

Letter to Benjamin T. Pyne, 4 March, 2 August 1850

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org), 2017

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Kolobeng 4th March

1850

My Very Dear Friends

I am ashamed to remember that your last letter is still unanswered although it has been by us for 2 or 3 months. My wife will bear none of the blame in that respect imitating M^{rs} P. after she got my scolding. I was quite proud when I found it had some effect and wish M^r P would touch up my better half occasionally too. We could work to each other's hands nicely. the reason why I did not answer it sooner was I have till tonight been going on under the impression that I had answered it long ago, but M^{rs} L insists that I have not. Mary's was a beautiful and most interesting letter - She takes after her mother. I cannot possibly answer her now as we are going to the North in a few days and are busy now preparing - If she will excuse me I shall write during the journey and send it off as soon as we return the box about which you advised us came to hand two days ago. and it afforded us a great amount of pleasure but pleasure is not all - the contents are all really useful Mary says M^{rs} P has anticipated all her wants and provided for them with the kindness of a mother - It is impossible to specify the different articles - they are so numerous. I was nearly out of shirts and did not know what to do for the journey for last time I went every washing wearing one or two of my stock through the middle. half a dozen from my mother in Scotland & yours have quite set me out. I have not looked over all the articles, but you must accept our hearty & sincere thanks for the whole. the seeds I am sorry to say were spoiled, they seem to have been put up too moist & and were gone bad probably your climate is not dry enough for putting up in tins. If you try again it may be well to put them up simply in brown paper - Our garden is useless from want of water. the olive plants around our table are the only vegetables that seem to thrive here

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We had a pleasant visit from M^r Freeman - he came a few days before 49 fled & left a few days after 50 began - We outlandish people forgot to wish him a happy new year - We

have no holidays, but I thought we might have so planned a trip of about a days journey to a cave - the Bakwains would not go near it. they have a tradition that some people went in & never came out - One called Kobokoe went in and was never seen again . flocks of sheep were sometimes seen near its mouth but when one went near they ran in. The old people thought I should never return and Sechele said he would go in if I did - We took a lantern, a line, & ladder It is on the face of a hill about 600 feet high. the waggon with wife & children stood at the bottom and the firm believers in old tales looked at us ascending with awe. I thought it might be a mile in length but alas it was not 20 yards deep.- We went in & spoke to those who had the hardihood to follow (some boys were among the numbers[]) on the follies of the old system, and that all their other tales were equally absurd. It seems to have been a fountain of water in ancient times - I crept to the extremity & deposited a Father Mathew & token and a bullet, and when the old men denied that we had entered we replied go to the end of it and you wil[l] find these. O, that they were wise. We went from thence about two miles & visited the spot where with Bube I led out the stream. there lay the stones we had lifted up & the serpentine form of the watercourse was still easily trace[d] but no gurgling - stream ran by, the drought has dried up all the Bakwain streams. After spending a day among these scenes we returned much pleased with our trip. The children having had the whooping cough was the thing that prompt[ed] me to this excursion. I forgot to say that all have not been so superstitious for some one had cut down a tree at the door way & must have seen into the end of it. the young branch[es] which were now young trees shewed that he must have done many years ago. this is a long digression & I have been led away by the word holiday - Mr Freemanremembers

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wish us a happy &c - He was much pleased with Sechele & wishes him to go to England. I had no idea that he would care about curiosities or I should have had some collected together the great difficulty of transmitting anything to the coast deters me from collecting . He got a few horns of animals &c here - left me a fine prospect glass & some hooks. His visit was very agreeable indeed. He had an apparatus for the Daguerrotype and tried hard to take me but something in our water prevente[d] Had you seen it you would perhaps have thought me rather unclerical with mostachios if that is the way to spell it I am becoming loyal now like Prince Albert but this is to prevent my lips being burned by the sun. We were sorry the visit was so short, and our accommodation is so poor. The object of the deputation was to reduce the expenditure from £ 9000 to £4000. some think this ought to be effected by allowing the

members of the old colonial stations to support the gospel among themselves - others that if we let the Hottentots alone they would sink into their former state - We are the only society which does attend to the wants of the coloured population the Wesleyan & Dutch reformed attend exclusively to the whites Now these worthy men excuse themselves from attending to the blacks because we do. "It would be unbrotherly to try & take them out of our hands" the thing goes round in a circle, then the Hottentots being provid[-]ed with the gospel free of expense, are not likely to act as free independent Christian men. they are in tutelage perpetually and the society is a sort of go cart to them - this would be little if they were not unconsciously the barrier which prevents the flow of the stream of benevolence to the real heathen lands. M^r F. has taken up Dr Philips idea that the colonial stations must be kept up for ever and aye, and though we expected much from his visit it is not likely to be of much service in as far as an onward movement is concerned - He was much pleased with the prospect beyond us and said it ought to be kept open for our society. We are now going in a weary

