

## Letter to Thomas Bayely and James A. Turner, 26 March 1857

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

57 Sloane St

26<sup>th</sup> March

1857

Thomas Bayely

J. Aspal Turner Esq<sup>rs</sup>

My Dear Sirs

I have thought it  
advisable in order to make the  
attempt to develop the trade of  
the part of Africa to which  
I intend soon to return as  
effective as possible to take  
with me besides the supply  
of cotton seed promised by  
Mr Clegg two or three cotton  
gins to be lent, part to the  
Portuguese and part to native

[0002]

native chiefs who may be  
willing to engage in the cultivation  
of that article. I have most  
hope in the latter but the former  
claim the country and we  
must appear to cooperate  
with them. I wish their [gins] to  
be of the simplest construction  
but strong, and as you are  
acquainted with these matters  
and feel interested in the success  
of the experiment I take the  
liberty of begging your assistance  
Will you let me know the  
prices at which these and the  
following articles designed

[0003]

for similar objects could be  
obtained?

2 Presses proper for expressing  
or grinding the ground nut

to extract the [sweet] oil. (I dont know  
which is preferable, grinding or expressing)  
4 Ploughs of malleable iron  
(double the usual strength)  
(In Scotland we can get what  
I mention for £5 each)  
2 small pairs of rollers for  
extracting the juice from the  
sugar cane with working  
aparatus of the simplest  
construction for oxen

All to be of the highest and most  
portable construction

[0004]

I wish just to make a beginning  
feeling certain that in so doing  
I am effectually promoting  
the extinction of the slave trade  
and the temporal and spiritual  
welfare of Africa. I have  
been strongly advised by  
Lord Clarendon to devote  
my attention chiefly to cotton  
at first both on account  
of its importance to our  
own manufactures and the  
influence which the cultivation  
of it in Africa must have  
on the slave trade. this

[0005]

is so exactly in accordance  
with my own convictions  
that I mean to devote the  
next few years of my life  
heartily to that line of  
action. A brother in America  
who views the subject in  
the same light intends to  
leave his church for a few  
years for the same object  
and I have advised him  
to pick up some information  
on cotton growing and come  
over here that we may go  
out together. I feel it to be

[0006]

of so much importance to  
have one with me in whom

I can repose perfect confidence  
that I mean to defray his  
expenses here myself. I would  
employ him as an agent  
on the spot to buy up any  
cotton or other produce at  
once so as to circulate the  
idea extensively that there is  
a certain market for all the  
natives may produce.

I am anxious to secure  
as soon as possible a

[0007]

second or third supply of  
cotton seed because one lot  
may get damaged or other  
accident happen and it  
would be a mistake to  
have to wait for fresh  
supplies from home.

Private I cannot but most  
deeply regret that the kingdom  
of Angola is not ours. there the  
success of cotton planting  
would be certain. It is prosperous  
now but the Portuguese do nothing  
with it except drawing large  
numbers of cotton cloths as tribute  
from the Natives - the Population

[0008]

is upwards of 600 000 souls &  
only about 6 per cent slaves.  
Skilled labour even costs only  
4 pence per day. Field labour  
would be about half & no lack  
of it. I mean to go to Lisbon  
to enlist the Portuguese in the  
effort on the East side. they will  
let us develop the trade if we  
appear to cooperate with  
them otherwise they will play  
the part of the "dog in the manger"  
I have strong hopes of the  
countenance of the young king  
who is said by Prince Albert  
to be much more enlightened

[0009]

than his people.

I am sorry that in adopting  
the course I intend to pursue  
I shall appear to some to  
be descending from the high  
position of a missionary  
for the sake of promoting  
trade. Some thought so  
when I felt it to be my  
duty to engage in exploring  
the country but feeling  
assured that I shall be as  
much engaged in promoting  
the Glory of God in that

[0010]  
new line as I was when  
toiling in bricks & mortar  
or labouring as a smith  
carpenter, glazier, gardener  
gun mender, doctor &c &c  
I must bear with any  
disapprobation that may  
be expressed. I mention this  
to you that you may understand  
on what grounds I intend to  
proceed. I address you jointly  
knowing that you are both  
equally friendly to the objects  
I have in view. I am &c  
David Livingstone