

Letter to John Washington, 20 February 1860

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Shupanga 20th Feb^y

1860

My Dear Captain Washington

I take the liberty of enclosing a list of articles said by Baines to have been furnished by Windsor & Newton. He had stowed away a very large quantity of artists' materials in his private boxes and on D^r Kirk asking where he got them, replied, that Windsor & Newton had made him a present of them. Then, that he got them out of the Australian expedition. It might easily be ascertained whether Windsor & Newton (Spring gardens) really made him a present of those materials - paints of all kinds - canvas &c. I suspect the Australian Expedition was a droll one and the Colonial office

[0002]

unwittingly gave him a good character. He has a large parcel of brass rings in his boxes at Tette stolen from my private property.

Thornton seemed to turn over a new leaf when cut off from us. We could not previously get a bit of work out of him. He tried to get D^r Kirk to invalid him in vain. He went up to Zumbo with a half cast trader but has only confounded my published opinion of the extension of the coal field thither. I offered him a passage home but the Portuguese have induced him to examine the upper part of Kebrabasa for a silver mine said to have been once worked by the Jesuits. He says he has no animus against me. "It was a lethargy he could not shake off", and he is now fat & well. He wished

me to sell him our theodolite and

[0003]

a sextant but I could not see Gov^t property. He has the use of all the instruments he brought out

By the way our craft has nearly ruined most of the magnetic instruments besides provisions & private property. We can take only what barely serves for a trip she is so leaky and wet. Could you send us some magnetic instruments that may have been returned from other Expeditions i.e. if we get a new ship like the Bann. With incredible labour and repeated dryings my worthy associate D^r Kirk has at least got his collection down so far to the sea. I feel sure that Sir William Hooker will be pleased and I am

[0004]

his choice does him great credit there are many new plants and I hope you will make the valuable woods & cottons known. We have sent seeds of Buaze to Natal, the Cape and India.

I hope you will lend your aid in getting freedom of navigation on the Zambesi. While the Portuguese have the exclusive use of it no good can be done. They are few in number and of the convict class chiefly. The immorality is frightful and any one who does no do as they do is hated - they hate us bitterly, but we have had no quarrel. We keep aloof and seem to be regarded as standing protests against their ways. According to them the fine young men of Commodore Owen's party

[0005]

were killed by indulgences with Donna Pascoa & other women at this place. Bedingfeld

had been exhibiting his bougies
here and I was taken aback
by the superintendant of the
estate once asking me something
about him and asking specifying
him as "the officer with
thirty Bougies." I am not so
much discouraged by the defections
that have taken place as you
may be for I have seen a
good many occur even among
missionaries. It is only by
patient perseverance that
success is ultimately obtained
and should I get the vessels

[0006]

I have applied for I feel confident
that with the Divine blessing
a large amount of good will
result. We have overcome the
fever, and know that any
European living morally need
not fear it more than a
common cold. A curious
point has of late shewed itself
a very greatly decreased dose
of the remedy serves better
than a large one did at first
1/2 a grain of the pill produces
as much effect as 10 or 12
did formerly. Good living
is essential i.e. if compelled
to live on salt meat or maize meal
we are more liable to fever. We

[0007]

must have flour and fresh meat
and I think that after any specially
hard work ale would be beneficial
for when we returned from
Nyassa after forty days tramp
we all took a sore longing for
a glass of beer though on ordinary
occasions and at home we
dont care for it.

I have been obliged to buy
calico to pay current expenses
this is very much dearer than
what I got from M^r Turner
of Manchester. Our Makololo

crew of 12 did well for six
months but got so tired by
perpetual wood cutting in

[0008]

ascending up the river that they
begged me to take others. I took
24 the wood cutting required is really
heart breaking. I beg you to
examine M^r Rae all about the
vessel and everything else. I don't
wish to hide an iota from you.

I come down now though the
bottom is all patched and continually
breaking out afresh in order to
get M^r Rae safely off and D^r
Kirk's specimens with him. I
would have gone up the Makololo
Country at once - but felt perplexed
as to whether you will send us another
steamer - the loss of the mail bag
leaving us in the dark. We heard
at Senna that the mail bag had
been found & taken by a native
to Quilimane & passed us on the way
down from Tette Ever yours

David Livingstone