

Letter to Edmund Gabriel, [2 March-3 April 1856]

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[0001]

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I make a few addenda as they occur to me in the hope that you may be induced by insnoozability some evening to glance over them. Though I make an offer to promote an overland communication as much as lies in my power I have but little expectation of its being accepted for the overland route ^ to India presents a much shorter mode of conveyance than this. And there is frequent communication between Mosambique and Bombay- I thought it graceful to make the offer at least. and perhaps there is a small admixture of pride in offering to do what they themselves desired but could never accomplish I have got two plants - one like but I think superior to Ifi the succulent part can be knocked off at once leaving fibres which when one tries their strength seem as if they could cut the fingers - it can be made into fine thread and is a kind of thornless aloes. Here they name it Congé or Konjé - Another named Buaze is very good strong lint.

I am thinking seriously of an iron house! I am sick of labouring in bricks and mortar. The Directors will give it Wont it do under, a spreading Ficus?

[0002]

Requires very little steeping too and when beaten between two sticks readily separates into fine fibres - it is really remarkably strong - grows in great abundance. I must I suppose send them to the Earl of Clarendon without the help of any one like yourself. I wish to introduce the Buaze to India it would be a benefit to the poor population for I think it may be found to grow in uncultivated

tracts of country - I mean to collect
some papyrus too - I dont care though
it does not succeed - there is pleasure
in making the attempt to benefit our
fellow men - It is like our Heavenly
Father to try and do good to the unthankful
and evil. If the Buaze succeeds in
India surely the Portuguese here wont
lag behind. Mayor Secard the Gov^r here
seems anxious to promote the welfare of
this fine but spoiled country - He
advises me to secure a licence to go back
again from the Port.^e Gov^t as many
have been refused permission to ascend
the Zambesi. The knowledge Lord Cⁿ

[0003]

possesses about my labours may be
of use to me in that.

I have often thought that Latham's ornithology
would be an agreeable companion for
you - but never when I happened to be
writing - It is £12..12 if I remember
rightly but worth it though it has many
faults - It will scarcely be worth your
while ordering it now as you will soon
go home - Remember to look at
D^r Smith's birds in some library - His
animals are not good - But those
of Harris. The large plates, are excellent
Also Angus plates of savage Caffres.
I never saw Audubon or Wilson's
American birds. Some of your acquaint[er]
-ances may be seen in Le Vaillant's
plates - This, when you are lounging
some time in Europe. you will
remember to do - There are British
birds of the size of life by somebody
you might manage the same for
Angola - Wonder how you enjoyed
your trip in the interior & what novidades
you brought back to Boa Vista

[0004]

Please write to me in England next. care of
Rev^d D^r Tidman, Mission House Blomfield St
London I feel sure he has paid the money

and do not refer to it on that account -

Have been examining native remedies more attentively than formerly - think there are are a few of value. I shall get some botanical books from Colonel Steele if he is alive but I think of and write to him now with a palpitating heart - We must learn to say from the heart "thy will be done" with respect to all our concerns I have thus far been so well and mercifully guided by our Heavenly Counsellor it would be in the last degree ungrateful in me to doubt his condescension and love. How true is the word "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct thy steps". That he may guide you in all your future life and lead you to his heavenly kingdom is the hearts' desire of yours Ever affectionately & Truly
David Livingstone