

Letter to Robert Moffat, 17 August 1856

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Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org), 2020

[0001]

H. M. Brig Frolic

Mauritius 17th Aug. of 1856

My Dear Father

As the supercargo of a ship
wrecked of Quilimane came with us
thus far and now leaves for the Cape
I give you a note in addition to a scrap
written while still on the African soil.
and which goes by the same hand.
I took the chief man of the party of
Sekeletu's people who accompanied
me to the coast with the intention of
showing him the benefits which
Christianity has conferred on us as a
nation. In going over the bar at
Quilimane three breakers rolled over us
and frightened him terribly. His large
brig of 16 guns rolled at anchor with
her bows under the boat seemed to
rise up as high as the top of your church
windows then down to the ground. We had

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to be taken on board in a chair. I thought
my friend looked bewildered ever after that
but all the seamen ^ (130) liked him so much & he
them I thought he would do well. He became
leaner however, saw a steamer towing us
into this harbour, became mad during the
night. Turned completely against all but
myself, yet when I went near him he
threatened to leap overboard. As he became
better during the day I objected to using
constraint lest it should make him
worse and in the event of non-cure he
might retain the remembrance of it and
prejudice his countrymen against me -
spoke quite rationally at midday but in
the evening became worse and tried to
stab an officer ^ (chief Carpenter) one of his great cronies

then ran down and pulled himself below
the water by the chain cable & disappeared
this is a great affliction for he was my
right hand man and contributed greatly
to my success. I felt deeply grateful to
him and wished to shew it. Sekeletu told
them that all must go with me to MaRobert

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and when I spoke of the possibility of death
ensuing all said well it will be in the
service of Morena. I found great difficulty
in preventing others from coming though I
explained the danger. Those who are wise
after the fact will say O what will they
not? I am as wise as any of them vow
and bear the sorrow of the loss of a very
good friend besides. If you have an opportunity
send word of the death to Sekeletu. To break
the shock his name was Sekuebu.

Another called Monaheng a good man
too went mad and fled from the camp
we never saw him again & the country
being full of lions we never will.
He walked with me & spoke quite well
the day before. But the tribe to which we
came refused a bit of cloth we offered
made a dance with all their arms in
their hands - firing guns, shrieking &c &c.
He thought we were about to be attacked
and when we lay down he was observed
to rise up and point to the town - "there" "there
they are" fled I believe insane - Excitement
of seeing so many new things at once

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I believe upset Sekuebu's brain and excitement
from dangers upset that of poor Monaheng
(Monageñ) I have been seven times in peril of
life, not from choice certainly. What do you
say Ma Mary. Anything you like but you
have two daughters and may yet get other
two but though you had four parishes
to pick out of you would not get a
pluckie son in law though your
spectacles were on in the search. There's
no going about the bush in that. Is there?

Will you add also in case of an
opportunity that 20 tusks are left at
Quilimane and all the goods Sekeletu
commissioned will be purchased
by my own money and if I return I
can then pay my self out of the ivory
and if I die I have ordered the military
commandant of Quilimane to sell
the tusks and give the proceeds to
Sekeletu's men so though I am dead
I am not in his debt. Love to Ma Mary
Anne &c. Affectionately yours
& Betsie & Mebaloe David Livingston