



DAVID LIVINGSTONE
from the portrait by T. and R. Annan and Sons, Glasgow

Some Letters from
LIVINGSTONE

1840—1872

Edited by
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Charles urged to prepare

saw our forefathers do so and we do the same'. They laugh at it. Have not the smallest devotional feeling unless spitting on the ground when they see the animal after which their tribe is named can be denominated such an emotion.

. . . Study thoroughly my dear brother. If you become a missionary you will have little time then. I wish I had a thorough education. If your constitution is not ruined you would be better in connexion with our Society than School keeping because you would have both summer and winter for study. If you can afford it go to some eminent physician and request his opinion on your health, also whether you may think of Missionary labour. Our Society has been trying to get agents for China and after trial of several have come to the resolution of educating sixteen expressly for that Mission. The funds are at present depressed but will come round again to success. You will know best how to act. Let us hear from you soon and often. We answer all who write us but find it beyond our temper's utmost stretch to write those who maintain a majestic silence. I thank you most heartily for the books you sent. Am sorry I cannot possibly send you any money. The reason a most cogent one—is, I have none. We got letter after letter from home breathing the most ardent aspirations for emigration. We made a great effort and sent £20 to enable them to emigrate.—Think of the acknowledgment. It runs as follows, 'John's views of emigration exactly correspond or coincide with ours. He says you may do something to a garden but old trees seldom bear transplanting well'. . . .

Yours affectionately,

D. LIVINGSTON.

LETTER 27

To REVD. ARTHUR TIDMAN

Kuruman 17th March 1847

DEAR SIR

As a considerable period has elapsed since I had an opportunity of transmitting letters to the Directors, and those which

Wild Animals

I have now brought with me seem out of date, I shall endeavour to embody their contents in a general sketch of our proceedings during the last eight months. This will include a short account of two journies in an Easterly direction, undertaken in order to attempt the removal of certain obstacles to the establishment of a native mission in one of the tribes located there; And in order that you may understand the nature of these obstacles, and the circumstances which rendered it desirable to make an effort for the settlement of at least one of our native teachers in that direction, I may mention that the country situated Eastward of our station & North of the 25° degree of South Latitude has been taken possession of by certain Dutch emigrants who consider themselves sole masters of the soil by virtue of having assisted in the expulsion of Mosilikatze; While still engaged in the erection of our dwelling at Chonuane, we recieved notes from the Commandant & Council of these emigrants, requesting an explanation of our intentions &c. as also an intimation that they had resolved to come and deprive Sechele of his fire arms. We recieved too about the same time several very friendly messages and presents from an influential chief called Mokhatla who lives about four days Eastward of the station and at last during my absence at Mabotsa he paid a visit to Chonuane and expressed satisfaction with the idea of obtaining Paul as his teacher—As soon as our house was habitable Paul and I proceeded to the Eastward

After crossing the River Marikoe our attention was attracted by villages which were scattered over the country in numbers to which we had been unaccustomed. One cannot travel far in the Bakwain Country without seeing large trees broken, bent and twisted, and other indications of the presence of Elephants and Rhinoceros. Or he may come upon herds of the Giraffe, Eilands, Buffaloes and other varieties of game. But here we found wild animals comparatively scarce and we beheld instead the more pleasant haunts of man & though travelling we had the pleasure of addressing immortals on their eternal destiny at least once every day. On reaching the town

Isaac Taylor

her time so you need not expect to hear much from her. We have so many things to attend to I can scarcely spare an hour for correspondence, and except in winter, I am in general quite exhausted by the evening and how it is with her you may guess. Robert is just beginning to understand matters, a great imitator. When just beginning to walk he was fond of doctoring the natives, and himself. Butter is his great remedy. After having the rod applied to his tail, he applies a piece, and thinks all right. Any one with a wound coming past may get it mollified if Robert sees it. He shewed his faith in butter long before he could speak. He speaks the native language well, but feels much at a loss in English. Never addresses us in it, and as we wish him to know the English we prefer to hear it though we lose much of his prattle for want of words. He is excessively obstinate at times. Never saw one so very determined at his age. He often causes us sorrow. Nannee is all fun and frolic, perpetually wanting new modes of merriment. She gabbles what she can in pure Sitchuana. As for Thomas he is a strong fellow but as he was but five weeks old when they left I must end the juvenile chapter. Mary speaks the language like a native, without knowing so much of it as your servant.—I have a foreign accent—a heelenman.—The native children are fond of her and may be so am I. Robert has hair a shade lighter than your lady's, Nannee's a shade or two darker. Both have black eyes. I am darker than either. . . . There is a new Josephus by Isaac Taylor. Have you seen it? It was begun by another. I lived near Mr. Taylor and formed such an opinion of his ability for the translation etc., I have sent for it, or rather told a friend who will buy it for me, that I should like to have it. He Mr. T. wrote me a long letter lately inviting me to become a contributor to a new Missionary Periodical. . . . Blessings on you Charles. May the Lord guide you. Mary, if here, would send much love. . . .

