

## Letter to Baldwin W. Walker, 17 February 1862

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Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org)), 2017

[0001]

Enclosure 1 in No 96

List of things req<sup>d</sup>

of 1862 River Zambesi 17<sup>th</sup> Feby

by D<sup>r</sup> Livingstone 1862.

req<sup>d</sup>

[Calculation[?] initialed B.I.[?]] Received 25 April 1862. per Gorgon

Admiral A.E. 314.

Sir Baldwin Walker

✓ Sir

I take the liberty

of placing before you a short account

of our proceedings since I last

addressed your predecessor Admiral

Sir Henry Keppel, and of thanking

you for most important services

rendered to us by your direction

by Captain Wilson of H.M.S.

Gorgon.

On reaching the Elephant

marsh about 30 miles below the

cataracts of the Shire in June last

[0002]

year we found that the river shoaled

to about four feet in consequence

of a number of branches passing off

from the main stream - Anxious

to place the ship in a healthy locality

we warped her up to within seven

miles of the cataracts, and feeling

that we could ^ not well leave the bishop's

mission without introducing him

to the people, we accompanied him

by a few days march up to the

Manganja highlands East of the

Shire cataracts - When we had just

passed over the brow of the first

plateau we met a party of Tette

slaves driving 84 captives before them - They had followed the footsteps of our discoveries and set up a system of slave hunting in the very country to which

[0003]

the mission had come, and of which they had no previous knowledge, by employing one tribe called Ajawa to attack another named Manganja - kill the men and sell the women and children to them - I was doubtful how to act at first, but while making enquiries among the captives, the Portuguese slaves decamped into the forest - We handed the captives of this and three other parties over to the bishop - For one of these we went several miles out of our way - and hearing of a fifth party with over one hundred captives, D<sup>e</sup> Kirk was sent back to intercept them in crossing the

[0004]

river - This movement failed but a body of men with about ninety muskets, and headed by a white Portuguese from Tette, was deterred from joining the Ajawa by hearing of D<sup>e</sup> Kirk's return to the ship -

We found the Manganja all fleeing from the Ajawa, and believing that we could induce them to desist from murdering the Manganja we went to hold a conference - We reached them about 12 miles from the mission station, and found them in the act of burning three villages - Unfortunately our professions of having come peaceably were neutralized by some Manganja followers calling out "our chibisa is come" - This

chibisa is believed to have medicines

[0005]

2/ capable of ensuring victory - I heard the words distinctly but it never struck my mind till afterwards that they were neutralizing our professions and depriving us of the protection of our English name - The Ajawa attacked us with four muskets and many poisoned arrows and forced us to drive them off with our firearms - a matter for which I am very sorry, as I never had a hostile encounter with the natives before -

We then left - returned to the ship - and carried a boat past the cataracts of the Shire - there are five cataracts in 35' of Latitude of 100 or 150 feet each - the whole descent amounts to 1200 feet, and when we

[0006]

launched the boat above the upper[-] -most cataract we were virtually on the Lake Nyassa or Nyinyesi, because the upper Shire is all smooth and deep - There are sixty miles of fine gently flowing river above the cataracts, and a lakelet 10 or 12 miles long and 5 or 6 broad. We sailed into the Lake on the 2<sup>d</sup> September and followed the Western Shore - It is a very deep body of water - our sounding line of 35 fathoms often shewed no bottom at a mile from the shore, and in the North no bottom was found at 116 fathoms - The Lake is from 18 or 20 to 50 or 60 miles broad but we could not cross to measure accurately; It was very stormy when we were there, and being encircled

[0007]

by mountains and highlands,  
tremendous seas for an open  
boat get up in 15 or 20 minutes,  
The length is over 200 miles.  
The shape is an approach to the  
Boot shape of Italy. We were  
forced to return by want of  
food without going round the  
Northern end - War had raged  
there and the country was  
depopulated by a tribe of Zulus  
originally from the South -  
so we were obliged to come  
back without finding out  
about the Rovuma - The  
chief object of our exploration  
on the western shore one man  
would tell us that we might  
sail out of the Lake into the  
river - Another that we must

[0008]

^ carry the boat a few yards - another  
would declare that she must be  
carried fifty miles or a hundred.  
on one point alone did all agree,  
namely, that Rovuma is a very  
large river - We must confess  
however that we returned just  
about as wise as we went - after  
a three months absence from the  
ship -

