

# Women Writing Home, 1700-1920

Volume 1: Africa

Sample letter by Jane F Moir

## Introduction

The next correspondence included in this volume comprises eight letters by Jane Fordyce Moir (d. 1932), a young Scottish woman, to her father, sister and three-year-old daughter in Scotland. These letters cover the period from May to October 1890, and were written during a trading trip in the regions of Lake Nyasa (today's Lake Malawi) and Lake Tanganyika, on which she accompanied her husband, Frederick L. M. Moir (1852–1939), who was one of the managers of the African Lakes Company (ALC). This trip took them from the ALC's headquarters at Mandala, near Blantyre, in the Shire highlands to the south of Lake Nyasa, to Ujiji, on the north-eastern end of Lake Tanganyika.

Biographical detail about her is very scarce. She was the daughter of Gilbert Beith, a Scottish MP for the Inverness Burghs in the north-east of Scotland, and had married Fred Moir in 1884 or early 1885.<sup>32</sup> Shortly after their marriage, in April 1885, the young couple had sailed to Africa, where Fred Moir and his brother John Moir had been managers of the ALC since 1878. The ALC was much more than just a trading company. It was closely bound up with the missionary endeavour in the region and had close organizational links with the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland Mission, which had been founded on Lake Nyasa in 1875.<sup>33</sup> Missionary enterprise at Lake Nyasa was closely linked with David Livingstone's activities there earlier in the century. In the period the ALC also became actively involved in the politics of the region and in empire-building. It negotiated treaties of protection with the various African chiefs and became involved in a local war with the Arab-Swahili chiefs who had extended their influence to the region of the Lake Nyasa in the early 1880s. At the time when Jane Moir was writing, the region was the focus of intense struggle for influence by various powers. The

Portuguese pressed for extension of their influence from the south-east of Lake Nyasa, where they occupied their colony of Portuguese East Africa (today's Mozambique), and Cecil Rhodes and his British South African Company from south of the Zambezi. The area to the north of Lake Tanganyika had so far been left unoccupied by the European powers, but the British had meanwhile made an agreement with the Germans that it should go to the latter. However, men on the spot like Fred Moir, Cecil Rhodes and Harry Johnston did not always care for such agreements, and tried to preempt them by concluding treaties for protection with the African chiefs in the respective areas in the hope of presenting the British government with a *fait accompli*. Thus Jane and Fred Moir's trading trip to Ujiji was not just for trade but part of such an endeavour by Harry Johnson, who had visited the region a year previously and was now using the ALC and some of the missionaries to further his empire-building plans.<sup>34</sup> Jane Moir wrote her letters in the midst of these power struggles and although she says nothing specific about the situation, she does give some hints about what was happening.

Although there were other British women in the area, Jane Moir's trip to Ujiji was an unusual one for a woman in this period, and even more unusual is the fact that her correspondence survived. The way she writes is very properly feminine: the trip is described as harmless, for which reason her husband allows her to accompany her. She plays down the risks of the trip, probably so as not to frighten her family to whom these letters are addressed.<sup>35</sup> However, from her descriptions it becomes clear that she is an active partner and not just following her husband. Her letters document something of the imperial expansion in the period, and its strategies. One interesting point she illustrates is the naming of places by Europeans, which became part of the appropriation of the African continent. Thus, the names of the newly-founded European settlements often echoed the names of places at home or those of individuals. One famous example is that of Blantyre, which was named

