

Letter to H. Bartle E. Frere, October 1869, May 1870

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[0001]

Manyuema Country - October 1869

My dear Sir Bartle, have not the faintest prospect of a letter for many months to come but make a little preparation for the time when the of sending off a packet may arrive. is refreshing also when brought occasionally a standstill to hold a little converse on with one's friends, and make believe progress is reported. I am in the Country the Manyuema the Suaheli say Manyema- reputed cannibals, and about 150 miles of Ujiji. As soon as I was recovered from I went up Tanganyika fifty to an islet called Kasange and then Nor West. This was to avoid a great of high mountains opposite Ujiji- had seen the central [line] of drainage of the Nile Valley pass through Lake Moero thence go away N.W. as the LualabaIt

[0002] was reported to enter another Lake , and was joined by the river

Lufira therein. [On] coming out it was said to West but no one knew whither. I that it might be the Congo, but have since found in coming West that am in the great bend this river, which retains the name Lualaba, makes turning round, and going N and .E. into, I suppose, the Nile. It is very large river, sometimes from eight ten miles broad. I have to go down see where it joins the eastern arm

Tanganyika - Lualaba - and Tanganyika are the two great head branches into Ptolemy makes the head waters . Were it not so very Burtonesque I call them Lacustrine rivers - specimens of the Lake rivers which

[0003] in Africa in prehistoric times. and surely has the dawned on my mind that predecessors of Ptolemy the , who flourished in the second century our era must have visited this very - and all they have left for us is the rediscovery of what has sunk oblivion, like the circumnavigation Africa by the Phoenician admiral of of the Pharaohs about B.C. 600?

He was not believed because he said that in round ~~Libya~~ [Libya] he had the sun his right hand. This stamps his to us as genuine. Ptolemy, by the springs between ten & twelve latitude, and exhibiting the water into [two] great arms shewed that his informants

[0004] had visited the sources - were probably traders in ivory, elephants, slaves, copper & . A map of the Ethiopian gold mines the time of Sethos the II is the oldest in world. The copper mines of the Katanga my S.W. have been marked for ages & malachite is said to be inexhaustible commentators have been strangely to place Ethiopia further up than

Nubia - some have ventured to put a of it adjacent to the Red Sea - I remember rightly "Timbaka the " had his seat of empire on the

Euphrates - he must have had a large of Africa to merit his name - Sir . Rawlinson thought it was like the

Imaum of Muscat with his African . I am not without hopes that lost city of Meröc may have existed the confluences of Lualaba & Tanganyika extensive underground houses reported

[0005] may have been places of sepulture a Race which has left no descendants - excavations are ascribed to the Deity & the modern inhabitants build their rude inside. These are my waking dreams they will not divert my mind from the line of discovery - to whatever may lead. Sir

Roderick by desiring to examine the watershed of South Central pointed to the true scientific way of the question of the sources. I understood to be the wish of the Council too but have my doubts. He said to me

"You will be the real discoverer of the Sources the Nile" - You will not readily conceive the - I had to feel every step of the way - was generally groping in the dark for who cared the rivers ran - the great upland Valley itself to the Barometers and then the of the rivers proved it - I am a little that my friends should understand my

[0006] for striving to make a complete work of the - I have had no letters but very old ones don't know the state of my affairs or of my family only thing I am sure of is that all my friends wish me to complete my task before I retire - this wish I join and think it better to do so now afterwards in vain - It seems indispensable that should go down and see where the two great head join. Then go round outside and South all the spring so as to be sure no one else come and "cut me out" by finding sources South mine - This may enable me to visit the rock and the Copper mines of Katanga - If could go straight where we wish the work soon be done, but we have to go where it safe and where cowardly attendants will not be out of their small wits and smaller sense duty - We have to make friends with one tribe in to venture to another. In this region of dense scarcely three Villages own the same headman

[0007] know each other - I have a seriously long work me but hope that the kind providence which helped thus far may aid me through.

