

Letter to W. Black, 15 November 1871

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Ujiji 15th Nov 1871

My Dear Sir

On reaching this place in 1869 I found your very kind and welcome present of Assam tea and as I had tasted neither tea coffee nor sugar for two years and six months you may be sure that I blessed you for your kind remembrance. I was greatly reduced by an attack of pneumonia and I think that the renewal of my strength was in a great measure owing to copious libations of the delicious beverage - native food is generally coarse though the people shew a great deal of ingenuity in making it as fine and as palatable as possible but after all our systems require European food if we are to retain health and strength. I wrote a note of thanks in May of /69 but my packet of letters was destroyed between this and the sea. I therefore feel that you have set me down as ungrateful and I write this in order that you may see that I am really greatly obliged and that I am very unwilling that you should have good reason to think I had forgotten my benefactor

I have been a great deal longer at my work of exploration than I ever expected - the sources of the Nile are not a little matter that one might reach - scream out Hurrah! and go away home: the watershed from which the springs of the Nile do unquestionable arise is full 700

[0002]

seven hundred miles in length from West to East and the springs in some parts I passed over are like the vegetation of frost on window panes - almost innumerable

the converge into enormous Lake rivers
the central one of which is from one
to three miles broad and it can
never be waded at any point or
at any time of the year - ultimately
the two Western rivers fall into the
central one and then we have in
it and Tanganyika with the lake
river Albert Nyanza but two
main drains of the great Nile
valley as was depicted by Ptolemy
I have been trying to follow the
central lake even down through
the country of the cannibals
named Manyema - it has four
large lakes proper in its course
the country is fertile beyond
description and the population
prodigious - were never visited
before and the ivory lies in
the forests where the animals
were killed - this has brought
swarms of half caste traders
into Manyema and not content
with ivory sufficient to acquire
to be carried by three relays they must
needs murder and make slaves.
It is not slave trading it is simply
marauding & murder and all that
slaving privileges of the Sultan of
Zanzibar should not suffer -
Kindest salaams to M^{rs} Black
from yours &c David Livingstone

[0003]
M^r Black Esq.
Superintendent in
P&O company
122 Leadenhall St
London
D^r Livingstone