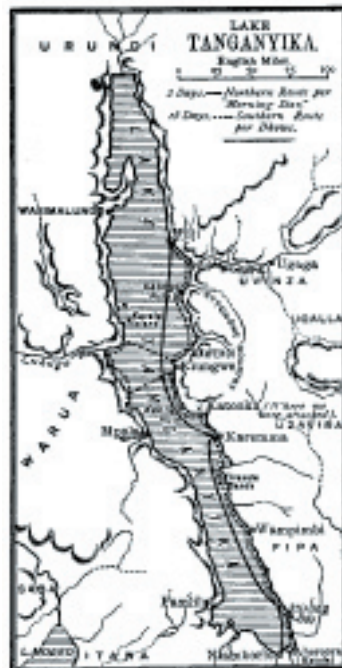
after Livingstone's birthplace in Scotland. Abercorn was named after the Duke of Abercorn, and there is the example of the envisioned 'Rhodes Port'. Other names, such as 'Forest Primeval', reflect European stereotypes about Africa. By the early 1900s the practice of giving personal or romantic names to places or landmarks had become so widespread that the Royal Geographical Society felt it necessary to publish a guideline on 'the giving of names to newly-discovered places', urging travellers to curb their imagination.<sup>36</sup> Another point that should be mentioned is her interest in photography. She was a pioneer photographer and took pictures during the trip, which were sent for publication to the *Graphic* and were also published in her husband's account of his experiences in Africa, which was published some thirty years later and for the description of this trip relies largely on her letters.<sup>37</sup>

Ujiji, Lake Tanganyika, 14 July 1890

Dear People,

The last letter I wrote was a short one from Abercorn, just after Fred had decided to go to Ujiji. I now want to tell you about our journey, and our new experiences. On Tuesday, 8 July, we got all our loads ready, viz., three cases provisions, two baskets food, and cooking utensils, one tin box, one bed, one bag, blankets, one camera box, and a number of loads of calico and stuff for trading. Some of these were sent on by road (about three hours' walk) to Niam Rorlo [= Niamkolo], and we went in the faithful big canoe. We left Chuanganya <sup>51</sup> behind, in a state of great grief. We reached Niam Rorlo [= Niamkolo] about 1 o'clock and had lunch and dinner with Mr Carson, and at 6 o'clock got on board the 'Morning Star,' and arranged our things. Sailed at 5.30 p.m., leaving Mrs Swann on the beach in a forlorn state. Mr Swann, Fred and myself, Kiongwe, and twenty natives, formed the passengers and crew. The 'Morning Star' is a steel sailing boat, not decked. She has a little cabin at one part of her, and a small covered hold farther forward. She is a capital little boat, and Mr Swann a thorough seaman, so we got on beautifully through squalls and calms. We made a quick passage to Karema, one of the stations of the French Roman Catholic mission. We arrived on Friday at 7 in the morning, but to do this we sailed night and day, indeed none of us undressed all the way to Ujiji, and Mr Swann never slept at night all the way.

I want to tell you about Karema, and the wonderful progress the French Roman Catholic Mission is making.



The Missionaries themselves are called 'Lavigerie's White Fathers.'<sup>52</sup> There are five of these men on each Station, and a Bishop over them, who sails about Tanganyika and visits each of the three Stations<sup>53</sup> in turn. The Missionaries guarantee to protect the people, but not to go out and fight. So their Stations are built like forts, and are very strong, and loop-holed all round. A Colonel, or Captain, Yubert, a soldier in the Papal army,<sup>54</sup> has come out to do the fighting department. He is not a Missionary, and lives by himself with his native troops, and his work is to defend the Mission Stations if they are in danger.

These White Fathers are dressed in long white (when clean) flannel, white and black rosaries, and great big helmets, and are very nice men. When they are sent here they come for life; they leave only when they die! One of the Fathers at Karema has been twelve years on Tanganyika; he looks very weak and ill, but is able for work. Their plan of operations is, to buy from Arabs, Chiefs, parents or relatives, several hundred small boys and girls, from three to five years old. These children live in houses round the court of the monastery or fort, and gradually grow up. Every child is taught to work, and each hoes its little bit of garden, and they are brought up strictly as Roman Catholics. I forgot to say, the Fathers plant their Stations in districts where there are no villages, but lots of ground for cultivating. As these children grow, the big boys are sent to live in a village by themselves near the Convent, and the big girls ditto. Then when a boy wants to marry he gets a girl, and they live together in another village further off, and are pure Roman Catholics, knowing no other religion or superstition. As each person cultivates his garden, the Mission is practically self-supporting, and the only heavy expense is the buying of the children year by year. The Priests do not teach many of them to read, but rather encourage them in industrial occupations. One Station has now one thousand churchgoers. Two Protestant missionaries said to us, 'Don't be surprised if some time you find the whole shores of Tanganyika Roman Catholic.' The weak point is the buying

of the children, as it encourages slavery; but, otherwise, it seems to me, they show great wisdom, and their natives turn out satisfactory.

