

## Letter to John Washington, 12 September 1860

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[0001]

Sesheke 12 September 1860

Dear Captain Washington

In three months we  
marched on foot from Tette to this,  
a distance by the route we travelled along  
the North bank of the Zambesi of 600  
miles at least. We crossed the mountains  
in which Morumbua lies, then the  
Loangua and Kafue at their confluences  
and proceeded along the fine fertile  
densely peopled valley in which the  
Zambesi gently flows till we came  
to °17 18 South. People very friendly  
and hospitable though the men  
go stark naked. the numbers of  
elephants buffaloes & Hippopotami  
prodigious and the whole country a  
coal field broken through at parts  
by igneous rocks. Here we turned  
[0002]

westward and soon gained an altitude of  
3000 feet above the sea or 2000 feet  
above the Zambesi - Near Tabachen  
we had hoar frost and a little ice  
and after breathing for a short time  
to clear cold air of the high plateau we  
descended to the West intending to make  
a pretty straight course to Sesheke  
but at 20 ° of latitude we saw the columns  
of smoke and I could not resist the  
temptation to shew the wonderful scene  
to my companions D<sup>r</sup> Kirk and M<sup>r</sup> C  
Livingstone though it added some 40  
miles to our tramp - the water was  
very much lower than when I was  
there in 1855. Indeed people employed  
to build a stockade to protect my  
seeds on garden island waded across  
from the North bank. Between  
ourselves my brother who is familiar

with Niagara declares that Victoria  
Falls throw the American into the  
shade. D<sup>r</sup> Kirk declares none but  
a painter in oil could give an idea  
[0003]  
of the scene - And this is when one half  
is nearly dry and but two good  
columns shew. I think that I have  
overstated nothing but the columns as  
to height and I cannot measure them  
We shall measure accurately all we  
can as we return, in the mean  
time a stone requires 5 seconds to  
reach the bottom. A gentleman from Natal called this 200! yards! I  
cannot refer to Cooley's fancy  
that the Liambai runs under  
the Kalahari desert and is lost in a  
serious manner. Pity we cannot  
get rid of London sewage as easily  
as he can get rid of a river 300  
or 400 yards wide above the Kafue and the most navigable part of  
the whole Zambesi.

We went on to [Sekeltuat] Sesheke and  
found him labouring under a skin  
disease believed by his people to be  
leprosy - several suffered death  
[0004]  
for the crime of having inflicted the disease  
by witchcraft. He was gratified by  
our treatment though not knowing  
the disease exactly we could not  
speak positively about it. We used  
the medicines we had and I went  
over to Linyanti on horse back  
to search for others in my waggon  
He regained spirits and was recovering  
when we left. We have kept faith  
with him and his people. The Arab party  
that went to ~~Linyanti~~ Loanda consisting  
of 95 persons never returned. they  
may have been wheedled over to the  
East coast on a promise of getting  
horses - overpowered & sold as  
French emigrants.

While at Linyanti I saw the  
graves of a party of English missionaries  
who had perished after some three  
months in the country. I was very  
much saddened by this - six out

of nine Europeans had been cut off  
[0005]

At that very time we at a lower  
and more unhealthy part of the  
river cured the fever so quickly  
that we were rarely detained more  
than a day or two - A European  
would be stricken down and  
resume his march on foot a  
day after the operation of a remedy  
which I first employed in curing  
my own children and a party  
of English (one of whom had died  
before my arrival) at Lake  
Ngami in 1850. Four of the  
native attendants on the mission  
also perished - this sad case  
makes me very anxious that  
the remedy become widely known  
and I have ventured to lay it formally  
before Lord John Russell in the  
belief that a saving of human life  
may be effected - and if so it ought  
[0006]

to be recorded that the discovery was  
by a Government servant D<sup>r</sup> Kirk  
has the same opinion of its value  
that I have and indeed it is the  
experience of this Expedition that  
gives me full confidence in its  
usefulness for Europeans generally It consists of common medicines  
but used in a way some would  
find fault with without preliminary  
measures - It is Resin of Jalap  
eight grains calomel eight grains  
Quinine and Rhubarb of each 4 grains. [mix well & keep in powder dose to 20 grs]. Then  
Quinine in four  
grain doses completes the cure - the  
most urgent symptoms are relieved  
in from four to six hours. I have  
never met a case in either white  
or black that I did not cure if taken  
in time but I have avoided saying  
much about it as it would look like quackery. It has no bad effect on  
the system for I have escaped any  
[0007]

severe attack. I have had little illness  
only probably from malaria but not  
one regular fever since my return We have tried combinations of other  
purgatives but they have left the  
conviction that anything else is

mere trifling. Warburg's Tincture  
causes profuse sweating & weakens Ours cures without loss of strength  
to the patient. You will understand  
my earnestness now when I  
mention that I found in my  
waggon the proper medicines for  
the composition of the remedy about  
500 yds from the spot where these  
missionaries died, and I have stated  
its value in general terms towards  
the end of "Missionary Travels"

The Makololo are perishing  
by fever and are very anxious to  
remove to the Highlands but  
[0008]  
dread removal to a defenceless site  
without some member of M<sup>r</sup> Moffats  
family. A town is to be sent up this  
year by way of experiment on  
Mosilikatzes cupidity. A son of M<sup>r</sup>  
Moffat is ~~there~~[with Mosilikatze] and as influence  
increases our post will work.  
Several trading parties have been to the  
West coast Sekeletu regaled us with  
tea - American biscuits & preserved  
fruits every day when we call. He  
is buying horses at 10 tusks per  
beast, and sent to Pungo Andongo  
in Angola to buy a horse I had  
ridden there. They are quite ready  
to be vaccinated. A supply sent  
lay long at Linyanti together with my  
despatches & has lost its power. I beg you to secure us a fresh supply  
by your mail so as to come as fresh  
as possible - the Establishment is 8  
Russell Place, Fitzroy Square. Ever yours

David Livingstone