

Letters from Robert to Amelia Laws MS3290/12

MS3290/12/1

Bandawe, B.C.A

Aug 21st 1894

My dear Amy,

And so your birthday has passed and you are now eight years old. You will soon be quite big & strong, & what is better still, I hope that as each year comes to be counted as added to your life, it will be a year filled with service to Jesus. It is not nice to think that Jesus was once a little boy, & knows just how little boys & girls feel. He knows how nice it is to play, & to learn to read & write & to do many other things. He knows also what makes little hearts sad, & little feet tired, & he likes you to tell Him when you pray all about these things & He will help you to bear them all.

Now how many kisses are going to give Grandma & Aunt Mary for Mother and me? We missed your arms round our necks when you used to come and kiss us goodnight.

How is Polly & how many words can he speak now?

Mother has told you about Beauty Mr Murray's dog. She died last week, perhaps a snake bite it. Her two puppies are growing fat little creatures, & are running about & barking a good deal.

Now good bye, my darling, and God bless you and keep you fit for his service is the prayer

Of

Your loving father

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/2

Bandawe,

Sep. 9th 1894

My Dear Amy,

This is Sabbath afternoon, and the bell has just rung for school, & the children are gathered together, & so I am wondering what you are doing. It is now about the time your S.School begins, and perhaps you are going with Miss Whyte to it.

I have been away up at the hills with Miss Stewart. We went to Njuwu first & then on to Ekwendeni. Dr Elmslie is there now, while Mr & Mrs McCallum have gone away to a new place near Mt Hora. Mrs McCallum has a baby-boy called David, who is just trying to speak. Mrs Elmslie has a little baby-boy too called Walter. He has been sick and has bad boils, but they are nearly better now. There have been a lot of lions recently in Ngoniland & some people have been killed by them. They are fierce, cruel animals.

Miss Stewart is better now, and is to stay at Ekwendeni for a time. Mr and Mrs A Murray and their baby boy are there, but are to go to Muera next week. Mr W Murray wrote me from Livlezi. He is well there. Dr Prentice & Mr McAlpine went up to the hills with me. Mr McAlpine's dog 'Bob' went with us and ran backwards and forwards on the road very much to see if we were all coming. Mr McCallum gave me a dog when I came down. It is a nice young dog like Kande in appearance. I wonder what we should call it!

On the hills, there are many boys and girls wanting to go to school to learn to read and write & to hear God's word. We are glad to see the change, & thank God for blessing His work.

This week Mother is to remain at Bandawe, while Dr Elmslie and I go on a long journey away to the North in search of a site for the New Institution. We may be away for two months or so. Posika went to the hills with me and is to go with me on the journey. He has grown to be a big strong lad now.

Now dear Amy I have told you much about what is doing here. We often think of you and Mother and I pray for you every day. We are so anxious that our dear little girl should be Jesus' little girl & strive to do right in all things. We were glad indeed to here, that you had remained with Grandma to let Aunt Mary go to see Miss Carnegie. It is when you try to help others & be like Christ, by not being selfish that you will be most happy.

We hope Grandma is well and also that Aunt Mary and Mina and all the others are so also. Remember me to Willie and Sarah Paterson, as well as to their Father and Mother.

We hope Miss Carnegie is stronger again. We were using in church to-day some of the hymnbooks, she gave to Dr Amry The children are much needing to be taught music better than they are. I hope you count when you are playing and that you sing as well as play. Perhaps another day God may give you work to teach boys & girls to sing the Hymns of Jesus.

I was preaching in the morning and forenoon today. In the morning most of the people present were Christians, & in the forenoon, many were present who knew little about Jesus. Many more in the villages neither know nor care about the Saviour. Pray to God to touch the hearts of the people that they may be turned to love and serve Him.

Kisses to Grandma and Aunt Mary & the same to my dear Amy from her

Loving father

Robert Laws

MS 3290/12/3

Bandawe, Livingstonia, Nov. 4th 1894

My dear Amy,

I was delighted on arriving here after my long journey to get your letter and also those of Aunt Mary telling about all at 56 C. Drive.

I write now to tell you how glad Mother and I were made when we read Aunt Mary's letter, and learned that our Amy had really become one of Christ's Soldier's, and that you were fighting bravely against strong giants. I do not mean such poor giants as are spoken of in stories like Jack and the Beanstalk, but real giants who have been trying to get hold of you for many a day.