Well, I have told you a lot about the Karema Mission, but we felt great interest in it. There is no comparison between the progress they have made and that of the London Missionary Society Mission on the lake, who so far, have little hold of the people, though they work bravely.

Two days more, with favourable winds, brought us to Ujiji, where we landed on Sunday forenoon, and were conducted to the veranda of one of the leading Arabs. Here we squatted on mats, and slaves brought us tea, and Huntly and Palmer's honey wafers, and then coffee. Soon Rumalisa<sup>55</sup> came, a tall, very thin, middle-aged man, extremely quiet and gentle in his manner, but with a certain dignity about him. He took us to his house, which is much the largest in Ujiji, and presently we were seated in his veranda on a Persian rug, and went through the same programme of tea, coffee, and sweets. As we were tired we said we should like to wash and rest, so ten girl slaves were sent to bring water in large copper pots, with which they filled great clay pots, in a most ingenious bathroom. After washing we were taken to the chief room of the house, a magnificent apartment, though not over clean, some forty by fifteen feet. It opened off the women's court, and during all our stay in Ujiji our ears were refreshed by the constant loud shrill chatter of some sixty to eighty girls. We were requested not to allow our boys to attend upon us, but Rumalisa told us, through Kiongwe, we might have four, six, or eight girls to do everything we wanted – girl boys as Kiongwe called them. We had an old slave, Atibo, to cook for us, and a capital cook she was, and two girls sat constantly, either outside or inside our room, to get whatever we wanted. At first they were very attentive, but latterly were impudent, and not so willing. What a laughing, talking, quarrelling, idle lot these women were. The most of them plaited grass, with which they made beautiful mats, but many of the wives did little or nothing. There are two Muscat wives,<sup>56</sup> who live in

one room, and do not go out, and some twenty slave wives, very handsome women, who each have five or six common slave girls to wait on them. And these make up Rumalisa's Ujiji household. He has many other such, and his chief wife is in Zanzibar. All are well dressed, and well fed, and proud of their position; very different from the wretched creatures in chains and slave sticks, who are sold in the market as beasts of burden to carry ivory, etc., to the coast.

*15 July.* What a day this has been of being interviewed, and trying to speak to the women, and to understand what they are saying to me. As soon as I was dressed, I was carried off to see them cook a sort of bread they make from wheat. They make it into flat cakes, and drop them into boiling butter, but the butter is not nice like ours. They also cook quantities of all sorts of sweet things for Rumalisa and his guests, and we see every morning a huge brass tray being carried across the court to his house on a slave boy's head. They always bring us our share of the dainties. After seeing the bread finished we had breakfast as usual, of beautiful rice, and the invariable sort of curry stew. Then the old cook, Atibo, made some very nice blanc-mange of fine rice flour and milk, and instead of putting it into a big dish, she filled all the saucers and shallow plates she could lay hands on with it. We did not know if she was cooking it for us or for Rumalisa, but after we had about finished breakfast, in came one after another, eight or ten women, each carrying a plate of this stuff, which they set down beside us. Fred said that was a great deal to bring, but one of the head slave wives answered, 'It wouldn't do for you to say that the people of Rumalisa did not give you enough to eat.' I have forgotten to say that before breakfast we went out to the market and took three photographs. I can't tell you what a queer place Ujiji is, in fact one must see it to understand what a mixture of civilization and its opposite are here. Think of a daily market in this outlandish place, where goat meat, salt, a sort of butter, flour, rice, mats, ivory, ground nuts, bananas, dried fish are sold for regular prices, and where the money consists of beads. It

