

Letter to Agnes Livingstone 1, 29 November 1861

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

H.M.S. Pioneer 29th Nov^r 1861

My Dear Mother

I am not sure whether
you will be pleased or not to hear
a mission has been established in this
land of darkness and of the shadow
of death, because Scotch bodies are
so desperately bigotted.

Janet says

"what good can Puseyites do" and
the mission is certainly of that
school, but without saying that
they are perfect or asking can any
good come out of Nazareth - I say
anything is better than heathenism
We are in the centre of the slave market
and it is against this gigantic
evil that my own mission is
directed. We went up lately to Lake
Nyassa and found it a large
[0002]

body of water with a population such
as I never saw before for numbers
and the only trade was that in slaves -
people were offered for sale but
nothing else. Fancy this state of things
over 200 miles - and an Arab ship
built on the Lake to carry slaves over
it. When we came up to the North end
of it the shores were literally strewn
with skeletons and in some parts
putrid bodies of the slain - this was
done by a tribe of Zulus and will
give an idea of how matters stand
where Satan has his seat. I am
exceedingly glad to hear that the Free
Kirk contemplates a mission
in this dark region, and hope that
they will not be discouraged by the
difficulties that beset the undertaking
the London mission tried the

Makololo and when we reached that country we found that most of the [0003] missionaries had perished. Had they written to me I might have helped them for we can with God's blessing cure the fever in a very short time Charles for instance had an attack in the very valley where they helplessly perished - took the medicine and next day marched on, but they did not write and when I arrived at Linyanti it was but to behold their graves. All our efforts here are directed to the eradication of the slave trade - that is the great evil here. When we took the bishop up to shew him where to live in health we met Tette people returning with large bands of captives, these were freed and about 140 souls delivered to the mission to begin school with. they were chiefly women and children- their relatives all killed Anything is better than heathenism [0004]

I am astonished that none but three letters have come to you. I have written to you by every opportunity except one I got one from Janet and one from Agnes at the end of three years - they had written none previously because "they did expect any sympathy from me" I recieved one from Janet a few days ago = I am going down to sea for provisions & a steamer which we expect, to put on the Lake. I expect also to meet my wife after our long weary and unexpected separation I would have sent for her long ago but dreaded exposing her & the child to the fever in our wretched accomodation. With kindest saluations to you all I am ever Affectionately

David Livingstone