

## Letter to Edmund Gabriel, 12 September 1855

*David Livingstone*

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[0001]

4 Town of Sekeletu, on  
Ed<sup>m</sup> Gabriel Esqui<sup>rc</sup> the River Chobe  
12<sup>th</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> 1855 My Dear Friend  
A Moor of Zanzibar called Rya  
Syde ben Habib and a Portuguese subject of  
Bihé leave this tomorrow for Loanda, and  
I am glad of the opportunity to send a few  
lines to inform you of our progress and  
welfare. We reached the Barotse country about  
the end of July and came down the river  
quite leizurely to Lesheke. Some parcels of  
Newspapers meal biscuits &c &c had been  
brought to the falls, in the river called Mosioatunya  
by the tribe called Matibele - the mortal  
enemies of Sekeletu's people and as the  
latter refused to go near them, they were  
left on a rock in the Leeamby. After due  
deliberation and divination my goods were  
taken to an island and a hut built over  
them. I waited at Lesheke for them and  
was gratified to find letters from my  
family and many others. My first set of  
observations had been recieved by M<sup>f</sup> Maclear  
the Astronomer Royal, and you will be  
pleased to hear that he is hightly satisfied  
with them. He says after noticing some  
errors into which in some of the observations  
I had fallen "But upon the whole, I do not["]

M<sup>f</sup> Moffat sent them while on a visit to their chief who  
lives south of Mosioatunya (your last packet did not come)

[0002]

"hesitate to assert that no explorer on record  
has determined his path with the precision  
you have accomplished." He pronounces  
the pocket chronometer to be an excellent one  
I do not mention these things by way  
of boasting but in the belief that your  
friendship for me will induce you to  
"rejoice with them that rejoice." He is very

well pleased with my occultations as affording the means of proving the correctness of the Lunars. I could get none in Angola - The clouds prevented.

In contrast to the above a doctor of divinity of the Dutch church (a scotchman!) collected some tales of scandal among the Boers who live beyond the Colony - and retailed them to my brother in law who listened to all & to his dumbfounderment told him of our relationship - He apologized but did not forgo the pleasure of giving information to the Government. (I had it from the Attorney General at the Cape) the secretary of the Missionary Society &c. &c. &c. I prepared a statement of the affair in case he should venture to publish it after my departure - the Boers plundered my house and carried off upwards of 200 children after killing many of the adults of Lechele & Tocoio, and at the very time they were perpetrating this

I go down the river Zambesi at the beginning of next month - October - I am your most affectionate friend David Livingstone

[0003]

outrage the aforementioned clergyman was engaged in receiving them ^ in synod assembled into the bosom at the Cape of the Dutch church as Christian bretheren.

The marauding expedition by which I lost about £300 of value was the first act of their Independence and Christian membership - I felt it to ^ be my duty to expose the slave making deeds of the Boers in a letter to Government and when it appeared in the Blue book the tale carried to the Cape was published although it was well known I could not possibly answer it or even know of it till months or years had elapsed, but my statement was published and the worthy doctor returned no answer - I enclose a piece of newspaper which will give you an idea of the affair - I have it appears become quite obnoxious to the Boers - though when living at Kolobeng, they came to me for advice in all severe cases of disease & I prescribed frankly without in any instance asking the price of the medicines

I thought Government ought to have given me compensation for the loss I sustained for it was incurred in the course of a direct violation of the articles of the treaty by which Independance was given to the Boers. But I have got

[0004]

nothing but the notoriety of publication in the blue book. The Gov<sup>r</sup> of the Cape is bamboozled by the public servants of Dutch extraction. Sir Harry Smith was attacked by the rebel Boers at Boomplaats and about a dozen of our soldiers slain - the Hon. Cap<sup>n</sup> Murray was shot dead - & two other officers disabled. While performing my duty among the blacks so soon after the engagement I had not heard of it. I met the worthy doctor above mentioned in the house of a boer who returned with two bullet holes in his clothing from the murder of our soldiers. This man had a significant hint given him by Sir H. Smith in a proclamation but what could he think of it - the underlings of Gov<sup>r</sup> had actually lent the clergyman the Gov<sup>t</sup> waggon in which the Judges go on their circuit and here his reverence was baptizing the children at so much per head - administering the sacrament and living on most amicable terms in the house of a man whose hands may be said to have been still reeking with the blood of our soldiers

