

## Letter to George L. Conyngham, 5 October 1858

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[0001]

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1858

My Dear M<sup>r</sup> Conyngham

We have an opportunity of writing home again sooner than we expected and I have had the most unpleasant letter to write I ever penned. The Naval officer Commander Bedingfeld who came with us got to Loggerheads with the captain of the Pearl and I knowing how we were situated with the vessel of the colonial office had to protect Captain Duncan, and on the first occasion in which I did so by saying "C<sup>m</sup> Bedingfeld I must have no more of these public alterations"

Would you be kind enough to send from your stationer a supply of proper official paper & envelopes with the newspapers at your convenience

[0002]

he tendered his resignation - He was evidently of opinion that I could not move mile without him - and tendered his resignation several times. At last I mounted the Paddle box myself and to my no small wonder found out I was a skipper and have been howling out "Ease her, stop her &c ever since - B. - was very much disgusted when he found he could be dispensed with and set about plans to secure his pay - Now I have been obliged to write long accounts to Lord Malmesbury of his conduct and never felt more averse to the pen for it is the first time I have

sat down to write against anyone -  
I know it must be distasteful to his  
Lordship to read it and to make the affair  
worse it was I myself that recommended  
him for the appointment. It was only after  
I heard him boasting of having been tried  
by court martial that I felt I had made a  
mistake - I was very careful to ascertain

[0003]

the tempers of my companions but his  
eluded my vigilance till it was too late.  
In one point I expect abuse and that  
is working on Sundays. The Great Niger  
Expedition you may remember lost  
nearly all the crew & officers. They  
kept Sundays and had prayers three  
times a day even while in the Mangrove  
swamps - but when I came into  
similar situations I made all haste  
to get out of them. It would have been  
more in accordance with my  
feelings to have rested but by my plan  
I sent the crew of the Pearl off all well  
more blame would have been attached  
to my name had I lost the men than  
will be now but Bedingfeld will  
make the most he can of it.

The most important piece of  
news I have to tell is we dug the

[0004]

very first coal ever taken from  
the earth in this country and  
having tried a ton & a half our  
engineer pronounces it very good.  
With a great abundance of good  
coal and no end of the finest iron  
ore surely something will be done  
for the civilization of Africa  
My men were overjoyed in receiving  
me back again - Thirty of them  
had died of small pox and six  
were killed by a rebel chief  
but all the rest are ready to return  
to their own land with me -

I beg leave to trouble

you again with a packet of  
letters and am ever yours  
Most truly  
David Livingstone