

Letter to Parents and Sisters

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My Dear Parents & Sisters

In case I have no other opportunity of writing you previous to setting off towards the north I now begin. I am sorry I had not one ready yesterday when a Griqua passed this way I sent several to friends & I hope this wont be long behind any of which you may hear .

I am busy learning the language which is not remarkably difficult the only impediment is a want of proper aids such as Dict^s , Grammars &c . I hope however soon to conquer it & then preach Christ & him crucified to the [...] Bechuanas . I have a great deal of work in the way of helping the infirm & many of them seem attached to me on account of little attentions shewn to themselves or children of whom they are remarkable fond. Mothers are mothers I see all over the world if only a little if only a little of poor humanity remains uncorrupted by the customs of sin. How is my mother ? I Hope comfortable . May God bless her and give her an inheritance with the blessed in Heaven by sanctifying her to himself .

I have got no letter as yet from you & have now written you 5. It is no easy matter to have all the correspondence to oneself but I hope they are on their way . Well what shall I tell you about, I suppose Janet & Agnes would like a lion story or something of that sort that I cant however give for I have not dared to look one in the face. A terrible fellow was shot a short distance from this & the sight of his dead body so (shall I say) frightened me I have no wish to have intercourse with his majesty again. I would rather meet with some [^][members] of the Royal families among men than of beasts for the former in this country at least are an insignificant race of beings, distinguished for nothing but superior impudence in begging & generally worse looking than any of their attendants. I have been in company with Waterboer the Griqua chief. He is rather an exception in point of intellect although in bodily appearance he is a little bushman of the Matebele .ur chief was here a few weeks ago for the purpose of being baptized & admitted into the church, a feeble decrepit old man tottering into the grave. After he had

carelessly heard the offers of mercy for about 25 years
we trust he has now turned to the Lord. His
baptism has caused great excitement through the whole
country particularly amongst the violent opponents of the
gospel. I hope it will lead others to think of themselves

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& look for mercy before it is too late. the Bechuanas are
great beggars, indeed they seem to make it a matter of conscience
to neglect no opportunity of asking & a refusal does not by
any means put them out if it is done in a jocular way .
It is only occasionally they think it worth while to tell you
what their opinion of you is & really it is ludicrous enough
to hear their epithets, instead of getting vexed by them they
always powerfully excite my risible faculties. Only think of an old grey headed ~~fat~~ man or
woman coming forward & saluting
me with the epithet "Father, king, Gentleman &c &c and then
after a little conversation requesting as a great favour a knife
handkerchief or only a little bit of my shirt to bind their heads &
when I give them the hint that though I much wish to gratify
my children it is quite out of my power. My father or mother
adopts quite a different style & tells me "Verily thou art a dog
tiger" &c "and whoever marries you will marry a wolf" .these paternal addresses have one good
effect they usually bring
something to my mind which sets them off in good humour .
When Moteeke was with us during the whole fortnight he never
begged any & for this he formerly was notorious, the sisterhood
will be amused to know I was physician to his majesty but
I nearly got into disgrace by shouting out to him as he lay
asleep in the middle of the path at midday with his karross
over his head . Hallo my lad this is not night. He awak
ed with a start when I beheld who it was I stooped
down & examining his eyes told him I should give him
some ointment for them in the afternoon. He seemed
quite well pleased & thanked me for my care of him .

When talking to him of his past life he always commen-
ced crying like a child. his is remarkable for a
Bechuana & particularly for a king, they never weep
the Spirit works upon their hearts & then they
weep like children. Sometimes in the chapel they
hide their heads in their karosses & creep under the
forms to avoid the eyes of the preacher. his however
wont do they then scream out & occasionally rush
out of chapel fleeing with all their might. It has often
made me wonder for in performing most
severe surgical operations they sit both men &
women as if they had no feeling - In one case of
fungous 4 inches in length & nearly 2 in breadth [nearly 1/2 in height] I employed a
severe but quick mode of getting rid of it. During the operation
I expected him to get up & dance from the pain . But no. He

sat & talked with as composed a countenance as
if he felt nothing, "A man like me never cries" said he
with the greatest composure. "Its only children who cry" .