In contemplating my work it is impossible not to of poor Speke - He affords the best example known the eager pursuit of a foregone conclusion - When he the Victoria Nyanza he at once concluded that lay the sources of the River of Egypt. He would no one to doubt this - nor would he allow his own to admit a flaw. When he saw that the River which comes out of it would not account for Nile he conjectured a "backwater" whatever that may as an augmentation of his little "White Nile" - His admitted of no question, and oddly enough Baker Speke's conclusion - though no large river begins in lake. Ptolemy's small lake "Coloe" is a more correct view Okara than that given by Speke and Grant - Three were run by Speke into one huge Victoria Nyanza. the most intelligent who spent many years the east of this Lake are grievously mistaken it but little water and the River that comes out is

[0008] than half the size of the out of Nyassa at any rate through it could be called a source, the and fountains of the Nile are unquestionably from

500 to 700 miles further up the Great Valley than Speke Baker believed them to be. I feel sorry for Speke's friends I should say little about him some will be offended. I say what I think others will take offence - I feel a difficulty and would fain not hurt the feelings of one - Grant needs no pity - the sources led to his getting good wife - £2,000 a year and a London house with her, he never saw them. I have lost nearly all my and am fast drifting into second Childhood - this is the sources have done for me. A Dutch lady of I know nothing but from scraps in the newspapers my sympathy more than any other - By wise foresight providing a Steamer, and nobly pushing on up the river spite of the severest domestic affliction - the loss of her Aunts by fever - until after she was assured by Speke

& Grant that they had already discovered in Victoria Nyanza sources she sought, she must inevitably by boats or on have reached the head waters had they not given,

[0009] enough of course, their own mistaken views, cannot conceive of her turning before she saw Moero or

Bangweolo for south of all they had seen. When they had off her hope she still lived to go South west and as much pluck as if she had been a descendent of

Von Tromp - We great he donkeys say "Exploration did not her sex" - Well, considering that

more than 1600 years elapsed since the Nile fountains were formally visited, Emperors, Kings - all the great men of antiquity, longed know where the great River, rose, exploration does not to have become the other sex either. She came further than the two Centurians sent by Nero Caesar

The Manyuema Country is in many parts densely by a rather degraded race - The Suaheli firmly believe to be Cannibals and tell tales of their purchasing slaves. The different Villages have no political cohesion vengeance has been taken sometimes by Suaheli Arabs supposed acts of murder and cannibalism committed on attendants. If asked the Manyuema laugh and should take the enquirer to be credulous, say, Yes we eat people laughingly go into details. But intelligent men among

[0010] speak seriously and point away about North to the Country of the real men eaters, which may be of Du Chaillu's Faus - a black stuff smeared on the is a sign of mourning - one of my attendants who everything was told that it was animal charcoal of the bones of relatives they had eaten - and when appeared shocked proceeded in their usual peculiar way shew him the skull of a recent victim - he pointed it to me in triumph - it was the skull of a Gorillah called Soko, and this with Serpents they do eat - the or Gorillah is abundant. His cry or mew may be any night in the gigantic forests here. It is not terrible. It is near what I remember of the call a peacock - or Tom cats on the top of a London house not so vicious in tones as he sometimes puts - Food very abundant - Holcus Serghum - Maize - Sweet Potatoes, & Cassava yield farinaceous diet. Ground nuts - palm oil palms another oil yielding tree supply fatty constituents - Sugar , bananas and plantains damilies Goats Sheep & Fowls the Villages, and Elephants, Buffaloes Antelopes swarming the forests afford plenty of nitrogenous matter - Nets are

[0011] strong enough to hold lions, and Sokos are deceived bunches of bananas placed in their way and speared. the Manyuema are cannibals they are so without reasonable . For the present I place them alongside the people have no knowledge of fire - of a supreme Being - or language, but have tails - I shall look for evidence before believe them to be very horrible. They build square houses. walls entirely of clay, and the Ladies plait their hair into straw bonnet shape. The brim comes out four inches and protects their eyes by its shade - They file their teeth to points - the Hussies!

