

Letter to William O. Livingstone, [26 October 1862]

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

On the morning of 23^d about 2A.M.
we deemed that we drew near
to Mohilla though no land was
visible the day before and
wished for the day as a
heavy sea was running - We
lay to as sailors say that is
bring the edges of the sails as
near the wind as possible
little sail in front and one
large one behind so the ship does
not go but leans over to the
wind. the Pioneer rose like a
little duck over the huge waves
and we stood peering through
the gloom and when day dawned
Mohilla lay before us and
sailing round it we anchored

[0002]

off the fort of the Queen. Soon a
canoe came off with outriggers to
keep it from being upset by the
waves and our old friend Abdullah
came to welcome us. this will
give an idea of a canoe with
one out rigger. Two sticks are

tied across the canoe and
then a flat piece to their ends
this keeps it from over
turning. Sometimes there are two
one on each side of the canoe. We
have a mongoose on board
a very funny little beast
shaped like a rat. We did not
know that it took any notice
of people but as soon as
the strangers came on board
with Abdullah he ran and tried
to bite their feet as if to say
What business have you in

[0003]

my ship. The Queen gave us
a bullock in a present and
we went and called on her - but
saw only a part of her face
as she had on what is called
the yasmak which covers
the nose and cheeks. Her
two children had patches of
medicine on their faces I
suppose from a superstitious
fear of the evil eye. I asked
[...] [then to put some on] my
face [...] [but the Queen's] husband
an ugly old man said laughing
it is only for little children
We took a walk yesterday
25th up the hill - saw lots of
bats as large as half grown
kittens. they are called flying foxes

[0004]

they are of a golden yellow colour
on the neck breast & back &
the head is shaped like a foxe's head
I have eaten them and thought
them good - but at present we
have the queen's ox - and dont
care for bats or such like vermin
We are now 26th steaming to
Johanna where this will be
left for transmission to you.
May the Lord be with you
and bless and guide you
[...]
Thanks to the Lady who
wrote in your letters
to Mama -