

Letter to Hamilton M. Dyke, 20 May 1847

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Kuruman 20 May 1847

My Dear Brother

Having come out here for the purpose of attending a meeting of Committee held at Likatlong, we have found it necessary to wait for an expected addition [^] [to] our family. The delay although pretty well employed in preparations for another campaign is rather trying to a head pretty full of plans &c. which we hope to see in operation for the benefit of our people. But it gives a little leisure for correspondence and I am happy to avail myself of it for the purpose of acknowledging your most welcome letter. Unfortunately I have not brought it with me. I shall therefore be obliged to do the needful from memory, and first of all the books you mention I have not in my possession. I need not add if I had you should be most welcome to a perusal. I wish you much happiness in your intended union. It is a state notwithstanding the jokes we can pass upon it which can impart a large amount of true happiness, and a good deal of that depends on not expecting too much from each other. Whoever expects his partner to be anything like perfect will as Goldsmith has it "find his goddess made of clay" and will be about as little pitied except an occasional ejac. of "poor fellow" as a person affected with sea sickness. We have not heard whether you had proceeded Capewards. Indeed there has been a dearth of news from your side for some time past. I felt amused when informed that you must go to the Consistory or what ever else they call it for Ordination and your old friend D^r Philip to be left out. I had imagined that this climate helped to make us forget some of our clerical foibles. But perhaps the Atmosphere you live in contains more of the Antique than ours.

A short time previous to coming to this place we paid a long visit to a number of the tribes lying Eastwards of Chonuane. We have felt anxious to place a native teacher with one of them but the fact of Boers living in that region and claiming authority over all its inhabitants presented obstacles

[0002]

to the accomplishment of our wishes. I endeavoured to remove the disinclination of those worthy landholders [to our plan] and found that [^] [in] my presence it was easily effected while [in] my [absence] absence their aversion was just the same as ever. they hate us cordially. Indeed one old "Christian" instructed the chief we wished have a settlement with to assassinate your humble servant. Our visit will have one good result

the natives now know that there are some white men who are not Boers. they shewed considerable confidence in us and especially those who when in subjection to Mosilikatse had been visited by missionaries - Mogale after whome a whole range of Hills is called Mogalesberg is completely under the thumb of the Commandant Kruger. I could not get a man to bring me a bit of Tin ore from a hill a mile or two distant unless I should ask leave first of his excellency the boer Mogale said it is not now my land. I can do nothing in it except through Gen^l K.. We had good meetings there and I believe at that time we were about due North of you. Still farther to the East and about the latitude of Chonuane 24° 30' S. lie the BagalakaM^r Arboussie if I remember rightly speaeks about them in his work. Mokhopane or Secoamari is chief of one section, a little fat talkative fellow. We visited other two sections of the Bagalaka - and saw the residences of others in the distance. Mañk [h]opane chief of the Bamapela is a young man not more than 20 and yet horrible dictu has 48 wives and 20 children - the latter all very much resembling himself in feature - these people and their numbers exceed anything I have seen in this country, had never seen a missionary before - I was quite ashamed to be called a Sekoa for the only Makoa they know are men who treat them as the beasts of the field. It would make you melancholy were I to recite all the tales of sorrow & oppression I heard. I gave most credence to those I heard from the Boers themselves Others do so & so said they I dont. On the side of the oppressor there is power - The people are rich in cattle but have

[0003]

no fire arms - so the emigrants carry it all their own way. I shall give you a specimen of what that really is On the month previous to my visit three or four boers moved up to Mankopane's herds at noon day & singled out 30 of the finest cattle & 50 sheep - and went off. they did the same in another tribe about 8 miles off When we came the people ran up the rocks in fear and the chief told me the reason was the Boers came into their towns drunk their beer and abused their women &c. and what can we do? "We hold our hands on our mouths because we have no [...]" Are these fellows not sowing the seeds of a future Caffre war? When I told the Commandant of this deed he pretended to know nothing at all about it He promised to look after the thieves & said that they belonged to a party which would obey no Gov^t. the Boers believed that our object was to obtain information from natives respecting a commando they made on a defenceless [^] [but rich] man called Melechoe and that I wished to introduce guns among the tribes. By the way if one Hartley an English trader comes into your house you may remember that he formed one of that Commando the people I daresay wondered at our curious ways - preaching praying &c. they could understand but little by one visit and it

is so distant we cant go often. We were 19 days travelling before we reached our farthest point. the Limpopo or Ourie makes an enormous bend down there coming from the North thus & recieving two large rivers itself becomes

Malinokawith a truly magnificent stream. A rich country copper iron & tin are all worked. the ores rich. We bought a few spindles & distaffs with cotton yarn But what a scene that land will present in the great day. What multitudes who never heard the glad sound. But my space is done go tipa tseta is to spin there Is it so with you. they have a great deal of the ole sound in their dialect

What funny chaps you are over there in Committee. You take away Lenine & Langa from a station which required all their energy to keep afloat. And then place a young man instead

[0004]

of these two hard working veterans. Is this your way of allowing a station to die a natural death? If it does the blame wont fall on the proper shoulders. I feel compassion for M^r Frideaux left at this stage of his experience among such a people But this is between ourselves.

Please present very kind regards from M^{rs} L & self to your esteemed brother & sister Cassilis, and to your better half if indeed you have secured the Rib additional. M^r & M^{rs} Moffat do the same the latter wrote from Likatlong. there are no news here. All goes on as it was in beginning, is now &c

Yours ever more D Livingston

Rev^d H. T. Dyke

Basuto Country

care of Rev^d T. Atkinson, Colesberg