

Letter to Charles M. Hay, 26 November 1860

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

Tette 26th Nov^r 1860.

My Dear General Hay

It was extremely
kind in you to remember me,
as you have done. I have had good
reason to remember you, and
though you have recieved no
evidence of it again & again and
again has it been brought to my
recollection how much I owe
to you and your delightful home
in the Mauritius. Indeed you
set me so completely up, that
all the tear & wear of a fearful
lionizing, though it wearied me
sorely, never broke me down,
and I have not had one
severe attack of fever since
my return. Had I gone home
at once in 1856 and gone through
the terrible ordeal, then come out
[0002]

I could not have done the work I do
now. We have just finished a
march of 1400 miles in six months.
We went up the river in order to
return the Makololo to their own land
keeping along the North bank of the
Zambesi till we were in Lat. 17° 18' South
and about 28° East Long. then turned
away Westward ascending the
Highlands near Tabacheu where
we saw hoar frost & a little ice
then descended Westwards into the
great central valley, to our old friends
the Makololo. When within 20 miles
of the Falls which I named after our
Queen we saw the columns of smoke
and went down to see this great
sight. I have no hesitation now
in saying that there is none equal to

it in strangeness in the world. the breadth is not one but nearly two thousand yards and it falls sheer down 310 feet. The river was very low and we could see everything clearly The whole river leaps into a crack & this crack is prolonged in the most fantastic manner - the country below or East of the falls being quite as high as the lip over [0003]

which the Zambesi rolls - try if you can understand this scrawl. All these promontories are of the same level as the bed of the river above the falls and ~~and~~ over 300 feet sheer down has the river of a mile wide jammed into a crack some eighty or 100 feet wide at the bottom. A most extensive coal field extends from below Tette to near Victoria Falls. In some places a steamer could load out of the seam in the bank of the river. These falls will be visited and coal worked when we are no longer here to write & talk about them I hail with great satisfaction the formation of the Oxford & Cambridge mission, and I shall count it a privilege to do whatever I can to aid the Bishop and his clergy. It was the best news I have heard in Africa and most heartily do I thank Him who has put the good purpose into his servants hearts. No where do people stand more in need of christianity and civilization than the Africans and if this mission is carried on with faith & patience there is no doubt but good will eventually be done both to Africa & England. It seems to me that we ought in all our plans for the good of others [0004]

specially remember our own home poor - our honest poor - This leads me to think of a small colony as likely to do immense good. Accompanied as it will be by this mission with the religious element I do not apprehend those frightful scenes which have occurred elsewhere (except New Zealand). As for the poor Portuguese, I must say nothing, but you "can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear"

We found the chief Sekeletu labouring under a skin disease believed to be leprosy the effect of course of witchcraft & several influential head men had been put to death for the crime. We tried to put him to rights during our short stay and his spirits revived. We found that a missionary party from the London Society had been nearly [all] cut off by fever at Linyanti. I regret this extremely as the very time they were perishing we at a lower & more unhealthy part of the river were curing the disease so quickly that a patient would be stricken down and resume his march on foot a day or at most two after the operation of the remedy. This remedy I found effectual as long ago as 1850 and ever since I have not lost a case but I forbore to puff. I could not be a quack and grieve now that the missionaries did not know it. We publish the composition now. Do drop me a line at your leizure & you will oblige

yours affectionately David Livingstone