

Letter to [Joseph B. Braithwaite], 24 October 1859

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[0001]

I enclose a letter for the Times again. It may be sent if the other was noticed. My love to all the friends at Kendal

River Shire 24th Oct^r

1859

~~Private~~

~~My Dear Friend~~[[J. B. Braithwaite]]

We have traced this river up to its point of emergence from the hitherto undiscovered [unexplored] Lake Nyassa and have thus made an opening into a cotton producing country superior to the American. for here there are no frosts to endanger or cut off the crops and instead of the never ending toil necessary to raise a foreign plant on that soil one sowing here serves for three years crops even though the plants are burned off. I have alway said that the fine country for the production of raw material for our manufactures and which I thought and still ~~do~~ think destined to free us from the stain of dependence on slave labour, is situated North of 14° or 15° of south Latitude and here we have entered it in a quarter of which we never dreamed. and

[0002]

Deck & Bottom went done simultaneously - £1200 for 12 months wear was fairish without any whine of "doing it for the good of the cause"

~~in consequences of hindrances but little creditable to ship builders & others. We have this~~ [The] river Shire [is] better adapted for steam navigation than even the Zambesi. One hundred miles without any obstacle. then 33 miles of cataracts past which a common road

could easily be made. Above this
the Shire is placed again right into the
Lake Nyassa in 14° 25 S. Lat. the
land above the cataracts ~~has~~ is arranged
in three terraces. the lowest, ~~or vall[e]y~~ [or valley]
of the Shire is 1200 feet high and exactly
like ~~the~~ [that of the] Nile at Cairo. a second terrace
East of it is over 2000 ft and a
third 3000 ft. All are well supplied
with running rills of deliciously
cool water You will percieve that
we have here changes of climate within
a few miles of each other. On the
third terrace rises the Mount Zomba
with a base some 20 miles in diameter
and from 7000 to 8000 feet in
altitude. On the other terraces it was
delightfully cool in the hottest period of
the yearon Zomba we found it
cold. One of the greatest benefits our
expedition will confer is the cure of
fever even in the lowlands without

[0003]

could not explore Nyasa. It seemed about 8 or ten miles broad
end. Lairds vessel was in a sinking state. Funnel Furnace

without[(in general)] loss of strength in the
patient. We use quinine in the cure
but as a preventative it is a farce ~~to~~
~~use quinine wine only good to fill the~~
~~pockets of the self interested.~~ On all the
terraces cotton is now grown very
extensively. the people are great
cultivators and have no cattle. the
Portuguese say that they are of quick
apprehension even in a state of slavery
We found that their suspicions
that we might after all turn out to be
a marauding party were most
effectually allayed by frankly telling
them that we came to mark the paths
for our countrymen to come and
buy their cotton.

Lake Shirwa or as its proper
name is, Tamandua is
ninety miles long. but no one
could tell us where the head of
Nyassa or Nyinyesi lay It had
a heavy swell on it though there

was no wind and it never varies
so far as we could see in height

[0004]

and a two & a half knot current. Even
[^] [the]Shire never varies more than from
2 to 3 feet from the wet to the dry season
The two Lakes lie parallel with the
East coast and all the trade from
the Interior must cross the Shire where
it comes out of Nyassa then go
along the partition between the Lakes
without embarking on either. We met
an East coast slaving party there
A more blackguard looking lot I never
saw. they had an immense number
of slaves and Elephants tusks with
them. We bought some fine pieces
of malachite from them. On learning
that we were English they made off
probably with the same opinion of us
as we had of them

Confidential We have submitted a plan
of an English station to H M. Government It would cut off the slave & other trade from
Mosambique and several other ports. I have
written M^r Venn recommending the church
missionary society to occupy this most
desirable field. but we must be still
lest the Portuguese smell out our intentions[...]