

Letter to John Washington

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Tette 28 Nov^r 1860

Dear Captain Washington

On treating myself to a reperusal of your kind notes I find that I have to give you some information about the country south of the Zambesi . Speaking in a general way all the region south of Tette Senna & Shupanga is under true caffre or Zulu rule. he paramount chief Manikuse, lately deceased, lived somewhere inland from Sofala and he had war with the people of that fort lately. These caffres named Landeens by the Portuguese are quite friendly to the English - we meet them occasionally at Shupanga where they come to take tribute of the Portuguese whom they conquered. We had thoughts of going in that direction and to visit an [ancient] Jesuit establishment at Gorongozo about 60 miles west of Senna, but we have the difficulty that the Portuguese still claim the whole country, and any thing we should do would be opening the country which at present they dare not enter, for their advantage: Large sections of a very fine mountainous country called Shiringoma were ceded

[0002]

by the natives to Portuguese who had intermarried with their chiefs - they were expelled by the Zulus aforementioned, and now that they dare not set a foot in it their home Government made a decree that the lands were to be more equally divided, and the family that got it by intermarriage should only have seven leagues of it - they fled lately from Shupanga even because the rent was excessive,

400 dollars to their own Government,
& 600 to the Zulus.

hen whenever we go the Portuguese
try to pick up information in a
sneaking way, and assert that they
knew all about it long ago. "It is
all in our archives in Lisbon" .
It is not the low characters out here
that do so but Portuguese ministers
even, as in the case of two slaves
having come from Cassange
in Angola to Tette. hey said in
a dispatch to our Government that
these were Portuguese who "went to
Mosambique." here is an old woman
still living at Tette who remembers
their coming, and she is positive that
they were quite black, and did not

[0003]
go further than Tette.

They claim Delgoa Bay too and all
the sea board - so we should procure no
advantage for our own country by
opening up friendly relations with
the tribes inland of their claims. We
feel more interest in parts beyond
their claims - and the Rovuma is
said to be navigated in large
canoes as far at least as the
Longitude of the Lake Nyassa .

Between Mosilikatze and
the Banyai there is a large
friendly tribe called Bazizulus
(Portuguese Mosusurus) they have
cattle and are in an interesting gold
country - stone walls & caves
are said to be common. We
shall make a trip to them in our
way up after we have been to the
Rovuma.

Many thanks for the ale &
books. We have a good chronometer
belonging to the Government and
my own private one as a standard .
We have a third but it is small
and not very good. Two pocket

chronometers were sent home

[0004]

with M^r Rae - for cleaning &c. If you have an opportunity we shall be glad to get them again.

I trouble you again about the vaccine Virus as you will be able to get it sent direct. Perhaps two supplies by different mails might secure it fresh. I wish it in capillary tubes - I cannot where our letters stick fast - they come in gushes .

I thank you most heartily for all the trouble you have taken about the vessel and I am very glad that you have lent us Skead. He is a first rate fellow, and I hope that you have not been so carefully in marking the exact point beyond which he is not to go. I think Duncan would do well, if you have the same confidence in him that we have you will accept the offer I understand he has made .

I am &c

David Livingstone

We found that Rowe had managed by dint of plastering & shoreing to keep the vessel afloat - the Pinnace is as bad - bottom all worm eaten as she was old when we got her - both make much water - having no other resource we mean to try both and abandon that which sinks first the steel does not go totally as Iron would but is as if worm eaten all over. 20 Dec^r tried to take her down to Senna in order to save the engine but so many leaks broke out daily we had to allow two compartments to stand always full. When within one day of Senna the current carried us on a shoal & we could not move her. She filled & we abandoned her - the engine is worth £20 or £30.

D.L.

[0005]

A Note on Fever for D^r MacWilliam transmitted by favour of Captain Washington

In the typical cases given

in Dr MacWilliam's Medical History of the Great Niger Expedition the gall bladder was found distended with black bile, and if my memory does not me most of the cases treated with quinine at an early period of the disease either recovered or were subjected to the milder or intermittent form of Fever.

