

## Letter to Agnes Livingstone 3, 8 February 1866

*Livingstone, David, 1813-1873*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

Good night. Love to Madame Hocede,  
DL

Zanzibar 8<sup>th</sup> February  
1866

My Dear Nannie

As H M S. Wasp goes  
to Mauritius on 10<sup>th</sup> though  
I gave you a pretty long letter  
by the Vigilant which went  
of yesterday, I may add a little  
by this conveyance. and then  
you may feel bound at  
some future time to write  
to me when there may be no  
possibility of [my] answering. I  
am happy to hear that D<sup>E</sup>  
Kirk is coming out here as  
surgeon to the Resident  
Political Agent which is  
almost sure to end in his  
succeeding to that office itself  
He will be of great use to  
every good cause out here  
& then I can write to one in  
whom I have entire confidence

[0002]

It is not a good climate by  
any means. Rae's brother  
came out here to supply George's  
place. He has been ill ten days  
and died last night. Miss  
Tozer had to go off to the Seychelles  
yesterday in ill health and  
D<sup>E</sup> & M<sup>ES</sup> Seward have just  
come back from those islands  
whither he went nearly dead  
four months ago. The town  
is by the shore on a tongue of  
land behind which the sea  
comes. The shore is indescribably

filthy & provocative of holding  
the nose. The island to look  
at is extremely beautiful.  
Groves of coconut palms,  
mangrove topes & groves  
of clove trees flourish  
in perpetual greenness, but it is  
a sickly place. Slaves swarm  
and they seem to have collected  
all the ugliest of their race  
from Africa. One never  
sees a face on which the eye

[0003]

rest with pleasure & this  
is the "fair sex"! I know their  
tribal marks. Nearly all  
come from Lake Nyassa  
and beyond it. One woman  
said to me that she had  
heard of my passing in a  
boat but she did not see  
me. Another came from  
hundreds of miles beyond  
the Lake. The slave owners  
go about in the slave mar  
ket here with a woman or  
a child held by the hand  
calling out "seven dollars"  
"seven dollars." The highest  
was 20 dollars. They sit in  
rows looking dejected &  
ashamed. An Arab or a  
Persian comes forward &  
raises up a girl - opens her  
mouth & examines her  
teeth - then her limbs &

[0004]

enquires how any scar was  
got. A wound from the lash  
decreases the value because  
it shews that she has been  
obstinate or disobedient - He  
usually ends by throwing  
his stick 20 yards or so &  
makes her walk for it to  
see as a horse dealer would  
say "her paces." One of my  
men was with me & he  
became very much excited

on seeing "wives for sale."  
all dressed up with flowers,  
and eyebrows painted. He  
said in English "Wife all  
same sister. All same as  
mother. Arab man sell wife  
very bad oh very bad. &  
he began to protest to them  
so energetically I had to take  
him away. One said to him

[0005]

you are the same as we  
no said he "I am an  
Englishman"

The Sultan gave me  
a house and he furnishes  
food and everything we  
need. He insisted on sending  
Lieutenant Brebnor and  
the crew of the Thule back  
to Bombay in one of his  
men of war The Nadir Shah  
while it is getting ready all  
our men are entertained  
at the Sultan's expense.  
This is rather handsome  
and if he would only  
give up slaving he  
would be a "brick" of a  
Sultan. but his chief  
income is derived from

[0006]

this source. We had our  
formal presentation  
after D<sup>r</sup> Seward came -  
the toothache was nearly  
gone and he insisted  
on meeting us & again  
coming down to shake  
hands in the street. I  
told him what Sir Bartle  
Frere said to the South  
Mahratta princes on the  
necessity of education  
and if they did not  
make some exertion  
to get knowledge power  
would slip through their  
fingers & they would be

left behind in the race  
I meant him of course  
to make the application

[0007]

to himself - I mentioned  
the power of steam & the  
gift of the Thule  
evidence that our <sup>Gov</sup>  
wished him to be a  
participator in that power  
We did not wish to mo-  
nopolize it. Everything  
he could send to Bombay  
for sale would find a  
ready market there. We  
needed grain of all sorts  
as rice - dura - in fact  
everything but slaves”  
he laughed at my last  
remark. Told me he would  
help me as much as he  
could now & at all future  
times - and I was never to  
have any shame in telling  
him what to do for me.

[0008]

Among Orientals this does  
not mean much but  
we must be Thankful for  
even the smallest con-  
tributions. His house has  
the only flower garden in  
the island. It abounds in  
roses which are free to  
use. The couches are mag-  
nificent and to keep the  
sepoys up to the mark  
the Havildar has made  
them mount guard at the  
door. A Portuguese has the  
contract for supplying us  
with provisions because  
he speaks English & is  
supposed to know English  
tastes. He did not know  
that there is no love lost between  
that nation & me. I did not  
pay the last letters. They went  
off unintentionally unpaid