

Letter to John Washington, 7 March 1862

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[0001]

near Shupanga Zambesi

7 March 1862

Dear Captain Washington

We found that 35 tons was more than Pioneer could carry - took out 5 tons at Shupanga and avoided the strong current now in [- parts of]the Zambesi of 4 1/2 knots by going into shallow places. This unfortunately led us aground four or five miles above Shupanga and the river is falling. It is the worst grounding we ever had for we have 100 yards of shoal on our lee or down river from us. I let you know lest you hear something worse. I was unable to do duty when she might have

[0002]

been got off but M^r Young is said by Captain Wilson to be "a thorough sailor", so I believe everything proper has been done. This was my first illness since leaving England in /58. We dont know what it was. Feet and knees swelled and were so painful for 2 days that I could not stand. An eruption came out, began with D^r Kirk and went over us all. Even Gorgon's people took it. I was down three days but am now I am thankful to say quite free of the complaint. I say so much about myself because people at the Cape made me so ill when nothing was wrong

[0003]

whatever

I have sent a pressing request to
Admiral Walker for provisions
for we have not a fortnight's
food on board, and cannot buy
any at this part nor indeed
in any part where slavetrade
has depopulated the country.
I propose, if no vessel is to be
sent this way, that the Admiral
should freight a small one from
Natal. I ask 6 months stores
We have been disappointed
in not receiving quinine from
you along with the other
medicines & ask 3lbs from the
Admiral. We need all this
while giving it daily to all hands
We don't see a paddle wheel
Boss ordered from Penn when
the Pioneer was at the Cape.
[0004]
It is much needed for the other side

The reason why the Pioneer goes so
slow with a load is said to be her
engines were placed for 3 feet draught
and she never draws less than 4 1/2
now with a load 5 - they would
require to be lifted up a foot & a half
We shall put the new steamer together
at Shupanga and tow her up to
the cataracts - I doubt Hardisty's zeal.

A gentleman has been sent out
by the free church of Scotland to obtain
information with a view to
a mission on Nyassa. As this
will not interfere with the bishop,
I invited him to come up and
see the country and people for
himself. His name is Rev^d
James Stewart. There is room
for all that in the region, and it is
questionable whether the bishop
[0005]
has not blocked up his own way
Northwards by attacking the
Ajawa, who now possess all
the East bank of Shire from

the cataracts up to the Lake.
His sister, a confirmed invalid,
came up to him. Captain
Wilson seeing how slowly we
got up - (3 weeks to Shupanga!
Last year 2 days only!) acceded to
her request to be taken with M^{rs}
Burrup (another of the missionaries)
forward to the Ruo in his gig.
The bishop engaged to be there
but did not appear & Captain
Wilson pushed on to Chibisa's
the invalid being more dead
than alive. We expect him
daily on his return, and when
[0006]
he does so I shall give you the
latest intelligence.

I feel it rather too much to have to
give passages to all the missionaries
I was willing and anxious to
do all I could for them & am
still willing, but it is a serious
draw back to our own success.
Rev M^r Proctor wanted to come down
for a wife, & the bishop proposed
to come too. I had to tell them
that the Pioneer was not a
passenger vessel. It is a serious
tax on our stores. M^r Stewart
offers payment for everything
has calico to buy his own pro-
visions and works at whatever
he can do. Some of the bishop's
people believe that they have a
[0007]
right to everything here, and on board
the men of war which causes
grumbling among the officers.

You really had a serious task
imposed on you. The only way
my daughter could concieve of
to keep her Mama at home
was to threaten to write to you
and ask you to lock her in a
room. She went the length of
writing to her Mama & telling her
that she was thinking of doing

it!

10 March at Shupanga unloading.

I have to spend more money than
I anticipated in buying country
provisions. We have nothing but a
~~little flour - a cask said to be beef by Mr Gedye turns out to be one of vinegar!~~ [beef found on
17th March] We shall be two months
[0008]
putting Lady Nyassa together - will tow
her up to the cataracts & there unscrew
her - probably we shall have food
before that from the Admiral - so no
uneasiness need be felt. There too
we can get plenty of native meal
goats fowls &c.

I may have mentioned already
that I offered the charge of the Pioneer
to M^rGedye at Johanna - & he refused
it on the plea that he could not
navigate. I offered to lay down
his positions for him & point out
the course but he again refused
to take charge = so the subordinate
position he occupied was his own
choice.

M^r May refused fowling pieces
Two we brought are broken.
I send up to Tette to bring our things
away, in canoes. We have plenty of
ammunition there. D. Livingstone