I wonder if you know their names. There is one strong fellow, who is very hard to fight against and to kill. Like many bad people he has several names. One of them is Just-in-a-little, another is Wait-a-minute, When a girl or boy is asked to do something, instead of jumping up and doing it at once, this giant tries to get her or him to say Just-in-a-little or Wait-a-minute, or I'm coming when this is done, and if the girl says so and does not do what is wanted at once, the giant is glad because he has got a rope tied round the girl, and every time, she repeats this the giant ties a new knot on it, till she is compelled by the giant to do what he wants.

Another giant has a queer castle where he lives, and he can make himself invisible so that no one would ever dream of his being there. I suppose I must tell you where this castle is, because I hardly think you would find it out yourself. He is most frequently found in a piano, and often hides away among the leaves of music. His name is Don't-count-aloud, and what a torment he is to girls who are learning to play. He is a bit of a coward though, like most giant bullies, and when he hears a girl going on steadily 1, 2, 3; 1, 2, 3; 1, 2, 3 &c at the beginning of a lesson he gets frightened, and runs away to hide himself till he gets another chance of catching her. He is very quick in the hearing and if the girl stops for a little out he comes to try to prevent her beginning again, and to try to bring her into disgrace.

There are some more giants whom I could tell you about, but I have written about these to-night, because Aunt Mary has been telling us of how you have been trying to conquer these two, and this has pleased us very much, and made us happy. You see to do so is to obey the Lord Jesus, and to show that you love Him, who loved you and us all so much that he came down from heaven to die for us.

I write this to you on Sab. eve. because I wish to tell you that to-day Communion was observed in Church, and there were 64 native members present besides six Europeans, including mother and me. Many of these are young Christians too and I was telling them that Jesus expected them to fight for Him against the devil, by refusing to do bad things, and by trying to tell other people about Christ's love for them.

Now goodbye or good-night. Mother and I hope to be away to a new station before next Sabbath, and we know you will pray for us, that God will help us in our work there. We expect you also to help Grandma, and be very kind to her when she suffers pain, and also help Aunt Mary as far as you are able. Kisses from Mother and Me,

Your loving father

Robert Laws

MS 3290/12/4

Kondowi, January 12th 1895

My dear Amy,

Do you know I would very much like to take you on my knee this after-noon, and give you a kiss, and have a long talk with you. Both mother and I miss the sight of you very much, but we know that you are cared for by kind loving Aunt Mary and Grandma. We hope on the other hand that you try to help Aunt Mary in every way, and we were so glad to find Aunt Mary able to write to us, and tell us that you had been useful to her, in trying to assist Grandma, when suffering so much from pain as she often does. Don't you find it makes you happy, to be useful to others? It is not easy always to give up one's own way and do things which we would rather not do, and at times when we would rather do something else, but then if it is our duty and we try to do it, happiness follows, and we know we have been trying to follow Jesus and become like him in this.

We wonder about your schoolwork, and your lessons, now that the holidays are past. We were so glad to hear about your having learned to play, and that you are counting aloud as Aunt Mary wishes you to do. We noticed the new hymns you had learned, and mother sang them over to me and I too began to learn them, because you had done so.

Charlie Domingo has learned to sing a number of hymns and he tries to teach the other boys, but they often make mistakes when they come to fa or re and so spoil the tune. However if they just 'try, try again' they will sing them better by and bye. God has given you a good ear and a sweet voice but what are you going to do with them? Would you not like to have both trained so that you may use both these gifts for the glory of God? I think so, and therefore Aunt Mary is taking the pains to teach you to play upon the piano and you will learn to sing, so that you may praise God, not only with a full heart, but with a clear voice well trained for this, and it may be, teach many others to do likewise.

You will be sorry to hear that our new house which we hoped to be into in a week or two, was struck by a severe storm last Sab. night and blown down. The house we were in, was very much smaller and an iron shed between us and the wind, and though it creaked & shook and clouds of dust flew about no harm was done except to drive some of the thatch off the roof. So you see God cared for us in all this.

