

Letter to George E. Seward, 1, 12, 23 June 1864

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

At Sea 1st June 1864

My Dear D^r Seward

On leaving you

I felt a little ashamed
in sending three cloths which
had been on view at M^r
Wittes to Memsahib for
after getting aboard I saw
that I should appear
as if I had thrown them
at her. I trust however
that you made allowance
for my heathenism.

One of Bullhead's men
had what I consider to be
leprosy in an incipient
state, but we were bothered
by the engines having been
left in not a very
creditable state. I saw after

[0002]

leaving Mosambique that
all hands were required to
start them. the whites pulling
at the starting rod like mad
supplemented by the blacks
with a rope to the same as
if they had hold of an elephant
by the tail. We could not
go astern & nearly ran into
Captain Bishops ship in
consequence. Away however
we went with 100 mile
current and a fine breeze.
One man down with a
severe bilious attack gave
me a regular turn at the
wheel. very nice when
you have nothing to do. but
one becomes desperately
sleepy when it comes

every other four hours.
When we crossed the line

[0003]

we got into a calm which
lasted 21 days. We steamed
out from the land, then
our only stoker who
managed the engines fell
sick of a bilious attack.
I mention this because
I have always experienced
great difficulty in getting
rid of the bile. All three
men had it: shovelfuls
of purgatives do not
act or if they do the
bile remains, and is
only got rid off gradually.
They all complained of
great pain across the
region of the navel.
but there was no tenderness
on pressure. tongue with
a very dark fur on it
and the other symptoms

[0004]

of biliousness but no
pain across the forehead.
When bile came away
either by vomiting or
otherwise, after a week's
physicing with little or
no effect, they recovered
with scarcely any loss of
strength. Have you found
any remedy effectual in
promoting a discharge of
bile. *Asclepias gigantea*
[or *gigantisa*] is used in some parts
of India for this, but I
never tried it. A scruple of
calomel in one case had
no effect nor did it salivate
I have been looking up
for the *Dadileira* in
Lindley, and think from
its resemblance to the
Sesamum which you

[0005]

know at Zanzibar as
yielding oil that it must
be the Pedalium Murex
of which he says that the
fresh leaf when agitated
in water renders it
mucilaginous, and is
prescribed by the Indian
doctors in dysuria &
gonorrhoea - the Dadileira
was shown to M^r Soares
by an old native woman
& must have more
than mucilage to produce
purging so quickly in children.

I wish you would
try a wash of corrosive
sublimate in the itch
often seen in Africans,
the genuine scotch

[0006]

"fiddle" is cured by one
application in London
when the Physician
gets it himself in
Dispensary practice -
it is made pretty strong
say 10 grams to the
ounce of water - or spirit.
I have found it very
efficacious. now
for this tell me
your application to
those shocking indolent
ulcers - was it bark
mixed with powdered
opium or the bark
to the sore & opium
internally?

[0007]

We found this steamer
burns more coal than
was stated. and I am
glad that she was not
sold at Zanzibar
for the deception
would have been laid
at my door though I

did not actually know
she burned a ton in
eight hours giving a
speed of about half
what was stated on a
sea smooth as glass
I shall explain this to
Sir Bartle Frere so
that you will appear
misled only in the
same way you were

[0008]

in writing. I would not
tell a deliberate lie for
twice her value.

12 June 40 miles off Bombay
add three [^] [and a half] days calm on this coast
to the 21 and you have a pretty
trial of patience. We had a dose
of rough weather too and saw that
the Bay of Bengal can exhibit
topping seas but the little vessel
is a fine sea boat & no mistake
Tell Captain Frazer with compts that
his canvass did good service
and Kinloch not to give him the
dollar the captain bet for we
were 19 1/2 days going - the captain
will surely not count the days
24 1/2 we were standing still!! but
we had better not make the
canny Scot a Jesuit. never
say a ship till the day before
yesterday. When we saw 3 from
Bombay & one going to it. the
Zambesians turned out good
sailors. Two can stear & three
stoke - Kind complts to M^{rs} S.
& Winifred

David Livingstone

[0009]

23 June 1864
P.S. We were so
little as not to be
seen when we
anchored alongside
the forest of ships
here for 2 days.
Then an invitation

from Lady & Sir
Bartle Frere took
me up to Dapoore
till yesterday
morning. Every
body is up there
they put the vessel
at Masagon as

[0010]
M^{rs} S. conjectured
a great many want
to buy her but though
I came expressly
to sell her the idea
of giving up Africa
was too much for
me I could'nt do
it and resolved
rather to run home
and take counsel
with friends about
my future. I go
tomorrow morning
so have not time
to do more than

[0011]
thank you and
M^{rs} S. which I
do most cordially
for your kind
letters. The Sultan's
letter was safely
delivered which
you may tell him
at your convenience
I saw M^r Oliver
in his court.
M^r West had
gone home. I
got plenty of
invitations after

[0012]
I was known, &
met many up
at Dapoore who
knew me. Hoping
yet to see you
and wishing

blessings on you
 & your household
 I am &c
 David Livingstone