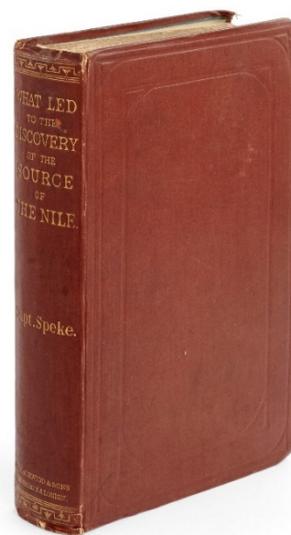
The archive of William Blackwood & Sons is held by the National Library of Scotland, and Blackwood's ledgers for the publication of the book document these twelve 'Tail' copies, which are also recorded in a letter from William Blackwood to Speke of 16 July 1864: Blackwood wrote to Speke that he would receive his copies of the book shortly, adding, '[i]n a short note I have to day from my Uncle John, he beg[s] of me, to drop you a line to be very cautious, & not let any of these copies be sent about beyond your family circle'. Until very recently the Library has only held a copy of the standard edition of *What Led ...*, but it has now acquired a 'Tail' copy from the antiquarian booksellers Bernard Quaritch Ltd, who were offering it on behalf of a private collector.

This copy was inscribed by the author's brother Benjamin Speke, presumably after John Hanning Speke's death on 15 September 1864. Dr Graham Hogg, a rare books curator in the National Library of Scotland, said: 'We are delighted to acquire this copy for our collections in view of the fact that the Blackwood's archive provides the key to the history of this long-forgotten suppressed text, and we also hold correspondence between the Blackwoods and John and Benjamin Speke. Moreover, this example is, as far as we know, the only one of the five recorded copies to be held in any institution internationally and thus freely available to scholars'. Maitland, who drew heavily on the Blackwood's archive when writing *Speke*, commented, 'I can't think of a better place than the National Library of Scotland for this book now'.

Mark James of Bernard Quaritch Ltd added, 'Quaritch is delighted to have facilitated the acquisition of this rare and remarkable volume by the Library, and its previous owner is very pleased that we have found a permanent home for it in such a suitable collection'.

For further information, please contact Mark James ([m.james@quaritch.com](mailto:m.james@quaritch.com) / 020 7297 4873). High resolution images are available on request.

*FOUNDED IN LONDON IN 1847, Bernard Quaritch Ltd is one of the world's leading antiquarian booksellers. Bernard Quaritch (1819-1899) counted Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte, the Prime Ministers William Ewart Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli, and the artist and author William Morris amongst his clients, and was characterised by The Times' obituarist as, 'the greatest bookseller who ever lived. His ideals were so high, his eye so keen, his transactions were so colossal, his courage so dauntless, that he stands out among men who have dealt in old literature as a Napoleon or a Wellington stands out among generals'. For further information about the company's history, please visit <http://www.quaritch.com/about/our-history>.*



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