Last night men came from Ngoniland and they brought some photos from Dr Elmslie taken when we were on the journey together. I sent you one of our tent taken the morning after the lion sprang upon it and tore it open over my face. You see the end of my bed, and my pillow just where they were when the lion sprang upon us. I am sure when you see this you will thank our loving Heavenly Father for having preserved Dr Elmslie and me, and our men from such a strong wild beast. You will also pray to God to take care of us day and night, and He will help us to tell the people here about the love of Jesus, and to teach the little ones to read about Him who loves them and us so much.

Now goodbye. Give our love and kisses to Grandma and Aunt Mary. Mother is well and my toe is nearly better.

Your loving father

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/5

Kondowi, B.C.A.

Feb. 23^d 1895

My Dear Amy,

Both mother & I were delighted to get your letter of Nov 6th and to learn by it that you are well and that you have been learning not only the lessons of school, but the better lessons regarding the Heavenly Kingdom. We were glad to hear you got the prize & hope that next time you will have no mistakes, when you come to try. By & bye, I suppose you will be asked not only to repeat & sing the hymns but also to play the tunes. I am sure grandma will be glad to hear you sing and play sweet hymns to her, especially when she is weary.

We were glad you were able to tell us about Pastor Brown's address about sowing the good seeds in the morning, and what this meant. Do you know we have sown our garden here, the seeds of Honesty, the Pastor and his sister gave Mother & they are now growing in far away Africa. Perhaps you will tell Miss Brown this when you see her. Mr Brown asked you to sow the seeds in the morning and mentioned the name of some – the wheat of knowledge – we have been sowing wheat here – Mr Moffat has – but after the seed is sown there is much to do. The birds wish to eat it up, and so a boy has to be kept in the garden to frighten them away. Then the locusts and grasshoppers are ____ to come and eat it up when it has sprung up and so we find a large patch of wheat we have sown has been eaten up by these jumping creatures, and if they continue they will eat up everything. Indeed there is great hunger in many parts of the country because there have been so many locusts. We have seen greater clouds here than those we passed after leaving ____ on our way home, you remember. So you see, after the sowing has been done, much work and watching are required in the garden so as to secure a good harvest from the seed sown.

You know we are away from Bandawe now, farther North – about as far North of Ekwendeni, (where, when on the hills we went to see Mr & Mrs McCallum), as from Bandawe to Ekwendeni - we are up on the hills too. Indeed our house is much the same height above the sea as the top of Ben Nevis. You will find out where that mountain is by looking in your geography. We can see the Lake & the mountains on the other side of it. Amelia Bay is opposite to us and we see it nicely, & the River on the South of it, when the weather is clear. Away to the West of us are high hills, some of them bare, others with trees, and just now beautiful green grass covers them all. Fleecy clouds float about, and this is indeed a beautiful place, and we hope it will become more beautiful yet, when we have houses built and trees and flowers planted.

I am busy laying out a road just now, when the grass is dry enough for me to get through it. Just fancy Father beginning to make a road from the top of Ben Nevis to get down to the sea-side, or the Lake side, as it is here. We have some cattle here, and this morning when at the kraal, one of the cows came and licked my hand, but her tongue was too rough to be pleasant. There is another pretty young cow, which is very gentle and tame. We have goats too, and one little kid, when it rains, likes to run here to get into the kitchen beside the stove and keep itself warm.

Posika – John Posika – is here, cooking for us. I do not think you know the other boys, and Posika has grown so much you would hardly know him. One boy from near Mt Waller, was caught by a hyena

long ago, and his left eye was torn out and part of his face destroyed. There are several other boys at work also and big men and women ___ as well are being taught Harry's Catechisms. Pray for all these that they may learn to love Jesus.

Kisses to grandma and Aunt Mary, whom I am sure you are trying to help. Many kisses to yourself from your loving father Robert Laws

MS3290/12/6

Kondowi, B.C.A.

March 24th 1895

My Dear Amy,

This is Sabbath evening, & the services of the day are over, & before going to bed I sit down to have a little chat with my darling.

Today we have had two services in Nyanja with the natives, 1 English & 1 native Bible Class & now our evening English meeting is just over.

