

## Letter to Benjamin T. Pyne, 28 May 1846

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[0001]

Kolobeng 28<sup>th</sup> May 1846

My very Dear Friends

It is no task to write to you - I would write frequently indeed if I took up my pen every time I think & talk about you But time is not allowed one for all I wish to do so you must take my efforts as all I can give to show that I am still the same as ever I am at present out at our garden which by the way is no nearer than forty miles from our residence We have very little water at Chonuane & cannot irrigate this year. The past season has been one of unwonted drought even in this thirsty land many fountains are quite dried up and the corn crop of the natives is nearly an entire failure the scarcity of water compels us to look for corn elsewhere so we sought for a fountain elsewhere & after some toil have made a watercourse & sowed some English corn. Where we ploughed is all over marked by footsteps of the Elephant Rhinoceros & buffalo. We have disturbed them in their pasture and the lion too seems to think we have no right here for they have growled enough at us lately both by night & day. - this absence from home prevents my using the best paper I have for you. But you will excuse me I know. I go over on saturdays to see my wife & child & preach on sunday We depart at daylight & reach the house about an hour after dark - this notwithstanding the continual work the whole day on oxback which is not a great deal quicker than a native walks Our child is growing - little Robert Moffat if he lives may see you yet. this I shall never while here on earth. How pleasant it would be to have another tea with you But no - never. M<sup>rs</sup> ( L ) has begun to write you several times but never finished one good enough for M<sup>rs</sup>Pyne I do not wonder at this for she has very little time. She must attend to everything almost and everything has to be made from the raw material. She dreams about you which shews

her thoughts are frequently turned "youwards"

[0002]

She manages her house very well and I have much cause for gratitude for comfortsto which I was before a stranger. She teaches some of the Bakuenes [Note: *The Bechuana, a South African people. Robert Moffat worked for the Bechuana mission.*] who come for instruction sewing & reading But we are not yet fairly settled One of the chiefs wives sews beautifully after a very little instruction She is now making a patch work waistcoat for her husband Did I ever thank you for patchwork shawls? If not I now do. I gave one lately to a woman who assisted to a loaf of bread on an occasion when I had tasted none for six weeks before. You mention some box or boxes sent these have not yet arrived so I cannot speak of the contents. We sent £26 to you lately & told M<sup>r</sup> ( P) how to do with the sum Hope it came safely to hand. We are favoured with Indian visitors occasionally. they come to hunt for game & health - of the former they find plenty and we are better off now than at Mabotsa - the chief is very liberal & scarcely a week passes without a present of meat being sent to us. One of our visitors this year M<sup>r</sup>Oswel from Tinneveley knows Ongar well. He is a judge & collector of customs - shewed us great kindness last year and this year brought two cows for Robert. We have agreed to travel together to the Bamapela [Note: *Bamapela, a Matabele people of South Africa. See Livingstone\'s, <i>Missionary travels and researches in South Africa</i> (1857), chapters 6 and 10.] a very powerful tribe of Matibele about 10 days East of us M<sup>rs</sup> L. will go too. If spared we shall furnish you with some account of our journey A M<sup>r</sup>Arkwright descended from him who invented the spinning jenny has passed us too on his way northward after game - the prodigious herds of between 20 & 30 different kinds of game will probably attract more of the sporting than religious world here We like to see them it is always a novelty to us to see strangers M<sup>r</sup>Methuen concerning whom I gave you a few particulars has we hear published an account of his trip. It will be a sporting work I presume. If you see it let me know*

[0003]

what he says about missionaries. Our sister Ann came to see us at Mabotsa and in returning homewards the people lost some sleeping skins. Two of them

returned to seek them and took the only gun with  
 them. Ann was left thus with the waggon driver  
 & only one servant - a female. A lion attacked the  
 oxen while still daylight. She saw him kill one -  
 He then cooly eat it and as the people did not return  
 with the gun she lay in the waggon listening to  
 the impudent brute coming every now & then  
 to the waggon sides & giving a roar as much as  
 to say "Disturb me if you dare." In the morning  
 as all the oxen fled back to Mabotsa Poor Ann  
 walked about forty miles back. the sun burned  
 the skin off her face and every bush seemed  
 to contain a lion - To add to the misfortune  
 she found we had gone off to Chonuane - &  
 she could only find a few potatoes to eat  
 We knew nothing of her being there and except  
 unground corn the potatoes were the only food  
 she got until they brought the waggon back  
 Would Mary like this to be her position? -

We have no news here. We endeavour to  
 impart saving knowledge - sometimes our  
 hopes are bright. Our hearts elated - at other  
 times our sorrows are abundant and our hearts  
 very sore. M<sup>r</sup>Inglis is snug in my house at  
 Mabotsa. He tried to remove the Bahurutse [*Note: Bahurutse, a South African people. See  
 Livingstone's, <em>Missionary travels and researches in South Africa</em> (1857), Chapter 4.*]  
 from an unpleasant locality to a better  
 they were not cordial one party wished to go the other  
 disliked him. In moving the dissaffected party invited  
 the Koranas [*Note: Koranas, a South African people.*] to attack the moving party. M<sup>r</sup> ( I.) assisted  
 his party with ammunition and about 28 of  
 the Koranas [*Note: Koranas, a South African people.*] perished - they vow vengeance against  
 M<sup>r</sup>Inglis & [...] crown the whole the party whom  
 he was instrumental in separating from  
 their fellows have left M<sup>r</sup> ( I.) and gone away  
 to the boers. It is probable they will settle there  
 M<sup>r</sup>Inglis being thus left came to Mabotsa &  
 I suppose is very well content to settle down  
 in my house & garden although ten times  
 stronger than I am and of course much

[0004]  
 more able to commence a new station than I was  
 It would be much better if missionaries would go  
 forward fearlessly to the tribes beyond

I think I mentioned that Sechele attacked the  
 successor of Bube & dispersed the tribe. He  
 by our entreaty acted a magnanimous part  
 on the occasion of a portion of the people

wishing to remove to him. But the rest believing  
that he would always be hindered by his  
missionary from shedding blood heaped  
insults upon him untill he could bear it  
no longer and their dispersion was the result

*[Note: page folds into envelope and has address, sideways in middle of page]* they beat some of his people  
shamefully - this was  
their last deed for Sechele keeping the object of  
his expedition a profound secret from us  
attacked & killed about a dozen of what were  
the people of Bube - the remained fled to  
Mabotsa & I found there the wife of Bube my  
old friend. Another wife burst into tears when  
she saw me. And Khake the successor of  
Bube came about ten miles along the road  
with me to Chonuane. Poor people they  
know not what they do. Will you post  
a letter to my brother Charles for me? They  
always are lost if posted in this country  
Asking this favour at the last is like a lady's letter - the object to be found  
in the Post script. Many & cordial thanks for your letters long short  
crossed &  
all

Poor Maclellan - dead. We must  
work hard now for soon the  
night cometh. Moore at home too

Care of ( Rev)<sup>d</sup> D<sup>r</sup>Philip

Cape Town

Benjamin Pyne Esqre

Wildingtree

Ongar

Essex

May 28 1846