

Letter to George Grey, 18 December 1858

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

Tette 18th Dec^r 1858

Private No 3

Dear Sir George

We have been up

to examine the rapids of

Kebra or more correctly Kaora-

basa when the water in the

Zambesi was at its lowest

And we found that all we

knew of it previously from

Portuguese description was

just nothing at all. We

steamed about four miles

beyond where any description

we could get even here

terminated and found that

instead of a number of detached

rocks jutting out of the water

across the stream the affair

arises from the Zambesi

destroyed them all - (that took place at the very time when my friend

D^r Robertson was receiving them (the boers) into the bosom of the

Dutch church in the presence of the Cape dignitaries - if others knew of

they existence of these orations they might recollect them)

David Livingstone

[0002]

being confined by mountains

to a bed $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide at parts

and at one point to 50 or 60 yards

In the wider parts there is a deep

groove cut out of the solid rock

if such it can be called where

rocks are twisted - broken, cleaved

& huddled together in every direction

besides being water worn and

drilled with potholes everywhere

When sailing up the groove with

the walls far above our masts

the man at the lead kept calling

out "no bottom at ten fathoms"
yet the groove fills at flood
and flows over the adjacent
bed though to do so it must
rise perpendicularly 80 or 100 feet
There are rapids in the groove
which this feeble vessel cannot
stem but we have no doubt
that a steamer of good power
would go up easily at flood
one rapid which had five feet

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of fall became level at three
feet general rise of the river - the
Ma Robert was just 1/16 of an inch
thick when new - is now thinner
so we fear to try towing
her up lest she should go craunch
like an old tin kettle in the operation
There is also a place with per-
pendicular walls past which
no towing line could be carried
The mountains are at least
2000 or 2300 feet high - covered
with trees and very healthy
As far as the [eye] can reach
Northwards we see ranges of the
same even into the blue
distance. We slept without cover
or quinine & but for the toil
which was excessive we
should all have returned improved
in health. It made us so
lean that had I come down
this way in 1856 I should have
perished before reaching Tette.
It is an impediment to

[0004]

navigation i.e. canoe or bum -
boat navigation - they cannot paddle
against a four knot current and
then here they cannot punt at 60 feet
deep nor tow from a height of
80 ft so they go over land - We have
abundance of work in the mean[-]

time down here - the geologist reports
having found 3 seams of coal
1st 7 feet thick 2^d 13 ft 6in. 3^d Twenty
five feet thick in a five cliff section
It was fired by lightning a few years
ago and burned a long time - We
are all in good health - Have had
colds only, no fever except among
the Kroomen. The Portuguese command[er]
ant Major Secard gave us the
Residencia or Government house
to live in at Tette. I am going up
the Shire next week -

Thanks for the pamphlet containing
the account of your library. I made
a collection of Bechuana orations
Maina or names they are called and
each boy must produce his own at
the circumcision. They contained a great
number of to me entirely new words - I
intended to have examined & translated
them but the boers in plundering Kolobeng