

## Letter to John Washington, 28 September 1858

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

Kongone Harbour

28<sup>th</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup>

1858

My Dear Captain Washington

Many thanks for your  
two notes which gave me  
much pleasure and some  
pain. I tried to keep up  
the good name we had  
when we left but had  
I not at last exerted my  
authority the complete dis-  
organization of the Expedition  
would have been the

[0002]

result. This all declared when  
I told them I had accepted C<sup>t</sup>Bed-  
ingfeld resignation. There has  
not been a single jar with any  
one and me or with each other  
but there were several with him  
Fancy him talking of Skead's  
wonderful perseverance in  
surveying as "that old fool  
shewing off". It was sorely  
against the grain for me to  
take the step which caused the  
resignation as he let it become  
known that he would attack  
me on the Sunday work -  
I took warning by the experience  
of the Grt Niger Expedition which  
I have been informed had

[0003]

prayers three times a day &  
stopped all Sunday - I would  
not remain an hour in the  
mangrove swamps and

have been attacked in the  
Cape papers by an officer of  
the Expedition in consequence  
people may call out against  
it but they would call out  
more if I lost my men.

I ordered some things to  
be sent up a Christmas  
and the Admiral kindly  
sent them up at once - this  
makes me draw £105  
sooner than I intended - the  
[0004]

Portuguese war is ended and  
we now hire canoes to carry  
up all our things - so I keep  
the money we have on  
hand for that. I believe  
we shall require no more  
for a twelve month. We have  
had no fever properly so  
called but colds modified  
by malaria - no one has been  
ailing more than a week.  
We have been taking quinine  
in water of late and as I  
considered that when we get  
over the first unhealthy  
season in January march  
my companions well

[0005]  
needing something bracing I  
ordered some ale porter &  
sherry for them. I consider  
our Expedition as conducting  
a health experiment as well  
as other matters. I take all up  
to Tete where M<sup>r</sup> Livingstone  
is now making magnetic obser-  
vations and Major Secard  
gives us a house and plot  
of land a mile or two above  
Tete to conduct experiments  
in cotton and sugar cane  
No sooner did the war  
end than he took up the  
little engine and sugar mill  
[0006]

and a lot of luggage. At his  
suggestion the gentlemen of

Tete at once got me a ton  
and a half of coal the first  
ever digged in this country  
and very feasible stuff it is  
too though exposed in the  
bank of the Unatize to the  
action of floods & sun for  
ages. It will be better farther  
in so all say. I send a report  
on it by Thornton - also a  
chart made by him. He being  
unable to geologize in the  
delta. Kirk has been working  
hard at Economic botany  
He has made indigo - We have  
[0007]

Lignum vitae -Ebony & teak  
or African oak & some fine  
fibres. I intend to take care  
of the young men at the  
house above Tete making  
experiments in agriculture  
till the healthier period comes  
If it is only a few rocks  
that render the passage  
tortuous and these of small  
dimensions I may try  
to blast them but I do not  
promise it. I would not  
grudge half a year's daily  
toil as a quarry man if  
I could open this pathway  
to the Interior  
[0008]

The Portuguese wish to purchase  
our cotton gins, and I mean  
to sell two. The press will be  
used for Buaze if it is in  
abundance. the war has  
been very much against us  
as it has caused immense  
destruction of property and depopu-  
lation. Portuguese are as friendly  
as usual - all of them.

My companions have  
had no serious illness - but  
all have had ailments chiefly  
colds except myself - we feel  
the necessity of care - but this

river has the great peculiarity  
of being a sandy in contrast  
to the muddy rivers of the West  
and inspires hope David Livingstone

I thank you for your kind remembrance  
of my wife - she will be at Sekeletus before us