

Letter to Edmund Gabriel, 27 June 1856

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[0001]

Quilimane 27th June
7 1856

My Dear M^r Gabriel,

Having by the Divine goodness reached this on the 20th of May last I felt very greatly disappointed in not finding a single line from you the box & parcel of which I heard of at Tete contained a dozen of wine from Commodore Trotter and some quinine letters & newspapers. I could scarcely believe my eyes when turning everything over & over again not a scrap appeared from Loanda. I had many fears imagining you had become ill and had gone home. and a mournful event which happened a few days before my arrival gave a sombre cast to my musings - H. M Brge Dart came to Quilimane to pick me up and the commander tried to come ashore when it was very rough - Unfortunately the

Dont forget the champagne Particularly if any of my old acquaintances are with you at the time

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boat was upset on the bar and the commander - with a fine young man Lieut^t Woodruff & 5 sailors were lost. This sad event embittered all my joy on reaching Quilimane I would have died for them rather than that they should have lost their lives on my account.

After having imagined a sufficient number of dismal things I was delighted by the sight of your palisade

like hand writing on your letter of
15th June 1855 a few days more
than a year having elapsed since
you wrote it, But it was none the
less welcome for its tedious journey
I have been gorging on the papers
for the last week and still have
the times & some spectators as
provender for a week to come.
I did not receive the letter sent after

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me to Cabango and not having gone to
Matiambo I suppose it must have
been returned to Loanda. I suppose
you received the map from Cassange
and letter with sketch from Cabango too
I wrote also from the Barotse and
from Sekeletu's town. Also from Tete
as soon as I came there. Writing to
to you is somewhat different from
addressing many others. It feels as
if it were talking for I believe you
will not cavil at defects & have
an interest in the enterprise I have
undertaken. I sometimes fear I will
tire you with my yarns. As friend
Arsenio did. It seems I have got
the Queens gold medal from the R. G.
Soc. and an honorary degree from
our old Alma mater Glasgow. The London
Missionary Society was last year £13,000
in debt. The income having fallen to
about £54,000, and I am told by Dr Tidman that

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it is not likely they can afford to begin
a new mission in an unknown field
but wish much to confer with me on
the subject. I think they may propose
to send me to China as this proposal was
once entertained since my arrival in
Africa, And I see they cannot get
suitable men for that inviting field.
The practice of medicine & surgery in China was
my own idea of the best way of
spending my life, and led to my

connection with the L.M. Soc. but
the Chinese ^ opium war prevented my being
sent there. Knowing (afterwards) my
wish my destination was nearly
removed from Africa to China - but
I have now no desire to leave this
land. And if I cannot work for
the good of this nation in connection
with the same society I shall leave
it and God will provide for my
wants otherwise.

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The Commodore said if the Dart
returned to the Cape without me he would
send another vessel to Quilimane. The
Governor of Mosambique offers
me a small vessel called Zambesi
but it would be improper to accept
of it and reject that of the Commodore
so I remain and hope to get away
in a week or ten days.

The gentleman to whom you
addressed the parcel met me up this
river some distance and gave
me his own boat to come down
in. An act of which I had much
need as I had a furious Tertian
on me, got as soon as I reached
the Delta. The Portuguese have
all been remarkably kind to me
and my men. The latter are working
at Tete only a few came down
here. There being a famine at Quilimane

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They cannot remain except at Tete
where provisions are abundant
some are employed as boatmen some
as carriers & some bring wood for
wages which please them well. I take
one with me to England. The others
remain till I return. This is a
wretched port. small vessels can
enter & depart but twice a month
The Governor asked my opinion
in writing about the salubrity of
Senna. I pointed out a mountain

called Morumbala close by as likely
to be more salubrious but its entire
decay from want of trade cannot
be revived by this. If the village
were put to one of the real mouths
of the Zambesi (Catrina) the people
would do good to both themselves
and the country. This opinion seems
to please & is to be forwarded to the proper

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quarter. But the state of the country is
from various causes most miserable
There are not 50 Portuguese in the country
and the natives lord it over them, making
them pay tribute in some instances
in the most disgraceful manner
If our cruizers have done nothing
else they have conferred a good name
on the English. I was astonished
to observe how far this had spread
they (natives) say "these English love the black
people much." This is so far in our
favour in endeavouring to propag-
-ate our blessed Christianity - I feel
convinced that God has gracious
designs towards the Africans they
are an imperishable race, neither
slavery nor war nor white men's
diseases can decimate the main
body of the negro family. Then as
our Burns has it.

[0008]

"Then let us pray that come it may
For come it will for a'that -
When man and man the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a'that."
I have looked over the letter enclosed
in this and felt inclined to destroy it
but you will make allowances for
my unburdening my feelings. I send
the letter for Gov^r Amaral to the Gov^r
General of Mosambique though I once
thought of enclosing it to you. There
is one too for Mr Schutmosambique - A Captain
Bobsein of Hamburgh is here and knows

M^r Schut - He lost his ship on the Bar
I send this to Mosambique because a
french vessel is there which will tour
at Loanda. They seem to be reviving
a sort of slave trade between this coast
and the Isle of Bourbon. Accept my
heartiest salutations and the heart's
love of your ever affectionate
David Livingston

Remember me to Captain Neves. please.