

Letter to John Washington, 28 September 1858

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Kongone Harbour

28th Sept^r

1858

My Dear Captain Washington

Many thanks for your
two notes which gave me
much pleasure and some
pain. I tried to keep up
the good name we had
when we left but had
I not at last exerted my
authority the complete dis-
organization of the Expedition
would have been the

[0002]

result. This all declared when
I told them I had accepted C^tBed-
ingfeld resignation. There has
not been a single jar with any
one and me or with each other
but there were several with him
Fancy him talking of Skead's
wonderful perseverance in
surveying as "that old fool
shewing off". It was sorely
against the grain for me to
take the step which caused the
resignation as he let it become
known that he would attack
me on the Sunday work -
I took warning by the experience
of the Grt Niger Expedition which
I have been informed had

[0003]

prayers three times a day &
stopped all Sunday - I would
not remain an hour in the
mangrove swamps and

have been attacked in the
Cape papers by an officer of
the Expedition in consequence
people may call out against
it but they would call out
more if I lost my men.

I ordered some things to
be sent up a Christmas
and the Admiral kindly
sent them up at once - this
makes me draw £105
sooner than I intended - the
[0004]

Portuguese war is ended and
we now hire canoes to carry
up all our things - so I keep
the money we have on
hand for that. I believe
we shall require no more
for a twelve month. We have
had no fever properly so
called but colds modified
by malaria - no one has been
ailing more than a week.
We have been taking quinine
in water of late and as I
considered that when we get
over the first unhealthy
season in January march
my companions well
[0005]

needing something bracing I
ordered some ale porter &
sherry for them. I consider
our Expedition as conducting
a health experiment as well
as other matters. I take all up
to Tete where M^r Livingstone
is now making magnetic obser-
vations and Major Secard
gives us a house and plot
of land a mile or two above
Tete to conduct experiments
in cotton and sugar cane
No sooner did the war
end than he took up the
little engine and sugar mill
[0006]

and a lot of luggage. At his
suggestion the gentlemen of

Tete at once got me a ton
and a half of coal the first
ever digged in this country
and very feasible stuff it is
too though exposed in the
bank of the Unatize to the
action of floods & sun for
ages. It will be better farther
in so all say. I send a report
on it by Thornton - also a
chart made by him. He being
unable to geologize in the
delta. Kirk has been working
hard at Economic botany
He has made indigo - We have
[0007]

Lignum vitae -Ebony & teak
or African oak & some fine
fibres. I intend to take care
of the young men at the
house above Tete making
experiments in agriculture
till the healthier period comes
If it is only a few rocks
that render the passage
tortuous and these of small
dimensions I may try
to blast them but I do not
promise it. I would not
grudge half a year's daily
toil as a quarry man if
I could open this pathway
to the Interior
[0008]

The Portuguese wish to purchase
our cotton gins, and I mean
to sell two. The press will be
used for Buaze if it is in
abundance. the war has
been very much against us
as it has caused immense
destruction of property and depopu-
lation. Portuguese are as friendly
as usual - all of them.

My companions have
had no serious illness - but
all have had ailments chiefly
colds except myself - we feel
the necessity of care - but this

river has the great peculiarity
of being a sandy in contrast
to the muddy rivers of the West
and inspires hope David Livingstone

I thank you for your kind remembrance
of my wife - she will be at Sekeletus before us