

Letter to John C.L. Marsh, 21 November 1872

David Livingstone

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org), 2017

[0001]

South Central Africa
21st Nov^r 1872

My Dear Sir

I was very
much pleased by the arrival
at Unyanyembe in August
last of your note dated
Nov^r 1869 containing a
resolution passed at a
meeting of the committee
of the Medical Club by
which I was most kindly
elected an Honorary
member - I feel extremely
grateful for the honour
and beg to assure you
that my silence is not to be
attributed to indifference -
I have been cut off from
the world by a slave trading
coterie or Ring compose

up a little for I am nearly toothless = a dreadful old fogie
but yours cordially, David Livingstone
to D^r
L. Marsh

[0002]

of Banian British subjects
and Mainland Arabs who
plundered my stores and
strove by the destruction of my
letters to prevent evidence of
their deeds going to the coast
They managed to make me
lose two years of time - to entail
at least 2000 miles of useless
tramping - risk of a violent

death from several times &
the loss of how much money
I cannot tell = The Banians
have the Custom House and
all the public revenue of
Zanzibar entirely in their hands
and by their money, arms
ammunition and goods a
large & cruel slave trade has
been carried on - they would not
hurt a flea or murder a louse
but they are virtually the worst
cannibals in all Africa - the
Manyuema women are very
pretty and are sold off often
as soon as captured for very

[0003]

large prices and are never sent
in chains to the coast - When trying
to follow down the main line
of drainage of the Nile valley
I came among the Manyuema
the reputed cannibals and was
thus in the comfortable mart
of the slaving coterie - the men
alone are cannibals and they
fly at the report of a gun in
terror as if it were supernatural
Hundred of Pounds £500 or £600
well handed over to the head of
the ring one Ludha Damji &
he handed them off to another member
who in turned handed them off
to one Shereef who sold off all
except a few pounds worth for
slaves and ivory at Ujiji - He
wrote to Ludha that all my
wants had been supplied & this
was reported & repeated in the
House of Lords! Another lot
was going ^ too when I returned 300
miles & secured your note with
a portion of the goods - the
plunderers were very quiet - men

[0004]

employed at the consulate to report
on subjects of English interest
were equally quiet though enjoying
wages - It looks to me as
if the members of the Ring all
expected me to die and deprived
a long time of European food &
comforts it is a wonder that
their expectation did not come true
Ludhas & other Banian slaves sent
in with the goods asserted & swore
that they were positively instructed
not to follow but force me back
I have no opinion as to who did this
but they persisted in their statements
all over the country - I suspect
that they overacted their part - An
American gentleman Henry M. Stanley
sent by James Gordon Bennett
of the New York Herald nobly relieved
my wants & proved himself a
good Samaritan truly - I am now
by his means enabled to go away
back to take up the thread of my
exploration for I could not bear
to be beaten by wretches - I have
no prospect of sending this but
make preparations for the time
when it comes - I thank you all
most heartily, and it will give
me pleasure to meet you when
I have got my mouth trimmed