

Letter to Agnes Livingstone 3, 8 February 1866

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

Zanzibar 8th February

1866

My Dear Nannie

As H M S. Wasp goes
to Mauritius on 10th though
I gave you a pretty long letter
by the Vigilant which went
of yesterday, I may add a little
by this conveyance. and then
you may feel bound at
some future time to write
to me when there may be no
possibility of [my] answering. I
am happy to hear that D^r
Kirk is coming out here as
surgeon to the Resident
Political Agent which is
almost sure to end in his
succeeding to that office itself
He will be of great use to
every good cause out here
& then I can write to one in
whom I have entire confidence
[0002]

It is not a good climate by
any means. Rae's brother
came out here to supply George's
place. He has been ill ten days
and died last night. Miss
Tozer had to go off to the Seychelles
yesterday in ill health and
D^r & M^{rs} Seward have just
come back from those islands
whither he went nearly dead
four months ago. The town
is by the shore on a tongue of
land behind which the sea
comes. The shore is indescribably
filthy & provocative of holding

the nose. The island to look
at is extremely beautiful.
Groves of coconut palms,
mangrove topes & groves
of clove trees flourish
in perpetual greenness, but it is
a sickly place. Slaves swarm
and they seem to have collected
all the ugliest of their race
from Africa. One never
sees a face on which the eye
[0003]

rest with pleasure & this
is the "fair sex"! I know their
tribal marks. Nearly all
come from Lake Nyassa
and beyond it. One woman
said to me that she had
heard of my passing in a
boat but she did not see
me. Another came from
hundreds of miles beyond
the Lake. The slave owners
go about in the slave mar-
ket here with a woman or
a child held by the hand
calling out "seven dollars"
"seven dollars." The highest
was 20 dollars. They sit in
rows looking dejected &
ashamed. An Arab or a
Persian comes forward &
raises up a girl - opens her
mouth & examines her
teeth - then her limbs &
[0004]

enquires how any scar was
got. A wound from the lash
decreases the value because
it shews that she has been
obstinate or disobedient - He
usually ends by throwing
his stick 20 yards or so &
makes her walk for it to
see as a horse dealer would
say "her paces." One of my
men was with me & he
became very much excited
on seeing "wives for sale."
all dressed up with flowers,
and eyebrows painted. He

said in English "Wife all
same sister. All same as
mother. Arab man sell wife
very bad oh very bad. &
he began to protest to them
so energetically I had to take
him away. One said to him
[0005]
you are the same as we
no said he "I am an
Englishman"

The Sultan gave me
a house and he furnishes
food and everything we
need. He insisted on sending
Lieutenant Brebnor and
the crew of the Thule back
to Bombay in one of his
men of war The Nadir Shah
while it is getting ready all
our men are entertained
at the Sultan's expense.
This is rather handsome
and if he would only
give up slaving he
would be a "brick" of a
Sultan. but his chief
income is derived from
[0006]
this source. We had our
formal presentation
after D^r Seward came -
the toothache was nearly
gone and he insisted
on meeting us & again
coming down to shake
hands in the street. I
told him what Sir Bartle
Frere said to the South
Mahratta princes on the
necessity of education
and if they did not
make some exertion
to get knowledge power
would slip through their
fingers & they would be
left behind in the race
I meant him of course
to make the application
[0007]

to himself - I mentioned
the power of steam & the
gift of the Thule
evidence that our Gov
wished him to be a
participator in that power
We did not wish to mo-
nopolize it. Everything
he could send to Bombay
for sale would find a
ready market there. We
needed grain of all sorts
as rice - dura - in fact
everything but slaves”
he laughed at my last
remark. Told me he would
help me as much as he
could now & at all future
times - and I was never to
have any shame in telling
him what to do for me.
[0008]

Among Orientals this does
not mean much but
we must be Thankful for
even the smallest con-
tributions. His house has
the only flower garden in
the island. It abounds in
roses which are free to
use. The couches are mag-
nificent and to keep the
sepoys up to the mark
the Havildar has made
them mount guard at the
door. A Portuguese has the
contract for supplying us
with provisions because
he speaks English & is
supposed to know English
tastes. He did not know
that there is no love lost between
that nation & me. I did not
pay the last letters. They went
off unintentionally unpaid

Good night. Love to Madame Hocede,
DL