Instead of a church we meet in Mr Murray's shop. Some trees have been ad_ed on one side & 4 legs put into them, & these are the seats for the audience, while 4 chairs are brought from the house for ourselves. Some day perhaps we may have a nice church here, but it is of most importance to get the people taught about God, & to learn to love Jesus. You have been reading the gospels, I am sure, & I wonder if you could tell me how often we are told in one of the Gospels that Christ preached to the people in the biggest church any one can preach in – I mean the open air.

Yuraia & Charlie Domingo are studying the Life of Moses with me & we have got to the III. Chap of the book of Exodus. John Posi___ is in another class, taught in Nyanja. John & several others are learning English with Mother during the week.

One little boy is working here, & has been for many weeks who got his left eye torn away by a hyena. He has a companion about the same size who has a tumour on his lower jaw, or chin rather I should say, which perhaps I may remove someday for him. He wishes it done, but I wish him to get his father & mother to consent to this first.

There has been a good deal of fever among the people here, because we have been having much rain, & at times cold mornings. Our cold weather is coming on now, & we need not be surprised if we have sickness about us.

You will be glad to hear that many of the people who are at work with us are learning part of Harry's Catechism during the week. Many of these men are from Ngoniland, & in former years they came here only to plunder the people & often killed them as well. Now many of them have been helping to make a road in this district which I told you about in my last letter. Some of the men had begun to learn to read, & brought the Gospel of Mark with them when coming here to work, & these are being taught every day by Mr Murray, while Mother teaches the alphabet & syllables to a class of big grown up men.

The gospel of Jesus Christ preached in Ngoniland by Dr Elmslie & others has been the means of this great change. Pray, dear Amy that God would help all these men & women to learn about Jesus, and turn to serve him, instead of doing cruel wicked things as they were accustomed to do long ago.

I wonder what you have been learning at the Sab. School to-day. How many of the questions of the Shorter Catechism can you repeat the answers of yet? I am sure Miss Melville, in Aberdeen, who was my Sabbath school teacher when I was a boy would be glad to hear that you could repeat all the

answers. Perhaps some day when you go to see Grandpa you will be able to repeat these answers to her if she ask them at you, as she used to do long ago of me.

Give my kind regards to your young friends to Willie & Sarah Paterson – Do you speak to them in German yet? Any words I mean? Also remember us to all Mr & Mrs Cowan's young folks, & to Madge Balleny. It is so good of them all to be kind to you & help you to enjoy their happiness. Mother & I thank them all for it.

With love & kisses to all the loved ones, which you know how to give, and praying for you that the loving Jesus may keep you from all evil & enable you to live for God. I am, your loving father,

Robert Laws.

MS3290/12/7

Livingstonia. Lake Nyasa. British Central Africa.

May 3rd 1895

My Dear Amy,

Mother & I were glad to get your last letter & thank you for it. We are thankful to God also for all His kindness to you when you had been sick, & for making you well & strong again. We hope you too thanked our Heavenly Father for all His goodness, and that you gave Aunt Mary more than one kiss for taking such good care of you, & helping you to get well.

We have been having very cold weather here, cold that is for Nyasa, but we are up on the hills, & it is cold with us when it is warm enough at Bandawe. The men feel it very cold in the mornings & they do not like to begin work even at 6 o'clock it is so cold.

Last week a man was sent by Mr Crawshey with a letter to me from Deep Bay. On his way up a lion sprang upon him from rising ground in front of him. As the man raised his rifle the lion struck him in his spring trying to seize the man with his teeth & claws. One wound over the man's right eye was said to have been caused by a tooth of the lion; some more on his right shoulder, & on his left arm, by the claws of the lion. The man was knocked over on his back by the lion in its spring, but the force of the jump on the hill side was such that the lion went tumbling down & then turned back upon the man, who now had his rifle ready & waited till it came near & then fired at & wounded the lion which made off. Two days or so later the man was brought here, & I have been dressing the man's wounded arm every day since. All the wounds on his right arm & head are nearly well, but his left arm was badly pierced by the lion's claws, & had been poisoned by their having been dirty. I think he is safe now & that the wounds will soon heal. One hole is more than two inches deep, indeed some of my instruments were through his arm y'day & the day before.

None of these wild beasts have come close to our houses yet, but we never know when they may come, or may be lurking about, & so we do not go out often at night, & then no farther than we can help.

