

Letter to Charles M. Hay, 26 November 1860

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

[0001]

Tette 26th Nov^r 1860.

My Dear General Hay

It was extremely

kind in you to remember me,
as you have done. I have had good
reason to remember you, and
though you have recieved no
evidence of it again & again and
again has it been brought to my
recollection how much I owe
to you and your delightful home
in the Mauritius. Indeed you
set me so completely up, that
all the tear & wear of a fearful
lionizing, though it wearied me
sorely, never broke me down,
and I have not had one
severe attack of fever since
my return. Had I gone home
at once in 1856 and gone through
the terrible ordeal, then come out

[0002]

I could not have done the work I do
now. We have just finished a
march of 1400 miles in six months.
We went up the river in order to
return the Makololo to their own land
keeping along the North bank of the
Zambesi till we were in Lat. 17^o 18 South
and about 28^o East Long. then turned
away Westward ascending the
Highlands near Tabacheu where
we saw hoar frost & a little ice
then descended Westwards into the
great central valley, to our old friends
the Makololo. When within 20 miles
of the Falls which I named after our
Queen we saw the columns of smoke
and went down to see this great
sight. I have no hesitation now
in saying that there is none equal to

it in strangeness in the world. the
breadth is not one but nearly two
thousand yards and it falls sheer
down 310 feet. The river was very
low and we could see everything clearly
The whole river leaps into a crack & this
crack is prolonged in the most fantastic
manner - the country below or East of
the falls being quite as high as the lip over

[0003]

which the Zambesi rolls - try if you can
understand this scrawl. All these

promontories are of the same
level as the bed of the river
above the falls and ~~and~~
over 300 feet sheer down
has the river of a mile wide
jammed into a crack some eighty or
100 feet wide at the bottom. A most
extensive coal field extends from below
Tette to near Victoria Falls. In some places
a steamer could load out of the seam in
the bank of the river. These falls will
be visited and coal worked when we are
no longer here to write & talk about them
I hail with great satisfaction the
formation of the Oxford & Cambridge
mission, and I shall count it a
privilege to do whatever I can to aid
the Bishop and his clergy. It was the
best news I have heard in Africa
and most heartily do I thank Him
who has put the good purpose into
his servants hearts. No where do
people stand more in need of christianity
and civilization than the Africans
and if this mission is carried on
with faith & patience there is no
doubt but good will eventually be
done both to Africa & England.
It seems to me that we ought in all
our plans for the good of others

[0004]

specially remember our own home
poor - our honest poor - This leads me
to think of a small colony as likely to do
immense good. Accompanied as it
will be by this mission with the religious

element I do not apprehend those frightful scenes which have occurred elsewhere (except New Zealand). As for the poor Portuguese, I must say nothing, but you "can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear"

We found the chief Sekeletu labouring under a skin disease believed to be leprosy the effect of course of witchcraft & several influential head men had been put to death for the crime. We tried to put him to rights during our short stay and his spirits revived. We found that a missionary party from the London Society had been nearly [all] cut off by fever at Linyanti. I regret this extremely as the very time they were perishing we at a lower & more unhealthy part of the river were curing the disease so quickly that a patient would be stricken down and resume his march on foot a day or at most two after the operation of the remedy. This remedy I found effectual as long ago as 1850 and ever since I have not lost a case but I forbore to puff. I could not be a quack and grieve now that the missionaries did not know it. We publish the composition now. Do drop me a line at your leizure & you will oblige
yours affectionately David Livingstone