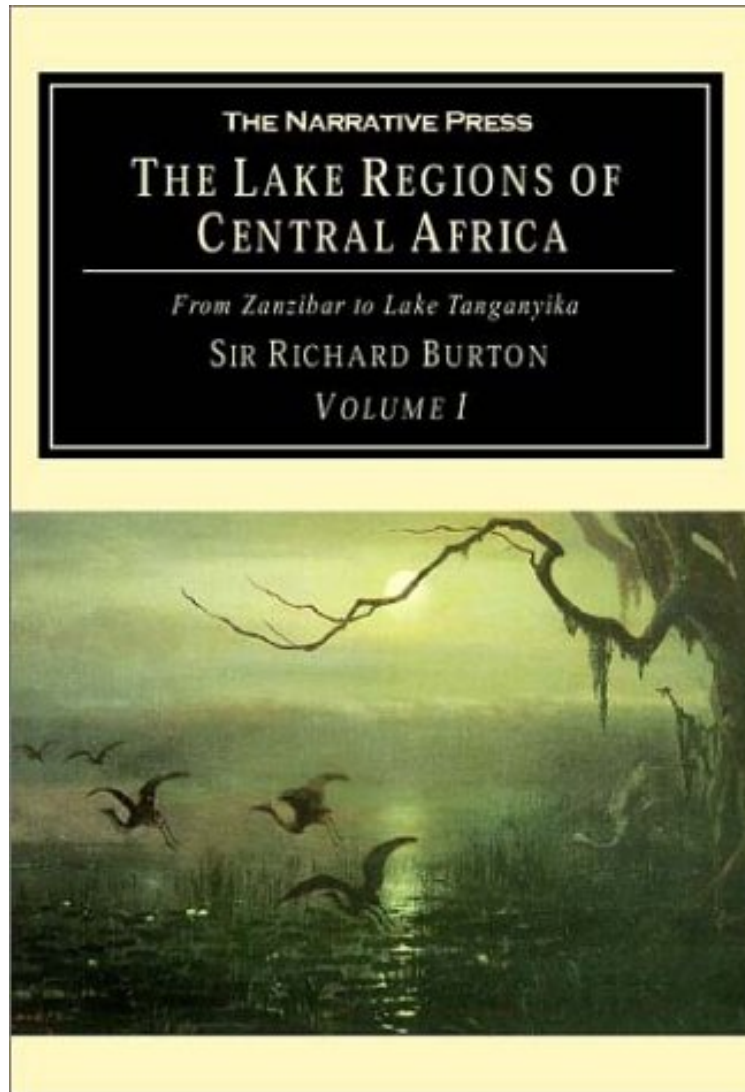


[Library ebook] The Lake Regions of Central Africa: From Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika (Volume 1)

# The Lake Regions of Central Africa: From Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika (Volume 1)

Richard Francis Burton

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**Richard Francis Burton : The Lake Regions of Central Africa: From Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika (Volume 1)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lake Regions of Central Africa: From Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika (Volume 1):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Elizabeth A. KentGood13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Well worth the effortBy Ein KundeThe book is a detailed chronological account of nearly three years of difficult travel between Zanzibar and Lake Tanganyika, circa the late 1850's. Nothing escapes Burton's

