

## Letter to Francis Skead, 8 February 1872

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[0001]

Ngombe Nullah<sup>8<sup>th</sup></sup>Feby

1872

My Dear Skead

I do not like  
to lose my friends by not  
writing to them - but  
getting letters destroyed  
by slaving Arabs  
and Banians has  
put me in the position  
of appearing to be  
quite careless to many  
who like you I have  
always regarded  
with feelings of great  
kindness. It is  
quite an age since  
I heard from you

[0002]

but I have been in the  
slave mart of Eastern  
Africa and all the  
slavers dread being  
"written against" and  
letters either going  
from or coming to me  
have been treated  
as unclean & burked  
An American gentleman  
takes this to the coast  
so I make my excuse  
to you for long silence  
I have been exploring  
for a long time  
the sources of the Nile  
and having found  
an immense number  
of them in 10" - 12" South

[0003]

[...] down the great central  
valley and through  
among the cannibals  
the Watershed is some  
700 miles long - from  
it innumerable springs  
converge into enormous  
rivers and Lakes  
not in an "Upper  
Nile Basin" but in  
a rather quick slope.  
As soon as the Southern  
was known it was  
claimed for certain  
dreamers called  
Theoretical discovery  
now by this packet  
I reveal 700 miles  
of fountains and to  
be fair the dreamers  
[0004]

must be allowed to have  
hit on the division of  
labour in their crossing  
each may claim 233 miles  
- a great Psychological  
discovery - I am going  
East to seize some  
of my goods which  
were unwisely handed  
over to slaves and to  
slave traders - the jolly  
fellows have been  
feasting on them for 14  
months. They have  
inflicted a loss of 2  
years in time = 1800  
miles of tramp and  
at least £1000 of money  
But I hope to get over  
it all and with kind  
love to your wife

I am very sincerely yours  
David Livingstone