

## Letter to General Edward Sabine, 6 February 1860

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[0001]

[Ans<sup>d</sup>. Oct. 3  
by Arch. Mackenzie.]

Tette 6<sup>th</sup> Feby 1860

My Dear General Sabine

In spite of the interest  
employed in our behalf by the Royal Society  
and the intentions of Government  
M<sup>r</sup> Laird furnished us with a most  
wretched vessel, and I am sorry to  
inform you that our magnetic  
instruments have lately suffered  
severely in consequence. the  
vessel was built of a sort of  
Patent steel plate of only 1/16 of an  
inch in thickness. It is excessively  
hard - friction has no effect  
upon it, but moisture & heat

[0002]

produce a chemical decomposition  
from which paint is no protection.  
Scales apparently of the black oxide  
of iron are formed inside & out  
and when these are peeled off there  
is a black smooth shining surface  
with numerous small holes. the  
scales are strongly magnetic, and  
I think that they have damaged the  
magnetism of the instruments. The  
moisture consequent on the scaling  
off, and wet from springing  
of leaks in plates now not  
1/32 of an inch in thickness  
have destroyed the glue in  
the wooden parts, so much  
that a new set would be

[0003]

the only really satisfactory

remedy. You may be  
sure that my brother  
will do the best that  
he can in the circumstances  
by regluing &c. but I  
think it my duty to let  
you know exactly how  
matters stand. We hope  
for a new vessel with  
room for instruments &  
collections. In this we have  
neither [& much private & public property has been spoiled]. and she has been  
so put together as to pump  
water into herself by her own  
proper motions. M<sup>r</sup> Macgregor

[0004]

Laird promised before we got her  
that she would carry ten or twelve  
tons. His brother cooly says  
after we got her, that she  
was intended to carry only a  
very few persons. As far  
as discovery is concerned we  
have done pretty well, but  
all our operations have  
been cramped by this wretched  
vessel, and it is a wonder  
we have escaped with our  
lives.

I am Dear Sir

Yours Most Truly

David Livingstone