

Letter to Charles Whish, 9 October 1846

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)
[0001]

Chonuane 9th Oct^r 1846
My Dear Friend

I am sure you have wondered again & again why your seed box has been so long in making its appearance. The reason of the delay has been the isolation [^] [to] which we have for a long time been subject. Even our Kuruman friends were in ignorance of our welfare for about six months and the transmission of the box was an impossibility. The country has been very much disturbed of late. The Caffre war has raged & rendered communication through the colony very precarious. You must have heard of the destruction of nearly all the mission stations &c throughout Caffreland. If I had sent sooner the whole of the contents would probably have been lost by delay on the frontiers of the Colony - or perhaps they might have fallen into lawless hands. I need not say more about the delay except that in process of time it has grown from a small box to a pretty large one and contains - the following articles

- 1 Two Karosses made of the feet of Jackals
- 2 Two spotted cat Karosses - (grey)
- 3 Two Golden Jackal Do
- 4 One Ground Squirrel Do
- 5 A parcel containing a spotted cat Kaross for Professor Andrew Buchanan, 13 Moore Place - (Roots &c)
- 6 One spotted cat Kaross for Rev^d D^r Heugh,
- 7 One white Rhinoceros horn 2 ft 9 inches in length
- 8 A lot of (Cameleopard shape) Bechuana spoons
- 9 One ostrich shaped Do -

- 10 Two ladles -
- 11 One cooking pot
containing two snuff boxes -
- 12 a bird's nest -
- 13 seeds of a tree
called Moana - 51 feet in circumference &c.
- 14 rings
- 15 Four Bechuana caps -
- 16 One wooden bowl
- 18 one cup
- 19 Three sewing needles, in two cases.
- 20 One shield -
- 21 one
spear (the handle cut).
- 22 A Queen's sandals -
- 23 A lady's
petticoat (ornamented). How worn? Will be more difficult
for you to tell than the puzzle padlock will be to him
who stole it.
- 24 A waistcoat made by Mokhatla, a
chief living East of Chonuane -
- 25 A serpent's skin
- 26 Point of Rhinoceros' horn. To make a handle to your
carving knife if you like, Do Tail Do
- 27 Tail of Elephant
&
- 28 point of proboscis.
- 29 At least 20 varieties of seeds
in two bottles.
- 30 Club of Rhinoceros horn -
- 31 Two
bracelets off Sechele's arm,
- 32 a native pillow which
serves as stool by day "a cap by night [...] all the day"

I feel sorry to conclude. I feel it as easy to write you as talk to a bosom crony But time or the want of it forbids Mr Inglis is in my house at Mabotsa & has lately added another unit to the Worlds population in the shape of a daughter son. We go Eastward again to take farther steps towards Paul's settlement with Mokhatla. Please present very kind regards from my rib to Mrs Connel she finds it impossible at present to write. She works early & late & hard too

[0002]

The seven Karosses or skin cloaks are placed at your disposal and although I have a desire to present one to Mrs McRobert one to Mrs Connel & one to each of the friends Paton, White & I do not presume to dictate except in reference to these ladies Let Mrs Mc R have her choice - then Mrs Connel then do what you think proper in reference to every thing else[and] everybody else Remember however to present my very warmest thanks to each of the above named friends & everyone besides who may have placed me under obligation to do so - I am sorry have appeared lacking in the acknowledgement line. It certainly did not arise from want of gratitude and having given a general assurance of thankfulness when I heard of your projected kindnesses I thought I might wait till I saw the presents. The majority of the articles sent never came. This loss was I believe mainly owing to their being packed in casks. Even very strong ones soon yield to the influence of the climate - the ends fall in and a strong temptation is placed in the way of carriers. The box now sent will give you an idea of what does best for this country. If dove tailed & a feather put into the joinings such a box is just the thing. There is another box in it wrapped up in an old bag to prevent the charcoal in which the bulbs are packed from permeating through & spoiling the Karosses. The bulbs number upwards of twenty - but the varieties included may not amount to so many. The delay has brought them to the very "best" time of the year for conveyance It was winter when they were taken up and as most of them are very tenacious of life I think you will have some satisfaction from them. They are not in general covered with earth. A little more than half ought to do & ~~but~~ little water will suffice - the soil of all ought to contain [a] considerable portion of sand, I should imagine no manure, vegetable mould need not predominate. The soil is usually firmly baked around them whether by heat or rains I cannot tell You probably have some new plants as the botany of this region has never yet been explored. If you discover a new one it must be called - Whishii - Mrs Moffat took the whole to the Kuruman last month -

After a protracted search I cannot lay my hands on yours con-

taining a list of queries - I must try & answer much as I recollect & such as may not be answered you will place to the account of defect of memory & nothing else Salary for an unmarried missionary in our Society is £75. for a married one £100. Our Society gives the least. The Wesleyans have considerably more. The French have £20 to £50 to be

