

Letter to Charles Livingstone, 8 November 1854

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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Golungo Alto

8th Nov^r

1854

My Dear Charles

Its a weary time since I heard any of my former correspondents. And I have slender hopes of seeing any epistle from you I am in Western Africa. the ship of the Commodore called the "Scourge" has gone up to Fernando Po for the mails. She is much beyond time and we cannot guess the cause of her But when she comes my last hopes hearing from friends will have to expire. I away into the region where there are no mails, cheer the weary wanderer.

I would have been fater away before this bad health & good hope kept me about a longer than was absolutely necessary Loanda. Then when I came up into the country as I had written some papers a Newspaper recommending agriculture of slave trading. It was expected that would shew some interest in the efforts a few who are making laudable efforts to themselves as coffee growers. the trees ready planted for them, and all that the coffee in the world requires is to have ground partially cleared and the fruit and sorted. they shewed extraordinary

[0002] and I had to refuse their gifts of coffee &c. I encouraged them to persevere and other things I learned that the views your Professor of Political Economy are . I shall return to this subject again the mean time - I may relate that after spending 8 or 10 days as above I came back to the residence of the chief of the District called

Golungo Alto, And when on the point of starting was seized with one of the deadly fevers of land. I of course could not leave one had shewed me a great deal of kindness bending under disease I entered his dwelling my way down to Loanda. I have been him for 8 days past. His head became and as he has none but slaves him, I have to see everything done by night and by day. Pity the poor who falls sick among his slaves. this a most kind and considerate master yet says to me - "If you had not been here I think would have knocked me on the head." they riot among the eatables - As I do not to scold in Portuguese I can only be in silence at the affection developed the domestic institution. they kill the goats & fowls - then tell me with faces of the most wonderment - "the thing is dead" When

[0003] tell them to throw them away there follows only comfortable roasting. When the sweatmeats are devoured one comes and tells me with a countenance horror - "these slaves are robbing [master of] everthing" and very one I have come accidentally upon the act of eating Pine Apples rolled in a large of sugar. I can scarcely get the washerwoman put my clothes in order though I pay her for . Let who will go for slavery I vote for the . I have seen a good deal of it now from the unstudied words and actions of masters I very much doubt if is the least truth in the averment that masters treat their slaves with kindness in the practice of habitual injustice them, it is extremely questionable whether the sort even can claim by a few driblets civility, the appellation of Kind Masters. It fortunate that this country contains but few in comparison with free men. In districts of the Province the statistics drawn by those who have no apparent motive misstating the facts, [shew] the proportion of in the entire population is 6.79 per cent.

But let us look at the subject of an armed putting down the slave trade. the views by your Professor - that such means

[0004] only have the effect of increasing the of the treatment of those who would be notwithstanding, to supply the demand. no means would be effective for the of this species of commerce so as the profits were so large - And then if I rightly in true Yankee style he jerked a little beyond the full length of his by the windy climax, that Great Britain have consulted the interests of the slaves had she instead of cruizers fitted out well ventilated - well found Emigrant to convey the negroes to the Brazils, the wind bag tacked on to the tail of them considered his sentiments just. And would been pleased had our squadron been . But since I came into this I found that the oft repeated tales the increased horrors and increased numbers nothing else than concoctions of the traders feeling the pressure from without
Angola sent some thousands of slaves down the coast for exportation trade was carried on thus. A trader went the Interior to purchase wax, ivory &c. and . And he always purchased as many as carry his merchandise down to the

[0005]

[2d] coast. He was sure of a market. Indeed in 1837 just before the treaty for slave trade suppression Portugal came into operation M^r Gabriel 39 ships in Loanda Harbour all waiting cargoes of slaves. At present no ship dare on the coast with slave fettings except to a dash into some one or two harbours hastily by night & put to sea next morning to return to the slaves of the time when there were no British cruizers on the coast. All came down were sold & exported. And as they now export them neither can they them and therefore a new system of merchandise [became] necessary. the new is called, of "Carregadores" or carriers and native chiefs living under the Portuguese are to furnish these carriers to do the work done only by slaves going to be exported. district supplies 400 monthly, and other in proportion - I have met a thousand them in one day either going or returning every man of them was a proof of the of the English cruizers in repressing slave trade - for, up to the time when the were placed on the coast all this work carrying was performed by those who had no hope of return

Again, Before the English squadron began operations the prices of good young slaves

[0006] the country near the coast or say within

200 miles of the coast line varied from 70 to 80 per head (as they say) Now the very best be had for from 10 to 20. If the reason is it invariably is "Because we can not now them." But say some slave trade abettors they can only get one cargo in four safe into transatlantic ports they realize handsome profits shall give you my reasons for doubting this. present the thing seems to cut two ways. Slaves very cheap now in Angola and that is the effect of the intervention of an armed . they are said to [be] dear in proportion in

Cuba & Brazil. As soon as a trader gets his dollar per head cargo clear off the African coast he value them at that or at [the] 150 or 200 dollars expects to get in Cuba. Clearly to my mind, livestock has become very precious in beast's own estimation, and unless some , of operative self interest, failing to him, can be proved as existing in his . the most powerful motive he knows comes play to make him lessen the horrors of middle passage. though he regards them as , it is well known all over the world that most brutal being alive will be more likely treat [well] a horse worth £200 than if it were worth £10. only.