Now I have got good news to tell you. God has been blessing His word at Bandawe, and a great many people are now anxious to learn about Jesus. Mr MacAlpine wishes to tell me that 2,000 women are now coming to his class for women, and are listening most attentively to what he has got to tell them about Jesus. Again there are over 2,000 children attending the schools in that district, & coming regularly every day. So you see how God has been answering the many prayers that have been offered in past days, beseeching Him to help the people to learn to love Jesus.

Here the people are leaving their hiding places among the rocks at the waterfalls, and are coming out to live in their gardens. They speak a different language from Nyanja but many of them know Nyanja and can understand what I say in it. On Sabbaths Mother has a class for the women and little folks whom they bring with them, & some of them are trying to learn to sing hymns, & understand their meaning.

During the week mother has her class every day of boys who are being taught to read and write &c. Two boys have come up to learn to work at the telegraph and they are busy also learning English with Mother in the afternoons.

Both Mother & I are so glad you are trying to shew your love to Jesus, & to serve Him, by learning your lessons well, and by trying to help Aunt Mary & be kind to Grandma. I am glad to learn that you are one of Christ's Sunbeams, trying to make everybody happy & bright about you. Mother is my best sunbeam here, & she not only makes me happy but also Mr Murray & Mr Moffat, and many of the men & boys about here who are trying to do what is right. Where do bright sunbeams come from & how are they so bright? Why they come from the sun to be sure, & they come so straight & so quickly that they bring the sun's brightness with them. Now Jesus is our Sun of Righteousness & to be His bright sunbeams we must come from Him, by His having all our hearts, & our having been recently with Him, that is in reading God's word & in prayer to Him. So Jesus gives us some of His brightness to carry to others. Just count up with Aunt Mary how many of His bright sunbeams He sends to visit you. I'll just give you two to being with Miss Carnegy and Sir John Cowan. How many more? Many kisses from Mother & me. Your loving Father,

Robert Laws.

MS3290/12/8

Kondowi,

Livingstonia, B.C.A.

June 9th, 1895

My Dear Amy,

Mother & I are often wondering how you are, and what you are doing. It is now the "leafy month of June" with you at home, & we hope you are enjoying the long days, and the pleasant sunshine, and that Aunt Mary and you are both able to go out long walks at times to see the flowers and the trees & when the birds sing.

Here it is our winter time, and on the hills we are feeling it very cold in the morning & at night, but it is pleasant and home like. In the garden the nasturtiums are in beautiful bloom & the peas are growing beautifully green, and are in bloom. European vegetables are also growing nicely with us except that a fly lays eggs on the radishes, on cabbages, & broccoli and turnips. From these eggs come little black caterpillars which eat up the leaves and kill the plants. Look up your book of Natural History & read there the strange changes these creatures go through.

Last week we began an elementary school here, and some 20 children are coming to school and beginning to learn the alphabet, and to sing some hymns. Charlie Domingo is teaching them meantime. The children are also learning Harry's Catechism and so getting a Bible lesson daily.

Some of the older Ngoni who are working with us are to sing hymns in their own language and also in Nyanja. This is something very much better & different from their old war songs & trying to kill people.

We had service to day in the workshop and three languages were used in it Ngoni, Tonga & Nyanja, & there were people there speaking other three or four languages as well. How we long that all these were brought to the Saviour, so that they might love Him & go to tell their fellow-men about Him.

One of the men who was here to have his wounds dressed (I told you about him before having been torn by a lion when bringing a letter home) is now better & has gone back to his work at Deep Bay. The other man is not quite better, two wounds having yet to heal, but he is recovering.

Mother is suffering from rheumatism just now, but we hope it may pass ere long. The cold weather is apt to make her feel it more.

Mr Wm Murray is here and often speaks about you.

Every day Mother & I are praying for you, that God may help you to be a bright, good little girl, enabling you to love & obey Jesus, and that He would yet help you to lead others to Him.

Love to all the dear ones at home & with kisses from Mother & me to you.

I am, your loving Father,

Robert Laws.

MS3290/12/9

Livingstonia,

June 23rd, 1895

My Dear Amy,

This is Sabbath evening, & the day's work is done. Being so far away I cannot call you to come to the room where I am, & take my darling on my knee, and talk to her about Jesus, & what she has heard about him, in Church, & Sabbath School, so instead I take my pen to talk a little with you on paper.

