

Letter to Roderick I. Murchison, 20 August 1854

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Loanda 20th August

1854

Sir Roderick Impey Murchison

Sir

The enclosed

is a sketch of my route from the town of Sekeletu to Loanda viz. down the Chobe and up the Zambesi and Leeba in canoes. Then through a portion of the Balonda country to Cassange the farthest inland station of the Portuguese, and thence to this city on oxback. It is intended to be supplemental to a letter which I lately transmitted through Commander Bedingfield. And a mere glance will enable you to perceive that Loanda is a well watered country. To me it appeared remarkably so in consequence of passing through it during the rainy season. But though

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the streams were much swollen I believe that all ~~those~~ [the streams] put down in the map are perennial, for they were invariably furnished with rustic bridges, and the water though not extending far beyond the banks submerged these structures several feet deep. The close proximity, (not more than 8 or 10 miles in some instances) of streams flowing in totally different directions through a level country, excited my surprise. [Begin Only when] ~~And~~ ~~not until~~ we reached the declivity which forms the valley of Cassangé could I conceive why all [the rivers] that flowed North, North East or North West, ran in much deeper vallies than those which followed an opposite course. The slopes down to the feeders of the Casai and Quango are more than 500 yards long and pretty steep, while the beds of the branches of the Leeba

are never more than ten yards

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below the level of the surrounding country. The whole valley of Cassange seems to have been a work of denudation, for on all sides the declivity presents the same geological peculiarities, viz. a covering of brown haematite, mixed with quartz pebbles, lying upon bright-red friable clay slate. This, differing only in hardness and paleness of colour continues to the bottom; but towards the centre of the valley, it takes the form of argillaceous schist. A detached mountain, 7 or 8 miles S.S.W. of Cassange, called Kasala, and having perpendicular sides all round, possesses the same structure. I regret much having no instruments to measure the elevations of these parts, but after ascending again at Tala Mungongo, we appeared to descend again all the way to Ambaca, where we met primitive and secondary rocks.

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the latter containing metals. Fever prevented me from doing more in that quarter than ascertaining the Latitudes of different points along the road. they are put down in black pencil and if I am successful in my observations for the Longitude while retracing my steps, I shall take the liberty of forwarding [the results] to you from Cassangé. the marks in red pencil are intended to shew the parts noted on the information of others who, however, possessed no means of ascertaining their true positions

Again apologizing for troubling you with my communications

I am, Sir

Your most Faithful

Servant.

David Livingston