

Letter to Janet Livingstone 1, 1 January 1862

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

A happy New year to you all. Try and write a more loving letter next time without saying that you love me as much as ever

River Shire 1st January
1862

My Dear Sister Janet

I recieved your second letter since 1858 a short time ago by one of the missionaries who came up this river in a canoe without knowing a word of the language or a bit of the way. It is not likely that the High church mission will be recieved with favour by any other sect. their pretensions are against the growth of cordiality but it is a good school they have come to. there is nobody either to oppose or laugh at their puerilities and the Africans will not be led by anything but the love of Christ. A Roman catholic mission far up the Nile paid the people to come to prayers and when their goods were expended the tribe left en masse saying "No beads, no prayers." this is Consul Pethericks statement & you may take it for what it is worth. As I am forbidden to say any-thing in my own defence

[0002]

You were, utterly inexcusable in not writing - I left orders that in

I submit as meekly as a sucking dove but like the cabman "I think a great deal." I even think that the church missionary society i.e. the Evangelical party of the Church of England, to whom

I wrote to occupy the field, might
have answered my letter as civilly
as the bishop of Oxford did another
epistle long afterwards [No answer came.] I am very
glad to hear that the free Kirk
contemplates a mission and I
rejoice that the United Free
Methodists are sending a mission
in charge of D^rKnapf to some
point on the East coast. You are
right in thinking I would be much
grieved in hearing of the death of my
dear friends M^{rs} & M^r Helmore. they
were a noble pair, and I visited
their graves with feelings of deep sorrow
I grieve much because the
Makololo are left without the
gospel. they spoke of Helmore with
great respect and affection - and
he was admirably adapted to win
their esteem - they were naturally
dissatisfied with their men being
so long away but said not a word to
me, which shewed a kindly feeling
at least, and the chief seemed very
thankful for medicine for a disease

[0003]

any case of distress you were to be at once relieved - running into
debt by borrowing when you had no prospect of being able to pay was my distress

which possibly is leprosy. I am sorry
that Helmore never wrote to me nor
did D^r Tidman and when we descended
into the Makololo valley you may con-
ceive the stunning effect of the news
that the missionaries were all dead.

Our cotton grows wild and when
well planted continues to yield for
several years, with only a weeding
now & then. the heartbreaking toil
necessary in America is not needed
here. We have no frosts to endanger the
crop and can buy it for a good deal
less than a penny per pound. We bought
300 lbs of clean cotton as a trial, giving
a foot of calico not worth a halfpenny
for several pounds. this was not
at the period of the cotton crop either.
But we must have an outlet of our

own away from Portuguese custom
houses and hence our efforts to open
Lake Nyassa - from Rovuma.
It is over 200 miles long - from
20 to 50 or more miles broad, and
exceedingly deep. We shall bend all
our energies to placing a steamer on
it this year and I pray God that
I may be permitted to effect this great
service for then we have highlands
all round Nyassa. It is surrounded
by mountains, and Europeans
can live well up there. I hope then
that our countrymen may both
benefit themselves and the Africans

[0004]

& It was never intended that you were to be kept idle on the money intended
for mother. You might have told your distress to me as easily as

you did to those who wrote begging letters for you to the Scottish Fund &c

by living among them. the population
around the Lake is prodigiously large
but slaving goes on perpetually either
by barter or by slave hunting - 19,000
pass yearly through the Custom House
of Zanzibar and Col^l Rigby our consul
there says they all come from Nyassa
Our plan has a double reference to
slavery in Africa & elsewhere. We
hope to benefit both Africa & England
but I need not specify my hopes.
You will however see enough to
let you understand the reasons of
my joy in seeing christians of
different denominations sending
the gospel without which all our
efforts will end in failure.

Suffer me to hint that your letter
is in a slight degree Miss Grantish. I
gave information according to the
varying phases of my experience. If
life was in danger I committed it as
I do now and always to the Divine
keeping. If reputation & usefulness
among the heathen were endangered by
false bretheren I spoke of it even as
St Paul did long before me. I was
distressed but not weeping as he was

£60 a year will be given if I have it
but how could I know you would
not work when you never wrote to
tell me. I think my letters were written
in a Christian spirit but it is questionable
if they were thus received D. Livingstone