We have better prospects of usefulness here than at any former period. But there is not a single convert. Let us have your prayers What may common windows without glass cost in Glasgow? I have seen cast iron ones which would do well for our chapel but may have mistaken, I cannot make them not having the tools

[0003]

expended on improvements on [the] stations £80 being considered as supply for the missionary's personal wants. I cannot specify the salaries of other Societies. I have never been intimate with any except the French. They have a mechanic on each station. Other Societies' missionaries employ mechanics from the Colony to build &c &c We do all ourselves £75 seemed a large sum to me. I thought I could maintain three native teachers out of it But it takes all my £100 now to keep my station going. It would be impossible to do with less. I think it would be an advantage if we had less manual labour As I write now my hands have the same aching sensation I had when spinning, my mind is often so exhausted by sympathy with the body I cannot write in the evening & this is the only time I have I do not know in what I could curtail my expenses - these are great chiefly in consequence of great distance from the coast the prices of everything are doubled or more ere they reach us A common clasp knife worth 6^d sells for /3 A wretched fustian Jacket /18 is - £1. & other things in proportion. We receive our salaries in money invariably. Perhaps your question about the equality of salaries referred [to] the missionaries of our society All [^] [in our society] receive alike. The majority I believe are content & we try to leave the future with God. We have a man & his wife as servants, & a girl as a nurse maid. The man is waggon driver & everything else he can do. His wife a servant of all work these form our establishment But these are not all we require. Grinding corn baking washing &c. are done by calling on assistants from the town. M^{rs} L. changes these assistants as soon as [they] have acquired some knowledge of household duties operations. These supernumeraries are taught reading as well as washing &c. All sleep in their own homes - they become familiarized by the process - they are paid in beads, a variety which costs about 3 shillings per pound. I mention this that you may not think the three above specified all we employ. We adopted the plan of employing others beside those absolutely necessary in order to do good. M^{rs} L superintends everything domestic & the superintendence involves her arms up to the elbows in all processes. We must be at the beginning middle & end of everything everywhere If not, matters invariably go wrong Mebaloe

is the only man I know who carries a piece of work right on to a termination without being looked after. We are all [...] the working clergy & no mistake I bought 10 cows for about £11 when I was married I have the same number yet Each when in milk gives about a mutchkin. I once had seven in milk at once & the whole did not yield as much as one cow at home they cost nothing for grass - the herd gets one yearly. A pen made of thorn bushes is all their accommodation. To have plenty of milk throughout the year we ought to have forty cows. This would equal 2 or three cows in Scotland - there is no Tryst We cannot purchase from Bechuanas From £1 to £1..10 is the price of a cow with the Traders Few bring them on account of the losses they sustain by lions in the way We have no sheep. I once bought 12 goats But whether they have increased or diminished I do not know. The man in whose charge I placed them lives so far off I have heard

John Wardlaw once in Glasgow. How employed? Do you know a surgeon in Glasgow call David Wylie - Can you give his address &c whatever you please If any of my answers require explanation Request that too

[0004]

nothing about them for two years. I think I mentioned the price of my horse. It was captured & recaptured I have it now It is very useful - by sending out our man to ride down a Giraffe or Eland we get a good supply of meat Each of these animals is very good but the Rhinoceros is our most frequent fare. Baba a Kuruman convert was killed by one last week. Unprovoked it rushed on him & ripped him up Mebaloe & I galloped off when we heard of the accident - A Rhinoceros disputed our passage and as it was midnight we were preserved only by Divine care. We saw a fire in the distance & believe it was Baba - a party made towards it We found that he had died the day before, & his companions had gone on to lay his body in the dust at Mabotsa I cannot at present write you with the care I ought You must excuse me - I shall do better when our meeting house is finished I just now recollect another question - the cost of [conveyance] a case is defrayed by the society as far as Colesberg - on this side the Orange R. the expense is ours Suppose a case 10st. It costs about 30 shillings from Algoa Bay to Colesberg. From Colesberg to Kuruman about £1 more & then from K. to Chonuane about 10 shillings I do not know the freight by sea

I thank you most heartily for the medicines you sent - they are excellent. The gentleman you bought them of has acted conscientiously. There was no trash in the box. It came most opportunely I was nearly out of some articles I have seen boxes of medicines sent out to this country (value £10 - £12) & nothing in them of value - the price was

made up by as much sulphur as would have cured all
Argyleshire of the itch (& we have none of it here) & salts & senna
capable of giving a black draught to all the blacks from this to Timbuctoo
But yours are most judiciously selected & I
thank you most sincerely for your kindness

This is no missionary letter & the fault
is entirely yours. May the Lord be with you
& bless you according to all your need.

Care of Rev^d Dr Philips Cape Town
Charles Whish Esquire
144 New City Road
Glasgow