

Letter to Benjamin T. Pyne, 1 January 1846

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org), 2017

[0001]

Chonuane 1st January /46

My Very Dear Friends

I wrote you some months ago ~~but~~ but was favoured with the means of transmission only ~~last~~ two weeks ago. We are famishing for want of news from the South having had no arrivals from Kuruman for many months, and as the next best to receiving [^] myself I begin something to be received by you. It is a wearisome thing to listen for months to the news of this dark region without anything to turn our thoughts away to the world of light & civilization. After the first two sentences were penned an instance of what we have to listen to perpetually occurred in the arrival of two messengers from a chief concerning his gun, somebody is tailor to her Majesty But I am gun mender to all - the tribes ~~ne~~ & their sovereign in the Interior. The chief of the Bamangueto sent all the way here for assistance in that particular, and I am sure you would smile if you heard the supplicating tone assumed by that as well as other potentates when their guns are "dead" And the authoritative tone I assume in threatening to withhold any aid if one drop of human blood is ever shed by fire arms In Sekhomi's case I threaten if he attacks the Bakaas (As he recently attempted to do) I shall not only refuse aid but prevent white men selling guns to him for all time to come. As they are aware we possess some influence with our countrymen - these threats make them almost turn pale lest we put them into execution. I think I told you in my last [letter] that Sechele the chief to whom we have transferred our more stated labours refrained from attacking the murderers of his father "because he would not break his promise to his missionary" We had recently at Chonuane a number of visitors from a very numerous tribe to the E.S.E. of us, they are of the Toolah or Matibele race and came to sell leglets of brass manufactured by themselves & many of them had cloaks of cotton cloth

I do not know what to do with the dress sent for M^{rs} Edwards. I did a great deal for her & M^r E. Indeed the latter

was permitted to occupy the post of missionary in the interior entirely by my consenting to going in his company
But no sooner was he made a full missionary than he

[0002]

they have seen the sea & describe all that region as densely populated. An old one eyed doctor asked me if I were one of the beings who go in ships and have eyes behind as well as before, and on my exhibiting my head, he began gravely to inform me that such creatures were actually in existence. ! O when will these regions feel the influence of the Sun of Righteousness. the articles you kindly sent and for which if I have not thanked you before I now most heartily do, are very usef[ul] indeed on occasions such as the above they are very anxious to obtain a little thing or two to shew they have been to the white man; and when we have a little influence over them we can use it in the prevention of wars & bloodshed. A party of Korranas attacked a villag[e] about 12 miles from Mabotsa while I was at Chounane & M^{rs} L at Mabotsa. they killed three people & took away their cattle Mosheu the person mentioned in M^r Moffats work took the cattle from the depradators & sent them back to the proper owners. I went to Chounane in order to prevent something of the sort there in company with a son of Sir William Cummin[g] to Forres As he is a real highlander he had a great inclination to follow the marauders in order to retake the cattle. He was on a hunting expedition in the Banyamgmato country and though deserted by all his people there brought out £800 worth of ivory. Mebaloe went in to help him when we heard of his misfortun[e] and found him with a broken axle. I made a new one for him and he generously gave at a low price coffee &c sufficient to serve us for nearly two years to come. As he has been in the army & is well bred we enjoyed his company. Only thank Mary. he gave us a few numbers of "Punch". Did I not enjoy the jokes on the poor River and that sort of thing became offended because he was not also my superior As he has a most unfortunate temper I think he would compel her to return it He forced her against her sense of duty to leave Mabotsa for the pleasure of being confined in Matita in order that might not assist on that occasion

[0003]

We have been dependant on Kuruman for all our supplies untill now when after a great deal of work & expense I got my garden into bearing order and from 5 1/2 buckets of wheat we reaped 166 by leaving I must begin the same thing over again but we are now providentially supplied for a long time to come M^r P's turnips do well, the clover & rape seed I have not yet tried but the oats still retain their vegetative power - the turnips are a most valuable accession to our articles of diet We thank you sincerely for them. the cows here do not eat Lucerne I dont know whether they eat clover but we shall try. Each cow gives just about a glass of milk morning & evening during winter: I am half or quarter of a farmer now A scotch gentleman gave me many hints when here lately indeed had he not come we might through sheer ignorance have lost our crop. He promised to send us seeds &c from Scotland and another gentleman from India promised to send lots of all sorts from India. All desire me to write them but I must attend to my old friends before those more recently known. M^r Cumming is delighted with the climate & country and talks of colonizing us Highlanders. A great charm to him in it is [...]abundance of game. He himself shot 29 elephants and other kinds of wild animals are without number He had 2 lions in the number of his trophies. Lately while walking over from Chounane to Mabotsa during the night (a distance of 45 miles) in consequence of the illness of my rib. We came near to two of these animals. As I & two of the people were in advance we sat down to wait for the other two who had fallen behind. the lions then began to roar very near us, which made us light up a fire immediately We were so tired we all fell asleep in about 5 minutes but having been awakened before day break we went on & when it was quite light we came close upon two very large animals which quitely moved off this was well for it was then raining so fast we were wet wading ankle deep & the gun would not have fired. We went close by an enormous herd of buffaloes the same morning.

M^r Ross is doing well at E Tauns. A great many believers have collected under the wily old chief Bahura and many conversions are taking place since. M^{rs} R finds great difficulty in managing her little unruly members.

M^r Inglis has begun with Bahrutse & I hope he will succeed

[0004]

I do not remember whether I thank Bernard for his bullets but I believe I spoke about a pistol. I should now feel

more obliged by a thermometer made for the purpose of measuring from the boiling point of water at the level of the sea. Newman 122 Regent St. is the maker most approved and as my better half intends to trouble M^{rs} P. to select some gown pieces for her the instrument may be put to the same account. If well I shall send a bill to M^r P about april next Part of it is for dresses & part for the assistance of my parents . We both admire M^{rs} Ps taste so much ^ exhibited in the things sent

Care of the Rev^d D^e Philip Cape Town
Benjamin Pyne Esq^{re}
Wildingtree, Ongar
single Essex

We proceed to the impudence above referred to. We need strong dark coloured prints But M^{rs} L will give the necessary information. She is a good deal of an African in complexion a stout stumpy lady so you will have no difficulty in selecting the proper sort of thing after this explanation. In my next I shall give you more missionary information that this contains . Kind regards to all. thanks to M^r J for the great trouble he took in the case of the last bill If I have not mentioned all the articles recieved it is not because I feel nothing in the way of gratitude