

Letter to John Washington, 6, 20 December 1861

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

H.M.S. Pioneer 6 Dec^r 1861

Private

Dear Captain Washington

I have to thank you for several [up to 5th May] which as usual came in a heap. the mail brought up by three of the Ox & Cam. missionaries came up the Shire in common country without knowing a word of the language a bit of the way - a feat I believe never yet by a Portuguese. Thanks for all kindness in writing and in doing on our .

the Pioneer is I am sorry to find much deep for river work. We observed that in Rovuma - and again when we reached upper part of the Elephant Marsh. Below she has plenty of water. We warped her some 20 or 30 miles in order to place the and our men in a healthy spot Chibisa's, and will do the same to place new steamer on the Lake. Were it possible put Pioneer on the Lake she would suit admirably. She is so strong and nothing a strong and deep boat will do there. seeing the missionaries up to the Highlands carried a boat past Murchison's Cataracts distance in Lat of 35° but about 40° with the . When there we are virtually on the for the Upper Shire is all deep and smooth Lake is very deep. As the Shire is 9 to 15 feet so the Lake gradually deepens as many fathoms. Then in rounding a promontory which gives a appearance to the southern end

[0002] which we wish to name Cape Maclear - we no bottom with our leadline of 35 fathoms a mile from the shore. In the north in 11° 40° S. . we tried with a fishing line in a bay and found at 100 fathoms - a mile outside no bottom 116 fathoms but the line broke in coming up ship would not get anchorage except near Shore, but there are several small rounded islands and adjacent to these as also all the rocky headlines there are rocks jutting or only covered with a few feet of water. Lake is from 20 to 50 or 60 miles broad we could not measure it by a chronometer we were there during the Equinoctial gales tremendous seas get up in 15 or 20 minutes rollers are as large as I ever saw at the mouth the Zambesi. they come across the Lake with sides and hairy heads and break 14 or 15 fathoms. We had to beach the boat night to prevent her being swamped at anchor often durst not attempt to launch her. Arab dhow lately built to carry slaves across from us twice to the Eastern shore. It would been madness to have wished ourselves in slight open boat. Though the great object of exploration was not attained, I mean the of the Rovuma, I cannot blame myself. did all than it was possible to do - and back as lean and dried up as red herrings could see that the Lake is surrounded by and high table lands. It was only sketches and bearings [at different Latitudes] of these as the sun rose them that we got an approximation to width. When we passed 11 ° 40 ° S. we came to recently depopulated region. Human skeletons putrid bodies lay everywhere - no food

[0003] to be had and some of the people - a tribe of from the south originally, fled from us. The went about 20° beyond the last latitude I took. went nearly as far as the mountains. thence also from the boat 20° more could be seen. we may say that the Lake extends to the southern of the tenth degree of south Latitude. It begins 14° 25° and may be 225 miles long. We say over

200 miles. Pirates live on detached rocks on part of the coast, and food was so scarce that fathom of cloth was demanded for a fish's . We came away back along the West shore reports about Rovuma as contradictory as . One man asserted positively that could sail out of the

Lake into the river, a that we must lift the boat a few yards third - fifty miles. A fourth a hundred. All in saying that it is a very large river. islands are uninhabited, with perhaps one - no current could be detected. It and falls about 3 feet between the dry & seasons. The population is prodigiously . I never saw so many people as those live on its shores. Slaving is the only trade. was much disappointed in not finding large river on the West that would have the Longitude to the Makololo Country rivers flow in on that side but they are . The Lake is not much longer than we seen for the people do not cross but go it where we turned.

It will take us a whole year to carry our past the rapids. We were stationary at Chibisa's yet collected with ease cotton equal 300 lbs of clean cotton - the price very low our calico so flimsy that we felt we

[0004] of cheating them. It is high time that regular agents should begin their work. Had we been to run up and down a great deal more could be bought. The goods M^r Clegg sent are quite for the people here. M^r Aspal Turner us before. £45 worth bought by M^r May the Cape possessed the same character for flimsiness while in going North we could buy any amount food, in coming South we have been found out, we could not get enough to satisfy hunger - fling the cloth at us, and called it mosquito . An investment [by May] in a sort of penny is quite unsaleable - so are trumpety glasses. Had M^r May refrained from money at the Cape, we could have supplied with strong American calico on the Zambesi a cheaper rate ~~than~~ and saved ourselves the of seeing slave buyers with better than we could offer. The unavoidable injury our character for fair dealing is lamentable, velvet is a good deal weaker than common paper. I shall be obliged to purchase stuff for wages at the roadmaking.

