

Letter to H. Bartle E. Frere, 1 February 1867

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

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Bemba. 1st February 1867.

Copy

~~My dear Sir Bartle,~~

~~By the first opportunity I have met with since we left the coast I send a Despatch for Lord Clarendon, & a request to D^r Seward to copy it for your private information. It does not coincide with the views of Col: Pelly, and I assure you it was not without long and anxious thought that I ventured to differ with him [from] him. I do not refer to him by name but feeling convinced that his reasoning as to the continuance of the Zanzibar Slave trade is untenable I beg that you will do me the favour to read a portion at least of what I have written. My sorrowful convictions have been deepened by all I have seen of the working of the system, & the dire ruin which for the sake of this paltry island annually overtakes much larger & more beautiful portions of Country. I have been quite unable to copy it myself. I had no prospect of sending coast wise, but here I met a party of black Arab slave traders from Bagamois, near Zanzibar, and while they agree to take a packet they will not wait more than half a day for me to write; they have come here for the first time - About 10° 10' south Lat. & 31° 50' East Long.~~

We have been a long time in making our way here, but some of the delay was pleasant for I had intercourse with people who had not engaged in the slave trade. We came round

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round the south end of the Lake. I was apprehensive if I took my Johanna men round the Northern Extremity they would bolt at the first sight of danger. They actually did run away on mere report of the doings of the terrible Mazitu or Zulus & I was left with a following of nine Africans, six of whom are Nassick boys. The Johanna men had proved themselves such thieves it was a relief to get rid of them. The most influential chief on the watershed between coast & Lake, called Mataka wished very much that some of the boys

would remain with him & shew the use that could be made of his cattle in Agriculture. Abraham met two uncles there, but no entreaty would induce him to remain though Mataka was extremely liberal & seemed to please them all. "How can I stop where I have no mother & no sister?" was the invariable reply. I promised to try & get some boys acquainted with Indian Agriculture from the same school; but the system for teaching for India & not for Africa had better be ~~recalled~~ altered. Abraham has done good service to me since so I have no reason to be dissatisfied with him. // I was obliged to go very ~~carefully~~ cautiously, and seven or eight miles was all we could accomplish in a day. We went Westwards from the heel of the Lake - ascended Kirk's range which is only the edge of a plateau densely ~~populated~~ peopled with various tribes of Manganja who have not yet engaged in slaving. After going Westwards till we were past the Longitude of the Mazitu, we turned to the North, & taking up the point we left off at in 1863 we continued our Northerly course, at times making a little westing. We crossed the wide valley in which the Loangua flows - the bed of an ancient Lake - the ascended the heights of Lobisa in the Southern borders of Lat. 11° South. Here we came to
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to a depopulated country - an immense forest. The Babisa were eager slavetraders & the ruin that has followed that traffic is now apparent in only a few hamlets occurring at wide intervals - & small patches of a species of Millet at various parts in the jungle. The people had little or no grain to sell. They were living on Mushrooms chiefly, good only for producing dreams of roast beef of bygone days. While in the valley of the Loangua we had plenty of game & easily kept the pots boiling, but here not a beast was to be seen, & daily trudging through dripping sloppy forests with the feet almost constantly wet, and gnawing hunger in the inner man took the flesh off our bones. We crossed the Chambeze, as Zambeze is here called, in Lat. 10° 34' S. only 40 yards wide. but it had plenty of animals on its banks & we soon got a supply of meat. This, the chief town of this side of Bemba has a treble stockade round it - the inner line having a deep ditch besides. If not mistaken we are on the water shed between Chambeza and Luapula which is said to flow into Lake Tanganiyka. It is said to be very large but I hope to let you know better from the Lake itself where I hope to find letters & our second supply of goods. We are 4,500 feet above the sea, the

temperature cool & the rains more abundant than I ever saw them in Africa - very few days pass without a shower. The Interior is chiefly forest & excessively leafy - one can see but a little way of on an elevation. The Gum copal tree, another, a Cres Alpinca, abound, with Rhododendrons & various evergreen tress - the two first furnish the bark cloth with is the principal clothing of the people. We have had no difficulties with the natives. Hunger & wet have been our greatest hindrances We could not for some time find out where the Portuguese route

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to Cazembalay but it has been placed by the map makers too far East. Hence they had no mountain chains such as we have met with. The watershed between Loangua & Chambeze is 6,600 feet above the sea - They went in search of ivory and slaves.

In case the sepoys destroyed my letter which I sent back with them I may say that their scheme was to force me to return as soon as they had killed all the beasts of burden. The Havildar actually payed in behalf of the rest eight Rupees to our Arab guide to feed & lead them back to the coast. When found out there was a good deal of blubbering & they eagerly accepted a sentence to carry light loads. They obeyed none of the Havildar's orders he evidently conniving with them. They were an intolerable drag & frustrated the best means I could devise for securing provisions namely by my going forward and sending in all directions for food. They would not march if I were not present & even then when I was out of sight they lay down & slept. On finding that one Bunado threatened to shoot a Nassick boy when he got him out of English power I sent them back with ample cloth in the hands of a merchant to pay all expenses. The Havildar came on but could be made of no use in any way - & when we heard at the Lake that the seven Mahometans of the party had remained at Matakas where food was abundant in order probably to let their pay accumulate while they played the mendicant the Havildar became sulky and shammed unaccountable pains in his feet & returned to join the others.

Mataka's town & country are the most likely for a permanent settlement to be made. It is elevated & cool. English peas were in full bearing & bloom in July

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July. the altitude is over 3000 feet & his country is

mountainous & abounds in running streams the sources of the Rovuma. D^r Norman Macleod promised me to try & get some German missionaries from Harmsburg in Hanover & salaries for them if I could indicate a locality. these same men go without salaries & are artificers of different kinds but this is a mistake they ought to have a little for some of them have in sheer wont taken to selling brandy even - but at Makata's they could easily raise wheat by sowing it at the proper time, & native produce by planting when the rains come - but it would require a leader of some energy - & not a fellow who would wring his hands if he had no sugar & his tea. I have almost forgotten the taste of sugar, & tea is made by roasting a little Joare & calling the decoction either tea or coffee. I have written to the D^r & given some account of the difficulties to be overcome. 300 miles is a long way to go but I feel more & more convinced that Africa must be christianized from within.

Believe me affectionately yours

(signed) David Livingstone

His Highness the Sultan did all he could for us & was extremely kind but his people to whom I bore an epistle all skeddaddled as soon as they heard that the "English were coming. " The Dhowes (2) on the Lake were kept out of my way lest I should burn them as slavers! & I could not get across the middle of the Lake.