

Letter to William O. Livingstone, 21 August 1862

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

H.M. Exploring Ship, Pioneer

21st August

1862

My Dear Zouga

I recieved four letters from you on 25th Ult. by H.M.S. Ariel which called at Kongone. there were two for dear Mama besides, which had she been here would have made her glad. She is now with her Saviour and possibly knows what we are doing without the aid of letters. I see that you remember the dates of the departure of the mails and have written monthly. We seldom get letters

[0002]

or send them away for no monthly mail comes to our quarters but if you write as often as you can I shall send you as much in return as all you write. I thank you for your kind birthday present and for all your good wishes. I have sent some little things in a box which will be opened by Sir William Hooker at Kew and the packet sent to Agnes. you may consider what is sent to you as your birthday present though I dont know when that is.

[0003]

We are now at sea in the
Mosambique channel going to
Johanna and the River
Rovuma. We steamed off
Kongone to get away well from
the land then our wood being
but small we set sail, and
kept the fuel for worse times
but the wind was against
us or from the North East.
If we went one way we
should have gone into Quillimane
so we went the other and
were fain to go away far to
the South East. When about
mid channel we had a fine
breeze from the south and
went as we thought sixty miles
to the North but next day we
found by the sun & chronometers

[0004]

that while sailing briskly in one
way the current in the sea had
been taking us faster in another
We were twelve miles South West
of where we had been the day
before when the wind began to
blow from the South. Indeed the
current had been flowing at the rate
of 72 miles a day. Last year
we met an East Indian ship
near the same spot which was
carried by the same current
40 miles a day. We were then
becalmed and knowing ~~that~~
though we could see nothing
that we were still gliding away
where we did not wish to go.
We got up steam and steamed
East till we knew we had
crossed the current. We have

[0005]

had a good deal of calms, and only
when we got near the coast of
Madagascar did we meet favourable
winds. if you look at the map
you may see a small island called

Jaõ de Nova we went between
that and Madagascar. we saw
neither the island nor Madagascar
but by sextant & chronometers
I guided our ship through that
way to avoid the current further
out. We went 120 miles yesterday
and should we have wind
will see Johanna tomorrow
afternoon. Now you see it is
a good thing to possess knowledge
I never intended to navigate
a ship but now that it has
come in my way, I do it &
am thankful that I picked up

[0006]

when younger all the knowledge
I could. You must do the same.
It is easy to carry about with
you though you may not use
it. I wished to give Robert a
good education as the best legacy
I could leave him. I know it
would be useful - but he does
not appreciate it. At present
when young, people will pay
attention to him on my account,
but when they see that he has
nothing in him he will be
despised, and will be fit only
to drive a "cuddy and a cart" with
greens or clay pipes. I am sorry
for it but the loss will be
his. and it will be yours if
you build yourself up on your

[0007]

connection with me and not
your own attainments and
energy. I shall try and give you
a good education to fit you for
a life of usefulness in the
service of God whether I am
alive or not. but if you do
not resolve to educate your-
self, or do that which your
masters can only help you to
do, money will not serve.
Wherefore is there a price in the
hand of a fool to get wisdom

seeing he hath no heart to it,
is I think one of Solomon's
sayings. In English we say
"One cannot make a silk
purse out of a sow's ear" We
cannot make a wise man out
[...] [of a thing that] has no earnest desire
[...] [to be filled] to act a manly noble

[0008]
part in life. See how the Queen &
Prince Albert taught their children
they knew that without education
- trained & disciplined minds, even
their high position would not
save them from contempt. I
am glad you still wish to be a
missionary. It is a noble work.
the Highest had an only son and he
was a missionary from the
realms of bliss to save a lost world.
I am working and preparing the
way for others who will enter into
my labours when I am no more
here - - You ask if I enjoyed my
holidays Didnt I? Thats all.
potesne lingua Romanarum
loquari? I dont like people to
see my letters as they sometimes
publish what I never intended. the
Lord bless & guide you [...]