M^r Rae writes that he has put down a for me among his losses. We sent 2 chronometers by him for cleaning & . I believe I gave you the numbers. I had watch there, but a silver thermometer case my own pocket chronometer is now I shall if you please buy this watch is coming, and which he says he put by mistake for the silver case. He was to go by way of the Cape in charge of collections and the chronometers the Lyra took him away from Quilimane met a ship going to the Cape he put [ten of] the boxes but would not go himself. Went towards Aden and came to grief. We hear that five of the boxes lately seen at Mozambique- to D^r Kirk's great sorrow .

[0005]

In connection with the thermometer, I learned what, though probably well known to you perfectly new to me - the glass tube and ivory expand and contract so as to ensure fracture was a neat pocket instrument in a silver by Dixey of New Bond St. and had a small on the lid. It was broken opposite to bulge inwards of this compass and I concluded pressure against my side had done it - sent another, it came out in a wooden case
and broken too the ivory scale had by the heat and the glass expanded and was the result.

I suppose glass scale blue white figures would be the proper thing. I the instrument lost on account of its a present from Sir Culling E. Earldley, but watch is of much more value, and needing if you let me know the price I shall add it the money I have on hand for current expenses give you an order on my banker for the .

A very fine sextant was bought out by M^r May. It is easily adjusted to index Error 0 above 100" degrees two images of the sun formed one from the surface of the mirror and another from the quicksilver . This would have been no great disadvantage as we should have used it at lower altitudes, but the mercury in the same box leaked and an was formed on the arc which renders it illegible in the evenings. M^r Maclear send you a tracing of the Lake with work there. The West side is a remarkable of bays one after the other up to the North. No Latitude was taken after I left boat. Fever was among them.

[0006]

I earnestly hope that the gins sent are not saw , M^r Clegg says they deteriorate the cotton. send our bit of cotton to M^r Turner M.P. Manchester. We wish to secure a good character our cotton but the gin we had would not clean though improvements were tried by M^r Hardisty hope too the press is an hydraulic one. The are so enormously heavy. If you saw yourself I am sure it will be hydraulic

The opinions of such men as Sir James , Sir James Liddell and D^r Bryson are not be despised, though not a medical man you easily understand that two of the ingredients the pills are incompatible, that is, they are to decompose each other when brought combination. Calomel & quinine should be combined in a scientific prescription Opium and sugar of lead are just as in-and yet they are the ingredients of one the best pills we have for dysentery and stand the Pharmacopoea. It is believed that they dissolve each other & form a compound is eminently useful. You must under-however that I do not for a moment unscientific prescriptions.

We were all taught to reduce the fever before quinine. D^r MacWilliam followed this rigorously in 1841. But in 1850 I took my with me to Lake Ngami intending to with Sebituane. Fever knocked down two them and I was led by feelings which can well understand to give quinine before fever was reduced, and with such good effect have followed the plan ever since. Quinine the great curative agent for fever, the pills but half the cure. We give the quinine until is produced, and with the pure quinine is effected by a few doses after the pills.

[0007]

I took seven Johanna men on trial and six Europeans into the Wasp. We find the Johanna men are better than Kroomen never take fever and work well. They have the wages viz. a fraction under one shilling per . We shall try and get a dozen more and with as few Europeans as possible. An , two stokers - a carpenter - a cook and quartermasters seem indispensable. At we have two seamen besides. I trust have renewed the request to the new to render us assistance, we need a many things from the dockyard. Slops up by officers are paid to me and I the money to the balance on hand for expenses. Those taken up by the men placed against them when leaving. I have

£50 on hand now and this will do I believe all incidental expenses for next year. I to pay the wages of M^r May's interpreter and purchase calicoes for wages to the to be employed in road making. I suppose

Sir George Grey will have sent home a bill two mules and two scotch carts I asked to send us to carry the steamer across.

