

Letter to Benjamin T. Pyne, 31 May 1847

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[0001]

Kuruman 31st May 1847

A little girl called Agnes the name
of my mother has taken up her abode with us for
a time. May we
feel she is lent hither up for God

My very Dear Friends

Your favour of Dec^r 19 has just now been placed
in my hands and though these are trembling I begin to do what I have
been doing most of the past day viz "strike while the
iron is hot." What have you seen doing say you? Are you
turned blacksmith? We thought you were a missionary well
I am and I was mending my intinerators or waggon wheels which
are rather the worse of having travelled some thousands
of miles. Could M^r Pyne weld a band or tire? If here we
could teach him I shortened all nine one & Sauls too without
any teaching whatever but this smacks of boasting. Yet
people are not ashamed at home to be called the "working
clergy" & why should we stickle to call ourselves so?
We have been here nearly three months waiting till a
unit could be added to the worlds population, there are some
symptoms of the event transpiring tonight. We shall never
wait so long for another. It is a great trial of patience
to us but some things convince us that there are many
others quite beyond our control. I need not say that we
feel always thankful for your letters. I think I had better say
it once for all. And now I must begin and thank you
for your great kindness in attending to our orders you
think the obligation all on your side. As I am requested to
tell you your mistakes you must put this down as N^o first
the obligation is certainly all on our side. N^o 2^d consists
in having put yourselves to trouble about the pistol & N^o 3^d
consists in having put your letters & I suppose those of the children
into the box & not into the post office. I cured a Griqua of
a very troublesome complaint - He appeared very grateful &
took charge of my horse[mare]. One given by Captⁿ Steele during the
sick season. A token of gratitude he rode [it] till its back was so
much ulcerated I never got any more good out of it. I lately
sent for the two foals which belonged to it and my grateful
patient will not deliver them up even though I offer to pay
him for his trouble. I think you will put me down as
brother to this gentleman as N^o 4th for my impudence. We

had a hearty laugh over this Griqua's gratitude and as it elicited another from M^r Moffat I shall give it you with the expression of my conviction that these sort of things seem necessary to the present order of things. If there were no ungrateful persons we should not know the value of gratitude. If there were no false friends we should not feel the value of true ones - even nonsense as you will call this seems necessary to make us feel the value of sense just in the same way that we never feel the value of water till we travel in Africa. M^r M. was once fortnightly invited [0002]

to Griqua Town - the people were in expectation of being attacked by parties of banditti which infested the country at that time. He went and assisted them by his counsel and as they had no ammunition gave them all his own stock viz 400 ball cartridges. For this they expressed unbounded gratitude When his people were bringing his cattle to the yoke some of them trode on the corner of a garden but ate nothing of the produce - the Griquas in counsel assembled sentence M^r M to pay a fine of 16 dollars. M^r M. wished him not to pay it but as he says to this day it was such a funny instance of the most intense ingratitude - he could not spoil the story by refusing

We have not yet recieved a box which you mentioned as having sent for our own use, some time previous to a ~~large~~ bale containing patch work shawls, thread, calico, and other things equally acceptable for the shirts I thank you most sincerely & believe M^{rs} L has done the same for the whole. I did not speak about the box in the my last because I had the hope that it might reach us ere we left this but it having been despatched at some period previous to that of the parcel we begin to fear it may be lost. If it comes to hand we shall acknowledge it immediately. We feel sorry for its loss, but must try to feel resigned to many things very disagreeable to flesh & blood - If the pistol comes to hand it will be very useful. A gun is heavy yet it must always be borne about wherever one goes. Lately or either when returning from our last journey to the Eastward I retired a little down a deep gully by the banks of the Marikoe - there is no privacy in a waggon - well I was standing leaning on my gun when long past went a pallah about three yards in from and presently a wild dog a large spotted wild looking thing in hot pursuit. It however started when it came to the spot on which I stood & leaped backwards & forwards as if uncertain whether to bite or not yet uttering a sort of howl as much to say its intentions were not over pacific - my gun missed fire & I confess I felt fear enough to produce trepedation which caused me to miss when the gun did go off. the people soon scared it off. A few days previous to this event I saw some haartebeests in the evening and ran a little way from the waggon in order to have a steak out of them but they went in a direction opposite to that of the waggon so I turned & was following on the waggon trail or tract when happening to look behind a tree there I saw an immense lion with his attention taken up looking after the waggon which had probably awakened him out of a dream. I could have shot him