is not as with us at Mandala, a case of barter, but regular buying and selling, the special beads used being valueless except as money. Here we saw the most primitive of natives in his skin apron, and the wealthy Arabs, and their head-slaves, swathed in calico, and the various grades between. Ujiji is composed of Rumalisa's house, the chief Arab, and some half-dozen other Arabs who live in their Tembes,<sup>57</sup> or big houses, outside of which live in their huts, the married slaves, and odd people, such as boys and old people. There are also some tradesmen – native smiths, tailors, sugar makers, etc., and the natives of the place, who are of little or no account. To go on with today, how-ever. After breakfast, and on till evening, I had a constant flow of women in, so that both Fred and I are now quite tired – he with buying quantities of ivory and marking all the tusks, ninety I think, and I with talking and being agreeable. The two white wives ventured across the court to call for me this afternoon, and were in a state of fear lest Fred should come in and see them. I showed them photographs of Mandala House, Baby, etc., and gave them sweeties and biscuits; but must say they are disagreeable looking women. The head one made no effort to be pleasant, but lolled in a chair, and stared about, and wanted to see things, and to get sweets to eat. She wasn't pleased because we hadn't the sort of biscuits she wished, but condescended to let her slave take away a few, which, no doubt, she would try in her own quarters. They are totally ignorant, and have no ideas beyond the gossip and scandal, they and the other women talk about all day long. I wasn't sorry when they took their departure.

*16 July.* This morning Mr Swann, Fred, and I went out early, to see how the large dhow is getting on with repairing. On the way to the shore we took photographs of the veranda of a big Arab house, and also of a date palm laden with fruit. It was interesting to see the ingenious tools of the workmen, and the wonderful patches they put on their boats, and we examined the dhow we shall probably get. Rumalisa does not think his big one will be ready in

time, or, in other words, he cannot let us have it, probably wishing to keep it at hand for Tippoo Tib's <sup>58</sup> use.

One morning a caravan arrived from the coast. There was great firing of guns, as there always is on any sort of occasion at Ujiji. They had with them six white don-keys, with pillows for saddles, on which the Arabs in charge ride, and their loads seemed mostly calico. It had taken them five months from Zanzibar. There are many slaves in Ujiji, but they are kept out of sight as much as possible. The misery of the few we saw in Rumalisa's, and others, chained at the houses of several of the Arabs, made us feel keenly the wickedness of tearing these poor simple people from their homes, and then selling and buying them like animals. One of the regular articles of sale at the market every morning is Human Beings, and to supply the demand, and also to provide carriers for their tons of ivory, such men as Rumalisa keep large bands of lawless, ruthless soldiers, scouring the country, and raiding all the more peaceful and less powerful tribes. We saw one of these fierce armies come in one day, gesticulating, shouting, and firing guns. It was so dangerous that Rumalisa ordered the doors of his courtyard to be shut till they had fired off all their guns, and it was safe to let them in. And these were his own men.

59

*17 July.* Day by day the glamour is wearing off Ujiji, and as we see more below the surface, it is not pleasing. I think if we had only stayed two, or even three days, we would have gone full of recollections of generous hospitality, barbaric splendour, and laughing girls, eager to help and amuse us; but now we are wearying to get away. The women are becoming very cheeky, and no sooner do I manage to get them all out of the room, than I hear the well-known 'Hodi!' which is the Arab word used to let people know there is some one coming, <sup>60</sup> and in they come again in numbers, chattering at the pitch of their voices, and walking about looking at all our things, and begging for whatever takes their fancy. I wanted to take some photographs of them yesterday, but they were very

