

Letter to John Kirk, 25 August 1858

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[0001]

[ms 17/1] Island of Pita, above Senna
25th August 1858
[14]
My Dear Dr. Kirk

I send this in order to
let you know that we have been obliged
to alter our plan so far as to leave
the Pinnacle here in charge of M^r Baines
We reached Senna in four days being
the shortest voyage made though
the water is now getting very shoal
and we had a whole boat overturned
by the paddle Tom will & Peter moving
it aft While we were going though I
told them I should stop to allow them
to do so - We lost merely the box of
plants & some iron things - The casks
floated & were all recovered - Toby was
nearly carried away by the current
he having jumped in to save things
and Tom Jumbo nobly saved him
We spent part of two days at Senna
then came on - with two pilots who
have led us into difficulties several
times - In going into doubtful places

Should you be desirous of getting away before I come & can arrange
with the Portuguese to take you & a cargo for say £20 or £25 - pray dont hesitate
[0002]

it is necessary to go slowly - the Pinnacle
catches first and the slightest touch makes
the Launch shew her want of power by
slewing round - Three times she has done that
with me - (Bedingfeld did it often) and when
she goes a shoal the current keeps her on
and much time is lost. We heightened the Pinnacle
as much as possible into the Launch but still
she draws so much as to be a great hindrance
Baines volunteered to remain with her and
I declined as one of the objects I had in view
was to get him up to Tete, but having lost
a whole day by Jumbo not having the

anchor ready when she began to slew round
I see is it absolutely necessary to make a
trial trip in the Launch first & then when
we know the river take the Pinnacle -
Please to speak about these matters to
Thornton only, Bedingfeld will chuckle
over any of our difficulties and make
more of them than any truthful man would
He may possibly try by misrepresentation
to present our getting any fresh graut
for what we shall need.

As I mention his name I may on
this occasion state that H.M.'s Government
in order to prevent insubordination such
as Baikie suffers from in the Niger
Expedition invested me with magisterial
power as a consul expressly to meet
[0003]
such a case as Bedingfeld's - I find
from the document purporting to be a Log
kept on board the Ma Robert which you
delivered to me that he trusts in the power
of reiterated assertion to prove my harshness
&c &c - I retain the document as evidence
and will require you to certify having
got it from him as a Log - for the satisfaction
of the Foreign Secretary of State - As I
must give a full statement of the
whole affair to the Foreign Office I shall
require your [^] [(medical)] evidence as to the state of
filth in which on taking charge of the
Ma Robert we found the decks as I con-
sidered it prejudicial to the health and
long before that recommended him to
adopt a regular system of cleaning them -
As also in respect to his having
told you that he had given [^] [into] me a
second resignation, and as you are
now the second in command your
opinion expressed to me when I
shewed you my acceptance of that
resignation that it was absolutly
necessary to save the Expedition
from complete disorganization
or words to that effect would prove
[0004]
of no ordinary value to the Foreign Secretary
from an impartial witness, for whom alone
the evidence is required - It goes to him direct
and is not published - As B. seems disposed

to make something out by your signing a paper I think it would be well to state also how much he asked & how much you meant in doing so. He refers to it in two documents - I am not conscious of anything disagreeable or harsh in my conduct nor have I been quarrelsome with anyone and in sending evidence to the Foreign Office I do so with extreme regret and sorrow that public duty requires it to be done against any of our number I earnestly hope & pray that nothing may arise to disturb the harmony which has hitherto existed among the rest of us

Baines is much better and has been working at everything in which he could be useful - Black will is bilious M^r Rae is better but a little shaken M^r L. was second engineer when R. - Coffee thought the first - The Kroomen all work admirably - They cut as much wood in one hour as they used to do in four can you give Major Secard a little bla[...] tea as he says it is diuretic

Ever you[...] [D. Livingstone]