May 1870 - I offered a handsome present to any one would shew me human flesh cooked or eaten but in - The native Arabs or Suaheli pretended to have seen so Cannibalism I expected to witness a little - At last a finger wrapped in a leaf was brought, probably a taken from a man who was killed in revenge - One had lived long among them told me that similar portions were all he ever saw, and the Medical profession them - the Doctors seem to have caused the Manyuema as Suaheli say Manyema to be called Cannibals. If I had

[0012] one tenth part of the horrible tales the traders adjacent tribes told me I might not have ventured come among them. Fortunately my mother never frightened in infancy with "Bogie" so I am not subject to Bogiephobia which the Patient believes in everything horrible if only it imputed to be the possessor of a black skin. A worse obstacle Manyema Cannibalism - the rainy season - has detained some months - the vegetation is exceedingly rank, through the of the Valleys, if grass it can be called which is more half an inch in diameter in the stalk & ten or twelve high nothing but Elephants can walk. Broad belts of forest between each district. Into these the vertical sun sends a few rays - the rain water stands in holes made by ' feet, and the dead leaves decay on the damp soil make the water of the numerous rills and rivulets of the of a strong infusion of tea. The mud of mire (scothice) is awful - bad water - perpetual wettings - brought on symptoms and great emaciation. I came to a stand the rains cease with the heads of a Suaheli horde which needs of cheap ivory brought to Ujiji - They are as kind as

could wish - Rest - boiling all the water I use and a new

[0013] have restored me - but I see that as soon as I out when the Lualaba goes into the lower Tanganyika I must retire - I must leave the excavations to some one . Up the back or southern slope of the watershed no can run - so no one can find sources of the Nile of mine, but I would put it modestly - I may be as others have been, though at present I cannot conceive in what.

I did not understand what Arrowsmith meant by making the Continent broader than it is but I remember that I took an observation on the Coast - The occultation the fixed Star by the moon, this is virtually a lunar distance the edge to the centre of the moon measured with an which no instrument can attain. The observation was at the Cape Observatory and differed by only 9 from Commodore Owen would have made it but for an error which he fell. The Admiralty in order to correct this pasted a note on the back of all their Charts requesting user of it to add 5 9 to every position along the Coast. observation added the 5 and it is rather to my credit

[0014] I came so near what the Commodore would have in with his 13 Chronometers on board - Arrowsmith[evidently] never the note referred to and he has transferred the erroneous to his Maps. Taking his erroneous Maps as the breadth the Continent mine is 5 or say 6 English miles too broad. ship sailing by Arrowsmith's Map would have to go six overland ere it reached the Africa he has depicted - has made enormous havoc of my positions of 1853-7. subsequent observations at some of the same spots prove that the first were generally correct but John to Germany and elsewhere glorifying himself for finding my errors. I have no doubt as to making mistakes considering how I was harassed by fever and fatigue unpaid it is not very dignified for him to raise a instead of being sorry that I did not do better. imperfect sketch of Nyassamas shire &c was sent to Sir just to give him a general idea of the Country - gave M^r Arrowsmith nothing till I come home and gave him observations calculated at the Cape - In the Assistant Astronomer Royal declared that my

[0015] of the Lake could not possibly be four minutes . Our friend had however got hold of our imperfect , and a sketch from this sketch by D^r Kirk and away at them though not employed [by] me, had to all his work when I gave him the Cape calculations charged M^r Murray & me £300 chiefly on account of alterations. M^r Murray says that M^r A. is a Man the strictest honour - I don't like such a slice to be off my property however honourably - He declared either my imperfect sketch itself or Kirk's Copy was forty wrong. As he got a hold of them long ere I came and found by the note appended by the Assistant Royal that from my repeated series of Chronometric I could not possibly be 4 out my worthy old might this time have given me a share of German , or at least correct his own maps by the Admiralty referred to if not the [...] Maps also at the Rooms in Whitehall Gardens