stupid about it, running away and giggling, so I calmly put the camera away. Rumalisa is exceedingly fond of being photographed, and we had a lot of him, and of the house, to develop in the evening. As usual there were about a dozen of girls in the room, and Fred said they were either to go or stay. They all wanted to stay, but the instant the candle was blown out, and only the ruby light left, they shrieked and fled like the wind. At nine o'clock Rumalisa always goes round the house, shutting the doors, and we heard them telling him of the awful things we were doing. To satisfy them he came in, followed by twenty or thirty women (which by the way made me think that perhaps white men are fully better off with only one wife!), and was much interested in the developing. Next day these same light-hearted ladies were very anxious to see the pictures of their lord and master, but I wouldn't let them even near them, and turned them out every time they came in. Then they sent messages and entreated me to take their photographs too, but I said I didn't think I would to-day, that yesterday they were very nasty, and today I didn't want. This only made them more keen, so one or two of them went and dressed up in their best clothes, and at last I said, if they would all dress, I would take them. They were now in the best of humours, and would have sat willingly for half an hour, instead of a few seconds. They actually went to the trouble of dressing again in the afternoon for Fred to take them, and you will see from the photograph how gorgeous they were. <sup>61</sup> They looked very well indeed, and several of them wore heavy Indian silver anklets.

*18 July.* Hoped to get away to-day, but it rained heavily all the forenoon, and the men couldn't put the ivory on board, so most un-willingly we are waiting till to-morrow. Rumalisa seems determined not to let Mr Swann, and Kiongwe, away before us, <sup>62</sup> but we all hope to start first thing to-morrow.

*19 July.* Have actually got away; gave the ladies a lot of coloured prints, soap, and combs, with which they were fortunately quite pleased. Mr Swann, and Kiongwe, sailed

about nine a.m., and we got our dhows launched by mid-day.

*August.* I will now go on to give you an account of the return voyage and of our dhow experience. A Tanganyika dhow is a rare looking piece of patchwork. Its foundation is a large canoe, say forty feet long, into which they nail strong ribs, and add several planks to the sides to make it higher above the water. There isn't a straight line in its whole construction, and unless you saw one you couldn't believe the way they cobble them up, and cut out rotten bits, putting in new pieces of wood. We saw several boats waiting for repair at Ujiji, which were in such a terrible state of dilapidation that they looked fit for nothing but firewood. Still the native carpenters seldom lose hope of even such wrecks, and patch and caulk with palm oil and cotton, till they have the old things afloat again. There is a small platform at each end of a dhow, and seats for the rowers in between, a mast, and one huge lateen sail. We have in our boat fourteen rowers and a captain, besides our own eight boys, whom we brought with us, who live in the bottom of the dhow, on the top of the cargo, and bilge water. We live on the stern platform, and have a sort of erection to keep the sun off. In this place – five by four and a half feet – we have existed for eighteen days and nights, through storms, and calms, and burning sun. When the captain remembers to put it up, we have the Arab flag flying. It is composed of pieces of Turkey red and white calico sewed together, and on the white part is written a bit of the Koran in ink.

Well then, picture us departing from Ujiji at midday on Saturday, 19 July, in the best of spirits at finally getting off, and quite pleased with our barks. For the first two days and nights, we thought we had discovered the very pleasantest way of travelling. How delightful it was to glide along for a few hours before a fair wind, and then when it ceased, to anchor in some out of the way bay, where the primitive inhabitants came, first warily and with some fear, to offer dried fish and other things for sale, and then, when they

gained confidence, coming in numbers; the queer women, with their babies tied on their backs in a goat's skin, hearing there was a white woman to see, venturing out to the boat to have a good look: then on again in the evening when the land breezes began.

