

## Letter to Janet Livingstone 1, 1 January 1862

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

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

[0001]

River Shire 1<sup>st</sup> January

1862

My Dear Sister Janet

I recieved your second letter since 1858 a short time ago by one of the missionaries who came up this river in a canoe without knowing a word of the language or a bit of the way. It is not likely that the High church mission will be recieved with favour by any other sect. their pretensions are against the growth of cordiality but it is a good school they have come to. there is nobody either to oppose or laugh at their puerilities and the Africans will not be led by anything but the love of Christ. A Roman catholic mission far up the Nile paid the people to come to prayers and when their goods were expended the tribe left en masse saying "No beads, no prayers." this is Consul Pethericks statement & you may take it for what it is worth. As I am forbidden to say any-thing in my own defence

[0002]

I submit as meekly as a sucking dove but like the cabman "I think a great deal." I even think that the church missionary society i.e. the Evangelical party of the Church of England, to whom I wrote to occupy the field, might have answered my letter as civilly as the bishop of Oxford did another epistle long afterwards [No answer came.] I am very

glad to hear that the free Kirk  
contemplates a mission and I  
rejoice that the United Free  
Methodists are sending a mission  
in charge of D<sup>r</sup>Knapf to some  
point on the East coast. You are  
right in thinking I would be much  
grieved in hearing of the death of my  
dear friends M<sup>rs</sup> & M<sup>r</sup> Helmore. they  
were a noble pair, and I visited  
their graves with feelings of deep sorrow  
I grieve much because the  
Makololo are left without the  
gospel. they spoke of Helmore with  
great respect and affection - and  
he was admirably adapted to win  
their esteem - they were naturally  
dissatisfied with their men being  
so long away but said not a word to  
me, which shewed a kindly feeling  
at least, and the chief seemed very  
thankful for medicine for a disease

[0003]

which possibly is leprosy. I am sorry  
that Helmore never wrote to me nor  
did D<sup>r</sup> Tidman and when we descended  
into the Makololo valley you may con-  
ceive the stunning effect of the news  
that the missionaries were all dead.

Our cotton grows wild and when  
well planted continues to yield for  
several years, with only a weeding  
now & then. the heartbreaking toil  
necessary in America is not needed  
here. We have no frosts to endanger the  
crop and can buy it for a good deal  
less than a penny per pound. We bought  
300 lbs of clean cotton as a trial, giving  
a foot of calico not worth a halfpenny  
for several pounds. this was not  
at the period of the cotton crop either.  
But we must have an outlet of our  
own away from Portuguese custom  
houses and hence our efforts to open  
Lake Nyassa - from Rovuma.  
It is over 200 miles long - from  
20 to 50 or more miles broad, and  
exceedingly deep. We shall bend all  
our energies to placing a steamer on

it this year and I pray God that  
I may be permitted to effect this great  
service for then we have highlands  
all round Nyassa. It is surrounded  
by mountains, and Europeans  
can live well up there. I hope then  
that our countrymen may both  
benefit themselves and the Africans

[0004]

by living among them. the population  
around the Lake is prodigiously large  
but slaving goes on perpetually either  
by barter or by slave hunting - 19,000  
pass yearly through the Custom House  
of Zanzibar and Col<sup>l</sup> Rigby our consul  
there says they all come from Nyassa  
Our plan has a double reference to  
slavery in Africa & elsewhere. We  
hope to benefit both Africa & England  
but I need not specify my hopes.  
You will however see enough to  
let you understand the reasons of  
my joy in seeing christians of  
different denominations sending  
the gospel without which all our  
efforts will end in failure.

Suffer me to hint that your letter  
is in a slight degree Miss Grantish. I  
gave information according to the  
varying phases of my experience. If  
life was in danger I committed it as  
I do now and always to the Divine  
keeping. If reputation & usefulness  
among the heathen were endangered by  
false bretheren I spoke of it even as  
St Paul did long before me. I was  
distressed but not weeping as he was  
£60 a year will be given if I have it  
but how could I know you would  
not work when you never wrote to  
tell me. I think my letters were written  
in a Christian spirit but it is questionable  
if they were thus received D. Livingstone

A happy New year to you all. Try and write a more  
loving letter next time without saying that you love me as  
much as ever

[0005]

You were, utterly inexcusable in not writing - I left orders that in

[0006]

any case of distress you were to be at once relieved - running into debt by borrowing when you had no prospect of being able to pay was my distress

[0007]

& It was never intended that you were to be kept idle on the money intended for mother. You might have told your distress to me as easily as

[0008]

you did to those who wrote begging letters for you to the Scottish Fund &c