

## Letter to John Washington, 7 March 1862

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

near Shupanga Zambesi  
7 March 1862  
Dear Captain Washington  
We found that 35 tons was  
more than Pioneer could carry -  
took out 5 tons at Shupanga  
and avoided the strong current  
now in [- parts of] the Zambesi of 4 1/2 knots  
by going into shallow places.  
This unfortunately led us aground  
four or five miles above  
Shupanga and the river is  
falling. It is the worst grounding  
we ever had for we have 100  
yards of shoal on our lee or  
down river from us. I let  
you know lest you hear something  
worse. I was unable to  
do duty when she might have

[0002]

been got off but M<sup>r</sup> Young is  
said by Captain Wilson to be  
"a thorough sailor", so I believe  
everything proper has been done  
This was my first illness  
since leaving England in /58  
We dont know what it was  
Feet and knees swelled and  
were so painful for 2 days  
that I could not stand. An  
eruption came out, began  
with D<sup>r</sup> Kirk and went over  
us all. Even Gorgon's people  
took it. I was down three days  
but am now I am thankful  
to say quite free of the complaint  
I say so much about myself  
because people at the Cape made  
me so ill when nothing was wrong

[0003]

whatever

I have sent a pressing request to  
Admiral Walker for provisions  
for we have not a fortnight's  
food on board, and cannot buy  
any at this part nor indeed  
in any part where slavetrade  
has depopulated the country.  
I propose, if no vessel is to be  
sent this way, that the Admiral  
should freight a small one from  
Natal. I ask 6 months stores  
We have been disappointed  
in not receiving quinine from  
you along with the other  
medicines & ask 3lbs from the  
Admiral. We need all this  
while giving it daily to all hands  
We don't see a paddle wheel  
Boss ordered from Penn when  
the Pioneer was at the Cape.

[0004]

It is much needed for the other side

The reason why the Pioneer goes so  
slow with a load is said to be her  
engines were placed for 3 feet draught  
and she never draws less than 4 1/2  
now with a load 5 - they would  
require to be lifted up a foot & a half  
We shall put the new steamer together  
at Shupanga and tow her up to  
the cataracts - I doubt Hardisty's zeal.

A gentleman has been sent out  
by the free church of Scotland to obtain  
information with a view to  
a mission on Nyassa. As this  
will not interfere with the bishop,  
I invited him to come up and  
see the country and people for  
himself. His name is Rev<sup>d</sup>  
James Stewart. There is room  
for all that in the region, and it is  
questionable whether the bishop

[0005]

has not blocked up his own way  
Northwards by attacking the  
Ajawa, who now possess all  
the East bank of Shire from  
the cataracts up to the Lake.

His sister, a confirmed invalid,  
came up to him. Captain  
Wilson seeing how slowly we  
got up - (3 weeks to Shupanga!  
Last year 2 days only!) acceded to  
her request to be taken with M<sup>rs</sup>  
Burrup (another of the missionaries)  
forward to the Ruu in his gig.  
The bishop engaged to be there  
but did not appear & Captain  
Wilson pushed on to Chibisa's  
the invalid being more dead  
than alive. We expect him  
daily on his return, and when

[0006]

he does so I shall give you the  
latest intelligence.

I feel it rather too much to have to  
give passages to all the missionaries  
I was willing and anxious to  
do all I could for them & am  
still willing, but it is a serious  
draw back to our own success.  
Rev M<sup>r</sup> Proctor wanted to come down  
for a wife, & the bishop proposed  
to come too. I had to tell them  
that the Pioneer was not a  
passenger vessel. It is a serious  
tax on our stores. M<sup>r</sup> Stewart  
offers payment for everything  
has calico to buy his own pro-  
visions and works at whatever  
he can do. Some of the bishop's  
people believe that they have a

[0007]

right to everything here, and on board  
the men of war which causes  
grumbling among the officers.

You really had a serious task  
imposed on you. The only way  
my daughter could conceive of  
to keep her Mama at home  
was to threaten to write to you  
and ask you to lock her in a  
room. She went the length of  
writing to her Mama & telling her  
that she was thinking of doing  
it!

10 March at Shupanga unloading.

I have to spend more money than  
I anticipated in buying country  
provisions. We have nothing but a  
~~little flour - a cask said to be beef by~~  
~~M<sup>r</sup> Gedye turns out to be one of~~  
~~vinegar!~~ [beef found on 17th March] We shall be two months

[0008]  
putting Lady Nyassa together - will tow  
her up to the cataracts & there unscrew  
her - probably we shall have food  
before that from the Admiral - so no  
uneasiness need be felt. There too  
we can get plenty of native meal  
goats fowls &c.

I may have mentioned already  
that I offered the charge of the Pioneer  
to M<sup>r</sup>Gedye at Johanna - & he refused  
it on the plea that he could not  
navigate. I offered to lay down  
his positions for him & point out  
the course but he again refused  
to take charge = so the subordinate  
position he occupied was his own  
choice.

M<sup>r</sup> May refused fowling pieces  
Two we brought are broken.  
I send up to Tette to bring our things  
away, in canoes. We have plenty of  
ammunition there. D. Livingstone