

Letter to John Washington

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Kongone Harbour

28th Sept^r

1858

My Dear Captain Washington

Many thanks for your two notes which gave me much pleasure and some pain. I tried to keep up the good name we had when we left but had I not at last exerted my authority the complete disorganization of the Expedition would have been the

[0002]

result. This all declared when I told them I had accepted C^tBedingfeld resignation. There has not been a single jar with any one and me or with each other but there were several with him . Fancy him talking of Skead's wonderful perseverance in surveying as "that old fool shewing off". It was sorely against the grain for me to take the step which caused the resignation as he let it become known that he would attack me on the Sunday work - I took warning by the experience of the Grt Niger Expedition which I have been informed had

[0003]

prayers three times a day & stopped all Sunday - I would not remain an hour in the

mangrove swamps and
have been attacked in the
Cape papers by an officer of
the Expedition in consequence
people may call out against
it but they would call out
more if I lost my men.

I ordered some things to
be sent up Christmas
and the Admiral kindly
sent them up at once - this
makes me draw £105
sooner than I intended - the

[0004]

Portuguese war is ended and
we now hire canoes to carry
up all our things - so I keep
the money we have on
hand for that. I believe
we shall require no more
for a twelve month. We have
had no fever properly so
called but colds modified
by malaria - no one has been
ailing more than a week.
We have been taking quinine
in water of late and as I
considered that when we get
over the first unhealthy
season in January arch
my companions well

[0005]

needing something bracing I
ordered some ale porter &
sherry for them. I consider
our Expedition as conducting
a health experiment as well
as other matters. I take all up
to Tete where M^r Livingstone
is now making magnetic obser-
vations and Major Secard
gives us a house and plot
of land a mile or two above
Tete to conduct experiments
in cotton and sugar cane .
No sooner did the war
end than he took up the
little engine and sugar mill

[0006]

and a lot of luggage. At his suggestion the gentlemen of Tete at once got me a ton and a half of coal the first ever digged in this country and very feasible stuff it is too though exposed in the bank of the Unatize to the action of floods & sun for ages. It will be better farther in so all say. I send a report on it by Thornton - also a chart made by him. He being unable to geologize in the delta. Kirk has been working hard at Economic botany . He has made indigo - We have

[0007]

Lignum vitae -Ebony & teak or African oak & some fine fibres. I intend to take care of the young men at the house above Tete making experiments in agriculture till the healthier period comes . If it is only a few rocks that render the passage tortuous and these of small dimensions I may try to blast them but I do not promise it. I would not grudge half a year's daily toil as a quarry man if I could open this pathway to the Interior .

[0008]

The Portuguese wish to purchase our cotton gins, and I mean to sell two. The press will be used for Buaze if it is in abundance. the war has been very much against us as it has caused immense destruction of property and depopulation. Portuguese are as friendly

as usual - all of them.

My companions have
had no serious illness - but
all have had ailments chiefly
colds except myself - we feel
the necessity of care - but this
river has the great peculiarity
of being a sandy in contrast
to the muddy rivers of the West
and inspires hope . David Livingstone

I thank you for your kind remembrance
of my wife - she will be at Sekeletu 's before us .