I have some good news for you. At Bandawe a great many of the children and their fathers & mothers are now anxious to learn about Jesus, and many say they wish to give their hearts to Him and learn to obey His Word. On Sabbath last there were 900 at the morning service and from 1200 to 1400 at the second service. The school church cannot hold so many people and so the services have to be held in the open air. At the Classes many people are also coming to learn, and the schools are attended by about 2,000 children. Doubtless Jesus will yet draw many of these to love himself.

Would you like to know what we have been doing to-day? I shall try to tell you. Soon after 2 o'clock this morning we were aroused by a voice outside & soon heard the lowing of cattle & the shouting of men & the barking of Carlo & Jessie. As it did not stop we were sure something was wrong, & I got up as I heard Mr Murray's voice. On opening the window I saw his light & Mr Murray and Mr Moffat together, & they told me some wild beast had broken into the goathouse and had killed & carried off a goat. Too long Carlo would continue to bark, but it was too dark & dangerous to try to follow the wild beast. It is thought to have been a leopard, as it has left no tracks on the hard clay soil. This is the first time our kraal has been attacked but it is likely the wild beast will come back again. We went back to bed and had a good sleep after that.

We had breakfast at 9. & at 10 our native service. We had hymns in Ngoni & Nyamja, the Lord's Prayer & then commandments in Tonga, and reading Nyanja, & I preached in Nyanja. We had people there who speak other three languages besides these. After the service was over Mother had her Bible Class for Women, and she was gratified by the constant attention some of the poor women gave to their words.

After 12 o'clock we had dinner, and at 2 I met with the native church members & arranged for them taking work in the Sab School at 2.30. When the school met many of the older men were away, and so we had only 6 classes & I sent the other four away to the villages to speak to the people there about Jesus. In my class I had some grown up Ngoni men. More than one of these had gone fighting & killing people and stealing cattle in former days. Now two are sawyers & one a brick maker & others at the garden & such like work. I think the Spirit of God is working in their heads. Pray for them dear Amy that they may be enabled to give up all that hinders them from turning to Jesus, and learn to love and trust Him.

After school we went down the road for some distance & met Mr Murray was asking about you & glad to hear of your last letter written by yourself & sends you his kind remembrances.

After we came back we had evening service with the men. Several who were absent in the forenoon were present in the evening, aft[er?] this we had tea. I forgot to tell you that after S. School I had to see some sick people. One man had hurt his foot & an abscess had to be opened. Then Knozya one of the men who were hurt by lions had to be dressed. He & a woman and boy were going home when 7 lions attacked them. 4 attacked the woman & they killed & ate her, the other 3 attacked him He drove his spear into two & managed to get into a tree 4 days & nights & then got to Deep Bay, when next morning the man who died was seized, & both were sent on by Mr Crawshay. The man whose arm was torn is better & away. Knozya is nearly better 4 wounds out of 30 are not healed, but will be, I hope, in a week or two. I do not like lions, & we both wish, I am sure, to fight against the Devil who goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour. We are glad you are better & helping Aunt Mary & kind to Grand Ma. God bless thee, dear one, & make you a blessing to all
ma__s Your loving father Robert Laws

MS3290/12/10

Kondowi, B.C.A.

July 17th, 1895

My Dear Amy,

I have just taken down your beautiful blotting-book, & I think the first thing I write on it should be a letter to you. It must be a short one for I have to start for Deep Bay tomorrow to meet the Commissioner on business, & I have much left to get done ere I go.

Mr Henderson arrived here safely on the 15th and his bones came up yesterday. When these were opened he handed to me the parcel you sent to Mother & me. Mother will write to you about the tray cloth & cosy cover, but I must tell you I was glad to see all your work & to know you had stitched in so many good wishes into it. Then this blotting book is delightful and the pen wiper with my initials on it is just the thing for me. Mr Murray & Mr Moffat as well as Mr Henderson saw all the gifts & were delighted by them. I thank you for them, and send you I do not know how many kisses.

And so poor polly is dead, you will miss it I suppose though it did not speak. Your cold Edin. Winter was very different from the heat of Old Calabar.

There are no grey parrots here, but I have heard that some black monkeys were seen in the trees a mile or two away.

