

Letter to David G. Watt, 7 July, 4 August 1841

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Ontspanned, alias anchored in loco innomenato

7th July 1841

My Dear Watt

Your most welcome *epistle* I received at Colesberg & though of necessity short one it proved quite a reviving draught in this thirsty land & this not so by what it contained as by the flood of pleasing recollections it made through my mind. I intended writing you from Cape Town & I assure you prevented me fulfilling that intention but a strange fatuity which me there & made me really believe I should meet you there, We a long time on the passage in consequence of having been obliged to put into

Rio De Janiero & after coming to Cape Town we had to wait a month for vessel unloading at Limon's Bay. I did not regret going into (Rio) is certainly the finest place I ever saw. Everything delighted me except . Even the "church Establishment" there is beautiful. They really do things in style there. If even I form an Establishment it wont be either the poor degenerate "sisters" at home but the good mother herself in Brazil I must be very concise or I wont be able to give you even the heads of the I have so much to say [to][^] you. [I secured a series of letters "on the status

& prospects of the Brazilian Empire for the Scottish (Cong.) (Assy.) by an American methodist missionary there, a good sort of fellow, once a in the American Navy & [devoid of the characteristic cant of æf (Engl.)]. We lived in his home during our sojourn. I think you would liked him. Alas he is the only protestant near I in Brazil & all sects tolerated. He can however do a little in the way of rooting out ignorance

Tracts & bibles are circulated & some efforts might be expected were a most influence not exercised by European visitors. These alone disgrace members of the religion they profess by drunkenness. All other vices are common (Rio). When will the beams of divine light dispel the darkness of the beautiful ? The climate is delightful, I wonder if disabled Indian missionaries not make themselves useful there]?

We left Algoa Bay on the 20th may & still we are a month from Kuruman crossed the Orange 10 days ago at a rather difficult ford near hillappoba navigating my ponderous vehicle through the stream I got aground & oxen got "reel ral" some with their heads where their tails should be

& others with their heads twisted round in the yoke so far they appeared bent committing suicide or overturning the waggon. In this predicament was glad to see an acquaintance of yours approaching from the other to my assistance. It was no other than " Sedras" who fortunately to the ford on his way to Colesberg to buy goods with £10 he has together somehow. He is a smart fellow & decidedly the best of Bechuanas I have seen - I like travelling very much indeed is so much freedom connected with our African manners. We pitch our , make our fire &c, wherever we choose, walk, ride or shoot at abundance all sorts of game as our inclination leads us. but there is a great drawback

[...] [we]cant study or read when we please, I feel this very much. I have but very little progress in the language - (can speak a little dutch) I long for the time when I shall give my undivided attention to it & thus furnished with the means of making known the truth of the gospel

I was introduced by D^r Phillip to the Colonial (Sec^y) & the "cases" were promptly ordered found three of them but most unfortunately an error in packing has caused the of many of the

glass vessels. I hope however to have as many as make complete & if so I may say from what I have seen of the animals of this country would be difficult to make it of some value to Mr Owen - I saw many of agatized wood in the bed of the Orange, the concentric rings beautifully & the pith chrystalized regularly & as clear as crystal. but the edges of the were mostly rubbed off by friction amongst other stones - In a plane about

50 miles from the river I passed an entire tree completely agatized & retaining so of the original appearance I took it at first for real wood - It was into blocks of about a foot & a half in length. I took peices of it but I not begin to describe all or any of the wonders I have seen. Any book travels will supply with wonders ad infinitum?

The missions on this side [of] the river are in a sad state. Every man's hand against his neighbour. Whatever may have been the original cause of the present state of feeling amongst our bretheren is most disgraceful

Mr Moffat is not on speaking terms with the Guqua town missionaries & another route when visiting the Colony to avoid seeing them. They in their hate the bretheren in the Colony & amongst the whole there exists a pretty amount of floating scandal one against the other. All uniting on side to scandalize D^r Phillip. All on the other side generally favourable to D^r & unfavourable to those on this side. The Devil is in it but they cant see or rather wont. I am determined to stand aloof from both parties but I attempted to set a couple of æ anti Phillipites right, I am set ~~right~~ down

(Augst) 4th Kuruman. We arrived here on [...] [14th] July in Sabety. Sedras has been [...] most desperately wicked characters in (K.). A determined resolute fellow above all companions but now he is under strong convictions of sin. I saw him weep all day in chapel The (Miss^s) say his conversion will be a miracle than they have

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down as a Phillipite myself & looked upon with suspicion by all the anti confess I feel very differently on the subject of the D^s superintendence now you must not imagine I am in the least changed in my senses thorough going independancy, the burden of M^r & M^{rs} Moffat's to me was always derogatory to the character of D^r & M^{rs} (P.). This filled in prejudice against the latter. A month's residence in their house during time I had sufficient opportunities of scrutinizing their characters, has dissolved the whole of it. With respect to his superintendence, he me he never had considered himself as anything more than the money of the Society. With spiritual affairs or modes of operation he had to do & never wished to interfere in these matters but he had been compelled by the Society referring disputes to his decision to act a part had no intention to, for generally one party was dissatisfied & he came calumniator. He may have domineered in some instances but Mr

