

## Letter to Richard Owen, 29 March 1841

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

Cape Town 29<sup>th</sup> March 1841

R. Owen Esq<sup>r</sup>.

Sir

I take the liberty to inform you that yesterday I presented to Colonel Bell the Hon<sup>le</sup>. Secretary of the Colony, your letter respecting the boxes sent out by the College for facilitating the collection of anatomical preparations. And today I received from him the following note. " Colonel Bell begs to inform M<sup>r</sup> Livingston in reply to his note of yesterday that there are at least two boxes at Gov<sup>t</sup> House which answer the description given by Professor Owen, being addressed to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, and marked "Glass" We recommend Mr Livingston to make application on the subject to His Excellency's Private Secretary at Gov<sup>t</sup> House- presenting at the same time, the Professor's letter which is herewith enclosed for that purpose" - &c

I understand there are three of them & as far as replenishing them is concerned nothing has been done. This is really too bad but what else can we expect from those who seem to make money their chief end of pursuit. Their leisure moments

[0002]

are devoted to something very different from lending a hand to the cause of science

I have no doubt but that I shall be put in possession of the "cases" And as the mail for England is made up tonight I lose no time in letting you know my success, and also the prospect of ultimate success in obtaining what you wish - I am informed by those who have travelled extensively through the Colony that it is by no means uncommon for the "Bushmen" to bring the eggs of ostriches for sale to the waggons of travellers, and these frequently in a state of incubation. And I likewise observe great

quantities of the shells for sale in Cape Town, these being objects of curiosity for sailors &c &c - The Cape Ant-Eater is reported to be delicious as food & no doubt is searched after by the natives on this account So I suppose by offering a larger price than usual for the former and placing a sum on the whole body or only the uteri of the latter, I may soon succeed in obtaining all we require.

You may rely upon me that I shall lose no ~~unnecessary~~ time unnecessarily but will make every effort to effect our purpose that may be consistent with the chief object of my mission to this country

[0003]

Scientific pursuits are not the end for which I have come hither, but the evangelization & civilization of the people and to this I hope to devote most of my engergies.

While however I make the latter my chief object I mean to attend a little to the former as a means of relaxation and if now or at any future time you should wish anything that can be obtained in my part of the country. Please, Do not hesitate to make what use you choose of my services. A note, addressed ( Rev )D. Livingston, Bichuana Country: care of ( Rev.) A. Robson, Port Elizabeth, Algoa Bay, S.A. and handed into the Mission House, Blomfield ( St. )to any of the Secretaries, will in due time reach me -

I have been longer in my passage hither than I at [...] anticipated. The delay having been caused by the splitting of one of our masts which obliged us to put into Rio De Janeiro to refit. The same accident detains me here and if we go on at this slow rate, I do not see that we can reach Lattakoo in much less than 4 months from this date. The length of time which must elapse before I can transmit the boxes down to the coast is rather discouraging but I earnestly hope to get one of them replenished before I pass the boundary of the Colony in which case I suppose it ~~would~~ will reach you before the termination of the present year. If however it is later Do not suppose I have

[0004]

I have forgotten my intentions But believe me

ever yours with much respect

David Livingston

R. Owen Esq<sup>r</sup>

page folds into envelope and has address, sideways on page  
single

Richard Owen Esq<sup>r</sup>.

Royal College of Surgeons

London