Mr Henderson has brought up a little puppy with him from Bandawe. It is a lively little creature & was tugging away at Mr Murray's trousers a short time ago. We hope it will take to catching the rats & mice which are becoming numerous about the place.

Several times I have seen a chameleon on the road. One I found at its hole with its eggs. Now would you look up your beautiful natural History book & see what it says about this creature, & tell me what you think the most wonderful thing about it.

Thursday. Father has left me very little to add. Your living gifts are very pretty & much admired. Your rosiness, & brightness & tallness, & love have all been added to by the arrival of this mail. Aunty knows how to pass over the kisses fr Kondowe Heights & we convey them to you. And such love & care as Aunty bestows on you calls for your full & daily flow of obedient & helpful love in return. Why, it can even become a joy to give up self-will when we see that fretting only brings clouds & trouble where all can & should be bright & happy. Such a sunny girlhood you enjoying. We hope you do not forget the little suffers in the Hospital & the far greater numbers outside of it.

Your pocket money must come to a good sum, earned too in a very pleasant way! Your music must be advancing in every way. We'll be expecting to hear fr you soon how you like the change to Sarah's School.

And so the Polar cold sent polly asleep & you laid him away.

Yes I remember well your stories of dear Janet at Craigs, & the lovely roses, & the peacocks, & the fruit, & her songs by wh she made you laugh so & be happy. She too was happy with you: now she rests.

The fishwife dolly might charm away the pain or weariness of a wee girl since you are growing so tall. Mr Henderson is to shew me the button you reached in April.

MS3290/12/11

Kondowi, B.C.A.

August 4th, 1895

My Dear Amy,

The day's work is done, and now I would like to have a Sab. Evg. Talk with my little girl – though many weeks may pass ere it reach you.

Perhaps you would like to know what has been doing here to-day. Well, y'day Yuraia & Charlie, & several others, went away to the Lake shore to stay all night, & preach to the people in the villages there to-day. In the forenoon we had service in the workshop & a great many people were there from villages several miles away; & a large women's class Mother had to-day after the service was over. Then in the afternoon we had our Sab. School; but most of the scholars are grown-up people. There were not so many to-day as usual, owing to many having gone away y'day to buy food. Then after school was over Mother & I went down the road & met the lads coming in with the cattle & goats. Brownie, a goat with her kid, came running to lick Mother's hand, hoping she might have some salt in it. Mr Henderson's puppy – Judy – had gone with us but when she saw the cattle & goats coming she ran away home as fast as she could, sometimes turning round to see if they were chasing her or not.

Then in the evening we had worship with the natives, & later on an English service. I shall give you my text, & then you will take your Bible & try to find out where it is and tell me who was the person who spoke the words, and tell me what great things he did. The words were "But as for me & my house we will serve the Lord".

The man who said these words promised something for himself and for every girl & boy in his house or household. Now do you know this is just what I promised for you as my little girl long ago – that you Amy would serve the Lord.

Do you know it makes Mother & me very happy to hear that you are trying to serve the Lord. Do you wonder at this & think that you have not any great things; well I do not know that, I think it is a great thing when a little girl counts aloud at her music when asked to do so, even when she does not like to do it, but knows Jesus wishes her to do so; or when she gives up biting her finger nails because it is a bad habit. Some people could more easily do what would be called great things in the newspapers, than give up or stop a bad habit.

Then again there is helping Aunt Mary, & being kind to Grandma, and other sick people when you have the opportunity – all these things can be the ways in which little people can serve the Lord Jesus.

I wonder how many of the questions in the Shorter Catechism you have learned to answer yet. It is a grand book that Shorter Catechism. It has done a great deal for Scotland. When you grow up you will understand this better. Do you know, I would like you to be able to answer any of the questions to Miss Melville, when next you go to Aberdeen. She used to ask these questions at me when I was a

boy in her class at the Sab. School. Grandpa also used to teach me the catechism & the instruction has been most useful to me in after days.

Now I shall stop tonight, & mother & I say goodnight to you far far away from us, but near our loving Jesus. Kisses to you from us both, and our love to Aunt Mary & all the others.

