

Letter to Francis Skead, 8 February 1872

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[0001]

Ngombe Nullah^{8th}Feb'y

1872

My Dear Skead

I do not like
to lose my friends by not
writing to them - but
getting letters destroyed
by slaving Arabs
and Banians has
put me in the position
of appearing to be
quite careless to many
who like you I have
always regarded
with feelings of great
kindness. It is
quite an age since
I heard from you

[0002]

but I have been in the
slave mart of Eastern
Africa and all the
slavers dread being
"written against" and
letters either going
from or coming to me
have been treated
as unclean & burked
An American gentleman
takes this to the coast
so I make my excuse
to you for long silence
I have been exploring
for a long time
the sources of the Nile
and having found
an immense number
of them in 10" - 12" South

[0003]

[...] down the great central
valley and through
among the cannibals
the Watershed is some
700 miles long - from
it innumerable springs
converge into enormous
rivers and Lakes
not in an "Upper
Nile Basin" but in
a rather quick slope.
As soon as the Southern
was known it was
claimed for certain
dreamers called
Theoretical discovery
now by this packet
I reveal 700 miles
of fountains and to
be fair the dreamers
[0004]
must be allowed to have
hit on the division of
labour in their crossing
each may claim 233 miles
- a great Psychological
discovery - I am going
East to seize some
of my goods which
were unwisely handed
over to slaves and to
slave traders - the jolly
fellows have been
feasting on them for 14
months. They have
inflicted a loss of 2
years in time = 1800
miles of tramp and
at least £1000 of money
But I hope to get over
it all and with kind
love to your wife

I am very sincerely yours
David Livingstone