

## Letter to William O. Livingstone, 21 August 1862

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

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

[0001]

H.M. Exploring Ship, Pioneer

21<sup>st</sup> August

1862

My Dear Zouga

I recieved four  
letters from you on 25<sup>th</sup> Ult. by  
H.M.S. Ariel which called at  
Kongone. there were two for  
dear Mama besides, which  
had she been here would have  
made her glad. She is now  
with her Saviour and possibly  
knows what we are doing  
without the aid of letters. I  
see that you remember the  
dates of the departure of the  
mails and have written  
monthly. We seldom get letters

[0002]

or send them away for no  
monthly mail comes to our  
quarters but if you write  
as often as you can I shall  
send you as much in  
return as all you write. I  
thank you for your kind  
birthday present and for all  
your good wishes. I have  
sent some little things in  
a box which will be opened  
by Sir William Hooker at  
Kew and the packet sent  
to Agnes. you may consider  
what is sent to you as your  
birthday present though I dont  
know when that is.

[0003]

We are now at sea in the  
Mosambique channel going to  
Johanna and the River  
Rovuma. We steamed off  
Kongone to get away well from  
the land then our wood being  
but small we set sail, and  
kept the fuel for worse times  
but the wind was against  
us or from the North East.  
If we went one way we  
should have gone into Quillimane  
so we went the other and  
were fain to go away far to  
the South East. When about  
mid channel we had a fine  
breeze from the south and  
went as we thought sixty miles  
to the North but next day we  
found by the sun & chronometers  
[0004]

that while sailing briskly in one  
way the current in the sea had  
been taking us faster in another  
We were twelve miles South West  
of where we had been the day  
before when the wind began to  
blow from the South. Indeed the  
current had been flowing at the rate  
of 72 miles a day. Last year  
we met an East Indian ship  
near the same spot which was  
carried by the same current  
40 miles a day. We were then  
becalmed and knowing ~~that~~  
though we could see nothing  
that we were still gliding away  
where we did not wish to go.  
We got up steam and steamed  
East till we knew we had  
crossed the current. We have  
[0005]

had a good deal of calms, and only  
when we got near the coast of  
Madagascar did we meet favourable  
winds. if you look at the map  
you may see a small island called  
Jaõ de Nova we went between  
that and Madagascar. we saw  
neither the island nor Madagascar  
but by sextant & chronometers

I guided our ship through that  
way to avoid the current further  
out. We went 120 miles yesterday  
and should we have wind  
will see Johanna tomorrow  
afternoon. Now you see it is  
a good thing to possess knowledge  
I never intended to navigate  
a ship but now that it has  
come in my way, I do it &  
am thankful that I picked up  
[0006]

when younger all the knowledge  
I could. You must do the same.  
It is easy to carry about with  
you though you may not use  
it. I wished to give Robert a  
good education as the best legacy  
I could leave him. I know it  
would be useful - but he does  
not appreciate it. At present  
when young, people will pay  
attention to him on my account,  
but when they see that he has  
nothing in him he will be  
despised, and will be fit only  
to drive a "cuddy and a cart" with  
greens or clay pipes. I am sorry  
for it but the loss will be  
his. and it will be yours if  
you build yourself up on your  
[0007]

connection with me and not  
your own attainments and  
energy. I shall try and give you  
a good education to fit you for  
a life of usefulness in the  
service of God whether I am  
alive or not. but if you do  
not resolve to educate your-  
self, or do that which your  
masters can only help you to  
do, money will not serve.  
Wherefore is there a price in the  
hand of a fool to get wisdom  
seeing he hath no heart to it,  
is I think one of Solomon's  
sayings. In English we say  
"One cannot make a silk  
purse out of a sow's ear" We  
cannot make a wise man out

[...] [of a thing that] has no earnest desire  
[...] [to be filled] to act a manly noble  
[0008]

part in life. See how the Queen &  
Prince Albert taught their children  
they knew that without education  
- trained & disciplined minds, even  
their high position would not  
save them from contempt. I  
am glad you still wish to be a  
missionary. It is a noble work.  
the Highest had an only son and he  
was a missionary from the  
realms of bliss to save a lost world.  
I am working and preparing the  
way for others who will enter into  
my labours when I am no more  
here - - You ask if I enjoyed my  
holidays Didnt I? Thats all.  
potesne lingua Romanarum  
loquari? I dont like people to  
see my letters as they sometimes  
publish what I never intended. the  
Lord bless & guide you [...]