

Letter to Unknown, 19 March 1857

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[0001]

1 MS 21
57 Sloane St
19th March
1857

Dear Sir

I beg you will
accept my sincere
thanks for the trouble
you have taken
about the hoes.
and will now
give the information
your friend desires
The smaller hoes

[0002]

2
were given me by
Sekeletu whose town
is situated in Lat 18° 17'
south & Long 23 50'
East. for the purpose
of purchasing a canoe
when I should strike
the Zambesi in my
Eastern course. They
were insufficient for
the purpose so I brought
them home. He got
them from his subjects
the Batoka as tribute

[0003]

3
The Batoka live East

of him in Lat 16° & 17° S.
Long 25°-26° East
They smelt & work
the iron from the
ore which occurs
in rounded masses
all over their country
and may be detached
from beds in which
they lie with pointed
sticks. It occurs
in large quantity on
the North bank of
the Zambesi above

[0004]

4
Tete called the country
of the Basengo. I
brought specimens
of it and they are
now in the museum
of practical geology
Jermyn St. One of
these is the specular
iron ore. The Basengo
work it as well
as the Batoka. There
can be no doubt
of it being purely a
native manufacture

[0005]

5 MS 21
The other ^ or larger hoes are
said to have been
made by some tribes
near Quilimane
I got them from
Colonel Dunes
of that village as
an addition to
the Batoka hoes.
~~from that gentleman~~
when I mentioned
^ to him that I meant to get
the iron tested and if

possible make a gun

[0006]

6 he made an addition of the large ones
barrel of them ^so
I think there can be
little doubt but that
they too are ^ a purely
native manufacture
if the inability of
your friend to make
a rifle arises from
want of material
only. I have two
still by. me. wy-one
of each sort. I should
have most confidence
in the Batoka iron

[0007]

7
as I have seen its
great toughness when
an assegai or spear
of it lighted on the
cranium of a hippo-
potamus it curled
up.
[Illustration of curled up Batoka iron.] instead
of breaking and the
owner straightened
it again cold with
two stones. could a
gun of any kind be
made of it? Or
anything else to test
its power. I should

[0008]

8
be glad to be able to
refer to your friends
opinion of the iron
in my work
Apart from the above

I am anxious to order
two good rifles for
about £15 each = double
barrelled - not highly
finished but quite
trustworthy. One is
for Sekeletu the other
for myself - I left
the ivory which
Sekeletu sent to purchase

[0009]

9 MS 21
his at Quilimeane
but will pay with
my won money
here.
I would not object
to giving more
than £15 say £20
if your friend
thinks I could not
get a reliable article
cheaper. I understand
the prices of rifles
are enhanced by

[0010]

10
the high finish. that
I care little about
and only want
the weapon made
of good stuff &
able to do its duty
I cannot exp[...][e]ct
you to write about
these matters but
as your brother
in law probably
knows the smith
to be a man on

[0011]

whose honour one
can depend I shall
feel obliged if
you give me his
address so that
if he is willing
to oblige me by
taking a small
order I may
apply to him myself
I want also
to send a gun for repairs
will you oblige me

[0012]

12
by letting me know
also the place of
business of the gun
smith. I have been
so long out of the
world I feel quite
bewilde[...][r]ed in trying
to send anything
anywhere. Please
do not trouble yourself
to write a long note
about this offer
Believe me yours &C
David Livingstone