

Letter to Margaret Sewell, 19, 26 April 1851

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Kolobeng 19th April 1851

My Very Dear Friend

I am happy to inform you that your favour N^o 23 lately reached its destination and the reviews &c &c. accompanying it were all right. the parcel was enclosed in a box containing clothing for the natives, but by whom sent we have no means of knowing. the letter containing the list and name of the donor had probably been abstracted somewhere between this and England. But the parcel was happily unscathed. From a former letter which I acknowledged, I have reason to believe there is another parcel where Gilpius wig was "still upon the road" There is a wide gap in the supply of periodicals but hope they will turn up in time. Accept my sincere thanks for your unceasing kindness. the different periodicals sent were extremely acceptable. the Report of the Myapore mission very interesting. We have not a printer in the Bechuana mission who could equal the printing of that report even in his own language Most of the printing has to be done by Mr. Ashton & Moffat. a very dear way of furnishing books I suspect though I have no data on which to calculate. A few of the youths are being taught by Mr Ashton but they are very slow. and all the corrections have to be done by the missionaries. Send another if you have opportunity What! a grandson six feet high. How he would look at the little doctor his uncle. I fancy I see Charles standing

[0002]

on his tiptoes every time he spoke to him. It is cheering to see our race is not retrograding either mentally or physically, though the Puseyites poor dogs would like us to take a backward course You sent no "Banners" because you perhaps thought some one else would be more thankful for them. If so I can assure you there is not a more thankful mortal within 100 miles of me. this is saying more than you Londoners dare do But here we can look out and see very few better than ourselves. However you may be assured that all you send even Punch, is thankfully recieved.

M^r Inglis about whom you enquire, is settled ~~about~~

about four days from this. We hold no communication with him. When he came into the country he complained mightily of the paucity of the population. then made an exploratory journey to the East of this. saying to me as he left, Well if I don't find a population now I shall go home He found according to his own computation about ten thousand but did not attempt to settle among them. He then went south and made some arrangements with a portion of the Bahurutse tribe. Returning himself to Mabotsa. there he remained a year waiting for the Bahurutse to come to him. As they did not appear likely to come at all I ask him in Committee what he intended doing - this gave great offence but it had the effect of making him leave Mabotsa. He then went to the East of Mabotsa & sat down on a fine stream without any people in the course of that year however the Boers compelled the Bahurutse to shift their quarters & they did not come to him but to another part called Matebe where he now is. As it was now evident to the Directors that he was only wasting the Society's funds, they sent out his recal to the Commitee but conditionally provided he had not by the time the letter reached the Committee [0003]

settled down in some sphere of labour. He had not "settled down in a sphere of labour" the nearest village being nine miles off but his friends insisted that he had. And as it invoked so much to poor Inglis the rest of the com. gave in. I was not there. the Bahurutse came near to where he was soon after the meeting of the Committee. the Directors seem apprehensive that his freinds in Scotland would in the event of his [re]call do damage to the Society. It was through a whim of D^r Paterson he became connected with the Society. He believes that the Boers are best adapted for civilizing the natives! And still wishes to appear an original. His wish is gratified in so far as the possession of a few odd phrases goes. And he has sometimes let out what friend MacLehose aptly termed "insane divinity" (perdition of infants) but I can scarcely believe he is sincere in believing such infinite nonsense. He propounds it more to annoy others than for anything else. His case is lamentable - enough to make one both sorry and afraid the opportunity afforded us of standing forth as fellow workers with God. In Christ's stead to entreat men to be saved implies such a precious privilege and such an immense responsibility as forces the request to all our Christian friends Bretheren Pray for us, with an intense degree of earnestness

Are you aware that he has many connections in Scotland? the above is of course between ourselves - though I cannot believe that even charity herself would say he has done good in the country. Take an instance of his conduct to Sechele. You know how nobly he made a profession

after three years diligent study & consistent conduct.
most of his people were opposed to him but he read the
word of God for himself and it was quite natural in
him to look for sympathy to Christians. Well, a short
[0004]

