

Letter to John Livingstone, 18 February 1858

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

I was waiting at the Admiralty and
found time for this. Write at once to Young

David Livingstone

50 Albemarle St.

London 18th Feby

1858

My Dear Brother

I have been unable
until this moment to write you
on a very important point to
which I am happy to call your
attention. A friend of mine M^r
James Young who was the assistant
to the professor of Chemistry at
University College London when
I was there made a discovery
by which he is able to extract
oil from a peculiar kind of
coal - this is name Paraffin
and it is simply gas in a

[0002]

fluid state. By a very simple
lamp it burns like gas and
is so cheap that one gallon
which in London sells at 3/8
gives as much light as 22 lbs
of sperma ceti candles. He has
made a large fortune by it and
being a good man he wishes
to do good and is very generous
I mentioned you as a suitable
agent in Canada and he is
willing to employ you and
give you such a percentage
as will make you anxious
to keep Niel at home instead
of sending him abroad. He wants
you to go into the thing with out

any doubt. It will return you

[0003]

an abundant income. He will supply all the materials - lamps oil - vessels &c & you must lay yourself out for an immense sale by advertizing it beforehand for next winter. Write to him James Young Esq.
Sardinia Terrace

Glasgow

and tell him whether you are willing to engage in it. You will be able both to benefit yourself and him by entering into it heartily - Tell him freely all your affairs & what you will or can do
Can you devote your entire time to suppose he sends you

[0004]

10,000 lamps and some hundreds of tons of oil. Write at once I shall be off in a week or ten days. I got a letter from our cousin John & will send him a book having the index before I sail. Our launch was tried yesterday & gave from 8 to 10 knots an hour. We sail in the "Pearl" - She puts into the Zambesi then we put our launch together as she goes out in three pieces & go up. I am counsel - £500 only. The Portuguese are favourable. If you still think of Africa for Niel I have not forgot my promise. You will hear from me Charles gave up £750 a year on the west he has £350 now - love to Sarah & all