



A Letter to William Brock From David Livingstone

To cite this article: (1994) A Letter to William Brock From David Livingstone, Baptist Quarterly, 35:8, 411-412, DOI: [10.1080/0005576X.1994.11751956](https://doi.org/10.1080/0005576X.1994.11751956)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0005576X.1994.11751956>



Published online: 05 Sep 2016.



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Further, these missionaries sought to help their supporters in North America understand Africa better by providing fair and balanced presentations of African society. They wanted to preserve the inherent worth of the African way of life, protect it from the detrimental aspects of Western culture, and show how Christianity could accentuate and rejuvenate the cultural integrity of African societies. Although some paternalism was involved on the part of the three because they did maintain the superiority of Christianity, still they admired African culture and were respectful of and dependent upon their Cameroonian colleagues. Thus, the study challenges the stereotype of the overly paternalistic missionary who disregarded the indigenous culture and uncritically opposed it with the tenets of Western civilization. Although the book may be narrow in focus, it nevertheless belongs in every good library with holdings in mission studies and Africana.

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A LETTER TO WILLIAM BROCK FROM DAVID LIVINGSTONE

A copy of this letter, dated Kongone Harbour, 12 November 1859, was recently sent to the assistant editor by Mr Alastair King, Brock's great-great-grandson, whose mother gave the original to the University of East Anglia.

My Dear Friend, Having this day finished my first perusal of your admirable memoir of an admirable man, which by the way you forgot to send after me, I feel that I must write to you. No wonder you were affected in preaching the funeral sermon of the good and great General Havelock. Such a lovely character - so exalted a christian - and yet so human - so sympathizing, and yet so brave. I can enter better into your feelings now, and I trust this labour of love of yours will become a blessing unto many.

Here we are away from the exciting themes which agitate the public mind at home, and we are working towards a great object in the hope that the Lord may in mercy accept our services and grant us our desires. At first matters appeared untoward but these very hindrances now promise to turn out signally in our favour. We have been longer in the lower portion of the river than we anticipated but our opportunities for observing the fever - and trying the plan which I followed when alone have been more numerous in consequence, and I believe we can now cure the disease quickly and without (in general) loss of strength to the patient. This is one of the greatest boons our expedition will have to shew. We cannot however cure the brandy fever but country fever and it are two diseases.

Then we have been led to go up the Shire and we found that this river comes out of a large Lake called Nyassa. The region bathed by Lake and river is one of the finest cotton countries in the world - there are no frosts to cut off the crops as in America and instead of the unmerciful toil required in the slave states one sowing of foreign seed serves for three years crops. In the cotton country we have highlands which present changes of climate within a few miles of each other for we can ascend from the Shire valley where the thermometer stands about 96° in the shade and the river water is 81°-84° or like a warm bath at home to a heights [sic] of from 3000 to 7000 feet - well cultivated and peopled too, in the course of a short days journey. The people even now cultivate

large quantities of cotton, and the problem of supply of the raw material of our manufacturers without dependance on slave labour seems verging towards a solution. The region referred to is a large section of the slave market. We saw abundant evidence of this everywhere and here English settlements would in the course of time be an incalculable benefit. Lawful commerce as a means of counteracting that in slaves but above everything the gospel which is the only remedy for the woes of Africa and the only means which can effectually raise the degraded portions of humanity would here find a most eligible field. I believe that something is in contemplation & if only carried out with vigour our efforts will be rewarded - & I shall not grieve at being detained so long from the Makololo.

It gives me much pleasure to see from some of the Papers that our Friend Binney is recovered and has been doing some good in Australia. If he is home and you happened to meet him please tell him that I am greatly rejoiced to hear of his welfare and usefulness. Should you see Mr Spurgeon the same thing will do for him - I love them both with very great affection. The Lord make them and you my brother abundant blessings. I am in apparently another line but I know what I am about. I had a naval officer who didn't. He came out I found not to elevate the African and prepare the way for the gospel but 'to discover the Ten lost Tribes' as if of all things in the world we had not plenty of Jews already. I had to send him home soon. We came down here to meet a man of war with provisions and tinker our craft with which we were cheated by a philanthropist (so called). Please present my kind regards to your lady and to Sir Morton Peto and family & believe me, Yours ever, David Livingstone.

David Livingstone, 1813-73, missionary-doctor and explorer, like many of his family had worked for ten years in a cotton factory near Glasgow, eventually becoming a cotton-spinner. He first went to Africa in 1840, returning to England in 1856, where he was widely honoured. He returned to Africa in May 1858, no longer as an LMS missionary although evidently still active for the gospel. Unable to get his paddle-steamer past the Zambesi rapids, he explored the river Shire in 1859, reaching Lake Nyasa on the third expedition, before going to the Kongoni mouth for repairs. 'Livingstone's Rouser', his own medicine for malaria ('country fever'), contained jalap, rhubarb, calomel, quinine sulphate and aloes, and was still in use in tropical countries when J. L. MacNair wrote *Livingstone the Explorer* in 1940.

William Brock, minister of Bloomsbury Chapel 1848-72, preached a memorial sermon after General Havelock died in relieving Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny. Repeated at Exeter Hall, this was published as *A Biographical Sketch of Sir Henry Havelock*, 1858, and proved a bestseller, especially with soldiers (45,000 copies in English, plus American and German editions). Many Baptist friends, however, censured Brock, a member of the Peace Society, for celebrating a soldier. Brock was active in the anti-slavery campaign and would have been sympathetic to Livingstone's views on cotton production and slavery. This letter gives credence to the Bloomsbury legend that Livingstone visited the church and was shocked by the state of 'darkest London' slums.

Thomas Binney was from 1829 the minister of the King's Weigh House Congregational Church, not far from Bloomsbury. Morton Peto was a deacon of Bloomsbury Chapel and treasurer of the BMS 1846-67. According to DNB the 'naval officer' was Commander Bedingfield RN, though there the disagreement is said to have been about landing stores. The various biographies do not mention the religious factor. The Admiralty, however, approved Livingstone's act in dismissing him. FB