

Letter to John Kirk, 25 March 1871

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[0001]

Webbs Lualaba or Lacustrine River 25 March 1871 across
another great bend to the West of about 100'
My Dear Kirk

I very thankfully recieved your letter of 28th Feb/69
sent by Sheikh bin Nassib at Mamohela about 7 days N.W. of Bam[-]
barre containing a welcome one from Agnes to you. By it I first
learned that you had taken unto yourself a wife who has presented you
with a daughter - Blessings on them both - R.C. people think each has an
angel - I only know that the little ones are angels themselves and come as
ministering spirits of peace and love - I have but one regret in looking
back to my stationary missionary life and that is that I did not play
more with my children but I worked so hard physically & mentally that in
the evenings there was seldom any fun left in me - I thankfully accept
your invitation to lodge with you at Zanzibar but I feel so woefully
far away and am going still further in order to make a complete
work of the exploration of the sources of the Nile - I have been sorely let [...] hindered in Manyema and reaction against the bloody Ujijian slaving
having set in I [...]went off not without apprehension and until I get
beyond the region of bloodshed I cannot feel safe - It is not slave trade
it is slaking thirst for blood and catching free people very many of
whom die before reaching the coast - I shall give you an episode which
happened about a fortnight ago close by the spot where I write - My spirits
are beyond measure depressed in writing on such matters for the public
and I can only give half statements for fear of letting heartless dawdlers
drawl from their club sofas "exaggeration" "overdrawing" &c - The
restrained exposure of the vile Portuguese deeds on the Shire in my last
book made me oblivious to every thing else - My own & family interests
were unheeded - Lord Palmerston sent a Queen's counsel to ask me "what
he could do to aid me as he was most anxious to serve me" I could only think
of the work in Africa & asked the East African ports to be opened to lawful
commerce ^ for all nations - It never occurred to me that he meant aught for myself or
children till I was out here and Lord Palmerston dead - The episode I
mention was by Muhamad Bogharib's people, and he being the best man
of all who have come to trade in Manyema you may if you can imagine
the conduct of the people of the worst - Bon Hassani - Bon embegu &
Bin Omar the heads of the party sent to trade gave the Manyema near
Moene Lualaba 25 copper bracelets worth at Ujiji about 2 ½ dollars.
This was the trap - Then went down the river & sold all the rest of their copper
for ivory - coming back they demanded ivory for the 25 rings & began

to shoot the men in cold blood, and capture women & children & grass cloth - goats & fowls - they continued the murdering for three days in a densely peopled district and carried off an immense number of women & children because Muhamad does not intend to trade here again - With all his goodness I have no doubt but he knew the plan & will receive his full share of the captives They will come into Zanzibar as traders, and the people as bought slaves but there is not one slave among them and to make the matter the more atrocious the very men who murdered & captured repeatedly declared to me that the people now victimized were remarkably civil and kind - thousands come over to the river every ^ market day to hold markets at various points for flour cassava beans groundnuts fish salt oil bananas plantains sweet potatoes sugar cane grass cloth earthen ware = iron ware as knives spears needles fowls sheep goats pigs slaves ivory &c and it was particularly noticed that when the men of two districts were engaged in actual hostilities the women go from market to market with their wares unmolested - Women were never touched until now by these Muhamadans - as a rule not a slave is sold in Manyema except by the ruffian strangers - It would be only Justice if the Sultan would set free all captives from Manyema as soon as they arrive - They were not traded for but murdered for - In talking with these Ujijians I always protest against shedding human blood - they think that rhyming over "God is great" &c all sin is forgiven - a slave of Thani bin Suellim of Ujiji named Yahood boasted in my hearing of having with his comrades killed one kindred people & burned 9 villages - all for a single string of red beads which a Manyema man tried in vain to steal - I said to him "you were sent to trade not to murder" He replied "we are sent to kill people, that is our work" one of my people was killed I suppose in blind revenge - a man was pinned to the ground with a spear near the 9 villages and I was sleeping in another close by - three were killed at another village and we dont know who are friends & who have first cause to seek revenge of all strangers - I find great difficulty in getting a canoe after the Bogharib feat of arms - all flee from us your men seem as eager for blood as others - all long to be able to brag of blood shed = That Shereef Boshier has put me to great inconvenience by refusing to send me my own beads and other things while he stops to feast at my expense He thinks that he and his three slaves are earning salary - I have sent orders to take the goods & give them to Moenyeghere a trustworthy man - Awathe the Had it at Zanzibar and onwards other headman has enlarged scrotum - I feel extremely thankful for all says now it pains him!! wants pay without work I fear you did for me in the most trying circumstances a man could be placed in - I send a cheque for Rs 4000 by Muhamad Bogharib - Lualaba becomes smaller down here than stated in my despatch - "2 to 4 miles" - but it is still a mighty river ^ from 1 ½ to 2 miles = Please to detain the Despatch & letters if you hear of my being on the way down and near I should like to rewrite

