

## Letter to George E. Seward, 1, 12, 23 June 1864

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

At Sea 1<sup>st</sup> June 1864

My Dear D<sup>r</sup> Seward

On leaving you  
I felt a little ashamed  
in sending three cloths which  
had been on view at M<sup>r</sup>  
Wittes to Memsahib for  
after getting aboard I saw  
that I should appear  
as if I had thrown them  
at her. I trust however  
that you made allowance  
for my heathenism.

One of Bullhead's men  
had what I consider to be  
leprosy in an incipient  
state, but we were bothered  
by the engines having been  
left in not a very  
creditable state. I saw after

[0002]

leaving Mosambique that  
all hands were required to  
start them. the whites pulling  
at the starting rod like mad  
supplemented by the blacks  
with a rope to the same as  
if they had hold of an elephant  
by the tail. We could not  
go astern & nearly ran into  
Captain Bishops ship in  
consequence. Away however  
we went with 100 mile  
current and a fine breeze.  
One man down with a  
severe bilious attack gave  
me a regular turn at the  
wheel. very nice when

you have nothing to do. but  
one becomes desperately  
sleepy when it comes  
every other four hours.  
When we crossed the line

[0003]

we got into a calm which  
lasted 21 days. We steamed  
out from the land, then  
our only stoker who  
managed the engines fell  
sick of a bilious attack.  
I mention this because  
I have always experienced  
great difficulty in getting  
rid of the bile. All three  
men had it: shovelfuls  
of purgatives do not  
act or if they do the  
bile remains, and is  
only got rid off gradually.  
They all complained of  
great pain across the  
region of the navel.  
but there was no tenderness  
on pressure. tongue with  
a very dark fur on it  
and the other symptoms

[0004]

of biliousness but no  
pain across the forehead.  
When bile came away  
either by vomiting or  
otherwise, after a week's  
physicing with little or  
no effect, they recovered  
with scarcely any loss of  
strength. Have you found  
any remedy effectual in  
promoting a discharge of  
bile. *Asclepias gigantea*  
[or *gigantisa*] is used in some parts  
of India for this, but I  
never tried it. A scruple of  
calomel in one case had  
no effect nor did it salivate

I have been looking up  
for the *Dadileira* in

Lindley, and think from  
its resemblance to the  
Sesamum which you

[0005]  
know at Zanzibar as  
yielding oil that it must  
be the Pedaliium Murex  
of which he says that the  
fresh leaf when agitated  
in water renders it  
mucilaginous, and is  
prescribed by the Indian  
doctors in dysuria &  
gonorrhoea - the Dadileira  
was shown to M<sup>r</sup> Soares  
by an old native woman  
& must have more  
than mucilage to produce purging so quickly in children.

I wish you would  
try a wash of corrosive  
sublimate in the itch  
often seen in Africans,  
the genuine scotch

[0006]  
"fiddle" is cured by one  
application in London  
when the Physician  
gets it himself in  
Dispensary practice -  
it is made pretty strong  
say 10 grams to the  
ounce of water - or spirit.  
I have found it very  
efficacious. now  
for this tell me  
your application to  
those shocking indolent  
ulcers - was it bark  
mixed with powdered  
opium or the bark  
to the sore & opium  
internally?

[0007]

We found this steamer  
burns more coal than  
was stated. and I am

glad that she was not  
sold at Zanzibar  
for the deception  
would have been laid  
at my door though I  
did not actually know  
she burned a ton in  
eight hours giving a  
speed of about half  
what was stated on a  
sea smooth as glass  
I shall explain this to  
Sir Bartle Frere so  
that you will appear  
misled only in the  
same way you were

[0008]  
in writing. I would not  
tell a deliberate lie for  
twice her value.

12 June 40 miles off Bombay  
add three [^][and a half] days calm on this coast  
to the 21 and you have a pretty  
trial of patience. We had a dose  
of rough weather too and saw that  
the Bay of Bengal can exhibit  
topping seas but the little vessel  
is a fine sea boat & no mistake  
Tell Captain Frazer with (compts) that  
his canvass did good service  
and Kinloch not to give him the  
dollar the captain bet for we  
were 19 1/2 days going - the captain  
will surely not count the days  
24 1/2 we were standing still!! but  
we had better not make the  
canny Scot a Jesuit. never  
say a ship till the day before  
yesterday. When we saw 3 from  
Bombay & one going to it. the  
Zambesians turned out good  
sailors. Two can steer & three  
stoke - Kind (compls) to M<sup>rs</sup> (S.)  
& Winifred

David Livingstone

[0009]

23 June 1864

P.S. We were so  
little as not to be  
seen when we  
anchored alongside  
the forest of ships  
here for 2 days.  
Then an invitation  
from Lady & Sir  
Bartle Frere took  
me up to Dapoore  
till yesterday  
morning. Every  
body is up there  
they put the vessel  
at Masagon as

[0010]  
M<sup>rs</sup> ( S.) conjectured  
a great many want  
to buy her but though  
I came expressly  
to sell her the idea  
of giving up Africa  
was too much for  
me I could'nt do  
it and resolved  
rather to run home  
and take counsel  
with friends about  
my future. I go  
tomorrow morning  
so have not time  
to do more than

[0011]  
thank you and  
M<sup>rs</sup> ( S.) which I  
do most cordially  
for your kind  
letters. The Sultan's  
letter was safely  
delivered which  
you may tell him  
at your convenience  
I saw M<sup>r</sup> Oliver  
in his court.  
M<sup>r</sup> West had  
gone home. I  
got plenty of

invitations after

[0012]

I was known, &  
met many up  
at Dapoore who  
knew me. Hoping  
yet to see you  
and wishing  
blessings on you  
& your household

I am &c

David Livingstone