

Letter to John Washington, 7 March 1862

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

near Shupanga Zambesi
7 March 1862
Dear Captain Washington
We found that 35 tons was
more than Pioneer could carry -
took out 5 tons at Shupanga
and avoided the strong current
now in [- parts of] the Zambesi of 4 1/2 knots
by going into shallow places.
This unfortunately led us aground
four or five miles above
Shupanga and the river is
falling. It is the worst grounding
we ever had for we have 100
yards of shoal on our lee or
down river from us. I let
you know lest you hear something
worse. I was unable to
do duty when she might have

[0002]

been got off but M^r Young is
said by Captain Wilson to be
"a thorough sailor", so I believe
everything proper has been done
This was my first illness
since leaving England in /58
We dont know what it was
Feet and knees swelled and
were so painful for 2 days
that I could not stand. An
eruption came out, began
with D^r Kirk and went over
us all. Even Gorgon's people
took it. I was down three days
but am now I am thankful
to say quite free of the complaint
I say so much about myself
because people at the Cape made
me so ill when nothing was wrong

[0003]

whatever

I have sent a pressing request to
Admiral Walker for provisions
for we have not a fortnight's
food on board, and cannot buy
any at this part nor indeed
in any part where slavetrade
has depopulated the country.
I propose, if no vessel is to be
sent this way, that the Admiral
should freight a small one from
Natal. I ask 6 months stores
We have been disappointed
in not receiving quinine from
you along with the other
medicines & ask 3lbs from the
Admiral. We need all this
while giving it daily to all hands
We don't see a paddle wheel
Boss ordered from Penn when
the Pioneer was at the Cape.

[0004]

It is much needed for the other side

The reason why the Pioneer goes so
slow with a load is said to be her
engines were placed for 3 feet draught
and she never draws less than 4 1/2
now with a load 5 - they would
require to be lifted up a foot & a half
We shall put the new steamer together
at Shupanga and tow her up to
the cataracts - I doubt Hardisty's zeal.

A gentleman has been sent out
by the free church of Scotland to obtain
information with a view to
a mission on Nyassa. As this
will not interfere with the bishop,
I invited him to come up and
see the country and people for
himself. His name is Rev^d
James Stewart. There is room
for all that in the region, and it is
questionable whether the bishop

[0005]

has not blocked up his own way
Northwards by attacking the
Ajawa, who now possess all
the East bank of Shire from
the cataracts up to the Lake.

His sister, a confirmed invalid,
came up to him. Captain
Wilson seeing how slowly we
got up - (3 weeks to Shupanga!
Last year 2 days only!) acceded to
her request to be taken with M^{rs}
Burrup (another of the missionaries)
forward to the Ruu in his gig.
The bishop engaged to be there
but did not appear & Captain
Wilson pushed on to Chibisa's
the invalid being more dead
than alive. We expect him
daily on his return, and when

[0006]

he does so I shall give you the
latest intelligence.

I feel it rather too much to have to
give passages to all the missionaries
I was willing and anxious to
do all I could for them & am
still willing, but it is a serious
draw back to our own success.
Rev M^r Proctor wanted to come down
for a wife, & the bishop proposed
to come too. I had to tell them
that the Pioneer was not a
passenger vessel. It is a serious
tax on our stores. M^r Stewart
offers payment for everything
has calico to buy his own pro-
visions and works at whatever
he can do. Some of the bishop's
people believe that they have a

[0007]

right to everything here, and on board
the men of war which causes
grumbling among the officers.

You really had a serious task
imposed on you. The only way
my daughter could conceive of
to keep her Mama at home
was to threaten to write to you
and ask you to lock her in a
room. She went the length of
writing to her Mama & telling her
that she was thinking of doing
it!

10 March at Shupanga unloading.

I have to spend more money than
I anticipated in buying country
provisions. We have nothing but a
little flour - a cask said to be beef by
M^r Gedye turns out to be one of
vinegar! [beef found on 17th March] We shall be two months

[0008]
putting Lady Nyassa together - will tow
her up to the cataracts & there unscrew
her - probably we shall have food
before that from the Admiral - so no
uneasiness need be felt. There too
we can get plenty of native meal
goats fowls &c.

I may have mentioned already
that I offered the charge of the Pioneer
to M^r Gedye at Johanna - & he refused
it on the plea that he could not
navigate. I offered to lay down
his positions for him & point out
the course but he again refused
to take charge = so the subordinate
position he occupied was his own
choice.

M^r May refused fowling pieces
Two we brought are broken.
I send up to Tette to bring our things
away, in canoes. We have plenty of
ammunition there. D. Livingstone