(M.) is I understand not the man who would cast the first stone- The D^r is now his dotage & wont do any more harm but were he in his vigour I should prefer the despotism of one to that of the many. The later Mr (M.) seems on establishing & my poor neighbour here seems delighted with the idea having a " Presbytery" I hope Griffith is a staunch Independant, you see the I must act. The present system is real liberty compared [^][with] committeeocracy feel I am giving you a very partial view of the subject It would take a day['s] talk explain the whole subject. I cant fully explain the Colonial feeling. It is what like caste in India. D^r Phillip has been the staunch advocate of the

coloured population. There is a strong feeling amongst the Colonists against ~~the~~ & them & strange to say most of the D^{rs} enemies have imbibed it. I mean the missionaries. I wont say all but all I have seen certainly have- They into radicals & conservatives. They have not these names but it is of nature. You would be a friend of the natives you would plead their cause the boors, I know you would for I know your feelings on that and from this I conclude you would take sides with the D^r & his friends cant help feeling friendly to him when I think of all

he has done in the cause liberty & when he tells me distinctly that he will not interfere at all in my , that he wishes all the (miss^s) to follow their own plans for these generally the most efficient that they [as][^] individuals can employ - [every one a way of doing things & each can do more in his own way than he can by the plans or modes of operation of another that he is only my money , the person who pays my salary on demand Why should I wish a of affairs on the ground of the quarrels of another man? Whether it been from the spirit of opposition that M^r Moffat has imbibed the Coloni[al] I know not but certainly he had a good quantity of it while here & course was a favorite with the boors But he found no Colonial feelin[g] England. He spoke out just in the same strain that D^r (P.) always has done speeches are full of affection to the African & it appears he says som[e-]about the boors in connection with the African. The speeches most have found their way to this country & have given morta[l] to the Colonists- They see he is a turncoat & are greatly enraged him- *The Ghram's Town Journal*. (conducted by the Wesleyans) another

"Watchman" has made known his inconsistency with joy. Altogether I sho[uld] like to be in Mr (M)s place when he returns. Instead of being the pet of illiberals on account of his opposition to the D^r. He will now be received suspicion by both parties. There was a great deal of sound sense & in your friend M^r Campbell's sentiments respecting D^r (P.). am sorry I ever said anything against him. I do not avow myself a or partizan of either but I certainly feel attached to the principles of the rather than of the illiberal party This is rather a railed story but I dare say y[ou] make out my meaning. The people in England have no idea of these & it is very difficult to give the full idea in few words to one actually on the spot?

I find that the fresh water lake about which Mokoters told us is a pon[d] which there is an anxiety amongst all the (Miss^s) to do something. Every[-]would like to be the first to see it for it is quite certain that one does exist. The distance is 2 months in bullock waggons & no French have it in contemplation soon to take a trip thither. One them rather an enterprising character was shrited to become a corresponding of the Geographical Society, but decline as he meant to give all his to the [^][(Misss)] Society & let them make what use of them they choose shall return to the Interior in about two months M^r Edwards is determined to accompany me Yours (DL)

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His brother in law sounded me as to my intentions but got nothing out - M^r Moffat got £400 from some (gent.) in (Eng.) for the purpose of fitting out our expedition to it I heard incidentally. Ross blabbed it out in my presence to one of Mr (M)'s chief at the Cape. I am afraid this will find its way to the ears of the French

(Miss.^s) who will be sure to lose no time in setting out. If they give your humble a month or two to acquire the colloquial language they may spare the pains of being first "in at the death". I can acquire the language while , without this ponderous vehicle, as well as by remaining at Kuruman better for I shall live as they do & mix constantly with them & I can information respecting the population &c. at the same time, I wish you here to give me some lessons in composition, I am a bad hand at that never studied it & my poor friend R. has such a precious idea of his learning that I have not heart to ask him. I daresay I would all stoop from my pride were I not fully concerned by all I have seen of that he knows very little about that or anything else. He & I are not good terms, because I speak out & pay no more regard to his opinions on ~~account~~ the ground of his 9 years education (his wife's heart) than if he were my

[...] [Hottentot] boy & could not read. I could have made something [...] D^r[...] [...] man is [...] heard beyond [...] his wife is sensible but though married remain an old maid to the end of the chapter. As for "olive plants round the table" fæ[u]gaces (Post.) &c. They are both adjuncts of or to Mr (M). Nothing is right but he has said. M^{rs} Sewell tells me in a *letter* I received at same time with yours she believes you were heartily sorry you had not a help mate with you, I have her I am sure you were not. I am conscious myself that I am better without

