

Letter to Margaret Sewell, 20 February, 2 March 1850

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Kolobeng 20th February 1850

My Very Dear Friend

We were favoured with N^{os} 21 & 22 about a week ago, the parcels in which they came we expect in about a fortnight. the Publications had reached Kuruman in safety and the messenger being on foot could bring no more than the letters. N^o 22. shews that the Med. Rev. & Eclectic &c. are safe up to May last. It is really marvellous that you do not recieve my acknowledgements for I believe I write you oftener than I do the Pynes. the longest interval occurred when I was absent at the Lake but I wrote a note before starting (about May) and another as soon as I returned (about October) and I had it in contemplation to write you now though no letter or parcel had come. Be assured I have always written you without waiting for an answer. But the idea that my pains are all in vain is rather discouraging. I must inclose them to some of my friends perhaps. Your good nature in continuing your kind services in the teeth of my apparent ingratitude is certainly wonderful.

We had a visit from M^r Freeman. He came a few days before 1849 fled and left a few days after /50 began. the visit was most agreeable. the only causes for sorrow in connection with it were its being so short, and our accommodation so poor. Ever since I have had the idea strongly impressed on my mind that a triennial deputation would lend much to the efficiency of the mission and if M^r Tidman would come out the journey I am sure would add ten years to his life. this is really a fine climate and a trip up here to breathe the pure air of the Desert and infuse spirit into the forlorn hope would certainly do your London ministers no harm. the perpetual hurry scurry in which they move might make them glad of a little desert calm

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the object M^r F. had in view was to reduce the expenditure of the Society in Africa from £9000 to £4000. But he has I am sorry to say fallen in completely with the views of the Rev D^r Philip in reference to the necessity of keeping up the colonial stations those who hold the opposite views maintain that the colonial missions having fulfilled their object in affording protection to the coloured population till their liberty and instruction have been [...] [guaranteed] by the Gov^t ought now to be abandoned & more of the funds appropriated to the real missionary field in

the regions beyond. the reduction in expenditure ought to be effected thus. But the worthy D^r maintains that if the stations were abandoned the Hottentots would sink again into their former state. this is giving small credit to the conservative influence of the truth which has been furnished them without money and price for more than 30 years. Another argument runs thus. the London M.S. is the only society that does look to the Blacks. the Dutch Reformed (parish ministers) and Wesleyan missionaries attend exclusively to the whites If we abandon them no one will care for their souls. But then the Dutch Ref. & Wesleyans make the fact of our attending to the coloured population their excuse for following the do nothing line. We are a salve to their consciences - the Hottentots promise great things to M^r Freeman but then hear what "great things" are in their estimation. It only amounts to raising by great effort £100 for their missionaries during the current year. Bare justice would in the opinion of many be £100 for the missionary they detain from proceeding to the Heathen - and the outfit & salary of another in his stead. If the Hottentots after being christianized for 20 years are to have a regular supply of pastors from Europe for ever & aye Bless the fellows, they are better off than we are in England. I say christianized for when a decided majority in a village are professing christians they deserve the appellation, and such has been the case in several cases for more than 20 years. If they do not now support the gospel among themselves I dont see at what

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period the society should slip out from being a sort of go-cart to them. Perpetual tutelage & everlasting leading strings would enfeeble angels. You folks in England talk very knowingly about "concentration" that maybe is philosophy but it is gammon in relation to Africa. Concentrate in India or China where you have an immense population but not in Africa the little experience I have had leads me to believe that concentration is not the thing for Africa. We cannot force the thing as gardeners do plants. By the above you will have a birds eye view of the question which agitates our missionary horizon at present. Many thanks for the parcels and all the news your letters contain. A fine set of people you Europeans are become, shooting each other as the people here do Rhinoceros and you dont eat each other either. You will get to that too bye & bye. Soup Kitchens will start up behind the Barricades

M^r Brown is a long way from us. It is not likely I shall ever see him. there is I am sorry to say but little doing [...] the missionary field here. successive years of scarcity have proved a great hindrance to us in this tribe. We have however by the Divine goodness the prospect of a harvest in may next and then we hope that the attendance of the

people will be more regular. I am much delighted with
the new field beyond. the Boers will not allow us
to labour among the tribes East of this I greatly desire
to be allowed to reduce the new language to writing
and translate God's word into it though after that I shall
be like a sucked orange & not worth burial. there
are however 600 miles additional land carriage. 270
already beyond Kuruman makes an impression on the
salary sufficient to induce us to look unutterable things
at the other 600. an epidemic frequently fatal. Great
swarms of mosquitoes & sparrows by the million

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make us think of the little olive plants of which we have now
3 two boys & a girl - for we shall not probably be able to raise
corn there. Poor Africa.

I must write Charles. & If I can will enclose it in this and
you will wafer & address it for me.

Could not possibly write My good friend Charles
but will if spared. Periodicals came all safe
a day ago. Feb^y 2^d [March]. this goes off tomorrow

I have written MacLehose about the Reviews - wishing them to
be bound in cloth before sending them. Accept the kindest
salutations from M^{rs} L and self. Mokoteri is not
married yet. Can not get a wife poor fellow.

Very Affectionately yours

David Livingston

Is M^{rs} Henderson [(Miss Leslie)]
better & gone out?

Why didn't MacLehose marry Miss Hall?

Care of Rev^d D^e Philip Cape Town
M^{rs} Sewell
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