

Letter to Thomas Maclear, 13 December 1852

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[0001]

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No 1 Kuruman 13th December 1852
Thos Maclear Esq.

My Dear Sir,

I am sorry that all
I have yet to say to you amounts
only to 0. I have been detained here
during the last four months in
consequence of the Boers having seized
our path to the Interior. - Now
however that the rains have commenced
I can pass by a still more westerly
path in spite of them. - I shall
start tomorrow and hope that when
I next write I shall have
something of interest to communicate,
(all

[0002]

all about the Unicorn, Salamander,
Phoenix &!) You must be kind
enough to take this in the light
of a parting salutation. -

I had several hindrances in
the way up - These prevented me
from falling into the hands of the
Boers, for it if I had come along
as quickly as I wished I should
have been at Kolobeng at the
very time the Commando rifled my
house, - they expressed much sorrow
because they had not got my head
as well as my property. They hate
me cordially, and I don't think there
is much love lost between us. The
reason

[0003]

reason why they distinguish me so much is the fact that the Bakuanis fought bravely. - They have attacked and dispersed eight Tribes during the last ten years and not a single boer was ever lost by the hand of a Native. Having guns and horses they keep completely out of the way of the blacks. But the Bakuanis managed to kill about thirty five of the Boers, therefore that Skellum Dokter must have taught them. - M^{rs} M. must try and fancy his Reverence "teaching the young idea how to shoot" boers, when she thinks of missionary

[0004]

missionary life in the interior of Africa. I am very much grieved at this outburst on the part of the Boers. I can assert most positively that Sechele gave them no cause for offence except that he would not prevent Englishmen from passing him to the north. - They made frequent attempts to induce him to do so, thinking by that means to divert the trade in ivory through their own Territory. - But the path through Kuruman and Kolobeng was discovered in its entire course by Englishmen and they have hitherto carried on the

[0005]

the trade. - It does not seem right for our Government to hand over this path to the Boers. Previous to my residence at Kolombeng there

was no trade and petty wars were of frequent occurrence, but trade was soon established not only with the tribes in the vicinity of Kolobeng but with many in the Countries far beyond. - And if you look at the map you will see that our path runs to the westward of the Boer Territory, the nearest point occupied by the Boers is at least a degree of longitude east of our route. And then this is the only route by which the

[0006]

the interior of Africa is open. - The fever presents a barrier on almost every other side. One of the Chief objects of my present expedition is to investigate the character of that disease which is the main obstacle to Africa being opened to beneficial intercourse with the rest of the world. - If I can only discover a healthy range of Country and means to foil that terrible plague, I shall be content to let the Unicorn [...] sleep in everlasting oblivion. - The blocking up of our path this way only makes me more determined to find out another on either

[0007]

either one coast or the other. My detention here has been difficult to bear, but my first hindrances having been the means by which a kind Providence prevented me from falling into the hands of the Boers, I am encouraged to hope that the present may have been the means by which through God's mercy I may escape being a victim of the fever. I have written to Sir John Pakington complaining

bitterly against the loss of our path
and the destruction of my own and
the English hunters' goods which were
deposited in my house. - I have not
yet got the length of taking
joyfully

[0008]

joyfully the spoiling of my goods, -
my books were torn to pieces and
the leaves scattered to the winds,
and the bottles containing medicines
all smashed. I would have forgiven
them, if they had only taken the
property which they could have used, -
but having destroyed my medicines
and library I feel quite grumpy
when I think of a big fat Boer up
lying on my sofa and drinking
coffee out of my wife's coffee pot,
Ugh! I suppose King Pretorius will
write his despatches on my wife's
writing desk. Well i hope to get
over it in time. I would not grudge
my

[0009]

my losses if the Government would
only secure our path for all who
choose to travel it. My house was
situated eight miles from the Town
of the plundering so it has nothing
to do with their policy to the Natives.
As I am nobody I scarcely expect
the Government will take any notice
of the affair. I hear from M^{rs} L.
that Oswell is already casting a
longing eye back to Africa.

I am verry sorry that I
stupidly left without saying goodbye
to M^r Morton. I was somewhat
like one of our girls who was quite
stupified by the sight of Cape Town,
I

[0010]

I had not all my wits about
me. Will you be kind enough to
present my apology and salutations
to M^r M. the girl above mentioned
found her tongue again when we
got away and the nearer we get
to her home it runs the faster. -
I expect when we reach Kolobeng
it will be the "perpetual motion"
at last. -

With many kind salutations to
M^{rs} M. and family
Believe me, Yours very Sincerely
Sig^d D. Livingstone