& with respect to scandal arising amongst the natives no fewer than $\frac{1}{2}$ married (Miss.^s) have been charged with incontinency. The charge however in each case has, I believe, quite groundless. I can be in no worse plight than they. Should of that sort arise. Mr (M). himself is one of the number & D^r (P.)s believing charge until evidence was adduced to disprove it constitutes Mr (M)'s chief to the D^r from these & other considerations which I need not mention conclude that marriage, like vaccination in small pox, is not as speci[...] to scandal in Africa. by the way tell me, if the matter from [...] called "grease" of horse's heels is need in hidra in the same manner that the is here & in Britain - all the (Miss.^s) wives I have seen denounce my [...] in no uncertain terms. Some even insinuated that the reason why I ask is I have been unable to ge[...] [t] a spouse but I put down that very speedily by that it is a great [...] [deal] easier for a (Miss.^y) to get married in England to come out simple as in [...] [the] latter case a vigorous resistance must be but in the former ou[...] yield up the affair into the hands of any friend & it is for you in a twinkling, only hold the neck down like one of our oxen & the yoke is fixed & no mistake. Of course I have abundance of instances at finger ends & dont fail to point to all the silly married people I can remember proof of how easy it is to get noosed. This is a digression but perhaps it come in seasonably if [M]r Kennedy's spouse is hard upon you - you can defend yourself well enough - I defended you as well as I was able evening in D^r Phillip's house when Mrs W. Phillip stated that she thought could not get a wife. She is a nice girl I liked her much better than . He is at present engaged in surveying several of the stations. I was at

Hankey with him. The neighbouring farmers have encroached on the lands of of our stations. To set them right is the object he has in view. After he intends coming up to the country to Gugua Town perhaps farther. We have a visit of him [...] Kuruman. I should like [...] doubt but he, weighs, [...] & I would manage Moffat in the event of his entirely spoiled by the people in England - If he is not spoiled it will a great wonder - What do you say to my going up to Abbyssin[-]

-ia? This is talked of by many of the missionaries as a desirable object, & some doing it. [Would it not promote our cause by making known to Churches the awfully degraded state of our immense population? Look the *map* published by the Society for the diffusion of (U.K.) you see far us "very populous country " &c. I think one may be quite safe if & without anything to excite the cupidity of the natives. I should cost Society of nothing during those years I should be away. It might be 6 or 7 before I should return, but if the languages are dialects of the Bechuana could soon make known a little of the blessed plan of mercy to the different on the way & if I should never return perhaps my life will be as profitably as a forerunner as in any other way - I thank God I have no desire accumulate money. Whatever way my life can be spent best to promote glory of our gracious God I feel desirous to adopt it. I shall wait anxiously your opinion & advice - To you alone have I disclosed it I should like you frequently as I have confidence in your Judgment more than that of many others. Of course our communications will be only to ourselves

have [...] at, Griqua Town & certainly he is the openlist[...] of strength [...] & no miracle to account for it!!

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Let us write frequently. I shall write again two months after arriving at Kuruman you write on receipt of this & again 2 or 3 months after? We have comm[-]

-unications with the colony every 3 months & a talk is amongst us of establishing post to go down to Colesburg once a month & bring letters, parcels &c. Address . Care of D^r Phillip Church Square Cape Town - " Bechuana Country" is quite enough for finding my residence or you might say Kuruman as the post most probably be from thence to Colesberg. I shall give you more certain when I write next- At present I am ignorant myself I must this to (K) & send it back again with my people who return to Bethelsdor (Captⁿ) of our vessel was very obliging

to me & gave me all this information the use of this quadrant in his power, frequently sitting up till 12 o'clock night for the purpose of taking lunar observations with me. He associated none but myself & D^r Grant- He soon got disgusted with all the others of them behaved like gentlemen. You will understand my feelings not of the agreeable nature if you imagine me cooped up with another D^rToguide. The (Captⁿ) is a informed shrewd Scotchman but no Christian. He rigged out the church on Sunday's

& we had service but I being a poor preacher & M^r R. addressing them as Christians in cold presbyterian style no moral influence was exerted & even had there been Sabbath, it would have been neutralized by the week day conduct. In fact no good done, I felt quite alone. Although the (Captⁿ) courted my company I could not enjoy his if he had been a Christian. I hope M^r & M^{rs} R. combined will make themselves of some to the Bechuanas, they appear anxious for it. I hope they will for both I believe ar[e] pious. Had he been to Ongas I should not be at present circumstanced as I am have met with very few indeed since I saw you intercourse with whom would much to promote spirituality of mind, I feel this painfully but at the same am convinced this position I now occupy is intended by Him who orders our to make me more & more dependant on Himself & independant of one else. I am reading "Baron's Mental Philosophy" carefully & find it useful in give me more defined ideas with respect to what emotions or are not sinful. How much need have we to watch our hearts bitter fountains which nothing but Almighty grace can cleanse & purify. Do me in your prayers. I wont & have yet been unmindful of you may mention here as I forgot to do when speaking of the Bechuana language Gallas of Abbysinia whom Bruce & Salt mention are imagined by some to be the parent stock of the Bechuanas I do not restrict you to two

letters. As many as convenient. I shall do the same Yours very affectionately (D.L.)

wont yet attempt writing papers for the *Map*. Not untill I have paid attention to composition will I write more to the Directors even necessity compells me. Give my kind regards to I. Kernerd if remembers me, I was with him in London in M^{rs} Sewells

Per Ship of Rev^d D^r Phillip, Church square

Cape Town

Rev^dDavid G. Watt

Benares

single sheet East Indies

(Recd) from Cape Calcutta