

Letter to John Kirk, 25 August 1858

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[0001]

ms 17/1 Island of Pita, above Senna
25th August 1858
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My Dear Dr. Kirk

I send this in order to let you know that we have been obliged to alter our plan so far as to leave the Pinnacle here in charge of M^r Baines We reached Senna in four days being the shortest voyage made though the water is now getting very shoal and we had a whole boat overturned by the paddle. Tom will & Peter moving it aft While we were going though I told them I should stop to allow them to do so - We lost merely the box of plants & some iron things - The casks floated & were all recovered - Toby was nearly carried away by the current he having jumped in to save things and Tom Jumbo nobly saved him We spent part of two days at Senna then came on - with two pilots who have led us into difficulties several times - In going into doubtful places

Should you be desirous of getting away before I come & can arrange with the Portuguese to take you & a cargo for say £20 or £25 - pray dont hesitate

[0002]

It is necessary to go slowly - the Pinnacle catches first and the slightest touch makes the Launch shew her want of power by slewing round - Three times she has done that with me - (Bedingfeld did it often) and when she goes a shoal the current keeps her on and much time is lost. We heightened the Pinnacle

as much as possible into the Launch but still she draws so much as to be a great hindrance Baines volunteered to remain with her and I declined as one of the objects I had in view was to get him up to Tete, but having lost a whole day by Jumbo not having the anchor ready when she began to slew round I see is it absolutely necessary to make a trial trip in the Launch first & then when we know the river take the Pinnace - Please to speak about these matters to Thornton only, Bedingfeld will chuckle over any of our difficulties and make more of them than any truthful man would He may possibly try by misrepresentation to present our getting any fresh graut for what we shall need.

As I mention his name I may on this occasion state that H.M.'s Government in order to prevent insubordination such as Baikie suffers from in the Niger Expedition invested me with magisterial power as a consul expressly to meet

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such a case as Bedingfeld's - I find from the document purporting to be a Log kept on board the Ma Robert which you delivered to me that he trusts in the power of reiterated assertion to prove my harshness &c &c - I retain the document as evidence and will require you to certify having got it from him as a Log - for the satisfaction of the Foreign Secretary of State - As I must give a full statement of the whole affair to the Foreign Office I shall require your ^ (medical) evidence as to the state of filth in which on taking charge of the Ma Robert we found the decks as I con[-] sidered it prejudicial to the health and long before that recommended him to adopt a regular system of cleaning them - As also in respect to his having told you that he had given ^ into me a second resignation, and as you are now the second in command your opinion expressed to me when I shewed you my acceptance of that resignation that it was absolutly

necessary to save the Expedition
from complete disorganization
or words to that effect would prove

[0004]

of no ordinary value to the Foreign Secretary
from an impartial witness, for whom alone
the evidence is required - It goes to him direct
and is not published - As B. seems disposed
to make something out by your signing a
paper I think it would be well to state
also how much he asked & how much
you meant in doing so. He refers to it
in two documents - I am not conscious
of anything disagreeable or harsh in my con[-]
-duct nor have I been quarrelsome with
anyone and in sending evidence to the
Foreign Office I do so with extreme regret
and sorrow that public duty requires it
to be done against any of our number
I earnestly hope & pray that nothing may
arise to disturb the harmony which has
hitherto existed among the rest of us

Baines is much better and has
been working at everthing in which he
could be useful - Blackwell is bilious
M^r Rae is better but a little shaken
M^r L. was second engineer when
R. was down - Coffee thought himself
the first - The Kroomen all work
admirably - They cut as much wood
in one hour as they used to do in four
can you give Major Secard a little bla[...][ck]
tea as he says it is diuretic Ever you[...][rs]
D. Livingstone