

Letter to Robert Moffat 1, 27 October 1846

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[0001]

Chonuane 27 Oct^r 1846

My Dear Father

As M^r Cumming leaves
tomorrow morning I must write you a note
But I have but little inclination to
writing at present. Robert has been
very ill for three days past of
Bronchitis or inflammation of the lining
membrane of the air tubes of the
lungs. How induced we dont know
A great many Bakwena suffer
from colds & dysentery. perhaps it
arises from the intense heat &
occasional disposition to showers
the damp air comes from the
parts where rain has fallen
& that too often in the evenings.-
- very pleasant but pernicious after
the hot sunshine
[0002]

He could scarcely breathe for one day - the
mucus collected so abundantly in the air
tubes. The sound was like the cooing
of wood pigeons in his breast. That
has been removed but no medicine has
any effect on the complaint. He has
constant heat of skin - loses flesh &
is much troubled with his cough
Remedies which usually produce a
speedy change do nothing in his case
the cough gradually sounds worse &
worse. I am sorry I cannot
speak of the favourable symptoms
I can only hope they will soon
appear. His cheerfulness is quite gone

M^r Cumming has kindly favoured us
with an adze so there is no need for
that which went to Kuruman. We hope
Mamary & party arrived safe. M^rC will
give all our news.

[0003]

I have been shortening the bands of the waggon
succeeded well with those of the "naves"
except making one rather too little. Three
of the large bands fitted well But one did
not touch the wood [^][at the weld] & when trying to
send it in (when cold) I broke it although
the weld was one of the best made. I
take it slowly welding one side then
the other. What is the proper distance
to place the band from the hole of the
bellows? ought the centre of the band
or the lower edge to be opposite
the hole? I placed the band sometimes
two sometimes three inches from the
hole but could not get a heat over
the whole part to be welded. It either
went over the upper or lower edge
My friends here say you put pieces of
stone under the band to bring it into
a proper position What that is I
cant ascertain - this sort of work
has suffered a few days interruption
School is finished - only one small

[0004]

shower of rain yet. Olive grows briskly
Waggon tent suffered a severe fracture
all along back bone - Ribs all shivered
We shall patch it up & go Eastward
as soon as Robert recovers - Corn
crop best this year - long ago
you have heard of the departure of Baba
to the land of the blessed. He worked hard
for us. ploughing &c. I could not reckon
with him being engaged with Vardon
& Oswel But said in parting I shall
add ten dollars to the amount for carriage
& reckon again with you. He said
although I gave nothing for the work
it did not matter. He worked to assist
us. In their confusion after the accident
they sent a man on horseback to Mabotsa
& a man on foot here - the latter
arrived late in the afternoon & Mebaloe &
I immediately set off keeping up a gallop
till it was dark. The moon arose
about one oclock and a rhinoceros at
the same time disputed our path

[0005]

standing snorting at us. We went off at right
angles with the path & our minds being

impressed with the accident conceived every
big dark bush after that a real burile
moving & making towards us, Directing
our course to a fire in the distance we
found it at [^][a] cattle post of Bakhatla who
gave the melancholy intelligence that
the spirit of Baba had departed just
about the time we left home. Had the
man on horseback come here we might have
[...] witnessed his dying moments & it would have
been satisfactory to our feelings to have
shewn respect to him though we could
do little else. We returned in the morning
with sorrowful hearts

If an opportunity should occur
we shall feel obliged by your sending
some alphabets & first spelling books
We recieved by some Wanketze
a parcel & (we supposed) letters
addressed to Mrs M. After letting them
[0006]

lie some time We concluded we might
open & it in order to take our share
& trusted you would take our word
that we had not read any but
our own But after opening the
envelope we felt what appeared
only one letter so we return it
in nearly the same state it left
you

We send if M^cC. will take it
a Macaca root hoping you will [...]
enclose it for D^r Buchanan, in
the Box. If you think it will
do mischief it can be left out

Intend as soon as the present brush
of work is over to collect some of
the rarer bulbs for your botanic
garden I know one Mocaca as
big as a small water vatchy - this
upper portion (stems leaves) &c. is
used as a vegetable by nati[...]