In 1850 I adopted the plan of giving quinine mixed with a purgative as the first step of the treatment - and was successful in the cases of two of my own children and an English party whom we found at Lake Ngami, and of whom one had died before our arrival - I have lost the notes of my reasons for adopting the practice, but I have been successful in every case I have met with since. The prescription employed is of Resin of Jalap and Calomel [of each] eight grains - Quinine and ~~and~~ Rhubarb of each four grains. Mix well together and when required make into pills with Spirit of Cardamoms. Dose from Ten to Twenty grains. The violent headache - pains in the back &c &c are all relieved in from four to six hours

[0006]

and with the operation of the medicine there is an enormous discharge of black bile - the patient frequently calls it blood. If the operation is delayed a dessert spoonful of salts promotes the action. Quinine is then given till the ears ring &c. We have tried to substitute other purgatives instead of the Resin of Jalap and Calomel but our experiments have only produced the conviction that aught else is mere trifling. No strength is lost. In our march up the river of 600 miles on foot - a European would be stricken down one day and the next after the operation of the remedy would resume his march on foot. In some very severe attacks a donkey was used but never more than two days - he would prefer to tramp it.

We tried Warburg's Tincture which has a great reputation in

India, but it causes profuse sweating
and does not cure the disease -
the strength is also impaired. We
had a good supply, by the kindness
of one of our Nobility, but I am
compelled to say that it did not
answer our expectations. he daily
use of Quinine is no preventative
we have seen many cases occur
when the person was on the verge of
cinchonism.

[0007]

I employed the foregoing remedy with success
on the west coast, but made no fuss about
it more than make a general statement
in the "Missionary Travels." I was not quite
sure that our fever was identical with
that D^r MacWilliam encountered in the Niger but the melancholy fate of a party
of missionaries at Linyanti where six
out of nine Europeans, and four native
attendants perished in the short space of three
months makes me fear that it is the same
complaint as that which destroyed the officers
of Commodore Owen in Zambesi - those
of Captain Tuckey in the Congo, and the
crews of the Great Niger Expedition in
that River. My companions, D^r Kirk
and M^r C. Livingstone entertain the same
opinion of the value of our Pills that I do.
We wrote a paper for one of the medical
journals. But the above sad case
makes us anxious that the remedy
should become more extensively known
than it has been - and I do not know
a better plan for effecting this than
by communicating it to D^r MacWilliam.
No secret has ever been made of it
but I felt as if saying more than
I did would be Quackish - those
who may try it will do well to
remember that the above doses are
for great He creatures whom [...] [they] turn
so effectually inside out that

[0008]

we have termed them "Rousers".

I cured myself and native companions
in this way during my long journeys between

1852 and 1856 and that the remedy has no bad effect on the system may be inferred from the fact that I have had no regular attack of fever since my return. I have had little illnesses probably from exposure to malaria in its most intense forms, but nothing like what I formerly experienced. And I am of the opinion that, what we were all taught, not to give quinine till we had used the preliminary measure of relieving the bowels, was a mistake . Query. Might the [remedy] not be applied to some of the fevers at home that arise in unhealthy localities. Around every village in this country, there is a very large collection of human ordure during the dry season - this is swept into the rivers by the heavy rains & you may guess the effect from hundreds of Thousands of villages. The natives here don 't drink it, as the natives do on the banks of the Thames, but make holes in the sand to draw from. Possibly this has as much to do with the origin of fever as it has at home.

David Livingstone

1860 Tette 28th Nov^r

I give a specimen of the difference between Dry & Wet Bulb - Victoria Falls 24 Sept^r 1860

In shade - 9 A.M. Air = 87° Wet Bulb 59° Difference 28°

12. Air 96.5 Wet B. 63 Diff 33°5

3 P M Air 96 W.B.60 Diff. 36

Once the diff was 40°

[0009]

the greatest difference to D^r MacWilliam observed was I believe 16° generally it was 6° or 7°