

Letter to Alfredo Duprat, 26 March 1856

David Livingstone

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[0001]

36

Tete, or Nyungué
7 on the Zambesi, Africa
26th March 1856
Alfred Duprat, Esquire
My Dear Sir

I begin another
note for you without any intention of
finishing it till I am farther down
the river, but the subject being still
fresh in my mind I like to "strike
while the iron is hot. The Cape Botanic
garden is formed I believe for the purpose
of diffusing a taste for flowers, and
also to spread abroad better varieties
of fruits, vegetables &c than can be
obtained by private individuals, I
approve most cordially of its objects and
I believe you are very much of the same
mind. Well, will you cooperate with
some of your countrymen here, and
send some Cape seeds, perhaps trees
in return for seeds of eatable wild
fruits of the forest. I tried many
years ago to get a collection of them
together for India, believing that
cultivation of them there would produce

[0002]

in time excellent varieties, now quite
unknown but though I did what I could
I heard no more about them. It is true
I could not do much for ~~Interior~~ missionaries
who go to the actual heathen must be
carpenters, smiths, gardeners, schoolmasters
ministers, often doctors & sometimes ma[...]
midwives too. To expect much fro[...][m]
such in the way of collecting except

for ~~his~~ their own table, is like thinking of
bolting a castle gate with a boiled carro[...][t]
a definition of "nonsense" I have somew[...][here]
seen. The Jesuits did a great deal
however, but whoever heard of a
poor Jesuit? they were rich all the
world over wherever richies were needed
I am not aware of a single rich
missionary in Africa - for myself,
I am considerably poorer than when
I landed on its shores 16 years ago.
you need expect nothing from me
then, but the present Governor of
Tete, Mayor Augusto d' Araujo
Secard, will very gladly collect or
cause to be collected - [...] the seeds of
all the edible fruits in this vicinity
And I promise in your name of

[0003]

course, that you will send some Cape
or English vegetable seeds when you have
an opportunity. All Cape seeds do well
here for some time then deteriorate perhaps
from the heat for the soil is exceedingly
fertile - A living peach, Apricot or apple
tree would be highly valued. The wild
fruits I can assure you are very
much superior to the ecrab apples &
sloes from which our fruits are
said to have come. We all eat devoured
enormous quantities of one named
Masuka on our way down. Its
taste is that of a pear but it does not
gratify one like that fruit by having
enough of the fleshy part. It is referr[...][ed]
to at the end of Bowdich's work.
others are equally good and contain
saccharine matter enough to
yield aquardiente by distillation
with pots and a gun barrel - a process
the knowledge of which among the
natives does not tend to promote
their welfare.

In case you may be at a loss
what to send I name cabbages
Broccolis - turnips, carrots radishes
Beet root, cresses, Spinach, & melons &c &c

[0004]

In case of not having time to finish
this when an opportunity of sending a
packet happens I shall now conclude
begging to be excused for again troubling
you and presenting my cordial salutatio[...][n]
David Livingston

P.S. I shall either bring or send the seeds.

Alfred Duprat, Esquire
H. F. M's Commissioner
Cape of Good Hope

The mayor got 12 varieties together after the
above was penned one however is the mango
He will be able to do much more. I have
collected at different times upwards of 30
kinds of fruits and berries. I exclude from the[...][m]
those which though eaten are disagreeable. On[...][e]
the Mayor now sends is used for making a
sweet meat or preserve as almonds are.