

Letter to John Washington, 5 March 1861

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

6 March Lyra in sight

Rovuma Bay

5th March 1861

Dear Captain Washington

We have been

here eight days waiting
for H.M.S. Lyra with
coals - cannot conceive
what detains her as
we expected her on the
1st and Captain Oldfield
is not the man to
delay without cause.

Rovuma promises
fairly. A very large
deep bay. the

[0002]

river's mouth a mile
wide, and no bar.

M^r May got no
bottom at seventeen
fathoms across the
mouth. An immense
body of water rushes
out. We went up
some eight miles in
the boat and found
it to be in full flood
High land begins
about that distance
from the mouth
so we seem to have
a very short delta

[0003]

It [(country)] is well wooded &
many snags shew
that character higher
up. People speak
the same language
as at Senna (nearly)

so we shall get on.
We expect the Bishop
by Lyra. He agreed,
not without a pang,
to postpone landing
in Africa for three
months. This takes
him over the three
most unhealthy into
the three most healthy

[0004]
months of the year and
should Rovuma
answer our expectations
he will make his
settlement there & so
will we quite away
from Portuguese
pretensions. Had we
taken them up to
Murchison's Cataracts
it would have been
subjecting them to
the risk run by the
Linyanti mission
His (the bishop's) luggage
& some of his people
are landed at Johanna

[0005]
Should Rovuma not prove favourable we
can go back to Shire & in the healthiest time

as soon as we see
that there is a pathway
to Nyassa we go
to examine it while the
Pioneer goes to Johanna
to bring the whole
party. We believe the
language may be
studied there as it is
said to be the Makoa
dialect. We like
what we have seen
of the bishop and
his party very much
and rejoice much
to see them as the

[0006]

first installment of
a mission destined
I hope to do great good
in Africa

I have to beg you
to correct a mistake
into which I fell in
the prescription of our
famous Fever Powder
We went over to the
N.W. to examine
whether a creek shown
in the chart as a
mouth were really so.
It opens into the bay

[0007]

near its northern extremity
but it is simply a creek,
there is a mouth more
to the N.W. - no doubt as
we got into a goodly
stream of fresh water
by going S.W. and
went all day without
regaining the main
stream [in the West] of Rovuma
sleeping in the boat
I waked & recollected
that I had given the
proportion of calomel
which ought to have
been Rhubarb &
should you send the

[0008]

enclosed to D^r MacWilliam
this mistake will be
corrected

M^r May knows his
work and I am right
glad of the prospect
of getting at last
to mine. We cannot
part with our white
crew, and a month
in the river will be
no great risk. We
promise them double

pay while in the river. I keep
Rowe as he is of great
use to us ashore.

David Livingstone