

Letter to [George Denman?], [26 September 1861?]

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

We who were up on the Highlands found all the people fleeing from the Ajawa and it was clear that if they were not induced to desist the bishop would soon have the country to himself. We therefore went to the vicinity of Mount Zomba to hold a parley with the marauders. We came upon them when in the act of burning three villages. Here the bishop offered up a fervent prayer. The Ajawa had a long line of captives laden with plunder and we could hear the wail for the dead mingling with the shouts of welcome to the victors. The Ajawa asked if we came peaceably & though we assured them that we did they seemed to look upon us - A party of about 20 - as such an easy prey that they began notwithstanding, to shoot us with their poisoned arrows - this probably arose from some Manganja who followed us calling out to them "Chibisa is come." Chibisa is one of their great

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generals and is believed to ensure victory by his medicines. this deprived us of the benefit of our English name - such has been the effect of the English cruizers and Lord Palmerston's entire slave trade policy that wherever known the English name is highly respected. An Arab Dhow, for instance, which was purchasing slaves & ivory about twenty miles south of this and we are now 120 miles up the Lake, fled as soon as they heard that three English men were coming up. Elated as the Ajawa were with their victories, they only interpreted our assurances and [our] slowly retiring from their village

as evidences if fear, rushed at
and surrounded us. Poisoned arrows
shot at 50 yards distance are no
joke, so we were obliged to drive
them away with our arms. When
they saw how far our rifles carried
they never came near again but
left that part of the country.

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The bishop will now follow his work
in peace, that is, if the Portuguese will
allow him. It is believed that the
gaurdianship of the coast from
Cape Delgado to Delagoa Bay was
given to them for the especial purpose
of suppressing the slave trade - they
have virtually converted it into
a private slave preserve for the
the benefit of the favourites of the
Govt. of Lisbon. I am very unwilling
to believe this of them, but I must
at last confess it to be the case. Major
Secard was removed from Tette
because he favoured us, and much
against his will made Governor
of Iboe "interiors" i.e. in the mean
time, till another comes out. It thus
came to him in a way he could not
refuse but complained loudly at
Mosambique that it placed him
in a false position for there is no
trade at Iboe to speak of but [in] slaves

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He was thus almost compelled to
become a slave trader. The Governor G.¹
of Mozambique has gone into recieving
all the emoluments of slave trading. the
Governor of Quillimane has given his
daughter to a Senhor Cruz the principal
[slave] trader of this quarter, and he of Tette had
slaves up at Zomba purchasing the
Ajawa captives. The salaries of all
these Governors are small - the court
of Lisbon knows them to be so yet
the appointments are well known
to be conferred as favours. In fact
the profits arising from conniving
at the slave trade are the emoluments
which the Portuguese Government

confers on its officers. The province costs the mother country about £5000 annually, and no trade is carried on between East Africa and Portugal. Why they should persist in keeping all other nations out I cannot divine for the few traders they have are either half castes - convicts or the officers of convict soldiers. I am unwilling to believe that Don Pedro knows anything about it. He wished to colonize and some soldiers were last year sent out as colonists. the Governor of Tette told me that the whole thing was a gross imposition on his Majesty for though

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agricultural implements had also been sent the soldiers knew nothing except cleaning their accoutrements. For his majesty's own sake the way should be opened for other nations for then alone will it be known that he is not to blame. The presence of others would undoubtedly be most beneficial to the Portuguese settlements in the way of stimulating their industry. If we exclude ivory and slaves there is more ~~trade~~ [produce] carried out in one year - from Natal than has been during the last hundred from the Zambesi. Whatever you can do in the way of inducing the Portuguese to abandon their exclusive policy will be so much gain to the cause of humanity and progress.

We carried a boat past thirty five miles of cataracts and then sailed her up. In no part of Africa have we seen such a teeming population as on the shores of this Lake. It may be because this is the fishing season

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but the shores seem covered with people. Slaves ivory and cotton are offered for sale. We can only promise that a large ship will soon come and buy all the latter two articles. If we may judge from the amount of cotton we buy at the ship from a small portion

of the river Shire, and that too not in the cotton season, the supply to be obtained here will be very considerable. the Lake is deep - we got no bottom with our sounding line at 35 fathoms say 200 feet. It has no current in it. there are four crossing places on it. and the canoes which go at a good rate cross over at one place in six hours - in another in twelve, and in some parts they do not cross at all - though even there we can see the tops of the mountains. We shall measure it but it may be said to be from 30 to 50 miles broad. It has a long coast line from numerous

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bays, and is surrounded, as far as we have yet been, by mountains. the people we called Marimba. they are civil. The lake rises during the rainy season about 3 feet - the waves and rollers, which are very formidable, go up to four feet. In Average years the Shire rises about the same height, and never falls much - but this last was an extraordinary year & it left marks 12 feet above ordinary levels. At the upper part of the Elephant marsh the Shire branches out so that we could not get five feet for the Pioneer below that it is all deep & above the cataracts it is all deep - again into the Lake, when it shelves off 8, 10, 12 14 &c fathoms - if we get calmer weather we shall measure the depth better (no bottom at 100 fathoms)

thanks for your friend Blakesley's criticisms. I think that he has missed my weak point. It is not the Zambesi

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for a Mississippi steamer could ply on it the whole of ordinary years, and eight months of the drier ones. Any amount of coal too could be obtained and [a] Lignum vitae & ebony trade be at once established. My weak point lies in the presence of the Portuguese penal settlements; and the Portuguese Governors

ready to sell their grandmothers for gain.
If however in the quiet of his incumbering
he will concoct a better plan than either
D^r Barth's or mine, and then come
out to help to put it into execution
I promise him as good elephant &
hippopotami shooting as is to be found
in Africa. the people have few or no
guns and the animals are not afraid of
the bow and arrow - If he will not
accede to these terms I need not try him
with a fish which seems to possess
some of the shape and habits of our salmon
but be contended with and thankful
for any more criticisms you may supply.

I am anxiously expecting a steamer
for this Lake - she must be a strong
one. Ma Robert would have floundered
here in the first storm. I think it may be
best to go on establishing ourselves
without heeding the Portuguese at
home - if they plunder my goods at
Tette I shall say little - please remember
me to your brother Captain Denman
& believe me yours &c David Livingstone