Ever affectionately Yours,

D. LIVINGSTON

Lessons of the Bechuana Mission

LETTER 33

To REV. J. J. FREEMAN, *London*

Kolobeng,
24th August 1850.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of two letters from you, one a circular relating to Mr. Thompson, and the other dated 23rd May in answer to one you had received from me before you left the Cape. The belief that in one or two points in the letter I ought to try and effect your conversion, induces me to trouble you with another letter. I hope you will kindly excuse the infliction.

You object to the 'idea of giving the people a trial with the Gospel for a certain number of years, on the ground that in nearly all cases where Christian Societies are now reaping success, a considerable time elapsed before there were indications of that success.' And you allege that 'had there been any precipitate removal of the Missions under the impression that it was useless and hopeless to give them a longer trial, then humanly speaking all the present success had been lost.' I agree with you entirely in reference to the time which has usually elapsed before success became visible. But the history of the Bechuana Mission forbids assent to the inference you draw. At least that is my conviction, and if you will only review that history I have strong hopes that you will view the matter in the same light. The Bechuana Mission began at the Kuruman, and the attention of the missionaries was directed chiefly to the Batlapi. No visible success attended their labours, but the tribe got a fair *trial* and instead of the missionaries removing at the conclusion of the trial, the experiment was performed for our instruction in the opposite way. The Batlapi left the missionaries, the tribe divided into several fragments soon after leaving, and without following their wanderings we may just note their positions—those under Motheebe at Lekatlong, Lingopeng and Borigelong, those under Mahura and Motlabani and Tlaganyane at Taong, Mamusa and Lathako. You will remember that Mr. Moffat in his work¹ mentions

¹ *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (1842).

never heard the Gospel are greater objects of compassion than those who have heard it for seven years and rejected it. The plan of trial would perhaps tend to the more rapid extension of the knowledge of Christ in the world. The full persuasion that this is the great desire of your heart makes me presume to give you this long lecture, and if I fail to effect your conversion you will not take the *trial* amiss.

I have had thoughts of writing on paper on the above subject for one of the periodicals, but people have got so much into the habit of laying everything to the account of the Directors I have had fears lest my heresies should implicate them. . . .

The Directors Manifesto has not yet come to hand. I have mentioned to Mr. Tidman my reasons for proceeding again to the Lake. Having only one establishment to support, the expense was less, but we lost eleven oxen by pitfalls, lions, etc. The sum you thought of, if sanctioned, would be amply sufficient. Mrs. L. promises me a twelvemonths leave next time. We met Oswald¹ on our return—brought supplies for us from the Colony and returned a bill of £40, which was to be spent in purchasing them—seemed very anxious to get me to promise to allow him to accompany me next trip. . . . I shall not involve the Society in any expense till I have the sanction of the Directors. If I go down to the Colony to get my uvula excised I should procure supplies by drawing a year in advance. . . . I begin to fear we have established a branch of what Sidney Smith called 'the great Irish manufactory.' Mrs. L. got a daughter seven days after we reached Kolobeng. Sechele sends you many salutations, The Boers are more than ever troublesome,—waylaying travellers between Sentube's and the Moloso in order to rob them—the rebel Pretorious sent an order lately to him to stop all English travellers and traders, and many other indications of a coming storm present themselves. I have but small hope for the stability of the station—in the present posture of affairs it would be impossible for Sechele to leave. I

¹ William Cotton Oswald the hunter and explorer; always a generous friend to Livingstone.

never have had a wish even to return to England, but what you suggest would answer extremely well. Sechele does not make any progress in English. This is rather surprising for he is a first rate speaker in his own tongue and comprehends most subjects readily.

Wilson (and Mr. Edwards's son) went in (company) this year and got nothing but a terrible squeeze from the king of terrors. We found him in high fever—gave him some medicine which relieved him. He again exposed himself—had a relapse and sent after us for more medicine, before that reached him he had been lying two days insensible. Large bed sores formed, &c., &c., and he is not yet perfectly recovered. The Batauna Chief¹ would not give him guides, although he offered anything he chose to ask as wages. The same Chief took a great liking to a beautiful gun I received as a present from Lieutenant Arkwright, after setting his collar bone, and also the broken thigh of one of his servants. It must have cost him £25. When I asked guides to Sebitoane, he promised meat for my family during my absence, guides, &c., &c., adding, if I only knew him I would have no hesitation in trusting him anent both family and gun. I handed it to him at once, an act of entire confidence goes a great way with these people, for instead of refusal, as in the case of Wilson, he was ready to do everything for me, and but for the fever I should have been more than paid for my gun.

Your beautiful telescope shews the satellites of Jupiter well, and were it not that my plague watch is dead again I could observe an occultation by the moon's dark limb sufficiently well for the Longitude.

May I ask you to pay Mr. Snow £10 out of the salary of 1851 for books I now order.

Of the Anti-rhinocerists you saw at Blomfontein, Rider² the young artist, died of fever. Rider took some views of the Lake.

¹ Lechulatebe; see Blaikie, p. 87.

² Rider. The drawing of the discovery of Lake Ngami which appears opposite page 66 of *Travels* is ascribed to 'the late Alfred Ryder Esq.' See also *Travels*, p. 75.