

## Letter to Thomas Milne, 28 October 1859

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

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[0001]

River Shire, Eastern Africa  
28 October 1859

Private

My Dear <sup>r</sup> Milne  
As we have not yet  
recieved any letters from home since  
our departure in 1858 I take advantage  
of this and skip over apologies to those  
of my friends whom I have neglected  
But I may say to you and M<sup>rs</sup> M. that  
I have not been idle, nor have I felt  
at ease when I remembered my duty to  
you. I have been employed in  
work which I did contemplate on  
leaving you. The naval officer  
with whom I was furnished was  
possessed with the idea that instead  
of coming to seek the elevation of the  
African and developement of the  
country. he was about to discover  
the ten lost tribes, as if of all things  
in the world we had not plenty  
of Jews already. I was soon forced  
to send this visionary away and do  
the work myself. though I assure you  
I would as soon drive a cab as a  
[0002]

steamer. We have but lately begun  
our proper work. and I am happy to  
tell you that our prospects brighten  
where I never contemplated exploring.  
We ~~went~~[steamed] up this river over one hundred  
miles though only three were previously  
known to the Portuguese. We have  
also traced it on foot another hundred  
and found that it emerges from  
the hitherto undiscovered Lake Nyassa  
or Nyinyesi. This lake must be  
large for it gives off a large river  
(Shire) without diminution of more

than two feet during the whole year. there are too only 33 miles of cataracts in it and a common road could easily be made past them. Here you find the finest cotton field in the world for it is of unknown extent watered by the Lakes - Nyassa & Tamàndua and there are no frosts to endanger or cut off the crops as in America Instead too of the unmerciful toil required to raise the crops in that country - one sowing of foreign probably of American seed already introduced by the natives themselves [0003]

serves for crops for three years though the plants be annually burned down. We have besides changes of climate produced by the land lying in terraces of different heights. The third terrace is 3000 feet high - and on it rises the Mount Zomba between 7000 & 8000 feet in altitude one days march took us from the hot sultry valley of the Shire into a cool climate, and all the terraces are abundantly supplied with running rills of deliciously cold water. Fancy our tramping in the sun when the thermometer on the ground reached 126° and climbing up two thousand feet into air delightfully refreshing. Then on to Zomba into the cold. I am hoping that the Church Missionary Society long anxious to enter Eastern Africa will take advantage of this opening. they can be away from the unfriendly coast tribes at once - and check the slave trade in the middle of the slave market. We met a large party of East coast slave [0004]

traders with an immense number of slaves and elephants tusks. A more black- gaurd looking lot I never saw. When they found out that we were English they slipped off by night, probably thinking the same of us as we did of them. The policy of Lord Palmerston in repressing the slave trade has given the English a prestige of great value. the

Lake Tamàdua is about ninety miles long. but no one could tell us how long Nyassa was. We could not explore it for we had left our sham vessel called a steamer in a sinking state. Funnel, Furnace, Deck & Bottom went down simulaneously after only 12 months wear. £1200 for 12 months (extras all paid for besides), was pretty fair without any whine from the contractor of "doing it all for the good of the cause." It has been a great hindrance to us from first to last involving enormous toil, and as in the Great Niger expedition, always wet. Indeed we have lain for many months on damp rotten cushions - but thanks to God we have not lost a man yet. We have had a first rate opportunity of trying the remedies for fever I had opted when alone & have been sucessful David Livingstone

Please present my kindest salutations to M<sup>rs</sup> M. I remember her kindness with gratitude. Remember me also to other friends. My wife is at Kuruman [0005]

My Address if you favour me with a letter, I don't say "line" only is D<sup>r</sup> L care of Admiral Sir F. Grey K.C.B. Cape of Good Hope