

Letter to Robert Moffat 1, 22 September 1845

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org), 2017

[0001]

Mabotsa Sept^r 22 1845

My dear Father

As Apie leaves tomorrow I begin another hurried scrawl. For the first time in my life I feel that my hands are really full. Too many irons in the fire over head & ears and the rain will come I have no doubt. I came here last friday week & after a fortnight[']s sojourn intend to leave on thursday or friday next, my window frames must be done then. I am now busy at them. When the first row of thatch is on "I shall sleep a month" The letter to the Directors is not finished & lies like an incubus on my mind. I cant make it to please myself. Tired out every night I fancy I feel like you in your perpetual bustle. I have been in bustles frequently but never felt as now But I dont by the above ask help either sideways or anyways. I just speak as I feel. The more we toil here the sweeter rest will be. Let us look to the Heavenly rest & peace with more intense desires. Mary I suppose will give all the news I have none

Thank you for the Music Book I am precentor now & such a precentor! I am in agonies before

[0002]

I mentioned your waggon. As it was principally for the beads you will not of course send it now. Fear we do not thank you sufficiently for all the things sent It is not want of gratitude but want of thought prevents us enumerating all the things & thanking for each May be the gratitude is not quite the thing either. Thank you for the barren cow consolation. It equals what one might have given the gravedigger's

wife who complained of the hardness of the times. "Naething doing at a' noo, Jamie has na had a job for three weeks, I dinna ken hoe we can fen ava". I have got seeds of the gigantic tree 51 feet in diameter. Very good food, native testimony. The one I broke has a good flavour, you will taste. These are small. I have seen them as large as ostrich eggs. Oswal & Murray may take them down. They were extremely kind to us. The former promises to send seeds from India & the latter offered to do anything in his power in Scotland. If I had had the money I

I can screw out anything like a tune & then Rira drowns me. I have to watch for a chink here and there in his voice & stick in a note just to let them hear their leader is not asleep

[0003]
should have entrusted him with an order for a magic lantern. It would be cheaper in Edinburgh than London & he being acquainted with many ship captains says he can send anything safely. Surgical instruments are ^{ds} cheaper in Edinburgh than London. Did you talk about Rome Masepa hela. The account reconciled me to the [...] of the Bechuanas they talked frequently about Edwards. We could with difficulty answer their questions they were so pointed. But we avoided saying anything to shew we were obnoxious. He M^r E has not however observed the same rule respecting us. M^r Murray said "M^r E is the coarsest & most uncouth man I ever saw I was ashamed to be seen in his ~~presence~~ company" M^r Oswal said, ["]What is that tall queer looking man we saw at Motito? "He seems to speak as if he were always in a rage" Many questions were put to Mary when I was absent which shewed M^r E had been going on at a fine rate to them. She felt very much at a loss what to answer. He told them he intended to go all along the East coast before he returned. He likewise told M^r Greig that he intended doing wonders in the travelling line northwards. How daring I was to make such a one an appendix

[0004]

Whether he has done anything or not when last here or whether it is merely the effect of knowing that we shall leave, the people now dont turn out to the meetings. We have not a quarter of the former number so I dont feel bound to remain here longer than I can help. Before his visit the house was generally quite full, since then we have scarcely ever of the former number. The only relaxation we have is half an hour in the garden before sun set transplanting. Mary is a real gardener & enjoys this much when not too tired. She is wonderfully well. We have had some dishes of Scotch Kale, spinach, leaves of Mangold Wurzil, carrots an inch in diameter. Lettuces we shall have in abundance & broccoli & cabbages & turnips ad nauseum endure in abundance but we dont know how to eat all our good things. Perhaps I shall turn out a half gardener at my ain hand like the boys brither Jock & the diel at sinning. I like it very much. Many thanks for the vine cuttings. When you come you must give me some instructions. Send out some oats & barley from England. The latter is perhaps superior, the former may go to comfort the stomachs of Ann's winged friends if you dont like to sow it.