Tanganyika is a curious lake. It is said to have been two lakes in olden times, and this is very likely to be true, for the northern and southern parts are quite different. The northern half is very windy, and there are frequent heavy gales. The hills round it are not high, and are very sandy, and as a rule run parallel with the water line. The southern portion is quite different and much prettier. The usual winds are gentle, and for the greater part, the shore is composed of the ends of numberless mountain ranges which run into the lake. At some time or other the water level here must have fallen twenty feet, and the effect is to expose a series of wonderful combinations of boulders, heaped together, and on the top of each other, in the most fantastic way. All the rocks which have been under water are now pure white, so it is a very pretty coast line, and there are endless sheltered bays to run into if a wrong wind comes. On the third night after we left Ujiji, about 2 a.m., as we were peacefully sleeping and floating along, a sudden gale came from the south, and very soon the sea rose to an alarming extent. It was very dark, and all we could make out of land was a line of cliffs. Our crew, as is their custom at critical times, were all talking at the pitch of their voices, all squabbling, each giving different advice and seemingly doing nothing. At last they threw out the big stone which serves as anchor, and let the boat drift. Then she began to roll, and such rolling I never before felt. Every time she righted herself after a big one we felt thankful, but hardly thought she could hold together for many more. How we longed for the morning, and the first reddening of the sky that comes about an hour before sunrise was never more welcome. When it was light enough, the men decided to run out before the wind to the middle of the lake, and tack back again. But there was no tacking for us that day, and

sometimes with bare poles, sometimes with a corner of the sail up, we scudded across a sea of white crested waves, and did not know what it meant to be free of painful anxiety till we got to the west coast, and into the still waters of a small lagoon, about two in the afternoon. The wind died completely in the evening, and reluctantly we set sail again about midnight. We sailed gently all night, and reached another lagoon in the early morning, where we stayed all the day and watched the great south waves tearing past us again. We went on this way for four days. Then the winds lightened, and we crossed the lake again, arriving just a few miles south of the place where the storm drove us from, on Saturday morning. Again we had to stay in shelter all day, and went on at sunset with the land breezes. We have both written, in separate letters, of the dreadful Sunday which followed;<sup>63</sup> how, struggling on, we were caught in the morning by a sudden gale, and driven ashore on the Attongwe country.<sup>64</sup> I am not going to repeat all the details of that day. On Monday we anchored in a small, desolate cove in the rocks, and kept a sharp lookout for people, but we saw none. Another weary night brought us, next forenoon, to four miles from Karema, the longed-for. By this time every stranger we saw was looked at most suspiciously, and when we noticed two great strapping fellows coming tearing along, armed with guns, I just wondered what it meant, and never before felt the benefit of a Mission Station so much as when we saw crucifixes hung round their necks. They brought us a very kind note from the White Fathers, offering us hospitality. Fred had fever then, but in a few hours, when he was rather better, we dragged ourselves along the four miles of loose sand, and reached the convent about five o'clock in the evening, two weak and very wearied travellers. We received the very greatest kindness, and had such a good rest. Next morning we felt much refreshed, and walked about the Mission Station, and took photographs. The mast and helm of our dhow, both of which were injured during the storm, were mended, and we started at sunset on Wednesday (30 August) very much

refreshed and encouraged. The White Fathers gave us lemons, and bananas, and beans, and eggs, and tomatoes when we left, and we gave them some tinned foods.

P.S.: <sup>65</sup> Since writing the above we have heard that Captain Yubert is an agent of the Congo Free State. <sup>66</sup> He has done some fighting in defence of the missions, and the people under him, and has therefore rather got into hot water with the Arabs, whose influence is pretty well paramount on Lake Tanganyika. From all accounts he does not seem to be very well supported from headquarters, yet this may be from the difficulty of transport through the district of Stanley Fall, where Tippoo Tib is governor, and practically ruler. <sup>67</sup>

## Editorial Notes

### Introduction

<sup>32</sup> F. L. M. Moir, *Heart of Africa: The Story of an Adventurer*, ed. Ian M. Thompson (Goole, UK, James McIntyre, 2001), p. 125.