My experience with the pupils from Nassick Schools makes venture the hint that teaching them to work on board a

[0016] of War anchored in a healthy spot as is done Lord Shaftesbury's suggestion with the outcasts of London be a great improvement on [M^r] Price's plan. I discovered all asserted at Nassick, that they had been taken in that all had been Slaves and of the Criminal Class and dreaded letting me know whence they had come lest they be taken back and made to work again. Work is what hate - and in all cases they do as little as they can - they to get back to the school to live in idleness - There they had , but if their statements which I have overheard scores of times untrue, they might either work play or do nothing - If Sailors of and forced to work they would be a benefit to Country - taught to wash, cook and mend and make their clothes, and the numerous jobs sailors can do - they would be - while coming as Smiths, Carpenters Masons they only give for jeering, for not one I have seen or heard of can a tool. If

the Sons of my English Gentleman were as these poor unfortunates are they would inevitably be spoiled for life - we have all to be taught that work our lot - a blessing and not a curse - To them work is an

[0017] evil - I look with great anxiety to the in America but indulge half a hope that have more manhood than mine. The way in which US Christian Commission carried on their gigantic work the Army may be repeated for the recent Slaves. To 4,000,000 is a superhuman task but the Lord of all seems be putting forth his power to gather all into his kingdom.

I got a small box from Zanzibar probably from D^r Kirk some wine and preserves a few Saturday Reviews & Punches not a scrap of a letter - I gleaned all I could from &c - I fear that my letters are kept by an influential at Unyembe or Garaganza called the "Governor" Syde bin Buxaschid by name for a certain long box was left with having medicines two English guns letters and despatches . I sent for it twice & received no answer and I am enough to think that he wants to fall heir to guns. I have no letters later than 1866 and none from but they may be at Nyembe - My attendants are too to go anywhere without me to shelter them and if had gone I should have been thrown into the rainy season Ujiji instead of in Manyema. I was much pleased to

[0018] by a Saturday Review that Miss Frere had turned and had wisely chosen a path in literature but trodden - Her sister doing the tropical scenery shows that had been in India[Africa] for my drawing is like what boys do on walls & I have no inducement to try do better for even photographs shewing good foreheads by the wood Engravers made into the low conventional shape. It seemed that they could not draw anything the West Coast type, while here very many have finely heads straight or aquiline thin noses & thin lips forms with small feet and hands graceful limbs barn door mouths prognathous jaws and dark heels are seen. Your name the List of Stewards at the Literary Dinner told me you were in England but this addressed before I saw it - My kindest salutations to

Lady Frere & her family. Although this is grievously prolix the Climate has told on the ink I shall add a little the latest information.

Affectionately

(signed) David Livingstone

[0019]

Lake Bangweolo, South Central Africa

My dear Sir Bartle, route I chose to take up the thread of my where it was broken by the Banian slaves has proved more and time consuming than I anticipated. An Arab war at Unyanyembe led me to go due south so as to avoid bands of marauders were incited to lawlessness by the disturbed state of the country. parties of traders had been broken up by them before we started, we got away safely, and turning West soon came to Tanganyika. eastern shore is very mountainous and the rocks of the Southern chiefly mica schist and gneiss are lifted up on edge as the leaves of book when turned up on its back and slightly opened. It seems as a wedge the breadth of the Lake had been thrust up from below where water now stands, and crushed the strata up and away as they appear - the marching was excessively severe and it produced cases of subcutaneous inflammation limbs - 'black' nose, or and when I mildly proposed surgically to relieve the tension idea was too horrible, but they willingly carried the helpless - not a had fallen, and the grass mostly burned off left a surface covered blade ashes from which the heat radiated as out of a furnace or

