

Letter to George Grey, 30 July 1859

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[0001]

Kongone Harbour 30 Decth July 1859

Dear Sir George

We are now about
to deliver our letters to H.M.S.
Persian and though I know
that she has one on board
for you of May last I add
a few words to that as we
are sending some Buaze
seeds and living plants
of the Motsikiri. D^e Kirk
will write M^r MacGibbon
as to how they are to be
disposed and I have now
to beg your good offices
for speedy transmission
to their destination. The
[0002]

Buaze will do well in Natal
in localities where other cultivation
is impossible, should it grow
no care is required for an
annual crop, (a comfortable
fact for all Hottentots English
Dutch & African) for it is
simply pollarded when the
fibre is mature in the thinner
branches, the seeds yield a
paint or drying oil, some are
for India & others for Natal,
and we shall send more when
we can, there are plants
too of Motsikiri, a tree the seed
of which yields a fat & an oil
valuable in commerce. It
is exported from Inhambane.

We have sent home a
Report the joint production of D^e Kirk and myself on the
African fever, and we think
our experience of it has rendered

it a less formidable disease
[0003]
than heretofore. This will probably be
published.

We have been able to furnish a
report on the navigation of the
Zambesi after seeing all the changes
to which it is annually liable. From
what we have observed in an
unusually dry year a vessel drawing
two feet such as they are obliged
to use on the Mississippi could
ply the whole of ordinary years
During four or five months
each year large vessels could
ascend to Tette. There the river
is 964 yards from bank to bank
about three times the width of Thames at London Bridge
at the broadest parts it is
about 3 miles, and divided
into five or six channels. A
Tide Pole put up at my suggestion
by Major Secard shewed a
gradual rise above low
water mark of eight feet, then
a variation from 8 to fifteen feet
during some months. The
[then a gradual decrease to 3 1/2]
[0004]
low water mark adopted was [the surface of] that
in which from 18 inches to 24 inches,
were found in certain crossings
from one channel to another.
The channels then contained reaches
of miles in length of 8 or 10 feet,
but in the crossings we had
much difficulty, the vessel of 31-3 inches
being of what is called the "the Niger
canoe or potbellied shape" & so
weak an engine as to be unable
to help us in the difficulty. She was
only 1 1/16 of an inch thick in the
beginning and is now like an
old copper kettle full of holes
at one part. We are about to
try Nyinyasi from the Shire,
if she will only stick together so
long. The Shire is more easily navigated
from the Zambesi as we have 2 or 3
fathoms constantly & can steam by

night. We are in hopes, after surmounting
a thirty mile difficulty of getting on the
Lakes of Eastern Africa, and then
we go to the Makololo Country either
afloat or afoot David Livingstone

I wonder why our Cape Merchants dont push their merchandise
higher up the coast. The Tette traders have been compelled to wait
four months at Quilimane for calicoes or till an American ship came
They are yard wide coarse unbleached calicoes & dearer than the English.
Gentoos from India give higher prices for ivory in English calico than the
Americans can afford