The Governor is very li[...][b]eral with presents of foolscap paper London makers name Millington 1867 same as yours - Suspicious
I got a
sheet of
my own
paper

[0002]

all the hearsay written only in apprehension of never coming
out - Not a single line from Sir Paraffin Young since I left England
and I have written him by every opportunity - the money I sent for was to
be lifted from £1000 in Coutts['] hands - mine not his - letters may be in the
box which Muhamad bin Saleh had my note to open and take out medicines
and letters but M^r Shereef refused to allow him - If you write to Seward
remember me kindly to him and his wife - Take good care of your
better half & child
move about as
often as you can
Good people are
scarce - I am
thankful to hear
you say that
my words have
had some little
effect at home -
I have often
said with a sore
heart, I have laboured in
vain & spent
my strength for
nought & in
vain, yet surely
my work is
with the Lord
and my judg-
-ment with my
god - the cheering
prospect of
stopping the
East Coast
slave trade belongs
to you, and
therein I do greatly
rejoice - The
Sultan must
get troops who
will scorn the
mainland &
catch the bloody
thieves inland
By the counsel
of an old man
near him he is
said to have
parted with his
Belooches to save

expense - He
must not trust
to Arabs they are
such liars -
their prophet
lied to reform
his countrymen who now lie because it is
ingrained in their constitutions -

In the event of detaining the despatch & letters
you might give the substance of my letter to you
to the Government = I am rather anxious to
give but little to the public - Four spurious pub-
-lications = were concocted from my letters on my
journey across the continent - one a five shilling
book was sold in America & all over the world
extensively as "The book" It was by a schoolmaster
named Adams - Routledge sold a shilling book as
mine at all the railways in England & America
and offered me £20 to hold my peace about it -
a secretary of the London Missionary Society issued
a pamphlet = D^r L's life & travels "with a map"
"by the author" and again advertised it with "revised by himself" another secretary
performed a like piece
of villainy but palmed it off as from the "Society" knowing that I would not injure a great
Institution doing
work of priceless value in the world = Another secretary of the same society indulged on a
tirade ^ in a London church against me as
"morally guilty of the death of M^r Helmore" Cooley regularly proved me all wrong in the
Athenæum as soon
as my letters reached home - The Liambai which we found to be a mile broad was "an
undeveloped river" that
ran under the Kalahari desert and was lost "and I was a fool to say that it was a river at all["]
- Give Waller a hint
not to answer him by name - It is the breath of life to him to be named - When I was silent he
entreated me to
argue the point of the Liambai with him and Athenæum shu[...][t] out his letters when I only
joked at him without naming
him - "the great apostle of hearsay geography"- Waller does not seem to know James Russell
Lowell["]s poems
He is a Northerner and lashed the slaveocracy of the South when they uttered the same trash
as the Anthropologists
till they were red hot with rage - "The mass aught to labour and we lie on sofas" &c &c
A friend at Mamohela gave me a young Soko or gorilla lately - she sits 18 inches high and is
the most
intelligent and least mischievous of all the monkeys I have seen - I could not take her with me
as
I am mobbed enough already - two sokos she & I would not get a breath of air - she is to be
kept for me at
Ujiji - she walks on the backs of four fingers the space between the first joint & second touching
the ground -
the nails & thumbs do not touch it = It is like the daft minister you knew the legs are hitched

forward as if the arms were crutches

Moosa Kamaals was detain[...]ed many months & even sent back to Ujiji He hid his letter as his wages depended on it -

The 40 letters went off same day as Moosa Kamaals I

suspect the Governor is guilty not to allow evidence

of the plunder of my goods by his man Musa bin

Salum going to the coast - Giving off my goods to his own creature who stopped the porters ten days while he plundered

was villainy - the porters needed no one they had come so

far honestly - and then Salum went off to buy ivory in

Karagwe - I fear my two guns are abstracted from

the box which Shereef nurses - You packed it and it is

now repacked with I suspect Shereefs connivance

but I may be mistaken - It is suspicious that Shereef

persisted in keeping it close in spite of my written order to

Muhamad bin Saleh to open it or sent it entire - the men came

without loads - a party went from us to Ujiji told Shereef

that I was near and waiting for him - invited him to come with them so he is inexcusable