

Letter to Benjamin T. Pyne, 22 December 1841

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Kuruman 22^d Dec^r 1841

My very dear friends

Afraid lest when you hear of the reception of a letter from me by M^{rs} Cecil you should think I had forgotten you I hasten to send you one too & hope although it is of a later date it will be favoured with a more speedy passage than the other. I am now quite recovered from the effects of a long journey I made in company with M^r Edwards into the Interior and lest you should feel anyway concerned about my comforts I may mention that I have as many as I can desire; M^r & M^{rs} E. are excellent people The longer I live with them I like them the better. Perhaps you will be pleased to hear I was not permitted to commence housekeeping here. M^r & M^{rs} E. insisted that they should take all of the trouble of lodging me &c. And although I felt loathe to put them to any additional trouble I was fairly compelled to it They likewise entertain Good old M^r Hamilton in the same manner Another friend! whom you know has not conducted himself in the most amiable manner to myself, is behaving in rather a strange sort of way to our bretheren here. Indeed I cant help thinking he is what you in England call a sort of imbecile. But he had ability enough to vex me thoroughly on sundry occasions. It will & I hope has done me good notwithstanding the nauseousness of the draughts

Our journey was very long for this is a country of prodigious extent & the people live far apart from each other. We however visited some who had not previously been visited by missionaries Traders have been much farther than we & they endure more fatigue in search of ivory than we do in endeavouring to gather in immortal souls to the Saviour's Kingdom. But I hope this wont be said again with truth: We hope to do more for souls after this than the men of the world for gain I intend soon to go into the Interior again. & I perhaps will go farther than in this last Journey. for although we travelled about 700 miles we were not more than 250 directly North. Circumstances compelled us to go in the hottest season of the year, but you cant understand ^ what heat of Sun means by feeling his summer rays in England; When we came even here although the difference in latitude is not great. It felt quite cool & pleasant compared to the Interior the sun was "indeed Angry Angry" a native expression in the wide wide waterless plains of that region - I dont want to magnify my

sufferings or call them such for I bore it I thought quite as well as the natives. I only wish to give you an idea of the country I am to consider my own hereafter. It was really intolerably hot. The very flies sought the shade & the enormous centipedes coming out by mistake I suppose from their holes were roasted to death on the burning sand

I have seen several of the Bechuana chiefs & my candid opinion of them all except one is they are a set of hereditary downright asses & it is no scandal to say so for generally they are much more insignificant in every [...] respect than to poorest of the people. They are good for nothing but begging

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Water is very scarce towards the north But there is plenty of game both large & small near all the watering places, so we usually got something to eat as well as drink at them. And then if you saw the mirth & laughter of the natives when cutting up an animal you should feel perhaps more strongly the meaning of the expression "rejoicing as in the day of slaughter" then you have before - Great numbers of the natives always turned out with us from every village in order to get a share of whatever might be killed. & It did not matter although we killed nothing for the first 40 or 50 miles. If they got after that a backful of meat they returned rejoicing in their good success. Sometimes at night an amusing circumstance occurred putting as sudden a stop to their laughing roasting & stewing, as if a thunderbolt had fallen amongst them. The approach of a wild animal towards our fires, then there was such a rushing for spears guns &c the belly was entirely forgotten in our anxiety to do some valorous action - but courage was ~~not~~ never at night (fortunately for us) put to the test. If it had it might have been found wanting

We saw all the large game of this country except the Elephant & we saw abundance of marks where he had recently been. They must have immense power for large "camel thorn trees" a kind of mimosa with wood so hard it cant be worked by our chisels &c. were lying twisted down to the ground, or split down the centre in order to allow them to eat the branches at the top. They must have great power of digestion too for the branches they had eaten were as thick as my thumb & covered with large strong thorns more than an inch in length The Giraffe is very beautiful & so are the Zebra & ostrich but the Rhinoceros is like a huge pig; we got one Zebra as large as M^f Ps grey mare & the meat was very good - But the people will be more interesting [to] you than wild beasts Although I believe the latter are greater in number than the former. They are quite a timid race of people, & there is not the least danger to be apprehended by any European traveling amongst them. They can be cruel enough to each other but are very much afraid of the "whites"