[0020] an oven. Yet out of this hard hot surface the flowers generally leaves persisted in coming. A species of ginger with its large and yellow blossoms was the most conspicuous in obeying some like that of the Medes and Persians - when we came to the south end Tanganyika

we suddenly mounted 4000 feet up to the highland region -

Unrungu and into the strength of the rainy season there with everything , and every place sloppy and slippery - I passed through this region and besides almost proving fatal at first, when the rains ceased circumstances compelled my remaining for 3 1/2 months at an of 4,700 feet above the sea it proved eminently restorative - some require a good deal of killing, and then again a mere flea bite the quietus. Three of the Baurunga chiefs had died during my - one - Kasonso - a great friend of mine for he lent me his son to to Liemba as the lower portion of Tanganyika is called, and a large quantity of food after us with no hope of reward - one meets good fellows everywhere, and some atrociously bad ones, but I that we African travellers have of late years got too much into travelwriters habit of turning up the whites of our eyes and holding our pains as pious people are all thought to do, whenever we meet with trait not exactly "Europe Fashion". The elections had turned the

[0021] all topsy turvey - they elect a sister's son or a brother, because the sly dogs the heir apparent may not be heir real - What !! - The old stockades had all been abandoned and new ones . Forest and virgin land had to be cultivated, and the reclaimed was necessarily small. Food was very scarce, and hunger to strengthen our old orthodox faith that chief magistrates ought on account to be elected - never saw such cloudy weather - no astronomical except a few snap latitudes could be made for over three , and it rained night and day as if it would never tire. positions carefully observed were now now of no use, and the people a perverse ingenuity in leading us West - when I insisted on the compass they had me completely in their power "No in that line for ten days" and then I had to think of the stomachs of my poor fellows who were collecting mushrooms good no doubt as mushroom ketchup with a joint but no more alone than the east wind which wild asses snuff up - they us down to the back or North side of Bangweolo and however I longed and watched for a lunar distance none could be - then the rivulets spread out in the flat country as they came the Lake so as to be impossible. Many long return marches for

[0022] together had to be made to extricate ourselves from the marshes threads were from two to three miles broad - the poor carried me through the waters though it would have been agreeable to me to wade, as I did when I had unwillingly . My thighs became sore from resting all my weight by hour on their shoulders. They have hitherto done remarkably well highest praise I could bestow would be that they equal the but they are cowards, and the system of their education left out truthfulness as one of the virtues. I always remember services of the brave, kind hearted, sensible, truthful and albeit wicked Makalolo with a warm glow in my heart - The flowing into this Lake often spread out into estuaries make Bangweolo look as if she had a string of oblong round her neck. At other seasons this may be different country adjacent is all flat forest, an hours march in this you to a rivulet flowing in a meadow with one or two yards of weeping earthenn sponge on each side, a stream along the centre or winds from side to side of the slightly valley - crossing this and ascending a few feet by a gentle you enter forest again, or plod through great patches of

[0023] and other Ferns into forest again, the rivulets are legion - but an eyewitness could believe the prodigious amount of water in country all flowing into Bangweolo - When its discovery was announced the coast some one wrote an official description of it to the Bombay and stated that it is like Nyassa Tanganyika and the

Albert Nyzanza, overhung by high mountain slopes which open out into and valleys or leave great plains &c &c - The Salse and country are about 4000 feet above the sea but the only slopes are of anthills which can scarcely be called high unless thought of perched on the top of the 4000 feet altitude - the country as far as eye can reach is remarkable only for extreme flatness - the slope generally not more than from the Isle of Dogs down to the of the Thames -

the description was possibly penned from Arab and the fascination of describing the unknown had better resisted or left to the Poets.

The Chambeze and other rivers flow into its North Eastern horn great spongy Bugas or Prairies - the Portuguese crossed the Chambeze as I did high up where it is small - they were real and not black men with Portuguese names so they are first European discoverers of this river in modern times - the

[0024] of name to the Zambesi led them to consider it a branch that river and misled by a map saying " Zambesi (Eastern branch" stupidly made my first crossing as fruitless as theirs - It cost me twenty two months to eliminate this error and I was less than they for I ought to have known and remembered while Chambezi is the true native name of the Northern river

