

## Letter to George Grey, 18 December 1858

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[0001]

Tette 18<sup>th</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1858

Private No 3

Dear Sir George

We have been up

to examine the rapids of

Kebra or more correctly Kaora-

basa when the water in the

Zambesi was at its lowest

And we found that all we

knew of it previously from

Portuguese description was

just nothing at all. We

steamed about four miles

beyond where any description

we could get even here

terminated and found that

instead of a number of detached

rocks jutting out of the water

across the stream the affair

arises from the Zambesi

destroyed them all - (that took place at the very time when my friend

D<sup>r</sup> Robertson was recieving them (the boers) into the bosom of the

Dutch church in the presence of the Cape dignitaries - if others knew of

they existence of these orations they might recollect them)

David Livingstone

[0002]

being confined by mountains

to a bed  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile wide at parts

and at one point to 50 or 60 yards

In the wider parts there is a deep

groove cut out of the solid rock

if such it can be called where

rocks are twisted - broken, cleaved

& huddled together in every direction

besides being water worn and

drilled with potholes everywhere

When sailing up the groove with

the walls far above our masts

the man at the lead kept calling

out "no bottom at ten fathoms"  
yet the groove fills at flood  
and flows over the adjacent  
bed though to do so it must  
rise perpendicularly 80 or 100 feet  
There are rapids in the groove  
which this feeble vessel cannot  
stem but we have no doubt  
that a steamer of good power  
would go up easily at flood  
one rapid which had five feet

[0003]

of fall became level at three  
feet general rise of the river - the  
Ma Robert was just 1/16 of an inch  
thick when new - is now thinner  
so we fear to try towing  
her up lest she should go craunch  
like an old tin kettle in the operation  
There is also a place with per-  
pendicular walls past which  
no towing line could be carried  
The mountains are at least  
2000 or 2300 feet high - covered  
with trees and very healthy  
As far as the [eye] can reach  
Northwards we see ranges of the  
same even into the blue  
distance. We slept without cover  
or quinine & but for the toil  
which was excessive we  
should all have returned improved  
in health. It made us so  
lean that had I come down  
this way in 1856 I should have  
perished before reaching Tette.  
It is an impediment to

[0004]

navigation i.e. canoe or bum -  
boat navigation - they cannot paddle  
against a four knot current and  
then here they cannot punt at 60 feet  
deep nor tow from a height of  
80 ft so they go over land - We have  
abundance of work in the mean[-]

time down here - the geologist reports  
having found 3 seams of coal  
1<sup>st</sup> 7 feet thick 2<sup>d</sup> 13 ft 6in. 3<sup>d</sup> Twenty  
five feet thick in a five cliff section  
It was fired by lightning a few years  
ago and burned a long time - We  
are all in good health - Have had  
colds only, no fever except among  
the Kroomen. The Portuguese command[er]  
ant Major Secard gave us the  
Residencia or Government house  
to live in at Tette. I am going up  
the Shire next week -

Thanks for the pamphlet containing  
the account of your library. I made  
a collection of Bechuana orations  
Maina or names they are called and  
each boy must produce his own at  
the circumcision. They contained a great  
number of to me entirely new words - I  
intended to have examined & translated  
them but the boers in plundering Kolobeng