

## Letter to Editor of The Times, [11 April 1861]

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))  
[0001]

~~The Editor of the Times~~

D<sup>r</sup> Livingstones expedition arrived in Pomony Bay, the residence of M<sup>r</sup> consul Sunley on the island of Johanna, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April last from the river Rovuma on the coast of Africa, and came round to the chief town to coal the "Pioneer" from H.M.S. Wasp on the 11<sup>th</sup>. They had ascended the river only thirty miles, when halting to wood their ship, a mark was made on a tree shewed that the water was falling at the rate of six or seven inches a day. they had found some parts carrying no more than five or six feet  
[0002]

of water, and as they drew nearly five feet, they had to look out and not be left, by spending more time in going up, fixtures till the flood of next year. the cause of this unsuccessful termination is attributed to various delays suffered by the Pioneer[in the voyage out] making her at least quite two months behind the time for a successful trip up the river. After coaling they left for the Zambesi intending to go up the Shire, and then make a road past Murchison's cataracts on that river to Lake Nyassa. The distance is only thirty five miles, and it is hoped that they will carry a boat up above the cataracts and  
[0003]  
by that means explore the Lake.

It is also in contemplation to settle the point whether Rovuma

comes out of Nyassa as asserted  
by all the people they met before  
going in the Pioneer again to  
that river. The Oxford and  
Cambridge mission accompany  
the expedition up the Shire, and  
it is proposed to place these  
gentlemen on the plateau of  
2000 feet [above the sea] on which stands  
Mount Zomba - there they are  
likely to enjoy good health,  
while pursuing their enterprise  
they have had a good deal of fever, but no  
mortality. The healthy season begins in May.

The Rovuma will probably  
turn out to be the entrance into  
Eastern Africa - it must  
[0004]  
however be navigated with a  
vessel of light draught, and with  
the same skill as is required  
in the above bridge London  
passenger boats. On the question  
whether it actually derives its  
waters from Nyassa the D<sup>r</sup> thinks  
that it cannot come out of  
the Nyassa he discovered - but  
[from] some other lake. The reasons  
he adduces are - Nyassa is already  
known to give off one large  
river, the Shire - this river  
never rises nor falls more  
than three feet nor is its water  
ever discoloured. The Rovuma  
rises and falls six or more  
feet, becomes very muddy and  
no instance is known of one  
Lake giving off two large rivers  
[0005]  
the probability is therefore that if  
the Rovuma does not come out of  
a Nyassa or Nyanza (lake  
or piece of water)  
it is some  
other than that discovered by  
the Expedition. It is well known  
that lakes having no outlets  
become brackish in the course  
of ages. This is the case with  
Shirwa - but Nyassa and

Tanganyika are sweet. the  
former owes its sweetness  
to the Shire flowing out of it.  
Does Tanganyika owe its  
sweetness to the Rovuma?

While the Pioneer was at  
Johanna a French vessel having  
sixty slaves on board lay anchored  
[0006]  
close to H.M.S. Wasp. She came  
from Quiloa on the coast of  
Africa where the cost of the  
slaves was twenty two dollars.  
The slave trader then went  
to Comoro Island, and paid  
250 dollars to one of the chiefs  
there for a certificate that  
the slaves had been engaged  
there. This last transaction  
could not be hid from  
all the other chiefs, but the  
slaver cannot be captured.  
He had even the assurance  
to ask a supply of provisions  
and rum from the Man-  
of War. The Emperor of France  
[0007]  
is said to have declared that  
if the so called "free emigration"  
were the slave trade he would  
not have it at any price -  
here unfortunately his people  
have it at the prices above  
stated.

Private the object of attempting  
the Rovuma is to get an  
entrance into Eastern Africa  
exterior to the Portuguese claims  
We hope to carry a boat up  
to Nyassa and ascertain the  
nature of the connection  
if any exists, between the  
Lake and the River.

David Livingstone  
[0008]

D<sub>r</sub> Livingstone

Rec: July 16