

Letter to John Washington, 26 November, 20 December 1860

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[0001]

2^dTette 26th Nov^r 1860

Dear Captain Washington

The water in the river having been lower than ever known by the oldest people, we could examine the Victoria Falls with ease: people could even wade from the North bank to the garden island and we could see well to the bottom. the depth is 310 feet sheer down probably a few feet more as the weight on the line rested on a slope near the bottom. the breadth from bank to bank is not a thousand yards as I conjectured but between one statute & one geographical mile, we say 1860 yards though

[0002]

it is little more by way of assisting the memory. We measured with a tape line & allowed 2 feet in every 67 feet for slack & curvature. then even at low water there were 800 feet of water falling. I measured the width of the fizzle at the island in the middle with the sextant and got 80 feet but this is doubtful as we could not throw a stone across
Looking from above it is the shape of the letter £ L but the crack of the most wonderful

zigzag shape ever seen. Fancy this rude sketch all of one level except the bottom of the crack which is 300 feet below

[0003]

The dotted line shews the

course of the water after
it has fallen down to
be from both sides
to the prolongation
of the crack. There
is but 400 paces
between the fall &
the first elbow made by the
Fizzle and all the land
formed by the zigzags into
promontories is of the
same level as the bed of
the river above the falls
You walk along and see the
river deep down on each
side of you and at least
300 feet ~~down~~ below. It is
really the most wonderful
affair in waterfalls in the world

[0004]

We could not visit Mosilikatze
and arrange matters about our
post. We could not leave Sekeletu
so soon as we wished on account
of his disease - then the Elephant
hunters whom we met at the Falls
had unfortunately departed before
we got our Despatches written
The heat became excessive too
At Sinamanés the soil was
136° at 3PM. not a single shower
had fallen and the country had
suffered one of its periodical
droughts. A thermometer held
in the shade of the body & 3 feet
above the soil was 102° at that
hour and during a march
our blood even became
1 1/2° hotter than that of the natives or 99.5
or 99.5°

[0005]

We could not moreover have
made a decent visit as to time
without breaking entirely our
promise to be at Kongone at
the end of this month. But we
got to the head man at the falls who
had always treated the Matibele
of Mosilikatze who came with

the letters in a scurvy manner removed to another part & orders given to his successor to treat & feed them well. Letters were waiting for me at Linyanti M^r John Moffat is now with Mosilikatze and in time matters will be arranged.

I have not by any means given up hope in the Makololo

[0006]

The delay caused by failure to ascend at once to them has led to opening a new field of perhaps still greater importance in reference to the slave trade I have no doubt as to being able to ascend in flood. We saw the whole river in our canoes from Sinamanés downwards many rapids were developed below Chicova by excessive low water which were under 4 knots when we ascended - the most rapid part we saw was scarcely six knots - Morumbua is a sloping cataract at low water and the water may come down in the space of 30 or 40 yards

[0007]

20 or 30 feet but the rise there is 80 feet and the flood will certainly smooth the cataract over. Chicova seen from the land looked like a basaltic dyke across the stream but we passed through it in the canoes without observing it in coming down. There is a large seam of coal in the bank there from which steamers will one day lead. There is another seam in the bank at Manyerive hill and the coal field extends up near to Sinamanés. The part of the Zambesi between Sinamanés & Kansalo is the deepest & most navigable of it all and Kansalo has

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has nothing formidable in it except to canoes whose gunwale is scarcely 6 inches above the water.

I thank you for all your notes which came now in a heap, & for all you have done to aid us most heartily. I am really unfeignedly thankful. It was very kind in you to dissuade M^{rs} L. from coming, and I sincerely hope she acceded to your most proper advice. The Makololo are excessively anxious to have her but until more progress is made she would be in the way. I have 16 of them here though I wished but 10. It is arranged that as soon as we get up to Kafue all remove to us