

Letter to Agnes Livingstone 3, 2 February 1867

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Chitapangwas vil.

Bemba 2 Feb^y

1867

My Darling Nannie

We have been a
long time in working
North to this which is
probably the watershed
the Geographers seek.
We are some 4,500 feet
above the sea and the
river Luapula lies
in front of us. This is
said to be very large &
flows into Lake Tanganyika
where we hope to be
by May next. I have
the anticipation of letters

[0002]

there and a fresh stock of
goods. The Arabs all fled
from me as if I had the
plague & I could send nothing
to the coast. We had to go a
long way round about
besides partly to prevent
my Johanna men running
away at sight of danger
and partly because the
Arabs were afraid that I
would burn their vessels
on Lake Nyassa as slavers
the Johanna men did at
last bolt at the mere
repeat of danger in front
and I went on & faced it
with but nine Africans
six of whom are boys
from a school at
Bombay for the recaptured

[0003]

the Johanna men were such
a lot of thieves that it was
a relief to get rid of them
We have since worked our
way North till we are
in a part blank on the
maps. We got enough
of meat in the lower
lands by the rifle. but
when we got up to the
highland of the Babisa
not an animal could
be seen. the people all
scattered by their own
slaving could sell us
nothing. They lived
chiefly on Mushrooms
and by trudging through
dripping forests and
sloppy marshes. the
feet almost constantly wet

[0004]
and gnawing hunger
within most of the Newstead
flesh came off my bones.
Here the people have something
to sell so we get on better
& mean to rest a while &
recruit. This village has
three stockades round it
the inner one being defended
too by a deep ditch &
thorny hedge. When we
came I went to be publicly
recieved by the chief-
Chitapangwa - no one
could go near him the
first time without a
present. He sat by a
huge hut and a dozen
men beat drums and
shook rattles so as to
make a terrific din
I would not sit on the

[0005]
ground so he ordered
a big elephants tusk to
be placed for me. His
legs were like milestones

from the number of rings
and little bells on them
after talking a while he
came along with me to
a group of cows & gave
me one sending the tusk
to me because I had sat
upon it, but I did not
accept of it

The country is covered
mostly with forest of
two kinds of trees mainly
and these yield to bark
cloth with which nearly
all are clothed. The forests
are very leafy - burns
run in every direction
and all are now full

[0006]

I have no news since
we left the coast. I lost
all my medicines at one
blow. This is the sorest
loss of property that ever
befell me. I have had no
fever as yet but should
it come I must try native
remedies and trust in
that watchful care which
every moment guards
and keeps us with a
care more minute &
constant than our self
love could attain. I
suppose you have been
at Newstead. Get all
the accomplishments
you can while you
have the chance

[0007]

I wish you would let
M^r Oswell know that
you have heard from
me. Some black slave
traders take this to the
coast and will not wait
till I have written to all
to whom I ought. they
have just got their complement

of slaves and off they
will go. Tom had better
not tell his fellow lodger
M^r Stewart all he asks
for he is not very delicate
as to his questions but
Tom had better not read
this to him as you did
my remark about Miss
— a good way of answer-
ing a question which
ought not to have been

[0008]

put is to ask "can you keep
a secret" to the affirmative
reply "well so can I." This
was archbishop's Whatelys
advice - I have written
till my head is blank
all or nearly all last
night & all day today
Remember me kindly
to M^r & M^{rs} Murray -
to Madame Hocede if
you are near her and
accept of my blessing

Affectionately yours
David Livingstone