

## Letter to George Grey, 25 March 1860

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[0001]

Mazaro, Zambesi River

25<sup>th</sup> March 1860.

Private N<sup>o</sup> 10

My Dear Sir George

In consequence of the loss  
of a mail bag on the bar off Kongone harbour  
we are ^ not aware whether in the hurry of parting  
you bestowed a thought on us - But  
feeling persuaded that you will be  
disposed to aid us wherever you are, I beg  
your attention to the question of free  
navigation on this river which I have  
brought before Lord John Russell - The  
Portuguese make no use of the river Zambesi  
below this point, nor have they ever  
ascended the Shire more than a few miles  
above the confluence - their line of  
exploration ran across country from  
Sofala to Senna, and then down to Quilimane.  
The Governor of Tette acknowledges in a  
letter to M<sup>r</sup> Dupratt published in the Cape  
Argus in August last, that we are the first  
that ever came from the sea to that district  
by the mouths of the Zambesi - Now I would  
not object to own their lordship over

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parts known or traded to by them, but  
we have opened a new region by going  
up the Shire; and Burton & Speke have  
explored that region still farther, and  
confirmed what we advanced respecting  
the form and fertility of the country, as  
well as the disposition of the inhabitants:  
And it seems feasible to suppose that  
English settlers in that Highland region  
would both develop the trade in cotton,  
and soon stop the supply of slaves to  
various ports on the East coast -  
I am so fully persuaded of this, that

should the Government not grant  
the means of placing a small steamer  
on Nyassa to afford protection to settlers  
and develop the lawful trade which  
crosses the Lake at various points -  
~~that~~ I now send home M<sup>r</sup> Rae our  
engineer to superintend the construction  
of one at my own expense - If the  
Portuguese hear of our plan they will  
be up in arms against it, and put on  
restrictions that will prove real obstructions.  
I don't see why they should retain the

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the power of doing this - we ought to have  
free passage in to our discoveries; and  
our success without diminishing their  
territory an inch, would promote the  
prosperity of their establishments - You  
will appreciate my earnestness in this  
matter when you remember that their  
settlements are not colonies, but small  
penal settlements entailing a loss of £5000  
or £6000 annually on the mother country,  
and sending not a particle of trade home;  
and never a single African made fortune  
to be spent there. The Governors, no matter  
what professions they make all get as  
much into their pockets from slave traders  
as possible. The present Governor General  
of Mosambique - an educated & enlightened  
man - winked at a regular system of  
French slave emigration from near Quilimane  
for two years - and then when the affair  
of the Charles & Georges caused a stir in  
Europe, made a formal denuntiation in  
the "Boletin of Mozambique" of those who  
carried it on. It was carried on under  
the very eye of the Governor of Quilimane.  
It was well known to His Excellency of

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Mosambique for everything is reported,  
and each Governor knows even the

private affairs of all the people of his district -  
When this denuntiation appeared the emigration  
agent (Senhor Cruz) retired to Bombay,  
and thence to Bourbon; and as every  
one expected, has now returned to Quilimane  
to carry on the same or a worse system -  
People here talk openly of the Governors  
being bribed to allow these things - and from  
all I have seen of the officials, I feel certain  
that they would hamper a movement  
such as I propose by every means in  
their power - We want only free access  
by harbours and parts of the river of  
which the Portuguese make no use  
whatever - to parts quite beyond their  
trade and even geographical knowledge -  
then their numbers are so small  
if we exclude the military there are not  
20 real Portuguese on the river and  
only 150 or 200 half casts. Portugal does  
not intend to send colonists - those  
actually sent are a class of military  
called "Incorrigibles" and the chief trade  
which is only paltry peddling in ivory  
and gold dust is in the hands of

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the few officers employed to look after  
these worthies - The exclusive - "dog in the  
manger" policy pursued, is almost entirely  
for the benefit of these men - No women  
are sent out, and frightful immorality is  
the consequence - I say little about them  
publicly, because I have recieved much  
kindness from individuals among them -  
but a more used up syphilitic race does  
not exist in the world - With a soil and  
climate superior to Natal we can get neither  
fresh meat nor vegetables between the sea &  
Tette for either love or money - On the coast  
we get abundance of game & live splendidly  
bushbuck - waterbuck & the oryx abound  
but inland the grass is too tall for hunting,  
and we are put on salt provisions or  
starve - I have laid the whole matter before  
Lord John Russell, and if you can say a  
word in behalf of urging a more open  
system on the Portuguese, you will confer

a great favour = I do not know  
whether a silent system might work  
out our ends - If we were allowed to  
hoist a pendant the officials could not

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interfere with us, yet I fear the opposition  
of the whole population when they see  
whither our efforts tend in eating out  
the slave trade - They are rather glad at  
having cleverly as they think, restricted my  
consulate to Quilimane, and I say  
nothing respecting my being accredited  
to the independent tribes beyond them.

the loss of the mail bag, (though I hear  
of its having been picked up in a damaged  
state and conveyed to Tette) has entailed  
ignorance of the intentions of Government  
respecting the "Bann" which my Naval  
officer led me to reject, or another steamer.  
If we get a powerful vessel we intend  
to try to reach Lake Nyassa by the Rovuma  
a river which is said to flow out of it,  
and to be navigable 100 leagues inland -  
It is beyond Portuguese territory, and from  
its situation on the map appears to be about  
what we conjecture to be the Northern end  
of that Lake. It has a depth of three fathoms  
at the entrance and no bar - but free  
navigation here would answer our purpose  
as well.

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I need scarcely say that I am as  
sorry as any one on account of  
your departure from the Cape -  
But I hope it may be only to  
afford you wider scope for  
your energies - Should you favour  
me with a line will you mention  
where a famous despatch respecting  
the treatment of native tribes is to  
be found - I hear about it  
but being long out of the world  
never met with it.

I am &c  
David Livingstone