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way of 600 miles in order to see if there is any good locality for a mission. the children will probably be the better of the trip and I hope so will the mother. the natives in there had never any idea of the value of ivory and now there is quite a rush into that region of Griques and Bechuanas and Whites : It is our California, but more will come away disappointed than joyous - 3 English men left us yesterday. Two are officers from India and the third a young man who has traversed N & S. America and published a book on the latter. They were accompanied part of the way by a gentleman called Nichols who came out from England to "discover the Lake" but before he had travelled many days. He said why this is terrible. One cant get anything to eat I shall return to my wife. He brought the young traveller all the way from England in order to sketch the Lake for him they have gone off in high glee but they dont know the weary way before them . I pity my poor wife, but I cannot leave her here, and she is quite willing to go. M^r T was accompan[-]ied by M^r Moffat & his daughter Ann. Sechele has brought a waggon and will accompany us to Sebitoane who formerly saved his life. We shall form a party of 30 or 40 and having some good shots among them we shall probably be well supplied with game. Pray for us and that that the way may be prepared for the spread of the gospel. We as[-]cend a large river coming down from the North about 200 miles - Would Bernard like to go & Morland to gather some seeds. Robert is quite pleased to go but will be tired long before he sees Kolobeng again - I wrote a long letter

to Mr Taylor for a projected periodical he told me of
but suppose it has never come to anything - a note
enclosed in the box near the seeds is I am sorry to say
totally illegible except 4 lines - "acknowledge it by
some message." & then something about Morland & seeds
the moisture from the seeds has destroyed it

[0005]

Very sorry to hear by our friend Mrs Sewell that Mrs P has
suffered much from poor health, but hope she has by
this time been restored to her usual health.. And that the
affliction has answered the end intended by Him who
sent it. We are favoured with pretty fair health in
this climate - the country around us is beautiful but
very dry. the Kolobeng is quite dried up except in pools
here & there. I dont remember whether I introduced our
youngest Thomas Steele to your acquaintanceship. He
according to Grandfather Moffat "is a noble fellow" "the
finest infant he ever saw" His weaning commenced
today - He is always ready for fun - My man Friday is very
proud of the black hat, and his visage becomes it well
it only wants a shade or two to be of ther same colour - the
naval cap nearly fits your humble servant at the
head of the medical profession in the Bokone. We got
a few apples yesterday from Kuruman - they vividly
brought to my recollection some I got from you for
shipboard - I planted the seeds of them but they did not
succeed - I shall enclose a few seeds in this of
a kind of hibiscus from which the people at the
lake make their nets. the flower is rather pretty - the
mebaic very strong. those in your tin smelt so
strongly when opened us to make me turn away
my head and I am not easily moved by a twingle
of the olfactory nerve - Have heard from Moore
lately, at ~~Colechester~~ Congleton Very kind regards
to Mary I began to fear she was dead and she may
set me down as good as defunct for not writing her more

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Mrs L very tired with the long journey of 1200 miles
shall write you at length very soon Excuse the
great blunder of taking this with us instead of
leaving it. Kind love to all the family every one
Mrs L writes with me
in love & thanks Believe me dear friends
Yours ever Affectionately
D Livingston
2^d August - this letter was finished long ago but by

mistake was not posted - It went with us to the Lake &
we have just returned - I am very sorry for it but an opportunity
occurs and I gladly embrace it. two of the children
had fever at the Lake but God in mercy raised
them up - our people too who had it were spared
while one English gentleman died & two of their people
Care of the Rev^d D^r Philip
Cape Town
Benjamin Pyne Esq^{re}
Wildingtree
Ongar Essex
England