Zambesi is not the native name of the Southern river at all. We the Portuguese corruption of the name rather than introduce as to a name possessing a rather melancholy interest from survey and deaths of the officers of Commodore Owen on the river flows past Zette lama Lupanza and into the sea by Luabo &

Kongone. The name by which the natives all know it and speak it to each other is Dombazi - when the speak to Portuguese or they call it Zambesi or Zambeze. Above the Victoria Falls name is Liambai - We followed the same course with the whose rather pretty name is Nyanza or Nyinyesi or Lake of - because the Portuguese corruption Nyassa was known in , and it was rather dumbfounding to find it printed as profoundly learned thing " Nyassi or the Sea" - Nyassi meaning species of very long grass and nothing else. I gained the first rays

[0025] light about Chambeze not from my own acuteness but from the bantering remarks of the Cazembe who was lately routed and by a party of Bampamwezi whose countryman Funga Funga murdered. Certain Arab traders made great preparations for his and after going several miles up the boundary on the thought better of it, told their slaves that the river was deep and went away to trade in Rua - the Banyamwezi brought head of Cazembe to the Arabs who are immensely elated in and after their manner give circumstantial details of powers in the fight which would be quite interesting did we know that they contained not a word of truth. On telling Cazembe that I wished to visit Bangweolo, he said "one piece of is just like another - you have seen water in Moero and

Lupuala, the very water that was in Chambeze and Bangweolo but your chief ordered you to see it all by all means go after I have good guides and food for you" &c &c I was not sure that was not royal chaff till I stood in the and an intelligent islander slowly moving his hand around 183° of horizon and saying that is Chambeze forming Bangweolo and round that Western headland to change its name into

[0026] was then that the discovery of this line of drainage was made, but may feel that our allies the Portuguese being the first to cross the river deserve all the credit. If so I shall not quarrel over the - but pepper and astrology preceded Herschel & Lockyer men whose I am not worthy to mention - it suits me better to laugh the great discover of Inner Africa who after the undoubted of the Chambeze made it run East instead of West and away some 4000 feet uphill; and then challenged me in a periodical to argue the point whether Chambeze was or not the " New Zambesi".

The Lake people are of the Bisa stock and have long been eager traders. Large caravans of Babisa Bazao & Banyamwezi - went to the coast and the effect of the enterprise has in first two tribes been depopulation of their own countries. Where foreign slave trade has existed the people live in peace, and peaceful cultivation of the soil - the frequent visits of Arab are followed by chronic warfare and mental soreness all strangers, this seems to be the invariable effect of system - but in Central Africa generally war is rare and have great influence. When

men speak of the tribes being

[0027] in a state of chronic warfare they refer perhaps unwittingly people within easy reach of the coast who have had many visits slavetraders. In this region a man called Motoka took to on his own account. He inspired terror, and many to him without resistance. He built a line of huts completely a stockade I saw & battled two months in vain - The relations of the besieged chief then assembled and coming on Motoka caused an utter panic and rout, and his marauding though he himself escaped - the news of guns can do and the fate of Cazembe inspired as much fear us as the most ardent anthropologist could desire. In many places entire people fled from us, and we got nothing in the villages but chickens - then when we did get a guide he was sure run away - this with the impossibility of making astronomical and cold wet forest gloom made our marches unpleasant. These I suppose are the Elephantophagi, the Lotophagi Ichthyophagi into which the ancient anthropologists divided the - Instead of naming our tribes after their eating an ostrich, fish or lotus eaters we modern anthropoi would divide the according to their drinks, as the Scotch = the whiskey fishoid

[0028] - the gin and stout guzzlers - the roaring Portheeuers - vin ordinaire bibbers - the Lager Bier swillers - and a far off tribe of the "Sherry Cobbler" and "Brandy Cock tail" . - Fish are abundant - Elephants and buffaloes numerous and two species of lotus or sacred Lilly grow

>even on the plains which are flooded only annually - the only in use is the everlasting Pombe which instead of the stomach requires a very strong stomach to it, and the taste is anything but delicious. It not drive champagne out of the market in our day. -