

## Letter to Thomas Milne

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

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[0001]

River Shire, Eastern Africa  
28 October 1859

Private

My Dear <sup>r</sup> Milne  
As we have not yet  
any letters from home since  
our departure in 1858 I take advantage  
of this and skip over apologies to those  
of my friends whom I have neglected .  
But I may say to you and M<sup>rs</sup> M. that  
I have not been idle, nor have I felt  
at ease when I remembered my duty to  
you. I have been employed in  
work which I did contemplate on  
leaving you. The naval officer  
with whom I was furnished was  
possessed with the idea that instead  
of coming to seek the elevation of the  
African and of the  
country. e was about to discover  
the ten lost tribes, as if of all things  
in the world we had not plenty  
of Jews already. I was soon forced  
to send this visionary away and do  
the work myself. hough I assure you  
I would as soon drive a cab as a

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steamer. We have but lately begun  
our proper work. nd I am happy to  
tell you that our prospects brighten  
where I never contemplated exploring.  
We ~~went~~[steamed] up this river over one hundred  
miles though only three were previously  
known to the Portuguese. We have  
also traced it on foot another hundred  
and found that it emerges from  
the hitherto undiscovered Lake Nyassa  
or Nyinyesi. This lake must be  
large for it gives off a large river  
(Shire) without diminution of more

than two feet during the whole year. here  
are too only 33 miles of cataracts in  
it and a common road could easily  
be made past them. Here you find  
the finest cotton field in the world  
for it is of unknown extent watered  
by the Lakes - Nyassa & Tamàndua  
and there are no frosts to endanger  
or cut off the crops as in America .  
Instead too of the unmerciful toil  
required to raise the crops in that  
country - one sowing of foreign  
probably of American seed already  
introduced by the natives themselves

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serves for crops for three years though  
the plants be annually burned down.  
We have besides changes of climate  
produced by the land lying in terraces  
of different heights. The third terrace  
is 3000 feet high - and on it  
rises the Mount Zomba between  
7000 & 8000 feet in altitude .ne  
days march took us from the  
hot sultry valley of the Shire into a  
cool climate, and all the terraces  
are abundantly supplied with  
running rills of deliciously  
cold water. Fancy our tramping  
in the sun when the thermometer  
on the ground reached 126° and  
climbing up two thousand feet  
into air delightfully refreshing. Then  
on to Zomba into the cold. I am  
hoping that the Church Missionary  
Society long anxious to enter Eastern  
Africa will take advantage of this  
opening. hey can be away from  
the unfriendly coast tribes at once -  
and check the slave trade in the  
middle of the slave market. We met  
a large party of East coast slave

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traders with an immense number of  
slaves and elephants tusks. A more black- looking lot I never saw. When  
they found out that we were English  
they slipped off by night, probably thinking  
the same of us as we did of them.  
The policy of Lord Palmerston in

repressing the slave trade has given the  
English a prestige of great value. he  
Lake Tamàdua is about ninety miles  
long. ut no one could tell us how  
long Nyassa was. We could not explore  
it for we had left our sham vessel  
called a steamer in a sinking state.  
Funnel, Furnace, Deck & Bottom  
went down simulaneously after only  
12 months wear. £1200 for 12 months  
(extras all paid for besides), was pretty  
fair without any whine from the  
contractor of "doing it all for the good of  
the cause." It has been a great hindrance  
to us from first to last involving  
enormous toil, and as in the Great  
Niger expedition, always wet. Indeed  
we have lain for many months on  
damp rotten cushions - but thanks to  
God we have not lost a man yet.  
We have had a first rate opportunity of  
trying the remedies for fever I had opted when  
alone & have been sucessful . David Livingstone

Please present my kindest salutations to M<sup>rs</sup> M. I remember her kindness  
with gratitude. Remember me also to other friends. My wife is at Kuruman .

[0005]

My Address if you favour me with a letter, I don't say  
"line" only is D<sup>r</sup> L care of Admiral Sir F. Grey K.C.B. Cape of Good Hope .