<sup>33</sup> For discussions of the activities of the Livingstonia Mission and the ALC on Lake Nyasa, see P. A. Cole-King, 'Transport and Communication in Malawi to 1891, with a summary to 1918', in Bridglal Pachai (ed.), *The Early History of Malawi* (London, Longman, 1972), pp. 70–90; H. W. Macmillan, 'Notes on the Origins of the Arab War', in Pachai (ed.), *The Early History of Malawi*, pp. 263–82; John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875–1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province* (1977; repr. Blantyre, Malawi, Christian Literature Association in Malawi, 2000). For the ALC, see also F. L. M. Moir, 'The Story of the African Lakes Corporation', in Leo Weinthal (ed.), *The Story of the Cape to Cairo Railway and River Route, 1887–1922, Vol 1: The Recorded Romance of an Imperial Project, How It Materialised to Date, and the Story of its Creators* (London, The Pioneers Publishing Company, [1922]), pp. 441–9

<sup>34</sup> Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston & the Scramble for Africa* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1957), pp. 171–2.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Colin Wilshaw, 'Introduction', in Jane F. Moir, *A Lady's Letters from Central Africa*, foreword F. L. M. Pattison, intro. Colin Wilshaw (Blantyre, Malawi, Central African Limited, 1991), pp. ix–xxvii; p. xxvi.

<sup>36</sup> E. A. Reeves (ed.), *Hints to Travellers, Scientific and General*, vol. 2, 9th edn (London, The Royal Geographical Society, 1906) *Hints to Travellers*, 1906), p. 273. <sup>37</sup> F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone: An African Trade Romance* (London, 1923; repr. Blantyre, Malawi, Rotary Club of Blantyre, 1986). For a recent edition of this account, which however is abbreviated and of inferior quality, see Moir, *Heart of Africa*.

### Sample Letter

<sup>51</sup> Chuanganya] Chunganya was Jane Moir's African serv-

ant. Formerly, she had been the wife of a Yao man but had abandoned him due to having been physically abused by him. She remained with the Moirs until their return to Europe and then re-married (Moir, *Letters* (1890), p. 37 editor's note; Moir, *Heart of Africa*, pp. 53–5).

<sup>52</sup> 'Lavigerie's White Fathers'] The White Fathers, a French Roman Catholic missionary society headed by Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, had arrived at Lake Tanganyika in 1879, shortly after the LMS. The relations between between these two missionary societies were strained and marked by rivalry, due also to their opposing policy concerning the Arabs of Ujiji: while the LMS (and Swann in particular) cooperated with them as far as possible, the French missionaries took a confrontational course and consequently were the focus of increasing Arab hostility in the period (see Bennett, 'Introduction').

<sup>53</sup> three Stations] Besides Karema, the White Fathers maintained two more stations on the lake, Mpala, on the western shore of Lake Tanganyika, and Kibanga, to the north. Like Karema, the station at Mpala had been taken over from the Belgian King's Association Internationale du Congo in 1885 (Bennett, 'Introduction', pp. xvii, xxii, xl).

<sup>54</sup> A Colonel, or Captain, Yubert, a soldier in the Papal army] Léopold Louis Joubert, a former papal zouave, had been serving the White Fathers in East Africa for ten years. Following the takeover by the White Fathers of the stations at Karema and Mpala in 1885, he had created a formidable military force consisting of 300 African soldiers to defend these stations, particularly from attacks by the Ujiji Arabs (Bennett, 'Introduction', pp. xviii, xxx–xxxii, xxxvii–xxxviii).

<sup>55</sup> Rumalisa] Muhammed bin Khalfan aka. Rumaliza was the leader of the Arab community on Lake Tanganyika and a close associate of Tippu Tip (Bennett, 'Introduction', pp. vii, xiv–xv, xxviii; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 48; Marcia Wright, 'East Africa, 1870–1905' in Oliver and Sanderson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 6, pp. 562–3). For

Tippu Tip, see n. 58 below.

<sup>56</sup> two Muscat wives] Muscat, in Oman, had been the home of the rulers of Zanzibar before they had transferred their capital from there to Zanzibar in 1832. Following this, the Swahili culture on the East African Coast had experienced a considerable Arabization (John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 181).