Look at the enclosures I have not time to write more the man Rya Syde goes off tomorrow morning

[0005]

I enclose too a slip containing information about the vegetable wax at the Cape - It has been investigated by the Cape Town agricultural society and you will see after giving good wages they can sell or expect it at a lower figure than the Portuguese give for it on the banks of the Luango. I saw 300 Reis per lb given for it there and at the Cape it is produced at 200

It grows where nothing else will and  
would flourish in all the sandy soil  
near the city - all the way down from  
Boa Vista and the adjacent valley might  
be covered with it - It is found flourishing  
on those banks of white sand which you  
may remember on you right in going  
from Simon's bay to Cape Town - Nothing  
else will grow there and when they sow  
the berries they mix them with rye or grass  
seeds which prevent the winds from  
covering ip the tender shoots of the wax tree  
The Gov<sup>r</sup> has taken pains to plant different  
practical plants & grass with Australian  
gum trees on that dreary sea of white sand  
which constituted the scenery in your  
time - The lands adjacent to Loanda  
are greatly superior to that weary waste  
& the berry would prove a boon to  
the black population of your city. If

The slip about berry wax might be published  
in the Boletin

[0006]  
any Portuguese ship of war coming round  
to Loanda from Mosambique would  
touch at the cape M<sup>r</sup> Duprat would  
I believe gladly send a bushel or two  
of the seed. It would afterwards propagate  
itself. I know M<sup>r</sup> Duprat to be a  
public spirited gentleman and it would  
delight him to promote the prosperity of  
the colony of Angola - I shall write him  
on the subject by the present opportunity  
and surely the gentlemen of Loanda would  
not consider it beneath their notice  
to secure an article of export by  
requesting their home government  
to order a ship to call at Table bay for  
the seed - There are not port charges there -  
the people go on the principle of the more  
ships that call the better - and the profit  
to the general community derived from  
the money ^ with which each ship purchases refresh[-]  
-ments, enriches more than your stupid  
100 milres per mast.

I wonder if you recieved my last  
letters and map with observations from  
Cassange and Cabango. I wrote a

note by a Mombari whom I met at  
the Barotse town Naliele and instructed  
him to deliver it to Guillierme Jose  
Gontaluelo at Bihe who would send to

[0007]

M<sup>r</sup>. Bires at Bungo Andongo - I dont send  
any observations by this person as I  
am not sure that they will reach you  
I remain here one month and will  
then go down the Zambesi to Quilimane  
in canoes. I could go to Lake Nyassa  
but as the object I have in view is to  
secure a passage to the coast by which  
merchandise may be profitably conveyed  
the discovery of Lake Nyassa would be  
accomplished at the expence of abandoning  
that which I clearly see to be my duty -  
the path would be opened opposite to  
Zanzibar but it would only be a  
repetition of that to Loanda - a land journey  
and such is not desirable as all the  
goods we brought were expended before  
we reached the Barotse. My men brought  
almost nothing of all they purchased  
and no one feasted - our chief food  
was manioc roots & meal - birdseed meal  
and occasionally a fowl for my use.  
Hence my desire to get water carriage  
and however much I should like to  
discover Nyassa I cannot go at present  
except with the conviction of leaving  
a more important duty. I should  
but for this find no difficulty in  
going there

[0008]

The Makololo ( Sekeletu's people) are  
really delighted with the prospect of returning  
they want words to express their thanks  
for the prospective benefit of trade to the  
coast - The men who went with me are  
great oracles now and the liberality  
with which their friends treat me  
makes me wonder - It is God who  
influences their hearts. Sekeletu has  
made two forays since left. One was  
in revenge for repeated insults by

a chief at Lake Ngami, who went  
so far as to take large quantities of ivory  
from Sekeletu's poor people close to this  
town - The poor people referred to are  
the chief elephant hunters and make  
no stand against an enemy - I expecte[d]  
such a course long ago but prevented  
it by representing the guilt of shedding  
human blood. but when I left, the  
warriors were let loose and punished  
the arrogance of the Lake chief severely  
Now however they have other means  
of enriching themselves if they choose  
Preparations for another trip are begun

You will find Rya Syde Ben Habib intelligent  
He is in connection with Carvalho Bastos -