observation. He writes of everything from the local hairstyles to the price of pombe (African beer). He gives detailed descriptions of the landscape, geography, flora, and fauna. He writes of Arabs and the Eastern slave trade. He depicts safari life in the days of human porters and mules. He tells of the people he encounters, though his descriptions of Africans may be offensive to some. There is a wealth of information here, something for everyone with an interest in Eastern Africa, or exploration, or imperialism. The place names have sometimes changed from Burton's time to ours, as have the English spelling conventions of Swahili words. Anyone with any interest in Eastern Africa, especially the precolonial period, should arm themselves with a good atlas and reference book and read Burton. Burton led an amazing life of exploration and scholarship [he wrote "The Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah" after disguising himself as an Arab to travel to the sacred city; he visited Salt Lake City and wrote "City of the Saints"; after exploring in South America he wrote "Explorations of the Highlands of Brazil"; and he translated the "Arabian Nights" and poetry of Lus de Cames], still he may not be an easy writer to come to terms with for many contemporary readers. He is far from what we would call "politically correct". But he wrote so much and so well, and is practically the only writer to travel in Eastern Africa in the 1850's that is in print today (except for John Hanning Speke who was with him on this trip, and who wrote "Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile"). To put this book in context it is wise to read something about Burton, particularly Burton and Speke in Africa; know why in "Lake Regions" Burton never refers to Speke by name. (There are a few Burton biographies, and books about Burton and Speke; or see the movie: "Mountains of the Moon")

25 of 26 people found the following review helpful.  
Comprehensive description of Eastern Africa in 1850's  
By Ein Kunde  
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Burton describes his three-year voyage throughout Central Africa from 1856-1859.

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Sir Richard Burton was a brilliant and complex explorer, linguist, adventurer, scholar and swordsman. The Lake Regions of Central Africa is the narrative of three years' hard travel from Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika to try and discover the source of the Nile. The journey was often fraught with danger: "The first visit to Kaole opened up a vista of unexpected difficulties. My escort had been allowed to leave the Artmise, and their comrades in arms had talked them half-crazy with fear. Zahri, a Baloch, who had visited Unyamwezi, declared that nothing less than 100 guards, 150 guns, and several cannon could enable them to fight a way through the perils of the interior. Tulsu, the Banyan, warned them that for three days they must pass amongst savages, who sit on trees and discharge poisoned arrows into the air with such dexterity that they never fail to fall upon the travellers' pate; he strongly advised them therefore, under pain of death, to avoid trees - no easy matter in a land all forest. Even while he is battling man and beast, Burton finds time to make painstaking records of the history and religion, geography and biology, as well as the styles and customs, of the regions through which he passes. He is always very detailed about the appearance of the people he encounters. "Their favourite necklace is a string of shark's teeth. They distend the lobes of the ears to a prodigious size, and decorate them with a rolled-up strip of variously-dyed cocoa-leaf, a disk of wood, a plate of chakazi or rawgum-copal, or, those failing, with a betel-nut or with a few straws. The left wing of the nose is also pierced to admit a pin of silver, brass, lead, or even a bit of manioc-root...They have also a propensity for savage "accroche-coeurs," which stand out from the cheek bones, stiffly twisted like young porkers' tails. Aside from having a hyperactive intellect, Burton was also fearless, and he experienced many things whites had never been privy to. For example, he describes some magical ceremonies he witnessed: "Becoming obese by age and good living, [the chief] fell ill...and, as usual, his relations were suspected of compassing his end by Uchawi, or black magic...The Mganga was summoned to apply the usual ordeal. After administering a mystic drug, he

broke the neck of a fowl, and splitting it into two lengths inspected the interior, if blackness or blemish appear about the wings, it denotes the treachery of children, relations and kinsmen; the backbone convicts the mother and grandmother; the tail shows that the criminal is the wife, the thighs the concubines, and the injured shanks or feet the other slaves. Having fixed upon the class of the criminals, they are collected together by the Mganga, who, after similarly dosing a second hen, throws her up into the air above the heads of the crowd and singles out the person upon whom she alights. Confession is extorted by tying the thumb backwards till it touches the wrist or by some equally barbarous mode of question. The consequence of condemnation is certain and immediate death... These two volumes constitute some of Burton's best prose. They are essential for anyone interested in the history of central Africa, the culture and customs of the peoples who live in these regions, or anyone looking for a good adventure story. Don't miss other books by Sir Richard Burton, available from The Narrative Press, including Goa, and the Blue Mountains and Wanderings in West Africa.