with great ease but preferred slipping away out of sight among the trees and then at double quick march made for the waggon the insecurity induced by perpetual occurrences such as these makes one feel anxious for pistols or a pistol about the person always. Your kindness will not be unprofitable. Nor is it unappreciated - I told you in my last that I was ashamed that you had got the little things sent by M^r Greig. I did not believe he would ever deliver them and therefore picked up a few things of no value in order to get off when he proffered his services to take them - the hair I cut off Machose's head a long time ago for you - she was then the wife of Bube. A very kind woman and now wife of Khase - the larger curls are from the head of another wife of Bube whose name I forget
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they were intended as specimens of Bechuana hair. the small bag has if I remember rightly medicine in it these are worn round the neck as charms and ~~that particular one~~ sent was thrown into a [believers] woman's house in order to bewitch her. the little box is what was worn in a slit in the ear of one of Mosilikatze's warriors It is a snuff box. the larger one was worn on the arm of a native of the Bamangwato - use the same - What you call a piecer is a Sitchuana needle. All their sewing is done by these - a hole is made and then the thread of split tendon inserted in the same way as shoemakers do with their awls. the carved bones are the Bechuana dice used in divinations - if you go to hunt one sits down & throws these on the ground & from the position they assume tells whether any game will be killed. If I had known he would have delivered them I should certainly sent some things worth going so far I have several curiosities at Choumane which have been preserved for some years. For M^{rs} P. we recently sent a box containing bulbs seed & karrosses to Glasgow. M^r Moffat got it forwarded for us. We knew of John Moffat going home but in an unaccountable manner forgot to bring your articles. I have been so often disappointed & have so often disappointed you I shall say nothing now, but you will hear from him if he arrives

We were much pleased by the visit last year of M^r Oswell an Indian gentleman. He visited us in the year preceding the company with a Scotch gentleman called Murray the latter visited the Mission house & gave a missionary with whom I was connected the character of a "an ill natured brute". that missionary had said many things hard & bitter against us to him. I never uttered a sentence against him. that was all the gain he reaped for abusing me to a stranger M^rM. said so many kind things about me at the mission House I should be an egotist if I repeated them. But here I am again to scold you Why you wish me to be egotistical - you wish me to tell you more about myself. Whoever heard the like. & M^{rs} L and Robert too. - the latter is growing very finely since we came here - but I am sure if you heard some of the squalls he makes during the night you would be ready to apply the rod to his tail instead of writing about him Both M^{rs} L & self are well - We were very lean when we came but our visit has improved our bodily state Robert was a skeleton but is now plump trying to walk & talk.

I have forgot whether you ever mentioned that M^{rs} Wright had recieved my letters. Please thank her sincerely for her kindness. It will be many months before we recieve the articles you have sent. If you instructed the clerk at the Mission House to send by way of Algoa Bay. Care of Joshua Kemp Esq the parcels might come sooner & be cheaper than by way of the Cape
I am sorry to hear of the continued attacks of indisposition to which you are subject. Colds may frequently be avoided by regulating the amount of fluid taken into the system. If you intend to expose yourself to cold at any time you ought to refrain as much as possible from drinking. If you were expecting to go out in the evening one cup of tea instead of two would lessen the probability of your recieving a check to the perspiration. the pores of the body would not have so much fluid to dispose of - A very good cough mixture may be made by purchasing at Apothecaries Hall London or anywhere where you can get pure medicines - Carbonate of Potash, Liquorice Root, Gentian Root - syrup of poppies & almond emulsion of each an ounce - Boil a quarter of the drugs & [0004]
roots an hour in as much water as will fill a wine bottle ~~nearly~~ - add when cold a teaspoonful of the Potash or wafer 1/4 of the ounce of all the other ingredients [shake this bottle] & take a tablespoonful occasionally - you may sweeten it if you like sweets with honey & you cannot poison yourself with the ingredients - it is difficult to prescribe for persons at a distance the above is good where there is no inflammation.

We have heard from M^r Drummond lately and one or two or the number. Reporters reached us too. The scientific portion made me blush I mean that part and tho probable information of the Islands. Only think of men believing that a flood or a transcending of them could trail down Capes after them formed of solid everlasting granite. Table mountain for instance is an immense mass of [old]granite with never sort shot up through many fizzes & at such a temperature that it transformed the sandstone at the top into schist and get out south senworthies I think all this were boulder or pebble rolled down from Timbuctoo the fields of Liliass Mills are worth a chart load of the scientific dreams

Care of D^r Philips Capetown
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S.B.

All here are pretty well - M^r Hamilton very frail. M^r Moffat busy translating karah. there is not much done at present among the people - the contentions for some time back have been dead. We mourn over the apparent deadness. May God serve his own work. A sister of M^{rs} Lis to be married this month in London - I do not know her intended. He has a good character but his letters seem to indicate a sort of peevishness such as prevents me wishing you to make his acquaintance. If Robert Moffat comes your way

he will visit you we have a better opinion of him - M^{rs} Ldesires me to say that a pair of stays
(alias pincers) you kindly sent would have
extremely handy (?) had they fitted her - they were too small & are now
worn by her sister. We have been favoured with a little
daughter. Mother & child both doing well. No word of the box so
we conclude it lost. We thank you for it although it has not come