

Letter to Robert Moffat 1, November 1848

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)
[0001]

Kolobeng Nov 1848

My Dear Father

We gladly welcomed our friend Paul back again after his visit to the Kuruman and the etceteras he brought were as welcome as he. We had recieved a most gloomy view of the state of Kuruman from Motseabona felt quite sad over it. Everybody talking of leaving & many actually left. You too among the talkers of learning. we really did not know what to make of it. I was on the point of offering you this house in order that you might go on undisturbed in your translations. Anxiety to see some little fruit from our labours among the Bakwains was the only thing in my mind that pre-vented. And after all, the mountain in labour brought forth a ridiculous mouse. Paul gave such a gloomy account of the numbers & state of your young people we felt quite cheered. Above all to see Sebube come forward & choose a station for himself is quite exhilarating. I felt inclined at once to go over & help him with his house but thought afterwards it would be better not. Let all the praise of the commencement be given [0002] to whom it is due & all the disgrace of attempting to hinder his settlement ^{rest} on the head which could tell you with tears & groans that he always assisted native teachers. Sebube will tell you of his message to the Wooketse not to recieve him. fortunately his influence is there as almost everywhere else somewhere about the degree zero.

We delayed the Baptism of Sechele for two months after his formal application. As he had for a long time previous professed firm belief in the truth of Christianity & his general conduct seemed to be influenced by this believe we did not feel so much hesitancy as we should have done had there been more

previous indications of change. He was tested in the interval by his own people in several ways & by the renowned chief Moshesh in a way that might have influenced one who was insincere at heart. He had sent some men with Karosses about four or five months previously in order to purchase a horse. Moshesh received the messengers very kindly and as I gave them a note to the missionaries requesting any members who might feel disposed, to act kindly towards them & for their spiritual good the poor fellows [0003]

were well taken care of. Moshesh gave them about ten head of & cattle & two horses. A great deal for poor people in this country & sent a private message to the chief that whatever he wished whether guns gunpowder horses or cattle he must apply to him & he would supply them, & tell him to allow his people to believe if they like but he (Sechele) must never believe. I am a king said Moshesh "I wont put myself under the authority of another (viz. God) I have my kingdom as well as He. & people would laugh at me if I believed & put myself under the power of another. tell Sechele that." Sechele told me although it was a private message & added ki le ka nyatsa gore ga a itse se o se buan ka a re Morimo ki khose ka ana. I should not like this private message to get wind. The answer seemed satisfactory to us. We were happy to have Paul with us In receiving him many of the people were shedding tears of sorrow for what do you think? That he was so far left to himself as ~~to allow himself~~ to drink the brains of men. It seemed water, said one to me. I expected to see something tala in it Ka na ba rosa yalo send another na reñ? They in general believe the satanic suggestions of wicked persons who tell them that baptism is being caused to drink men's brains & the Lord's supper a scene of impurity. They love darkness rather [0004]

than light. The youngest child be desired to be called Setefano in allusion to his hope of being the first among the Interior0 chiefs who will embrace the gospel He endures a good deal of trial from his people at present. We have no rain - one good shower alone this year while around us the rains have been abundant. The Kolobeñ gets smaller & smaller. It has not run into the watercourse for the last three weeks. The people say

to him, "There is Mosielele, he has plenty of rain
& he hates the word. Our chief loves it we have
none" - This is the fourth year of scarcity. They
had always abundance of corn untill the Word
came.- Last year at this time we could not
make our water course contain its water
but two dry seasons following each other seems
too much for it- If the prince of the power
of the air has no hand in it we feel unkindly
towards the old rogue. We are cutting corn -
seem to have a pretty fair crop. The friends
who send the chairs would be pleased if they
knew they came just two days before his
baptism & their first use was on that occasion
& one of them by the wife he has retained
the gun gave great satisfaction, but two
months nearly have elapsed before he could
bring himself to fire with it. He told me he
did not know what to do with it. It was

[0005]

2^d sheet

too fine to shoot out of it hela. He intended to keep
it till he got a waggon & then he would shoot
with it occasionally & then put it into its bed.
But a big buffalo made a mistake yesterday
and came blundering through the town. He
fired the first shot into it. It is now loaded
in both barrels. He wonders who made the different
parts & as there are three names for conjecture
viz. Tipping Lawden & Parker it is supposed
one made the stock another the lock & a third
the barrel - The gun accoutrements are welcome
have you no finished common musket ~~hammers~~[cocks]
the percussion are not at present so useful as
these would be. I have completely failed in
all attempts to make a screw [thread] in the inside
of the part of the tumbler which projects. The taps
have a portion tapering at the point which only
scrapes & before the real screw comes into
operation it is either down to the bottom
or broken Can you give me any hint or
instruction on the point - Any finished
pans.? Time is everything here.*

Can you provide us with 1/2 muid of good
seed corn for next sowing. That we have
is mixed with Bengal &c. The seeds are
very welcome indeed. None of my beans did
*and any new ideas you may have acquired on putting fire into a new
[0006]

Yours come on splendidly. The scotch Kale was

excellent at Mabotsa but the two plants preserved for seed were planted close to each other & a curious interchange was the result - The kale gave its breadth of leaf to the turnips & contented itself with becoming a "thistle" with a short stalk The turnips are now things with leaves like bananas & enormous branching inedible roots - A few seem to have escaped the contagion but I doubt whether they will be worth propagation

