

Letter to Roderick I. Murchison, 10 September 1860

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[0001]

Sesheke 10th Sept^r 1860

I.

Private

My Dear Sir Roderick
Feeling in honour
bound to take the Makololo back to their own
country, and disliking the idea of coming
to a stand still while waiting for news
of a real steamer, we started on the 16th of May
from Tette and in three months accom-
plished a distance of some six hundred miles
During the five years sojourn at Tette
many of the Makololo had married slave
women and had families - As they were
chiefly of the subject tribes and scarcely
in contact with Sekeletu's government
at home I expected that many would
prefer remaining at Tette to going home.
In their way of effecting this they shewed
the evil influence of contact with slavery
for though repeatedly requested to follow their
own choice in the matter they preferred running
away while we were on the march. they
seemed to have less honour than when they
were in the interior.

Our route lay along the North bank of
the Zambesi - crossing the mountain mass
in which Kebrabasa lies, and the Loangua
& Kafue at their confluences. then along
[0002]
the fine fertile valley in which the Zambesi
gently flows (being new ground) for about
100 miles - then turning Westward in Lat
17° 18' S. up a sandy river [(the Zangue) Zongue] till we saw the
source of the fragments of coal strewn on it's
bed - Ascended about 2000 feet above the
the Zambese or 3300 feet above the level
of the sea to the base of Tabacheu - breathed
for a short time the clear cold reviving air

of the Highlands and actually saw hoar
frost and a little ice. then descended into
the great valley of the Makololo.//When within
20 miles of Victoria Falls we could see the
columns of vapour with the naked eye.
and there I could not resist the temptation of
acting the showman to my companions
D^r Kirk and M^r C. Livingstone, though by diverging
from our straight course to Sesheke we added
some forty miles to our tramp. After a second
visit I think that I have overstated nothing
about them except the height of the columns
of vapour - but I could not measure their
altitude. The river was now very low and
there was no danger in going down to my
garden island on the lip of the fissure for a
large space on the left was dry. You may
add 100 feet to the fall and say 200 feet. the
crack is of the shape of the letter . the hippopotami

had eaten all my trees, so henceforth we shall
have war with them to the knife. they are
good food half beef & half pork & lots of fat
that serves as butter. this is part of the casus belli
[0003]

By the way our good friend Professor Owen and the
gastronomic committee will stand very much
in their own light if the she Giraffes die a natural
death. If they praised the Eiland so, which we con-
sider but so so, a dinner of she giraffe will leave
them all lying on their backs.

Our plan of returning is to pass Victoria Falls
and by canoes at Sinamanes, then drop down
the stream so as to be at the sea in November. this
goes by an elephant hunter whom we met at the
Falls to Mosilikatze and thence to Kuruman

We found Sekeletu labouring under a skin
disease believed to leprosy the effect of course
of witchcraft and several headmen had been
executed for the alledged crime - many influential
men had died of fever and the tribe is altogether
in a shaky condition. they are anxious generally
to go to the Highlands and were much disappointed
at my not bringing M^{rs} L.; for all believe that
she or any number of M^r Moffats family would
be a protection to them against Mosilikatze.

they have not neglected the opening made to
West coast though the first party which you

may remember reached Loanda under the direction of an Arab before I reached England in 1855-6 never returned - it consisted of ninety five persons and I conjecture that the Arab wheedled them over to where his countrymen are in power on pretence of finding horses for Sekeletu - overpowered & sold them all as French free emigrants. Another party was sent to purchase a horse I happened to ride at Pungo Andongo in Angola. It is now at Sesheke; and a third party had just returned from Benguella on the West coast. A fourth party is out now. I could not find out that the law promulgated by Sekeletu seven years ago against selling children to slave [0004]

traders has ever been publicly violated but the subject tribes are so numerous & many live 200 or 300 miles from the capital and [that] I suspect secret transactions of the kind have taken place among them. During our months sojourn here we have been treated to tea, American biscuits and preserved fruits daily. We have tried to cure Sekeletus complaint and he is recovering; but time & patience are requisite for the cure. It is probably an obstinate skin disease & not leprosy

But I must tell you that we were saddened by the loss of a party of London missionaries as we suppose by Fever at Linyanti. Six out of nine Europeans perished in three months. By a remedy first tried on my own children at Lake Ngami in 1850, we at a lower & more unhealthy part of the Zambesi, cured severe cases of the complaint in Europeans so quickly, that our march was rarely interrupted more than a day or two - a man stricken prostrate was sometimes able to resume ~~our~~ [his] march on foot a day after the operation of the remedy. and this while those good people were helplessly perishing. The proper medicines too to for its composition were found by me in the waggon, which has been carefully guarded for seven years. within a few hundred yards of their graves. I think it is mentioned near the end of the "Missionary Travels" which you made me write - but I am now anxious that it become generally known. And there is great difficulty in the matter. Medicines so often deceive people - panaceas in one hand and nonentities in another I have however never

failed to cure during ten years. With very kind
salutations to Lady Murchison I am &c David Livingstone