

Letter to Thomas S. Livingstone, 26 December 1863

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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[0001]

River Shire 26th Dec^r

1863

My Dear Tom

I was very
much concerned to hear of
your illness, but could
only commit you into the
gracious care & keeping
of our merciful creator.

This you must do for
yourself and then it will
be with you in life
and in death.

I have been telling Oswell
that I went North lately -
and passing up a beautiful
valley came out in sight
of the heel of Lake Nyassa
We went along the shores
occasionally having a bath
in its waters till we came
to two Arabs building a

[0002]

dhow or ship of the same shape
I suppose as Hiram built of
old for King Solomon - they
were transporting slaves across
the Lake as fast as two boats
could carry them & the dhow
was intended to do it faster -
they were civil & presented
meal, rice, sugar cane & a
bit of Malachite - they were
buying boys like you for 2
yards of calico or a shilling
and girls for 4 yds or 2 shillings
each - a sort of war had
driven down thousands of poor
people to the Lake for the sake

of hiding in the reeds or hoping
the Arabs would shield them
Now they have to sell each other
for food - and are in sad
plight - It was here that I
hoped to have lived and
help to stop this wretched
traffic but am not allowed
to do it - We could not I

[0003]

think get on unless the Portuguese
were checked in their slaving
and I suppose our Government
after trying to get them to make
a free passage for lawful trade
by the Zambesi gave it up - If
the Rovuma had not been so
shallow we should have gone
there & been away from the
Portuguese and I trust something
will yet be done in that
direction otherwise slaving
will still go on unchecked .
The English mission is to
be abandoned and for this
I am very sorry - more so
than for the recal of this
Expedition -
We went Westward after
leaving the Arabs along the
great slave route whence
all the slaves for Zanzibar
are drawn - plenty of people
but 19 000 or more
annually cannot be taken

[0004]

without diminishing their
number - We had very little
time as we must be back
at the Pioneer by the Earliest
flood & have unfortunately
been here two months already
We were within ten days
of a Lake which gives rise
to a river and that again

forms two other Lakes
but we durst not go on
without being sensible of
neglect of duty to the ship
This would have made me
very uneasy for it is only
when sure of doing ones duty
that we can be happy with
all our shortcomings in duty
you know we must tell
him of who is able to [...]
through his blood which was
shed for sin - so we returned
Affectionately David Livingsto[ne]