The terrible effects of the guns of a few boers has contributed more than anything else to produce this fear of us & now through the whole country they have an impression that "whites" are decidedly their superiors - Everywhere we were received with respect but more especially by those who had never seen a white face before. My hair was in their eyes a very curious affair indeed and the wife of one of the chiefs very innocently put up her hand to my nose to make herself sure by the sense of feeling that it really was so far elevated from the level of my face as it appeared to be & were not like her own little flat thing. When told of the creation it seemed strange to them how one father should have some children with such sharp noses white skins & eyes that can see everything while others had flat noses

Jany 4th 1842 No opportunity seems likely to occur of sending this but I leave it with M^r Hamilton I am about to start for a distant part of the country Yours Affectionately DL I expect letters from you
& M^r Moore when I return

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short hair & their skins like pots - About praying to God they had many strange notions. Because we kneeled & bowed down our head they thought our God must surely be in the ground. One woman told me when I was looking at some of them drawing water out of a deep well that she would pray to God after this. The nature of her prayers I suppose will be like that of one of her countrymen who told me a day or two afterwards when he & I were returning from shooting a Rhinoceros that he had prayed for success in getting game before we went & now the prayer was answered. We sometimes had to exert ourselves considerably in pursuit of game to supply the wants of our people. It was no easy matter in the midst of such heat. some people might blame a missionary assuming the character of a huntsman but if they knew the toil connected with it they would never suspect he did it from motives of pleasure - They are very superstitious. We had 8 with us from the Bo-quain tribe. (Bakuain) who come for the purpose of trading with an elephants tooth & a few skins they had got one of them a hearty openhearted youth who had been a soldier of the notorious Marauder Moselekatsi & had with his own hands killed 3 men, attached himself to me as a particular friend of mine (we have in almost every village a particular friend and although the chief burden of the friendship rests upon us we encourage it for when arriving at a village our friend is sure to turn out with a bowl of porridge, milk or boiled beans which we is really most acceptable after livin chiefly on meat for some time) As I liked this hearty fellow I allowed him to ride sometimes. But one day I requested him to bring me a human bone lying near. With an exclam[-] -ation of horror he replied, "My friend how can you ask me

to do that. How can I love you after this. Nobody but bewitchers use human bones. I am afraid you are one." And from that time he never would even look into my waggon he traveled about 200 miles after that on foot

In order to try him I promised to reward him if he should bring it but he declared he would not do it Although I should give him as much as he had agreed for with Mr E. to go as servant to Graham's town & back again, first going home to his own country to ask his father's consent, see his wife & child & then return. The whole distance he offered to travel being about 1500 miles - He was quite friendly in all other respects, a most obliging fellow but that he could not get over at all — I am sorry I said the baby's clothes were not the thing for me. I hope you did not think me saucy. I know in M^{rs} Phillips hands they will be applied to good purpose & even in my own hands they would have been of considerable use. I should have liked to have had one suit of them now for a child that has been named not David L. but Monari Livingston, or Master L. & very likely they will add the word for D^r yet so my poor little black representative will have a handle to both ends of his name. I may mention for the

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benefit of the young folks. The condition of the females is very degraded indeed they are sold for oxen &c, when mere children to be wives to those who perhaps have several already. The men care not how many they have for as the women sow the corn & cultivate all the other articles of consumption as well as build the houses; The more wives the more corn &c. and when they are old or a little ugly from disease they are put away & must shift for themselves by digging up roots until they perish from hunger or are devoured by wild beasts. Do your young people value their privileges? I am sure if they for one night only heard the dismal howling of the wolf or were once wakened up with a start by the horrid roar of the lion, they would never forget them & I think they would pray more earnestly for the spread of the gospel into these dark places of the earth - A poor little girl was brought to me at one village she had been enduring intense pain in her eyes from a certain disease for about a month and now they had both burst. During all that time she had no comforts neither by night nor by day. Although I had to adopt severe measures to stop the disease. She never complained, And this was a solitary case amongst many. Many both men & women were so ill they could not crawl to the waggon. They have no comfort here & they have no hope of anything better in the world to come - I could fill a letter. many letters telling you about their sorrows but this will suffice. Pray for the outpouring of the spirit upon our feeble labours that they may result in turning many of these heathen to the Lord — You have I hope heard from M^r Drummond. Please let me know how the lad

goes on. In expectation that I shall soon hear from you
by letters long since sent. I am yours Affectionately D Livingston
I have heard from T W S Taylor & we have heard 8 missionaries
were set apart as designated in Barbican Chapel for S. Africa
& India. & I wish to hear if Moore & Inglis are coming by
but patience, Please direct by way of D^r Phillip
~~Care of Rev^d D^r Phillip Cape Town~~
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