

## Letter to Roderick I. Murchison, 18 June, 17 July 1864

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[0001]

Malta 17<sup>th</sup> July. I come home to consult friends as to my future work. I did not sell the steamer - could

Poonah 18<sup>th</sup> June 1864

My Dear Sir Roderick

We arrived at Bombay on the 13<sup>th</sup> current after a passage of forty four days from Zanzibar, and very thankful I feel to be again on solid ground. From Zanzibar we went along the African coast for the sake of the help of a current of at least one hundred miles a day. If Solomon's ships went down to Sofalla, as some suppose, they could not have done it [against this current] in the South West Monsoon. We went along beautifully till we got past the Line then fell into a calm region which Captain Maury places south of the Equator. Altogether we had 24 1/2 days calm, the sea as smooth as glass, and as we had but one stoker with us we could

[0002]

find it in my heart to give up Africa & now run

not steam more than nine or ten hours at a time. By patience & perseverance we have at last got over our 2500 miles - but I now feel at as great a loss as ever. I came here to sell the steamer but with that comes the idea of giving up Africa before accomplishing something against the slave trade. The thought of it makes me actually feel as if I could not lie in my grave in peace with all the evils I know going on. That which makes it doubly galling is the fact that while Lord Palmerston's policy has, to a very gratifying extent, been successful on

the West Coast - The same measures  
have been in operation here - the same  
[expense and] same dangers incurred - the same  
heroic services performed by H M  
cruizers on this coast, and all has been  
rendered ineffectual by dirty dribble

[0003]

home intending to be back again in four months  
& will too if I can make up the means. D. L.

of the Portuguese convict population,  
who by no means represent either  
the best or half best of the statesmen  
of Lisbon. the country is to be shut  
up now more closely than ever.  
and unless we have an [ English] trading settle-  
ment some where on the the mainland  
beyond their power. ~~Without it~~ all  
repressive measures will continue  
fruitless.

I would willingly have  
gone up some of the rivers instead  
of coming here - but I had only three  
white men - a stoker - a sailor  
~~and~~ a carpenter; and seven Zambesians  
The sailor & stoker had severe illnesses  
in the way and it would have been  
imprudent to go up a strange river  
as the Juba - - -  
so short handed. The two men  
named had moreover volunteered  
to accompany me to Bombay though  
they had served some years with us .

[0004]

[already] so it would not have been right to have  
drawn them elsewhere. Our engineer  
left at Zanzibar for a situation on  
a sugar plantation, and I had either to  
run the risk of a pretty long voyage in  
the little Lady of Nyassa or wait at  
Zanzibar till the monsoon changes in  
Autumn. She is a first rate little seaboat  
and rose on the huge waves of the Bay  
~~of Bengal~~ [Indian ocean] like a little duck - but she  
was not intended for sailing. the sails  
are very simple and the screws drag in  
the water as if we had another boat in  
tow.

I have some hesitation too because the Baron Van der Decken intends to explore the rivers. but my object is not so much exploration as to set in train operations by merchants & others which shall eventually work out the slave trade. I would not forestall him or do anything dishonourable and I wish I had five minutes conversation with you about it. The Mission of the Universities was a sore disappointment to me. they have all bolted - too fine gentlemen I fear for the work of civilising. Kind love to Lady M. from yours  
Ever affectionately David Livingstone