

Letter to George Grey, February 1863

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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River Shire Feb^y 1863 14

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Dear Sir George

We have been very much
baffled in our work since you left and our
prospects now are far from bright - We are
engaged in the transport of the steamer "the
Lady of the Lake" past Murchison's cataracts
and while hoping to do something effectual
towards stopping a stream of slaves of above
20 000 annually that passes from the
Lake region towards Quiloa - the Red Sea and
Persian Gulph, we look back ruefully
on the doings of the Portuguese behind us -
It is but lately that I have come to understand
their system - because during the past
few years the French slave emigration was
chiefly supplied by raids to the North of Quillimane
and we saw but little of it - the valley of
the Zambesi had previously been depopulated.
Last year however the Tette people followed
on our spoor - supplied one tribe with guns
and ammunition to be paid in slaves -
The tribe attacked fled to the Shire - famine
succeeded and we saw as we ascended
many dead bodies floating past the victims
of famine and slave hunting - Another person
engaged in slave hunting in the country
adjacent to Mount Clarendon - He is a half
caste and is said to possess a thousand
armed slaves - flight to the river and famine
have done their work lower down than
where the Tette people have acted - Two others
have set up slave hunting on their own
responsibility and the authorities never
interfere until the marauder has accumulated
spoil enough to make him worth squeezing
The missionaries fled down to Chibisa's & are "as well as could be expected"

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This system going on with the connivance of the Governors - We caught some of the Governor of Tette's own slaves at it - It seems evident that the good effects expected from the operations of the cruisers cannot be realized - In the West great success has attended their efforts in the way the promoters of the suppression policy intended - the slave trade was repressed for a time to allow the influences of Christianity to extend inland At least 20 missions have been established an equal number of dialects have been reduced to writing - thousands are educated about 12 000 communicants are members of the different churches, and lawful trade has extended from £20 000 annually to between £2,000,000 and £3 000 000 - Indeed a greater amount of tonnage is now engaged in legal trade than was formerly employed in that in slaves - But on this coast it is still the old system of paltry peddling in ivory and gold dust and slaving as often as there is opportunity - If none but a few convict Portuguese had been allowed to enter the West the same results would have followed as here - and unless the navigation of the Zambesi & and Shire is made free to all nations I doubt whether we can effect much When the passions of these Africans are enlisted on the side of wrong the case is difficult - Fortunately we have in Earl Russell a man who will do all that can be done to promote freedom of both black and white - and in Lord Palmerston who is pre eminently the author of the

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the suppression policy we have one who has done more [...]for] the good of Africa than any one who can be mentioned Being under him one cannot speak out all that is felt in reviewing his long & unwearied labours for the abolition of the slave trade - without appearing to be a toady and that does not lie in my line - I hope that something may be done and think the Portuguese might yield it as they never use the mouths of the

Zambesi or Shire at all -

The death of bishop Mackenzie was a great misfortune as it created as a prejudice - and half of the exposure ^ in England he subjected himself to would have led to his being quickly cut off by consumption We have had our losses too from being compelled to delay a long time in a most unhealthy locality - but these cases are accidental - We have the prospect of half a dozen Scotch mechanics joining us soon - They worked at their trades in Aliwal North and M^r Burnet the commissioner gives a good report of them - Their wages went to a common fund out of which waggons were bought and they were ready to proceed overland when the Governor asked me if they might not rather be sent by sea - They seem just the men we want and I have recommended them to try and set an example of independent industry and Christian life before the inhabitants of the Lake -

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We went up the Rovuma about 156 miles or 114 as the crow flies during September & October last - People near the coast unfriendly but further inland all we could expect - the lands on each bank rise up 400 or 500 feet - the edge of a plateau though they look like ranges of hills - the country well wooded & fertile - pieces of coal seen in the sands but tsetse prevails - the river takes us twice on to the slave route from Nyassa to Quiloa - we turned at some low rapids about eleven Arab days from Lake Nyassa - One day above our turning point the Rovuma is joined by the Liendi which rises on the mountains East of the Lake. Rovuma is still said to come out of it as formerly but the passage is narrow and down rocks this will be our outlet rather than pay dues to Portuguese but it is hard to leave the route we opened & rendered safe to vile slave hunters -

I am glad to hear from our Friend
Maclear that you are succeeding in
your labours - You have our heartiest
good wishes - If you still wish to do
us a good turn write a line for
a word from you is ever valuable
and exhilarating Believe me
Affectionately Yours
David Livingstone