I beg leave to call your attention  
to the opinion of Colonel Rigby that  
of 19,000 slaves which pass annually  
through the custom house of  
Zanzibar, the chief portion comes  
from Lake Nyassa, and the  
valley of the Shire; and that should  
it ever be possible to place a  
steamer on the Lake the trade  
would be repressed - Without  
knowing this opinion we have  
been working with a view

[0009]

3/ to carrying into effect his proposition with respect to the placing a steamer on the Lake - Our hopes can scarcely be realized unless in addition to a steamer on the Lake we have an outlet to the three hundred miles of cotton field which in the upper Shire, and Lake Nyassa we have opened up - It must be beyond Portuguese claims, and Rovuma seems to be best adapted for the object - The Portuguese watch every step we take, and the Government by lately building a port at the mouth of the Shire intends to enrich itself by dues from the cotton trade, while the Tette merchants headed by the Governor depopulates the country from which the trade is to come by slave hunting -

[0010]

The movement of the Governor General of Mosambique to induce the Sultan of Zanzibar to cede the Rovuma to him is just of a piece with all their policy - They are intensely anxious to be enriched by English enterprise, & without an outlet away from them we cannot invite English merchants into the country.

We shall be unable to do anything about Rovuma during twelve months in which we shall be carrying the steamer past the cataracts - It is extremely desirable that the new cotton field should be opened during the present complications of affairs in America. I feel diffident in venturing to suggest anything to you but

[0011]

remembering the important influence

that free access of Englishmen  
into the country will have on  
the Nyassa slave trade, I hope  
you will bear with me in  
proposing the exploration of the  
Rovuma in boats from the sea  
upwards - avoiding the months  
when the river is low, probably  
June July August September & October  
The work might be quickly per-  
-formed especially if committed  
to a man so well acquainted  
with the coast and so energetic  
as Captain Wilson - The service  
would be of immense value  
to this Expedition and to the  
objects which we have in  
common in relation to the slave  
trade - To my mind all that is

[0012]

wanting to complete the success of  
our undertaking is a steamer on the  
Lake and a road out to the sea  
coast free to Englishmen - Being  
very anxious that the latter object  
should be secured while we are  
busy with the former I hope you  
will excuse me in saying so much

I have now to thank you  
for your kind consideration in  
instructing Captain Wilson to render  
us assistance, and I can soberly  
assure you that I feel more  
grateful for his services than I  
can express - He brought the Brig  
having the steamer "Lady of the Lake"  
on board from Mosambique to Kongone -  
and put the principal pieces into the  
Pioneer in a week - a work that  
would have cost us a month if  
we could have accomplished it  
at all - I feel very thankful for

[0013]

4/ he has done everything he could  
in the most frank & obliging

manner possible -

On another point I feel inclined  
to say very little but am sure  
that you would not fully  
understand matters up here  
if I kept silence - The bishop  
informed us that during  
our absence at Lake Nyassa  
he had gone about 15 miles  
and attacked another tribe  
of Ajawa's - burned their  
town and drove them away  
He took 2 men of war's men  
and our Engineer whom  
I had sent up for the sake  
of change of air after being

[0014]

much reduced by fever - They remembered  
after they had gone that I had given  
no orders to them to fight and I  
excuse them on account of the  
position of the gentleman who  
asked them to go - I never  
contemplated the missionaries  
doing anything in the offensive  
and indeed told the natives before  
leaving that the white men  
would never engage in their  
quarrels or fight unless  
attacked as we were. I disapprove  
of the missionaries fighting at  
all except in self defence - but  
am not very sure what I ought  
to do to prevent it - I apply by  
this mail to the Government  
for advice on the point. I

[0015]

regret very much that by going  
to try and secure a peaceful  
settlement for them I became  
in a measure mixed up with it.

We left our small boat  
hoisted up to a shady tree above  
the uppermost cataract. We  
have one gig only and very

much shattered by the work it  
has done in laying out anchors &c  
May I beg a strong cutter gig  
from the dock yard?

Captain Wilson will inform  
you that he could give us but  
very few provisions - We shall  
therefore trust to you for a  
supply of all sorts of common  
provisions at your earliest  
convenience -

[0016]

We shall come down to the Kongone  
sometime in March and again  
in April next -  
I am Sir  
Your most obed<sup>t</sup> servant  
David Livingstone