

Letter to George Drummond, 21 November 1844

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Mabotsa

21 Nov 1844

My Dear Brother Drummond

Your welcome and excellent letter written at some queer outlandish place where it seems M^r Chisholme among other good deeds is doing the needful towards augmenting the worlds population found me in my monkish all a few days ago as happy as any of you domesticated animals and (miserbile dictu) first on the eve of becoming one myself. Tempus intanta &c. But I cannot leave the batchelor life without a sigh. What infatuation you labour under to rejoice after having [had] your nose held to the "grindstone" for such a length of time and what infatuation I am under myself. In love!! words yea thoughts fail so I leave it to your imagination & recollection – I am it seems after all to be hooked to Miss Moffat (M^r Moffats first daughter) in about three weeks hence. I am just finishing my house. It is something like your own I suppose [one] rather more primitive. 52 feet in length & 20 broad, containing a study bedroom & parlour - , & pantry, kitchen apart from the house. It is stone do you think? Nay but a much easier material to mould. viz. plastic rind. We dash it about a foot thick and then cut it straight with a spade and such is the heat of the luminary that Fairbrother wont call the sun over our heads before two hours you would wonder where the water has gone. Indeed one hours exposure makes it difficult Dent We are up walls in no time after the foundation is laid and they are as hard as brick almost. Let Moore good dear fellow know of my marriage. It will comfort all your hearts to know I am become as great a fool as any of you. the pickle he was in at the time he wrote the note predictates something in the population line I suppose But he did not mention among his other duties the washing of the baby's unmentionables. He wont stick in the world nor will I if I can help it.

Now after the above nonsense I must give you something better if I can. And first of all I must tell you that this station has been recently formed by M^r Edwards & myself &c M^r E came out 20 years ago for the Kurrichane & is the only one of 7 with the same destination who ever saw the locality. the Kurrichane mountains lie about 30 miles South east of us, the people among whom we have

taken up our residence are called Bakhatta a tribe of Bechuanas which works in iron & wood, the founderies are of the most original description, farre similies of that of the old Tukul coin. What you say of the Samsons applies in all it is farce to them, desire for property is a predominant feature in their character, greedy & mean beyond calculation [0002]

Indeed they seem to make conscience of begging, and though refused if the refusal is in a jocular or friendly manner they dont seem to take it ill. they have chased their conscience and had they gone away without making a trial they would have perhaps felt its stings. Deceitful, liars to a man and as proud as Lucifer if they think you are under any sort of obligation or dependant for anything in them. I should say in general we ought to place but little dependance on a native untill we get him into Heaven, and as a rule of conduct Let us act with uniform kindness to them expecting that at one time or other they will repay it with ingratitude, perhaps insult. It will be a great misfortune if we (as some have) allow our tempers towards them to become soured or disgusted. I know one who has placed confidence on many and having been ungratefully treated his talk regarding them would savoured badly if reported any where. the case is instructive. I have tried as much as possible to avoid making the conduct of others to me any part of my rule of conduct to them and have got on comfortably sometimes when others got broken heads (much grief) Our chiefs are generally an imbecile race. "gawks" & "Sandy Macfarlanes" their power is of the fended sort. And they are exceedingly jealous of our approaches. Everything we do is thought to be an attempt to draw people to our party & pawn the "Boguera" or circumcision is more (or rather entirely) a national civil right than religious observance. It takes place every four or five years & all of nearly the same age one subjected to it. Those [who] have gone to the circumcision together are bound into a cohort under one of the chiefs sons or brothers for ever afterwards & have to under service go wherever he is sent, do whatever he likes under pain of death untill that event takes place, this ceremony was looked upon by the early missionaries as sinful, they keep it secret as a measure & perhaps this was one portion of the reason why the missionaries came to the conclusion. You will perceive that war proclaimed against this ought easily be interpreted as war against the feud as system which exists & it was so, and thus jealously for the existing form of government was very extensively engendered, this has been a great hindrance to the spread of christianity. Each chief is absolute lord of his people business without his consent, this was the state of matters out at Kuruman & vicinity when the mission began - it is not so now. But it is so here. Mahurathe chief of the Battapiwas very much

