

Kisuludini, September 23, 1852

Rev'd & Dear Sir!

My last letter from April was written in great heaviness of heart, not knowing whether the Lord's purpose as to my dear wife was life or death & it is now more the feeling of joyous thankfulness from which I write – our gracious & merciful God having preserved her for me – His name be praised. She had indeed, in the meantime the fever off and on many times, but is now evidently convalescent. Having of course nobody in this poor country to attend on her but myself. I was obliged in this half year to stay at my station at home, the more so as our new house-money-management had still to be made, but most of the time I spent at home was also devoted to my Suaheli-English Dictionary. Since about 2 months, however, I was enabled to resume my going about on the plantations, directing my steps to a district that from Rabbai Empia had been rarely visited. Here in Kisuludini we have indeed nobody so close to us as in Rabbai Empia, but we are in a position from which we are nearer to the whole of the tribe as also to a tribe bordering upon it & to the Wakamba, who are our daily visitors. The people are pleased with my visits among them, listen to me with attention, & the women may frequently ask me about the health of Mrs. Rebmann and ask me to greet her. I like to wander about among them, there is a blessing in it both for the soul & body but you must have learnt to arrest their attention by a way of speaking to them adapted to that fearful degree of ignorance & darkness of which we Europeans can scarcely form an idea. That precious passage in Joh. 3 v. 6 so simple & clear to us has no meaning to them, as long as the Missionary does not expound it by making them sensible of their lost condition & want of a Saviour. The mere text of the Bible remains as useless to them as the most precious medicines to a man who does not know how to make use of them. In this much is to be learnt.-

Our Abbe Gundsha goes on as far as we can judge, steadily & satisfactorily, & is some light among his countrymen. We intend to baptize him as soon as our chapel will be built, as to which we have already made a beginning in fixing the spot & gathering a considerable quantity of timber. To this Dr. Krapf is not opposed, well knowing that the heathen need some outward representation of the religion of Christ whom we preach among them, the more so as they themselves with their glimmering wick of an idea of God did not think it superfluous to erect little straw temples indeed not large enough as (as it is the case in India) to enable a wandering Missionary to lodge in them for the night. But they do at least exist & testify in their small degree for the almost inextinguishable human want of worshipping God in some way or other. We should indeed have liked to have our plan of building a chapel first sanctioned by the Committee – but for this we should have to wait a whole year. In a place like this, so much out of the way of communication with Europe, you must rather trust the judgment of your Missionaries for conducting this work in accordance with the wants & circumstances peculiar to the spot, or have no Mission at all. As to farther stations in the Interior, these are at present no prospect (Usambara

will like this be rather & only a coast station) as of the various labourers who were to come out with Dr. Krapf & partially had actually come not a single one is left. Two indeed ought to be here & that with greater necessity than in other countries, there being no European Society near us. If the single one died, there would be nobody ever to procure him a christian burial, not to mention other consequences. Even in His own country the Saviour thought it necessary to send out two & two. One of us can indeed revisit the countries in which

Dr. Krapf & myself have been & go to some others which we have only seen from a distance – but as I told you in my letter from Cairo, of mere cursory preaching no good is to be expected among so inconceivably dark & ignorant nations as these. The Missionary must live among them – his life must preach to them. Headquarters are indispensably necessary. Kisuludini, situated in the midst of the Rabbai District, is meant for that purpose. The building here is something quite different from building in Abessinia, the unfortunate termination of which Dr. Krapf so often reminded us of as a warning, but circumstances alter cases. Not the slightest of any suspicion has reached our ears yet. Our house, as superior as it indeed looks in comparison with the miserable native huts, is, notwithstanding, in itself far too simple & modest as to occasion suspicions of that kind, the more so as the Arabs in Mombas have far larger houses than ours is, while the Natives must find it quite natural, that we, who in their eyes as Europeans are far superior to the Arabs, have at least dwellings equal to theirs,. We agree with Mr. Williams who says in his "Narrative of Missionary Enterprises", pag. 477:" It was my determination, when I originally left England, to have as respectable a dwelling as I could erect; for the Missionary does not go to barbarize himself, but to civilize the heathen. He ought not, therefore, to sink down to their standard, but to elevate them to his." Again, the Wanikas from having a real castle before their eyes in Mombas, know very well to distinguish between such & a common dwelling house. But in such outward concerns you must never expect perfect harmony from your Missionaries – such things may indeed be managed in a variety of ways – but while every individual must justly be allowed to have a view of his own, none ought to oppose another in what he is & does different from himself. The thing absolutely needful is only one, while in other things, not essential, God himself purposed variety. May we only have grace, that while we attend on the things many, we may not neglect the one needful.

What you say in your instructions as to the 30 acres of ground to be given back to the Natives, is entirely inapplicable, as the Natives neither care for their pieces of ground, nor for miles & miles around us of far better land than we possess. Again our claim to it is in fact only nominal because they never sold it to us, but rather merely allowed us to occupy it.

Hoping to be remembered by you at the throne of grace

Allow me to remain yours truly

J. Rebmann