Of M^rOswel's seeds the custard apple did best we have six growing rigorously - many more came up but were devoured by insects several beat roots & a plant called Bringale have come on but these are all

If you can procure sheep as cheap as the last but at some future time you will oblige us by them. But no more goats. They are very useful in payment but a skin disease unusually fatal these two last years renders it unprofitable for us to keep them any time on our hands The sheep do extremely well & we can pay with them. heifers will always be welcome [preferred indeed to every thing else]. We can get 9 or 10 sheep in [0007]

exchange for one - It will be well to avoid spending ~~anything~~ money on on our behalf for some months or till next years salary comes due except for hiefers & Tea - We shall want but little besides If you can procure good tea for us we shall remember you every time we drink it - If you cannot get what we like best the next best although inferior must do. Although it should be like rotten hay & we say, so we do not dream of attaching blame to you because you are not the Tea dealer — As for the Ham We never doubted your kind intentions in sending it - & our remarks had a reference to the future rather than the past - We never dreamed of sending back anything bought for us never having once looked on you as the dealers

We are not Mahometans either. We are glad you admire the cap. We shall send that perhaps.

What in the world has become of Robert III we are exceedingly anxious to learn - Mary is afraid he has been in the commando against the boers. I imagine he would be employed in

some way at the time perhaps as aide camp
or what not for what will not conjecture
conjure up. The worst of conjecture is its
indefiniteness to those who have but little of the
imaginative & excitable in their composition
[0008]

I am very glad of the musket. Have you never recieved
the powder ordered? You must not forget that one
of the bellows must come this way. I intend
giving that we now have to Paul when settled with
Makhatlā which use will I feel sure meet your
approbations - as soon as we plough we shall
make the attempt to fix him there - Paul is
preparing - I felt favourable to the proposition
that Sebube & Paul join at the Beiñuaketse at first
But on reflection came [to][^] the conclusion that
we ought to attempt introducing the gospel into
both places & if both are as favourably recieved
as Sebube has been - each may in time be
furnished with an associate. Sebube does
not seem to need any energy from Paul &
I do not expect soon to find one better adapted
for commencing a station than Paul
If Paul is not allowed to remain in the
prosecution of his work we shall then think
they way open for ~~Paul~~[him] to go over to the Beiñuaketse
the attempt would have been made sooner had we
not been engaged in removing hither &c. This has
caused more than 12 months delay. a long time to some
this may appear but no portion of my life passed
quicker & though I have not done all I wished
verily I have not been idle. It occurs to me at
[0009]

[3^d] this moment that as on earth when employed in what
we enjoy. The time passes so quickly we do not percieve its course
so the employments of heaven will completely saturate
the periods of direction & in the opposite state existence
will drag on heavily, there will be no employment
to disturb the everlasting ennui of prolonged eternal
despair What a wearisome time Judas has spent
since he went to his own place. What a
mercy to be allowed to spend our lives in labour
for him whom we shall yet see in glory. A
great mercy indeed that he makes that labour
pleasant

Many thanks for the gun apparatus. Have
you none of more greater finish. We want time
very much to drill holes especially. The two
loading rods have been bought by Sechele. I have
got wherewithal to pay for them. He is anxious

to pay for the double barrel & gun & will do so soon for
he has sent to the Bamangwato in expectation
of ivory. It has been promised. If successful
the little rifle will be bought about same time
S. does not know what to say about his
gun he is so pleased with it. Among the
multitude of words expressions of gratitude to Tipping
Lawden Parker you & myself are not wanting
[0010]

and the overruling Providence which protected in its
way is duly acknowledged. I think you would be
pleased by his expressions in prayer. He has a
great deal of opposition to bear with & you need to
remember him that he may be established with
truth. We teach a little English to him Paul &
Mabalse & a few others, but have only one
English Burner. Can you furnish us with
some & a few English Testaments if you
have them. We were glad of the books sent
lately. I had the impression that you had handed
over the book department to M^r Ashton
Our schools have diminished since we recieved the
chief or rather since the wives were dismissed
& so has the attendance on the services - Mokhatla's
lock was done extremely well. I seldom hit giving
the pans so much fire --- ——

The weather is excessively warm - From
93° to 95 in the coolest part we can find
in the shady parts of our house - I worked
unders some mimosas as long as I could but
the heat gave me headache - A complaint
I never knew till lately so we built a smithy
Mary is more troubled than formerly by the
pains peculiar to her condition - I never
looked to the clouds so much in my life as I have
done these few months past
[0011]

Mary desires me to say that she did not send sugar
by Motsealeona because she did not possess full con-
-fidence in his honesty. If the trouble of drying
quinces is not greater than that of preserving them
we should prefer them so.. She will send sugar by
next opportunity. Sebube is here on horseback.
I have read with great pleasure the Broadmead lectures
by Hoster - Have you his works selected from
the Eclectic - I shall send the former out
some day. Leelong gives an outline of
the present state of organice Chemistry - as
an appendix Agricultural chemistry which
is excellent. You must remember

it in some of your journeys.

Any word of vaccine virus?

Affectionately yours

DLivingston

Love & kind salutations to M^{rs}M Ann
& M^r Hamilton. Mary desires me to
transmit thanks for Cheeronrecieved
&c. The christian treasury is excellent -we
thank you for perusal Be sure & read them
before you send them I was much ashamed
when I knew of was put in mind that you
never read the Echo & the shame returned the
other day when a number of that ill fated work
stared me in the face
[0012]

Kolobeng

Nov 1848

Rev^d R. Moffatt

Kuruman