

Letter to George H. Richards, 8 February 1872

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Ngombe Nullah near
Speke's Kazeh 8th Feby
1872

My Dear Captain Richards

My letters to you
have been destroyed
because I have been
looked upon as a spy
on the Zanzibar slave
trade so you must
kindly make allowances
for my long silence -
Mr Stanley an American
gentleman takes this
to the coast so I repeat
my thoughtfulness to
you for all you did
in Young's Expedition
and otherwise -

[0002]

My work would have
been finished long ago
but from grievance of
the situation Dr Kirk
handed over the matter
of supplies & men to
Ludha a Bannian slave
trader and he entrusted
his slaves who curiously
enough all had the idea
that they were not to
follow but force me
back - £500 were thus
squandered and again
another £500 was placed
in Ludha's hands. &
I am now going East
to catch the relics of
the second £500 worth
of goods from the slaves

who like jolly fellows
have been feasting on

[0003]

on them for 14 months
the loss inflicted on
me is over 2 years
in time. 1800 miles
of tramp and nearly
£1000 in money -
but I hope to get over
it all - You will
have learned before
this that the Nile
rises in 10°-12° South
When this became
known it is said to
have been awarded
to Beke Finlay and
Arrowsmith because
they dreamed about
it - this is interesting
for as my Despatches
will shew you the
watershed from which
the Nile arises is

[0004]

is some 700 miles long
and to be fair the dreamers
must have awarded to
them also the discovery
of division of labour
in dreaming - Each to
get 233 miles = Discovery
to me means very hard
work and the work is
not yet finished - I
go West again to the
Western or seventh
hundred miles of the
watershed where the
four fountains are
separated to the West
possibly are the sources
mentioned long ago
to Herodotus - I wish
I could settle them in
a good long snooze -

[0005]

The fountains are almost
innumerable and all
converge into large
rivers and Lakes in
the great Nile really
a perpetual slope so
far as I have seen it
and no " Upper Nile
basin" at all and I
reached the level
ascribed to Gondokoro
It goes through the
country of the cannibals
called Manyema
The slave trade lately
began there as not
trading in any sense
it is simply cold
blooded murder and
it is all carried on

[0006]

by the money of Ludha
and other Banian English
subjects who though
they dare not kill a
gnat or flea are really
and truly the very
worst cannibals in
all Africa - The money
all comes from them
and they manage adroitly
to let the odium rest
on their Arab agents -

I transmit by M^E
Stanley two pocket
chronometers and two
common watches -
all are dead though no
accident befel any of
my instruments except
some by shipwreck

[0007]

which were going to be
put in depot in case
of those I took with me
being lost. I retain
one [^] [dead] chronometer to
try if I can get a longi[-]
-tude by putting a

weight on the key and
observing successive
sun's alts - and moon's
distances. The watches
I trouble you with
because you have
superior workmen
one was dipped in
water and I filled
it with oil to preserve
it - The other had
second stop hands
but too small -

[0008]

If you can favour
me by allowing your
workmen to put a
new dial & larger
second face on it. I
shall feel greatly
obliged - It is a very
good watch but too
small - I am hoping
to get the Aneroids
back to the sea to
test them there again
one has altered
considerably.

very sincerely yours
David Livingstone
H.M. consul.