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The spirit of God alone can affect their health. Without this aid all our efforts
must be ineffectual .

There are many believers scattered up & down the country even far from
this & where all is opposition (apparently) the missionaries are pleased to
know that there is piety even in the centre of the opposition. Pious
women particularly are often found where none were[are] expected
and often it is impossible to hold intercourse with them as it
would subject them to great annoyance from their heathen
husbands. Only a shred of this can be said where much
is needed. We hope however the Lord will uphold his
own work in their hearts & enable them to
persevere unto the end. he women have hard work
to perform amongst the Bechuanas - they cultivate the ground
and build the houses while the "Lords of the Creation" sew karosses
milk the cattle & hunt or sleep. hey make very neat
builders indeed. It would puzzle their men to do half as well
and if the latter are spoken to about it they reply "O it is good for
them" "it makes them strong" &c. It is only a very few of
the younger people who can be inclined to do a little of women's
work & I dare say their own opinion that hard work makes
makes their wives look soon old has more influence over them
than any of our arguments. When sitting round a fire
by our waggon I have sometimes tried to let the women have
a share of it by requesting the men to give way, but
that was out of the question. "We are the kings" was [...] [quite]
a sufficient reason for the women being compelled to [...] [quite]
behind in the cold. How would Agnes like this system of things ?

The old spectacles [ks?] mother put with my bag were a most acceptable
present to an old woman who made great efforts to learn to
read but her nose not being of proper shape for the antique
thing to adhere by[on] their own natural way she must hold them
always to with the hand. he beads are invaluable - money being
of very little use & rather a losing concern as they will take nothing
but silver & they always prefer a few beads or a handkerchief
to it [...] . M^r Hamilton has just returned from an [^][itinerating] journey
of a month or nearly 200 miles towards E by north. He met
great opposition in some places & encouragement in others .
He is quite well in health and so I am thankful to say we
all are. Fergus & David still within reach of
you I should have written them but feared they
might be removed ere my letters arrived. I hope to write
M^r Naismith soon as also S^l & Jⁿ. Remember me kindly to
them. Could they not write me my letter will cross
theirs on the way if they do. How is Duncan? I suppose

gone to America - & I Wheeler? D^o. The sun shines
down our chimnies here. Yours affect^y D L

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I can write no more to Charles . He is a shabby fellow for a correspondent. Tell him I say so. I think frequently of you all but this language engages mixing thoughts. I am never pleased with the progress I make, the natives do jumble their words so together & then they are so stupid at understanding if there is any blunder in my sentences. But I hope soon to overcome. I shall after returning live entirely amongst them & speak not a word of English, I must conquer. Yesterday a man came to carry medicine for his wife whom I had just been to see. I gave him instructions to let her have it immediately. Before I could say stop the fellow had it whisked into his own stomach. Although not very agreeable (castor oil)[a large quantity] he yielded prompt obedience to what he thought I wished, & the reason was I did not use the phrase most commonly employed. he people here are much like what the patriarchs must have been. hey are all nomadic if they can possibly find a few cattle. Some are mighty hunters, not your red coated gentry after a fox - I know men here who have attacked lions & killed them with no other weapons than an asagai in one hand & the Kaross wound round the other arm to thrust into his mouth - the mill is more original still than that of the two women which I have seen in use in the colony, a flat stone (broad) with a little roundish one to rub with a sort of shoving motion as women in Scotland do with their clothes at the bottom of the tub. I can understand why Rachel felt so much at being barren, nothing is so great a curse to a B. wife as want of children, they are really miserable if without & children are so valuable.

he heat is beginning. North winds sweeping over the long tract of country in that direction become
so heated when they come here they are like the blast of a furnace, sometimes crumble the grass into
powder

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