

Letter to Margaret Sewell, 22 November 1852

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

I have got your parcels up to - Reviews for Jan Feb. & March 1851 - inclusive
and your very welcome letters, last one being N° 25

Kuruman 22 November

1852

My Very Dear Friend

I have not written you for some time
because I believed you would have a living epistle by you
who would answer the purpose better than pen and paper
I expected that my better half would have found her way
straight to 57. but I suppose she must have forgot your
address. I am sure I would not forget it. Well you have
seen my little niggers, noisy enough I fear they made your
quiet domicile. I was sometimes bothered by their roaring
and ranting and noise but now I wish I could hear
it again. It is much easier to live a batchelor's life than
one of widowhood. The "stillness is shocking to me." Of the
poor batchelor it may be said as Cowper said of his
bird "that delight he never knew." I am getting quite
poetical I declare. I must stop or instead of a letter you
will recieve a sonnet to the Moon or some other bit of wise
nonsense.

I have met with many obstacles to my progress
Northwards since I left the Cape. but I found when
I arrived here that the delay had been wisely ordered
for had I got on as well as I wished I should have
been at Kolobeng exactly at the time the commando
of Boers came. they vow vengeance against me
and the reason of their hatred is the following. they
have attacked and plundered eight tribes since I have
come into the country and on each occasion, have
carried off large numbers of captive children and
killed great numbers of the parents. they have

[0002]

Thank Charles for his kind promises of welcome Fain would I see you all again
But I have such a world of work before me I shall never have time to visit England

no compunction for they believe the blacks have no souls
In these massacres they never lost a single man for having
guns and horses the natives cannot approach them with
their spears. The Bakwains however fought bravely, and
killed about 30 of them. A son of Pretorius the rebel

chief was among the number. Sechele had two bullets through his hat and one through the sleeve of his coat Now the difference in this attack is all ascribed to me "Its all owing to thst horrid doctor" they say - and we shall have his head yet for it. they believe that I must have taught them to fight. Only fancy your reverend friend "teaching the young idea how to shoot" boers. they gutted our house - tore [^] [the] books & smashed all the bottles containing medicines. I have not got the length of taking joyfully the spoiling of my goods. We had just bought an iron sofa. I may have sat twice on it but not oftener. It was intended to be a spare bed for any stranger as well as a resting affair for ourselves. Now only think of a big fat Boeress enjoying it and drinking coffee out of my wife's kettle &c. They are worse savages than the natives. Yet the ministers of the Dutch Reformed church go among them administering the sacrament - baptism without the least discrimination The people have been severely punished and viewing their punishment apart from the iniquities of the Boers. It seems a judgement on them for rejecting the gospel. They have rejected it. And I hope they may be led to repent of their unbelief. their kindness to us personally was very great and I feel much for them but it is not to be forgotten that they have by unbelief done despite to the spirit of grace. All the fault the Boers could charge on Sechele was his refusal

[0003]

to throw obstacles in the way of Englishmen going to the countries beyond. Our Government can do nothing for the natives [in the Interior]. It has foolishly been led into a war with the Caffres and though wishing to exterminate them cannot effect it. Sir George Cathcart brutally hangs or shoots all prisoners even women are not spared. the Hottentot leader wrote to him lately requesting him to fight with men and not with women. And now that he finds his brutality avails nothing - the "Caffres being just as they were and where they were 20 months ago" *

* statement of a leading colonial Newspaper He tells the friendly chiefs to recieve the enemy among them - which means "for any sake take them away from fighting with me. they may beat me out after all". this after about two millions of English gold have been squandered in the war. The Hottentots have fought bravely they [...] and retire in strict military order by the sound of the bugle and though our troops are furnished with all sorts of guns & rifles they never come out of an engagement unscathed. If no other good comes out of this struggle than this we feel sure that nobody will henceforth laugh at missionaries for believing that Hottentots have souls

and no future Caffre war will be undertaken
with as little cause as the former wars have had.
Calderwood has £600 per annum as a magistrate
he preaches on Sunday and beats the Caffre seats of
honour on Monday. The Caffres say he holds the
bible in one hand and the Sambok [(whip)] in the other. They [(converts)]
have been forced in some cases to fight against their
own chiefs & have asked to be shewn in the bible
the text which authorized such conduct. My opinion

[0004]

from all I have heard of your friend is that though he
should do good for fifty years to come he will not counteract
the evil of his missionary magisterial course. He was the
main instrument in the condemnation of Botha a Hottentot
officer of forty years service and it came out that he (Cald)
had been in the habit of acting as a Government informer
Calderwood himself admitted it in the Newspapers. At the same
time confessing he had not an interpreter when he took the
accusation & sent it to the Government

I was quite taken aback with this for I have always understood
him to be a man who would not rest with the stilt of an interpr-
eter. In our part of the country the missionaries are decidedly the best
scholars in the native language. there is not a man of us except
perhaps M^r Ross who needs an interpreter. From all I can learn
the less you hear of Calderwood the better. I am sorry he has
turned out so. I had a high opinion of him formerly. Please
present my love to Charles. M^{rs} L. was highly pleased with
you all. I leave this in a few days. Ever Affectionately

D Livingston

Care of Rev^d W. Thompson

~~Cape Town~~

Prepaid

M^{rs} Sewell

57 Aldersgate St.

London