We had bought a number of hoes for road at about 6^d each. They are of native entirely. Many of the tools you sent will be very useful and I think sufficient for our purpose as we out from the river and thereby avoid gullies and hills. It will be a curve some 50 miles long - 1200 feet of altitude be got up. The West is far easier the East bank, where so many spurs down from the highlands. We shall have of workmen if we have calico - a cubit

[0008] day is handsome pay to them. When we came first time we could not get a guide without greatest trouble - now we can get fifty in hours notice. As soon as we get on the not an hour will be lost before settling Rovuma question. The Portuguese have a fort near the mouth of the Shire to enrich with the dues from the cotton trade others work hard to render the Shire devoid of population as the Zambesi. So am quite alive to the expediency of securing outlet

Between ourselves I am rather mortified find that missionaries went to fight Ajawa. I would not have gone [at first] had I in least suspected an attack, but used and presents before venturing them. The head chief Chisunze of [of Manganja] afterwards and urged our going to the Ajawa entirely away. I was and gave him to understand unmistakeable terms that we did

come to fight nor would we use arms except in self defence as in the which had just occurred. The bishop to all I uttered, and enumerated points inculcated as religion - peace - no slave selling - industry and . I did not know that had touched on all these points, but we left he went, assaulted the Ajawa their town and took a number captives - they are now our enemies life. We could have easily got over first affair for all acknowledge that party that begins the fight has all the , but I fear we shall never be friends

[0009]

3^d Sheet

Many thanks for the ale - none however yet come to hand, but it will turn up time - we had some when we returned Nyassa and it is after severe and sun roasting, that one enjoys thoroughly. One of the younger Hanbury's us 4 dozen=corks unwired and 4 only remained of the whole.

D^{rs} Kirk and Meller will draw their by means of their brothers - I a certificate of heal life and we a sort of power of attorney not worded of course, but by your it may do Mess^s Gedye & Hardisty's Father's draw their salaries M^r Frederick Fitch does the same my brother. I have drawn slops the Siden and Wasp - some been taken up by the seamen. keep a list and give it off to the Forté Admiral's ship if they leave to be from their pay. Some have taken up by the officers of the . To simplify the accounts take their money value and place with the balance on hand - and some I paid sixteen Makololo were intended to form a land on the Rovuma and did act in capacity on Nyassa - we thought leaving them at the foot of the Lake & let the boat party perform all the Exploration

[0010] though they were quite willing to remain the event of accident to the boat we should have . It was only fear of our numbers that civility where slaving goes on. In the sphere the dhow's operations the people were worse I ever saw Africans. We were robbed twice (the first time to me in Africa) - and one of the was robbed and bound for sale when the interfered and liberated him. We should captured the dhow had we got a chance the owners three Arabs or light coloured fled to the East shore as we came near we came South there were only black men her and they fled again as we approached suppose no fault will be found with us taking her though we have no slave papers

20 Dec^r

I see that I have repeated myself of having written at times. We started from the Dakanamaio[15 Nov^r] by a sudden of the river dropped down about miles - and next day could go further as it fell a foot. We been detained ever since waiting the river to rise - I mean to down to the Kongone in an old so as to communicate any Man of War that may and land the provisions. river will be sure to rise January - and then the ship come down - as I take mail with me I close this now

Ever yours &c David Livingstone

[0011]

P. S. We once in coming up the Shire in the Ma Robert killed a number elephants but got the tusks of three - four tusks were worth selling I sent them to Mozambique got £50 for them. We used wine & brandy for as long as it lasted - then more for the same purpose in addition some private mess - which we did not use except Sundays and special occasions

Baines confessed to making away half the wine - offered to pay it but when we were making the account denied taking . I once came in upon him three of his convict friends Portuguese with our wine. shared the loss. As well other losses by the same . Will it be wrong in to repay D^r Kirk, M^r Livingstone

M^r Rae, M^r Thornton&self losses out of this £50. think it will suffice to pay our private mess bills for we were very moderate - you say yes there is no to it I shall do it.

[0012]

M^r Gedye begs me to tell you M^r May received payment keeping stores he will esteem a favour if you grant him same. I can say that he is worthy of it - attends carefully his duty, and during our absence entire charge of the ship. He occupies the same position we are at work on the and carrying the steamer he took charge of the stores the way out & not M^r May.

A naval officer named Burlton for employment. I declined services. A mixed naval & civil cannot possibly work. This was evident in May's case. He assured of absolute command of the even if Kirk succeeded [me] until the of the Foreign office were known.

"No, No, he would not play second fiddle &c. this the man of whom you said to me leaving England. "If any of your set up their backs as May has done the Niger, you will be perfectly justified leaving him on the first island." A master one of the river steamers might do but with due respect to the service I think that no officer will do unless it is converted a naval expedition entirely.

We use quinine wine out of deference to the of greater men - we have plenty now and send for it to the Cape as we need it.

D. Livingstone

We got a couple of whalers with the Ma Robert, built by a man in Liverpool they were of first rate quality and only now are worn out - stem & stern of same . The Nyassa boat was made purposely very thin - she is hoisted up to a above the cataracts - and we have only one boat now - could you us out two whalers - ? made strong with behind