opposed

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to the gospel untill lately, and so long as he continued so, No one living near him embraced the gospel. He has lately become more favourable & M^r Ross has gone to live with him & we have hopes of good being the result, told you notice that Mr R mentioned in the report that he had been "the first to get Mahura to listen to this gospel" this was a lusus linguae with a vengeance after M^r Moffat, Hamilton &c had preached to him so long. But we must be charitable & hope against hope that it was true. the French missionaries have been very successful among the Basutos to the eastward of us and a great deal under God has been among the influence of an enlightened but unbelieving chief, he had never like the others thrown obstacles in the way, on the contrary has encouraged the people to attend to the instruction of the missionaries. Our chief is a real Johnny Raw but he is kind as yet & civil & encourages the people to attend our meetings. You speak of the expedition to endeavour to make peace. Had you been here church members would not have been deemed acknowledgement of the teachers as chiefs & a certain attack would have been made. Churches here are notwithstanding all on efforts regarded still as sort of political communities you seem to have been shocked by the indecency of the dress of the males. A short apron reaching half way down the thigh is the Bechuana female dress when working. the men nondescriptively always and the Caffres go stark naked. I have seen the men stand in the presence of European females with as little consciousness of impropriety or shame as G. D. does without trousers on. the Matibele all go in puris naturalis & are & all of them wonder what makes us thrust our pins "into bags which can only hinder us from running fast" Your language seems a curious pointless one, the mouth

can't get a hold of so many vowels, you say "I thank you for your advice, this in situana is "Kia gu itunelela ka enutla kakololo ea gago, I [do]thee thank for by means of advice of thine. How different the two tongues We have much circumlocution to express a very simple idea and have to make use of words frequently which have very little meaning. Witness the above "for by means of "or on account of I now do thank you for all yours & hope I have profited by it the hand writing however is beyond my power. I am getting worse

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and worse the more I write & don't know where I shall end. You of course have heard of Radford's death. He wrote me the most affecting letter I ever received. It came in a box of medicine he sent & that arrived long after I knew he was dead. He told me the state of his lungs & with the full consciousness of his approaching dissolution said "Now write soon as I won't be here to receive it." Salome Coal

too & Miss Marshall. I have recieved letters from M^r C & Metomatree often At the latter place they were lamost dispairing of hearing from you ere you first arrived & when it did it caused great joy Prentice a Plymouth brother is gone to the wall as far as mission are concerned. Poor Catharine, she has not enjoyed the maroned state here. In perpetual pain & unable to stand without support [...] well & of Fison I hear nothing

You say if [...] children pulling my coat tails &c could not take the breeks off a [...] could you? I dont know when I have had a coat on my back I wear jackets. & I say if you were as near Egypt as we are you would have worse plagues than children only a great deal smaller How is with respect to native agency? I have £50 at my disposal if I like some or most of it from persons I never saw for native teachers, I have not yet been able to appropriate more than £12 on account of paucity of suitable individuals. I cannot conscientiously recommend unsuitable. I have thought perhaps you may be more favourably situated for that mode of propogating the gospel & a lot of ladies & gents in D^rWoodlands's church having sent lots of things now on their way here and guessing me to mention waht may be useful in order to assist me. if you wish it I feel inclined to direct some of their benevolence to you & friend More I dont know if I should succeed as I am not reasonably acquainted with a single individualof them but it is always well to set people in the way of the good. I intend writing to them tomorrow by way of taking their pulse on the subject and you may be you may be sure I shall give you a character worth 7& sixpence any day. If you see a fair prospect of doing good by a native teacher and apart from your own station let me know if you please. I think the last point desirable to be attended to in order to be able to tell them of the amount of good done & thus stimulate others to support & individualize their own labourers at the throne of grace. Have you seen Marrnonisio Kilmarhock facts?

M^r Williams has been ill since he went to England & I fear he wont get better. this prevents his fond project of a Welsh magazine. If however I hear again I shall let you know Peace and mercy be with you & wife & children give her my most affectionate salutations D.L.

Dont address me Rev & M.D. too say either D^rL or Rev D^rL. if you say Rev D^r that would be equal to D.D. which I am not

Rev ^dGeorge Drummond
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