

Letter to Thomas Bayely and James A. Turner, 26 March 1857

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[0001]

57 Sloane St

26th March

1857

Thomas Bayely

J. Aspal Turner Esq^{rs}

My Dear Sirs

I have thought it
advisable in order to make the
attempt to develop the trade of
the part of Africa to which
I intend soon to return as
effective as possible to take
with me besides the supply
of cotton seed promised by
Mr Clegg two or three cotton
gins to be lent, part to the
Portuguese and part to native

[0002]

native chiefs who may be
willing to engage in the cultivation
of that article. I have most
hope in the latter but the former
claim the country and we
must appear to cooperate
with them. I wish their [gins] to
be of the simplest construction
but strong, and as you are
acquainted with these matters
and feel interested in the success
of the experiment I take the
liberty of begging your assistance
Will you let me know the
prices at which these and the
following articles designed

[0003]

for similar objects could be
obtained?

2 Presses proper for expressing
or grinding the ground nut

to extract the [sweet] oil. (I dont know
which is preferable, grinding or expressing)
4 Ploughs of malleable iron
(double the usual strength)
(In Scotland we can get what
I mention for £5 each)
2 small pairs of rollers for
extracting the juice from the
sugar cane with working
aparatus of the simplest
construction for oxen

All to be of the highest and most
portable construction

[0004]

I wish just to make a beginning
feeling certain that in so doing
I am effectually promoting
the extinction of the slave trade
and the temporal and spiritual
welfare of Africa. I have
been strongly advised by
Lord Clarendon to devote
my attention chiefly to cotton
at first both on account
of its importance to our
own manufactures and the
influence which the cultivation
of it in Africa must have
on the slave trade. this

[0005]

is so exactly in accordance
with my own convictions
that I mean to devote the
next few years of my life
heartily to that line of
action. A brother in America
who views the subject in
the same light intends to
leave his church for a few
years for the same object
and I have advised him
to pick up some information
on cotton growing and come
over here that we may go
out together. I feel it to be

[0006]

of so much importance to
have one with me in whom

I can repose perfect confidence
that I mean to defray his
expenses here myself. I would
employ him as an agent
on the spot to buy up any
cotton or other produce at
once so as to circulate the
idea extensively that there is
a certain market for all the
natives may produce.

I am anxious to secure
as soon as possible a

[0007]

second or third supply of
cotton seed because one lot
may get damaged or other
accident happen and it
would be a mistake to
have to wait for fresh
supplies from home.

Private I cannot but most
deeply regret that the kingdom
of Angola is not ours. there the
success of cotton planting
would be certain. It is prosperous
now but the Portuguese do nothing
with it except drawing large
numbers of cotton cloths as tribute
from the Natives - the Population

[0008]

is upwards of 600 000 souls &
only about 6 per cent slaves.
Skilled labour even costs only
4 pence per day. Field labour
would be about half & no lack
of it. I mean to go to Lisbon
to enlist the Portuguese in the
effort on the East side. they will
let us develop the trade if we
appear to cooperate with
them otherwise they will play
the part of the "dog in the manger"
I have strong hopes of the
countenance of the young king
who is said by Prince Albert
to be much more enlightened

[0009]

than his people.

I am sorry that in adopting
the course I intend to pursue
I shall appear to some to
be descending from the high
position of a missionary
for the sake of promoting
trade. Some thought so
when I felt it to be my
duty to engage in exploring
the country but feeling
assured that I shall be as
much engaged in promoting
the Glory of God in that

[0010]
new line as I was when
toiling in bricks & mortar
or labouring as a smith
carpenter, glazier, gardener
gun mender, doctor &c &c
I must bear with any
disapprobation that may
be expressed. I mention this
to you that you may understand
on what grounds I intend to
proceed. I address you jointly
knowing that you are both
equally friendly to the objects
I have in view. I am &c
David Livingstone