

## Letter to [George Denman?], [26 September 1861?]

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[0001]

We who were up on the Highlands found all the people fleeing from the Ajawa and it was clear that if they were not induced to desist the bishop would soon have the country to himself. We therefore went to the vicinity of Mount Zomba to hold a parley with the marauders. We came upon them when in the act of burning three villages. Here the bishop offered up a fervent prayer. The Ajawa had a long line of captives laden with plunder and we could hear the wail for the dead mingling with the shouts of welcome to the victors. The Ajawa asked if we came peaceably & though we assured them that we did they seemed to look upon us - A party of about 20 - as such an easy prey that they began notwithstanding, to shoot us with their poisoned arrows - this probably arose from some Manganja who followed us calling out to them "Chibisa is come." Chibisa is one of their great

[0002]

generals and is believed to ensure victory by his medicines. this deprived us of the benefit of our English name - such has been the effect of the English cruizers and Lord Palmerston's entire slave trade policy that wherever known the English name is highly respected. An Arab Dhow, for instance, which was purchasing slaves & ivory about twenty miles south of this and we are now 120 miles up the Lake, fled as soon as they heard that three English men were coming up. Elated as the Ajawa were with their victories, they only interpreted our assurances and [our] slowly retiring from their village as evidences of fear, rushed at and surrounded us. Poisoned arrows

shot at 50 yards distance are no joke, so we were obliged to drive them away with our arms. When they saw how far our rifles carried they never came near again but left that part of the country.

[0003]

The bishop will now follow his work in peace, that is, if the Portuguese will allow him. It is believed that the gaurdianship of the coast from Cape Delgado to Delagoa Bay was given to them for the especial purpose of suppressing the slave trade - they have virtually converted it into a private slave preserve for the the benefit of the favourites of the Govt. of Lisbon. I am very unwilling to believe this of them, but I must at last confess it to be the case. Major Secard was removed from Tette because he favoured us, and much against his will made Governor of Iboe "interiors" i.e. in the mean time, till another comes out. It thus came to him in a way he could not refuse but complained loudly at Mosambique that it placed him in a false position for there is no trade at Iboe to speak of but [in] slaves

[0004]

He was thus almost compelled to become a slave trader. The Governor G.<sup>1</sup> of Mozambique has gone into recieving all the emoluments of slave trading. the Governor of Quillimane has given his daughter to a Senhor Cruz the principal [slave] trader of this quarter, and he of Tette had slaves up at Zomba purchasing the Ajawa captives. The salaries of all these Governors are small - the court of Lisbon knows them to be so yet the appointments are well known to be conferred as favours. In fact the profits arising from conniving at the slave trade are the emoluments which the Portuguese Government confers on its officers. The province costs the mother country about £5000 annually, and no trade is carried on

between East Africa and Portugal.  
Why they should persist in keeping  
all other nations out I cannot divine  
for the few traders they have are  
either half castes - convicts or the  
officers of convict soldiers. I am  
unwilling to believe that Don Pedro  
knows anything about it. He wished  
to colonize and some soldiers were last  
year sent out as colonists. the Governor  
of Tette told me that the whole thing was a  
gross imposition on his Majesty for though  
[0005]

agricultural implements had also been  
sent the soldiers knew nothing except  
cleaning their accoutrements. For his  
majesty's own sake the way should  
be opened for other nations for then  
alone will it be known that he is  
not to blame. The presence of others  
would undoubtedly be most beneficial  
to the Portuguese settlements in the way  
of stimulating their industry. If we  
exclude ivory and slaves there is  
more ~~trade~~ [produce] carried out in one year -  
from Natal than has been during the  
last hundred from the Zambesi.  
Whatever you can do in the way of  
inducing the Portuguese to abandon  
their exclusive policy will be so  
much gain to the cause of humanity  
and progress.

We carried a boat past thirty five  
miles of cataracts and then sailed  
her up. In no part of Africa have we  
seen such a teeming population as  
on the shores of this Lake. It may be  
because this is the fishing season  
[0006]

but the shores seem covered with people.  
Slaves ivory and cotton are offered for  
sale. We can only promise that a large  
ship will soon come and buy all the  
latter two articles. If we may judge  
from the amount of cotton we buy  
at the ship from a small portion  
of the river Shire, and that too not in  
the cotton season, the supply to be obtained  
here will be very considerable. the  
Lake is deep - we got no bottom with

our sounding line at 35 fathoms say  
200 feet. It has no current in it.  
there are four crossing places on it.  
and the canoes which go at a good  
rate cross over at one place in six  
hours - in another in twelve, and  
in some parts they do not cross at  
all - though even there we can see  
the tops of the mountains. We shall  
measure it but it may be said to  
be from 30 to 50 miles broad. It has  
a long coast line from numerous  
[0007]

bays, and is surrounded, as far as  
we have yet been, by mountains. the  
people we called Marimba. they  
are civil. The lake rises during the  
rainy season about 3 feet - the waves  
and rollers, which are very formidable,  
go up to four feet. In Average years  
the Shire rises about the same height,  
and never falls much - but this  
last was an extraordinary year &  
it left marks 12 feet above ordinary  
levels. At the upper part of the Elephant  
marsh the Shire branches out so that  
we could not get five feet for the  
Pioneer below that it is all deep &  
above the cataracts it is all deep -  
again into the Lake, when it shelves off  
8, 10, 12 14 &c fathoms - if we get  
calmer weather we shall measure  
the depth better (no bottom at 100 fathoms)

thanks for your friend Blakesley's  
criticisms. I think that he has missed  
my weak point. It is not the Zambesi  
[0008]

for a Mississippi steamer could  
ply on it the whole of ordinary years,  
and eight months of the drier ones.  
Any amount of coal too could be  
obtained and [a] Lignum vitae & ebony  
trade be at once established. My weak  
point lies in the presence of the Portuguese  
penal settlements; and the Portuguese Governors  
ready to sell their grandmothers for gain.  
If however in the quiet of his incumbering  
he will concoct a better plan than either  
D<sup>r</sup> Barth's or mine, and then come  
out to help to put it into execution

I promise him as good elephant &  
hippopotami shooting as is to be found  
in Africa. the people have few or no  
guns and the animals are not afraid of  
the bow and arrow - If he will not  
accede to these terms I need not try him  
with a fish which seems to possess  
some of the shape and habits of our salmon  
but be contended with and thankful  
for any more criticisms you may supply.

I am anxiously expecting a steamer  
for this Lake - she must be a strong  
one. Ma Robert would have floundered  
here in the first storm. I think it may be  
best to go on establishing ourselves  
without heeding the Portuguese at  
home - if they plunder my goods at  
Tette I shall say little - please remember  
me to your brother Captain Denman  
& believe me yours &c David Livingstone