<sup>57</sup> Tembes] 'Tembe' is a Swahili term, signifying a 'flat-roofed house' (Johnson, *A Standard Swahili-English Dictionary*, s.v. 'tembe').

<sup>58</sup> Tippoo Tib] Hamed bin Muhammed el Murjebi aka. Tippu Tip (d. 13 June 1904), a Zanzibari, was the most influential and famous Swahili trader in the East and Central African interior in the period. To the readers of Jane Moir's letters, he would have been known also through H. M. Stanley's book *In Darkest Africa* (1890), having assisted the latter in his explorations of the Congo area and subsequently fallen out with him. In 1890, a lawsuit brought against him by Stanley was waiting in the Zanzibar courts, in which Swann intervened on Tippu Tip's account (Bennett, 'Introduction', pp. xxxiv-xxxvi; Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison, Milwaukee and London, University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 235-42; Wright, 'East Africa', pp. 562-3). Tippu Tip's versions of the events were told in his life story, published in 1902-3 by the German missionary Heinrich Brode and subsequently expanded into a biography. For a recent edition, see Brode, *Tippu Tip: The Story of His Career in Zanzibar and Central Africa* (Zanzibar 2000).

<sup>59</sup> And these were his own men] Rumlaliza's weak control over his army was characteristic of the relationship between the Swahili-Arab traders and their armed followers. These irregular military bands, also called rugaruga, terrorized African local groups and raided for slaves and food (A. E. Atmore, 'Africa on the Eve of Partition' in Oliver and Sanderson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 6, pp. 10-95, at, pp. 72-3; Bennett, 'Introduction', p. xxviii; Wright, 'East

Africa', pp. 556–7).

<sup>60</sup> the well-known 'Hodi!' ... some one coming] 'Hodi', which is a Swahili word, is used as a polite inquiry before entering a house or room (Johnson, *Swahili–English Dictionary*, s.v. 'hodi'). Swahili was the lingua franca in the East and Central African interior, having been introduced by the Arab and Swahili traders.

<sup>61</sup> you will see from the photograph how gorgeous they were] The photographs taken by the Moirs during this trip were sent for publication to the *Graphic*, an illustrated weekly and competitor of the *Illustrated London News* that appeared between 1869 and 1932. They were also published in Frederick Moir's *After Livingstone* (1923) (Moir Letters (1891), p. 54 editor's note).

<sup>62</sup> not to let Mr Swann, and Kiongwe, away before us] Alfred Swann and Kiongwe were to go on their treaty-making mission to the north of Lake Tanganyika, while the Moirs wanted to return to Lake Nyasa.

<sup>63</sup> We have both written ... dreadful Sunday which followed] see Jane Moir's letter of 28 July 1890, pp. 195–197.

<sup>64</sup> the Attongwe country] see n. 69 below.

65 P.S.:] In the first edition of J. Moir's letters, this postscript is given as a footnote with a note that in the original letter this was given as postscript.

<sup>66</sup> Captain Yubert is an agent of the Congo Free State] Jane Moir is mistaken here. Joubert was not employed by the Belgian king's Congo Independent State but by the French missionaries. However, one of their mission stations, Mbalala, on the western lake-shore, lay in the territory claimed by Léopold II and in 1890 Joubert had been obliged to accept a Congo Free State flag for the station, which he grudgingly did (Bennett, 'Introduction', xxxviii). For Joubert, see n. 54 above.

<sup>67</sup> the district of Stanley Fall, where Tippoo Tib is governor, and practically ruler] Tippu Tip had established wide and effective control in the eastern Congo before the arrival of the representatives of Belgian king's Congo Independent

State. In February 1887, he had agreed to become Governor of the Congo State's district of Stanley Falls (Bennett, 'Introduction', xxvii, Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, p. 239; Wright, 'East Africa', p. 563). For Tippu Tip, see n. 58 above.