

## Letter to Robert Moffat, 17 August 1856

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[0001]

H. M. Brig Frolic

Mauritius 17<sup>th</sup> 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

[0002]

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

[0003]

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

[0004]

I believe upset Sekuebu's brain and excitement  
from dangers upset that of poor Monaheng  
(Monagēñ) 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