

Letter to [Joseph B. Braithwaite], 28 September 1858

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[0001]

Kongone Harbour

28th Sept^r 1858

My Dear Friend

I send you the first
sheet of a letter I began for you but
could not finish by the time the Pearl
left us just to shew you I was not
so unmindful of you as might be
inferred. the other unfilled sheet
told of the damage of Krootown by
the present Governor Hill who was
extremely kind to us and the effect
on the general health. Now I go
without farther preface into the middle
of things and say that I have been
up at Tete with the first cargo - the
first steamer ever seen there and
was visited with as much interest
as the Leviathan. It would be
a vain attempt ~~to meet~~ were I to
endeavour to tell you of my
meeting my Makololo companions
Poor fellows they grasped my
hands and arms with all fervour
[0002]

and lullilood as a way of shewing joy
The Portuguese could not get near me
for they clustered so closely. I never shed
tears but this time as I told them that
I had no Sekwebu with me the tears ran
down in spite of me. Thirty have
died of small pox and six were killed
by a half caste chief who holds a stockade
at the confluence of the Luenyathe
excuse is that it was done in a fit of
drunkenness. For them our hearts are
very sore. they have accumulated a stock
of property in beads fowls & pigs by
woodcutting & other work and many of

them have taken wives and possibly a few may remain altogether But they say the Tette people taunted us often by saying your Englishmen will never return but we trusted you and now our hearts will sleep.

We got the Tette gentlemen to dig coals for us, the very first ever taken out of the seam in this country. We got a ton and a half and the engineer reports them to be good for steaming purposes though what we have is from the surface and exposed for ages in the [0003]

bank of a river to the action of floods and our if M^r Thornton our geologist reports favourably of them too. He will yet make a full report of the whole thing quantity, quality &c. With, as I believe from my own former observations, no end of coal and the best iron ore Surely the Great Architect designed something grand for the future of this poor trodden down Africa. As for me I will work with might and main at this one thing that it be opened to the gospel of the grace of the Almighty. From all I hear of Kebra basa it is not a waterfall but a number of rocks jutting out across the stream which render the passage through deep tortuous and dangerous. If half a years work and a good deal of expense in gun powder and sweat will remove this obstacle then dont be surprised at my turning quarryman as well as consul & "Skipper" but I say nought about it till I see and I am going up to see directly while the river is low [0004]

The Naval officer who came with me turned out badly, quarreled with everyone and at last from the confident belief that we could not move a mile without him took on all manner of airs against myself. I had to interfere for the protection of my companions and especially

for the Captain of the Pearl and Bedingfeld
at once resigned. I would have sent
him home at once but thinking it
would not be doing as I would be done
by if I did not give him a chance I allowed
him to withdraw the letter. I could not allow
him to make the cabin of the Launch his
own private apartment and on seeing
him turn out the things of my companions
unceremoniously I requested him to ask
them first. Then came resignation second
I bore with slander, carping, complaining
raising objections and endeavouring
to excite the Kroomen to mutiny to the
utmost limits of endurance but he
went on from bad to worse - ran
the boat aground and said to one of the
officers "do you think they could do
without me" So I accepted his resignation
and mounted the paddle box myself
made quicker passages - carrying heavier
loads than was ever done before
[0005]

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First trip I never once touched the
ground and he never made a trip without
doing so several times and delayed us by
clumsiness in getting her off. D^E Kirk
tried it too and was equally successful
so we got two skippers instead of one.
When we returned from our first trip
never did lower jaw descend like his
when we came in "Ease her, stop her, let
go the anchor " All right. He then tried in
various ways to secure his pay but
failed though he accused me of cruelty
harshness &c &c because I ordered him
off to Kilimane and thence home.
I never met a person who had so
little regard to truth as he. He seemed
to trust to unlimited assertion and
even wrote a log after his dismissal
in which he changes sides making
me the person who hindered our progress
and himself the person anxious to get on
[0006]

It was awfully painful to witness all this
in connection with extra ostentatious
piety. His secret prayers must be done

in sight of the whole ship. but if you will not be offended I enclose some of the rough copy I have sent home to Foreign Office All the rest of my companions are agreeable. Not a single jar and with B. I had no quarrel. What he may make a noise about is the following

I consider this Expedition as experimental in various respects one of these is the health. Now the great Niger Expedition if I am rightly informed had prayers read three times a day and stopped all Sunday. Warned by its fate I resolved to lose not a moment in getting my party out of the Mangrove swamps and worked on that day at what I believe to be service to Christ Our Lord after asking the leave of the men I sent the Pearl off without a case [0007]

Two Dutch clergymen whom I met in the house of a rebel have fastened on a footnote in my book and make a great row because £400 or £500 is mentioned instead of £200 or 300

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People may talk against this they talked more against the Niger Expedition's loss of life. then when we got out of the swamps of Mangrove & mud we found the country in a state of war and I could not rest all day on Sunday while my companions were exposed to be plundered. So I never stopped except to have a public religious service unless we were all together on the island. We have had no fever yet some colds which resemble fever a little but nothing serious. This is a sand river in contrast to the muddy ones of the West. The river is now near its lowest point, and as it is spread over between from one mile to three in width we found considerable difficulty in getting a deep channel. but when we got to Lupata all difficulties of that kind ended Two naval officers gave a very favourable report when it was five

or six feet higher than now. I see it
in its worst state and a vessel
[0008]
[0009]

but say nothing of my mention of them. They wish by this slight mistake to
throw discredit on the whole

drawing three feet would navigate it with ease
I was led to trust in the report of the naval
officer respecting this Launch the Ma Robert
and was deceived for instead of as he said
very little wood being required we spend
half our time wood cutting and she has
a badly constructed engine - so weak too
the canoes pass us in ascending & look
back at the "Asthmatic" as she ought to
be called. It is a great shame to M^r
Laird to send such a job from his shop
the vessel herself is good & a well made
one - broader & shorter would save our
sailors an immense amount of labour but the
engine is a wretched thing but here we
are & will make the best of it. Bedingfeld's
untruthfulness began in England. He led me
to reject the Ban a fine vessel drawing 3
feet but I find now it was because he
would have been required to navigate her out
and he could not from sea sickness

the war is finished. It was nothing to us for we
went from one side to the other perpetually as friends
of both. We sometimes raised an alarm in the
rebel camp by coming near their sentinels by night
but when we called out "English" (Maingleze)
all was right. Several influential Portuguese wished
to accept my mediation but the Governor refused
Kindest love to Robert and you all in Kendal
M^{rs} L is away to Kuruman David Livingstone