

Letter to Benjamin T. Pyne

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Kolobeng 28th May 1846

My very Dear Friends

It is no task to write to you - I would write frequently indeed if I took up my pen every time I think & talk about you But time is not allowed one for all I wish to do so you must take my efforts as all I can give to show that I am still the same as ever I am at present out at our garden which by the way is no nearer than forty miles from our residence We have very little water at Chonuane & cannot irrigate this year. The past season has been one of unwonted drought even in this thirsty land many fountains are quite dried up and the corn crop of the natives is nearly an entire failure the scarcity of water compels us to look for corn elsewhere so we sought for a fountain elsewhere & after some toil have made a watercourse & sowed some English corn. Where we ploughed is all over marked by footsteps of the Elephant Rhinoceros & buffalo. We have disturbed them in their pasture and the lion too seems to think we have no right here for they have growled enough at us lately both by night & day. - this absence from home prevents my using the best paper I have for you. But you will excuse me I know. I go over on saturdays to see my wife & child & preach on sunday We depart at daylight & reach the house about an hour after dark - this notwithstanding the continual work the whole day on oxback which is not a great deal quicker than a native walks Our child is growing - little Robert Moffat if he lives may see you yet. this I shall never while here on earth. How pleasant it would be to have another tea with you But no - never. M^{rs} (L) has begun to write you several times but never finished one good enough for M^{rs}Pyne I do not wonder at this for she has very little time. She must attend to everything almost and everything has to be made from the raw material. She dreams about you which shews her thoughts are frequently turned "youwards"

[0002]

She manages her house very well and I have much
cause for gratitude for comfortsto which I was
before a stranger. She teaches some of the Bakuenes *[Note: The Bechuana, a South African people.
Robert Moffat worked for the Bechuana mission.]*
who come for instruction sewing & reading But
we are not yet fairly settled One of the chiefs wives
sews beautifully after a very little instruction
She is now making a patch work waistcoat for
her husband Did I ever thank you for patchwork
shawls? If not I now do. I gave one lately to a
woman who assisted to a loaf of bread on
an occasion when I had tasted none for
six weeks before. You mention some box or
boxes sent these have not yet arrived so
I cannot speak of the contents. We sent £26
to you lately & told M^r (P) how to do with the sum
Hope it came safely to hand. We are favoured
with Indian visitors occasionally. they come to
hunt for game & health - of the former they
find plenty and we are better off now than
at Mabotsa - the chief is very liberal & scarcely
a week passes without a present of meat
being sent to us. One of our visitors this year
M^rOswel from Tinneveley knows Ongar well.
He is a judge & collector of customs - shewed us
great kindness last year and this year brought
two cows for Robert. We have agreed to travel
together to the Bamapela *[Note: Bamapela, a Matabele people of South Africa. See Livingstone\'s,
<i>Missionary travels and researches in South Africa</i> (1857), chapters 6 and 10.]* a very powerful
tribe of Matibele about 10 days East of us
M^{rs} L. will go too. If spared we shall furnish
you with some account of our journey
A M^rArkwright descended from him who
invented the spinning jenny has passed us too
on his way northward after game - the prodigious
herds of between 20 & 30 different kinds of game
will probably attract more of the sporting
than religious world here We like to see them
it is always a novelty to us to see strangers
M^rMethuen concerning whom I gave you
a few particulars has we hear published an
account of his trip. It will be a sporting
work I presume. If you see it let me know

[0003]

what he says about missionaries. Our sister Ann
came to see us at Mabotsa and in returning homewards
the people lost some sleeping skins. Two of them
returned to seek them and took the only gun with

them. Ann was left thus with the waggon driver & only one servant - a female. A lion attacked the oxen while still daylight. She saw him kill one - He then coolly eat it and as the people did not return with the gun she lay in the waggon listening to the impudent brute coming every now & then to the waggon sides & giving a roar as much as to say "Disturb me if you dare." In the morning as all the oxen fled back to Mabotsa Poor Ann walked about forty miles back. the sun burned the skin off her face and every bush seemed to contain a lion - To add to the misfortune she found we had gone off to Chonuane - & she could only find a few potatoes to eat We knew nothing of her being there and except unground corn the potatoes were the only food she got until they brought the waggon back Would Mary like this to be her position? -

We have no news here. We endeavour to impart saving knowledge - sometimes our hopes are bright. Our hearts elated - at other times our sorrows are abundant and our hearts very sore. M^rInglis is snug in my house at Mabotsa. He tried to remove the Bahurutse [*Note: Bahurutse, a South African people. See Livingstone's, Missionary travels and researches in South Africa (1857), Chapter 4.*] from an unpleasant locality to a better they were not cordial one party wished to go the other disliked him. In moving the dissaffected party invited the Koranas [*Note: Koranas, a South African people.*] to attack the moving party. M^r (I.) assisted his party with ammunition and about 28 of the Koranas [*Note: Koranas, a South African people.*] perished - they vow vengeance against M^rInglis & [...] crown the whole the party whom he was instrumental in separating from their fellows have left M^r (I.) and gone away to the boers. It is probable they will settle there M^rInglis being thus left came to Mabotsa & I suppose is very well content to settle down in my house & garden although ten times stronger than I am and of course much

[0004]
more able to commence a new station than I was
It would be much better if missionaries would go forward fearlessly to the tribes beyond

I think I mentioned that Sechele attacked the successor of Bube & dispersed the tribe. He by our entreaty acted a magnanimous part on the occasion of a portion of the people wishing to remove to him. But the rest believing

that he would always be hindered by his
missionary from shedding blood heaped
insults upon him he could bear it
no longer and their dispersion was the result

[Note: page folds into envelope and has address, sideways in middle of page] they beat some of his people
shamefully - this was

their last deed for Sechele keeping the object of
his expedition a profound secret from us
attacked & killed about a dozen of what were
the people of Bube - the remained fled to
Mabotsa & I found there the wife of Bube my
old friend. Another wife burst into tears when
she saw me. And Khake the successor of
Bube came about ten miles along the road
with me to Chonuane. Poor people they
know not what they do. Will you post
a letter to my brother Charles for me? They
always are lost if posted in this country
Asking this favour at the last is like a lady's letter - the object to be found
in the Post script. Many & cordial thanks for your letters long short
crossed &
all

Poor Maclellan - dead. We must
work hard now for soon the
night cometh. Moore at home too

Care of (Rev)^d D^rPhilip

Cape Town

Benjamin Pyne Esqre

Wildingtree

Ongar

Essex

May 28 1846