[0007]

My reasons for doubting the plea of handsome profits realized by the few slave traders who manage get clear off with an occasional cargo. are following. I have made many enquiries and not been able to discover more than two three who have hold of riches got in the slave trade

again and again have individuals been out to me as having been once very and having lost their all in it. But setting particular cases let us look at the of Angola - the city of Loanda. It may said to be in ruins and if the cause of decay be enquired into - It is the inability to on the slave trade as in what they term Palmy days of the city. they have an expressive of indicating the pressure from without. We say they "pela forza da necessidade" ("by the of necessity") the public gardens on the of which stood the inscription written with the successful slaveholder's pride "Let this serve an example to Posterity" are now in ruins so unrecognisable a gentleman of the Navy me when near it "Where are the gardens of in the accounts of Loanda?" Many turn their attention to Agriculture who the tales of antisquadronites were true would prefer the handsome profits of every voyage. Indeed the tale seems to have

[0008] got up by those who are friendly to the trade others including your professor and your obd^t servant followed in the trail. thinking our knowing fellows [too] and so far ahead of the ancients thought that hard knocks would serve best villains who trample remorselessly on God's image ebony. the reason why some opinions afloat is, occasionally in England people may utterance to very strong views and their are in profound ignorance that the is deriving a good income from indirect connection with the slave trade saw bales of goods for the traffic marked " Glasgow" the American flag were not so often employed cloak it there would be fewer profits still.

I have been examining some of the old Jesuit stations in the country and the fruits their labours. From all accounts the were very exemplary in their lives and themselves to the instruction of the conscientiously. the effect of their efforts seen in the numbers who can read & write the country. They teach each other now in the district of Ambaca it is considered disgrace for any one to be unable to read the Jesuits were expelled from Portuguese by the Marquis of Pombal, the

[0009] place of the Jesuits was supplied by a batch of the priesthood, with five long beards. these were bardies, who loved to tuck up their nalects their waists and join in the dances of the natives visited one of the stations called Bango a few days . It consists of a good church and row of at right angles to the farther end. these the dormitories of the missionaries and large chests for holding their grub. there no books, all, with the silver & gold having removed by the present bishop to Loanda are no inscriptions on their graves. they just allowed to die out. & the poor fellows in silence waiting for the sound of [the] terrible . the people could tell nothing about these batch except their fine beards. But one on being questioned to tell that an inhabitant the lovely valley of Bango was honoured by arrival in his domicile of a little white stranger afraid to speak out on the occasion He . "A wonderful thing has happened in

Bango. Both my wife and I am black yet have got a white child! this must be another the miracles of St. Hilarion" - (the patron saint the establishment) the man told it with a of the muscles about the mouth which he had often enjoyed a hearty guffaw the subject before

You will percieve that the country possesses

[0010] of great interest. the people are ready for the word of God. What a difference between and those with whom I have to deal in the beyond. Long years of our short lives be spent in the monotonous labour of to read those who have an inveterate to believe that they are conferring a favour by condescending to learn. And they have acquired a knowledge of reading majority of the young turn their backs as against the gospel as before. they we have some interested motive in drawing to Christ. they will lose some of their self-if they yield. &c &c So that more rigorous by God's providence seem absolutely to humble or punish them. Yet when in the case of Tahiti the rod falls upon them a hulleboloo we make about it in . Here the people have been suffering rod of the oppressor for centuries, and as they read they are in a

proper state for receiving knowledge I have a strong desire to some bibles among them. And perhaps more. But will the Portuguese allow me? came out behind them. they would not have me to go in from Loanda. No English ever saw their fine fruitful country before known now somewhat in the world they

[0011] not for shame refuse me passage back. But is ten to one if they would allow me to land box of bibles at Loanda. To do them justice I must say they have all treated me extraordinary kindness -

this although they looked upon my coming as another wedge against their slave trading - When they saw me in the interior calculating they wondered why a "Doctor Mathematico" should pretend to be a missionary

the above are my more than actual knowledge of what would have done. the bishop did everything could for me. giving presents to all my com- a horse saddle & bridle for the chief and dress of a Colonel with Epauettes cocked hat &c the chief. Sending an order to all the to furnish me with every th[...] needed till beyond Portuguese territory embraced me when parting, bless His , I would have preferred kiss from my wife to a hug from this & kind hearted celibate in crimson gown & golden cross hung to his neck will be better not to publish anything the state of the Angolese perhaps for is vigilant and would not hesitate act immediately if it were only to shut door. I earnestly pray I may be permitted do something for the spread of Knowledge Christ here. Physically it is one of the finest in the world but one would not so at the coast. In here the luxuriance vegetation is wonderful and beautiful. The

[0012] introduced many fine fruit trees from America. One called fruta da Conde is like cream taste. A wild one called Masubiri has a large and resembles in appearance the breadfruit wish I could send you seeds. Edens fruits all been allowed to degenerate except the vine. In the Millennium I suppose they will be and as much improved as the apple is the crab. My love to your spouse, and 'family. I shall leave this as soon as my is better. I have found an invaluable [in Loanda - West Coast (of Africa)] in Her Majestys Commissioner Edmund Esq^{re} Any letter sent to him will be for-to England by him if I am there. D. Livingston

I have written John by same mail yankee vessel will take both to the States
(Boston?)

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Plympton

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