

Letter to John Washington, 10 October 1859

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

(I)

Murchison's Cataract

10th Oct^r 1859

My Dear Captain Washington

we have traced this
river up to its point of departure from
Lake Nyinyesi or as we heard it
called there Nyassa and found
that there are only thirty miles [(say 33)] of
cataract and the river is placid
up to 14° 25' S. where Nyassa
begins. We abandoned our intention
of going up the Ruo when we
found that M^r Laird's precious
Punt was in a sinking state:
Funnel, Furnace, Deck &
Bottom went shaky simultaneously
so it would have been unadvisable
to be encamped near the border
tribes about Ruo. We came on to
Chibisa's taking nearly a month
to do what an ordinary steamer
would have done & what we can
do (with the current) in three
days. We proceeded over land
to Zomba & then descended
[0002]

into the Shire valley & followed the river
up to the Nyassa. It was the hottest
season of the year - the "smokes" from
the burning of thousands of acres
of tall grass = a broiling hot London
fog if you can imagine such a
thing. We were 37 in all D^r Kirk M^r
C. Livingstone, M^r Rae & 33 Makololo
all were delighted with the country & no
wonder for it is mountainous &
every few miles we had streams of
delicious cool water. It was Londa

again. A great deal of cotton is cultivated and indeed the Lake region opens up the finest cotton & sugar country in the world. Remember please when I say so that I invariably discouraged the formation of any company or other speculation, but the time has come when with calm deliberation I can say there is a glorious prospect for both Africa and England. No matter what you have done there is now an opportunity for you doing more than ever, for, the two Lakes Shirwa (which means simply - {Great water) or Tamandua and Nyinyesi or Nyassa lie parallel to the East coast and all the slave trade of Anghozia & Mosambique [0003] from the Interior crosses these Lakes or rather crosses Shire and then goes along the partition between them - Tamandua extreme length is about 90 miles Nyinyesi no one could tell more than after months to the North it turned round into the sea. We met a large slaving party from Cazembes country & bought fine specimens of Malachite from them. When they knew we were English they evaporated by night They had a great many slaves and elephants tusks. Now lawful commerce would eat out that traffic ere long, but it must be untrammelled by Portuguese restrictions and I now give you the points about which you will probably be consulted.

The Kongone or as it is sometimes called Nyangalüe was quite unknown to the Portuguese and lately when we went down to meet the "Persian" slaves were sent to follow & report on where we had found a navigable bar. This though we had given plans of it they knew Melambe six miles west of it but not Kongone [0004]

Then, the Governor General of Mosambique sent for a half cast called Paul Mariano

a few months ago to ask him if the
Zambesi really entered the sea at the
Luabo! & shewed him my map. And
again a slave from Senna our
interpreter in last journey was sent
for to Mosambique to be pumped by
His Excellency as to where we had
been. The Shire being wholly unknown
to them except 3 miles at its mouth.
All is English discovery exactly as in
the Niger and all the right or Southern
bank which at Shupanga they farm
is paid tribute for by the Portuguese
to the Natives. From Kongone up to
this is all English discovery & ought to
be free for the Portuguese line of
discovery ran from Sofala to Senna
and then across the country to Quilimane

M^r Candido denied to D^r Kirk that
he had told me of his having been to
Nyanja. then reasserted to me that
he had been there & pointed to it, N. N. W.
of Tette. That he punted 36 hours under
cabbage palms - quite soft. If he had seen
a Lake at all it was Not Nyassa for it
is deep & has no cabbages & it is N. E.
instead of N. N. W. of Tette

We found the southern edge of Zomba 6600 - a peak 8 or 10 miles off must
be eight thousand. Air delightfully cool, water delicious & plenty of it
D^r Kirk botanized up a peach a mile from our camp 500 ft. more (or 7000 say)

We must have a steamer capable of being unscrewed here & carried 30
miles. No more Macgregor Laird shams please.

We hope to send off Thornton - disease, laziness, Baines - theft
He has stolen a great deal & given away to Portuguese ticket of leave men
public property & provisions

[0005]

I stopped Baines pay on 30 July, but think anything on hand of his
ought to be stopped till he accounts for stolen goods

Not a line from you yet I am &c Ever Yours David Livingstone