after he was baptized, one of his people went to Matebe on his own
business and being favourably inclined to Christianity went to
salute the missionary. Inglis began at once to denounce
the man's chief as one of the worst wretches on the face of
the Earth - and that too in language which the man
would not repeat. "He never knew a white man could
use such language. And rather than encounter it again
he would disobey his chief and refuse (although ordered) to go
near him. think of this and Inglis never once saw Sechele's
The reports he had recieved were of course from Sechele's
enemies. And the man of course told his chief the whole.
the effect on Sechele's mind will I have no doubt be
made apparent on judgement day. He has lately
been using something of the same sort of language to the
Bahoutse respecting their circumcision and they will
not look near his meeting. When M^r Freeman came
here Inglis took care to vent out against Sechele. I suppose
it is his way of giving me a stroke. those who see and
converse with Sechele invariably think a great
deal more of him than I do. I am always with him
and know his faults and failings best. M^r Freeman
encouraged him to come to England. (at Sechele's own
expense) While I mindful of Mokoteri have always
opposed the idea. S. was mightily pleased to hear
M^r F approve of the project of proceeding to England
By the way I mention that Mokoteri has at
last got a wife. A Griqua, the height of his ambition
All the parents refused to let him have their daughters &
some gave him a drubbing for presuming to ask them
but by means of seduction he has got one at last
the parents yielded with no very good grace you may be
sure. He is a rank Antinomian in sentiment
[0005]2^d sheet

With respect to this country generally it is in a very sorry state
there is war on all sides. The Caffres are at war with
the Colony. the Basutus among whom the French
bretheren chiefly labour are at war among themselves
and with the Colonial authorities too. the Batlapi truly mean, rob the poor Bakwains who are
returning from the Colony with a few head of
cattle. their hard earned wages, for work performed
at a distance of more than five hundred miles from
home. the Boers knowing that the Colonial
Government has its hands full met yesterday
at Mosega to concoct plans for bring the Bakwains under their authority. Which authority is
to be

exercised in forcing them to work without pay. this is their practice among a great many tribes situated East of this. Very like I shall in the course of this season lose all my little property at Kolobeng. I think the Boers will certainly attack us soon. Mosilikatse on the North East seems inclined to make a stir. the Damares too on the west Coast have been fighting & one mission has been broken up. Add to this there is nothing doing in the country. no conversions & very few candidates indeed even where the gospel has been long established. the only work worth mentioning is the translation & printing of the Bible carried on by M^r Moffat & Ashton at the Kuruman
[0006]

Here we are doing little. We are hindered in our work greatly by the fact that the Kolobeng is dried completely up Neither we nor our people can obtain food and very soon we shall be compelled to remove for want of water The whole Bakwain country is drying up. When M^r Moffat visited the Mauketse country as it was full of fountains and there were many streams near to Kaukoe but when we were lately there they pointed out nine streams which have dried up since, and we had to send about three miles off for water to cook our kettle. Our people are much attached to us but we must I fear part from them soon. And the only way open for us is the North. I wrote you an account of our second visit to the Lake. And in a few days we wend our way thither again. the fever and Mosquitoes make me quail. I look at my wife & children and my heart yearns intensely over them you know what a parent's feelings are. I cannot enter into all circumstances of the case at present But it seems duty to go. And were I alone it would not cost me a thought But O my children. Am I sacrificing them. Your institution at Walthamstow is certainly a noble affair. How I should be relieved if I could place them there till I had alone proved the salubrity of the climate. You know the African fever. How it baffled the medical staff of the Niger Expedition though they had all the resources of the medical art at hand. this may be the last letter I shall write you. I do not shrink for myself but for those I love however we
[0007]

go as soon as M^r Oswel comes and we expect him tomorrow. He with great generosity has supplied many of our wants and will do more. I have not written M^r Tidman since I returned and do not now. Have not heard from him for a long very long time say 18 months at least, and feel as if I could

not carry on a correspondence without any
reply. I shall however send my journal - or
the substance of it. If you happened to meet
him you might inform him I had written you
just before departing for the North. May God be
gracious to you my dear friend and supply all
your need out of His abundant fullness. thanks for
all the information communicated in your last
hope MacLehose will be abundantly compensated
by the amount of conjugal bliss he will enjoy [...] [for]
the misery he endured while compelled to live the glorious
life of a batchelor. Will you present my congratulations
I did so before but Miss Hall gave him the go bye
as many have done before here (not to him however)
Remember me to Charles and M^r John Sewell
We saw Ashton &c when out at Kuruman lately
All are well. M^r Hamilton seems nearest
to death's door. He walks with crutches and
his sight is so impaired he cannot see the
largest print Believe me

Ever Affectionately

Yours David Livingston

My Wife joins in
affectionate salutations
[0008]

Do you know anything of a young man a distant relative
of late Thomas Wilson by the mother's side. He goes by that
name. (James Wilson) here - lives very retired, seems to avoid
correspondence. Had the fever badly last year in at the Lake
He went in with us at the discovery. Seems respectable
but avoids intercourse. Speaks very little of the language
His father was an upholsterer.

26th Now two days beyond Kolobeng on the road
Northwards - send these letters back. DL.

M^{rs} Sewell
57 Aldersgate St
prepaid London
Prepaid