Your loving father,

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/12

Bandawe, Sep 29th 1895

My Dear Amy,

You see I am writing to you from our old home, though not from the old house. I left mother at Kondowe a week ago past Thursday to come down here by Ekwendi. I reached Ekwendi on Sat. having slept two nights on the road. Kande our dog came with me & liked to sleep in my tent. The first night after our tent was pitched, & dinner was over Kande began to bark, & seemed sure there was some wild beast about. After a time we heard a hyena cry, & then Kande came & lay down at the fire, as much as to say "Now you know what wild beast is there, & can take care of him". We reached Ekwendi all right & stayed there till Wed. morning when I left for Njanya & Hora where Mr & Mrs McCallum are staying. On Thur. I started for Bandawe & camped at the R. Lucia. Next day at 5 I reached Bandawe.

A poor man who had been torn by a leopard was under Dr. Prentice's care, but died y'day. Y'day forenoon some people were out cutting grass for Monenga's school. Suddenly a wild beast sprang on one poor woman & killed her & carried her away. A man brought a goat to be poisoned for the bait & the bait was taken & this forenoon after service some natives brought in a big lioness & said there was yet a lion & two cubs prowling about.

Now I have got good news to tell you. Many, many of the people round Bandawe are now learning to love Jesus, and seeking to learn his word & obey it. There are over 2,000 children in the schools, who are coming regularly every day, and are being taught about Jesus, as well as to learn to read & to write. Today there were many hundred people at the morning & forenoon services, and yesterday many people from Clontechi 12 miles away came wanting to know more about Jesus Christ & seeking to follow God.

When you hear of this, I am sure you will thank God for all his goodness to those people & for blessing the preaching of his word in past days.

Little Walter Elmslie has got a baby brother (John) and little Peter McCallum had measles, but was getting better when I was there.

I got Aunt Mary's letter here & Grandpa's also, & I was very glad indeed to find how you love Aunt Mary & had been a help & comfort to her in the time of trial to you all when Grandma was called home.

I am sure you must find it make you happy yourself to be kind to others. God has given you many kind friends including Aunt Mary, & we thank Him for being so kind & good to you. How many answers to the questions of the Shorter Catechism were you able to repeat correctly to Miss Melville. I am sure she has been glad to see you.

And then you were going to Craigo to kind, good Miss Carnegie. I hope you were a sunbeam there also & helped all to be happy.

God loves his children to be. And then going to Drumnahoy, away among the pine trees & heather * clover, & mile & hens & I know not what all! I expect a long letter telling me all about this.

Would I not like to see my little Amy coming in at the door now. I think we would have a long talk about Jesus and His love to us. I hope you will help many to learn to love Him & live like him. Now, darling, goodnight. Mother though far away is praying for you as well as father. Love to all dear ones & kisses to yourself from Your loving father

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/13

Bandawe,

Oct 20th 1895

My Dear Amy,

I am still at Bandawe, & in the quiet of the Sabbath evening I turn to my pen to have a chat with my dear little one so far away & which I hope she may read by & bye, & know that she is never a day forgotten by her loving mother & father.

At home Mother & I pray for you every morning before you are awake, & before we go out to the work of the day & now that we are farther apart than Aberdeen & Edinburgh you are prayed for by each of us.

And what do you think our prayers for you are? That you may be rich or great, or wise, or that many people may think you clever & such like. Not a bit of it. There is something far better than riches, or greatness or cleverness or the praise of men, & it is this better part that we pray God may give you. We wish to hear that you love Him & that you are trying to serve Him every day, trying to serve Him, by doing your best to learn your lessons well, by doing your best to help Aunt Mary, & so learning to know about household work, & learning to use your hands in keeping things nice & tidy. We wish to hear of your loving God & trusting Him as your Heavenly Father, who is stronger & wiser than I am, & who cares for you & loves you & helps you day by day.

Just think what a friend you have in Him: That you can speak to Him anywhere & He is willing to help you & listen to you. He is far greater than the Queen & can help you as she never could. He loves you & just because He loves you He is willing & ready to help you to fight against Satan & all his giants whom Satan sends to tempt you & make you do wrong. He is able & willing also to help you to do your duty & is glad to see you growing up in His service.

When the steamer comes back, a number of boys & girls & some men & women are going up with me to the new station. Some of these are already Church Members, others are Catechismers, & some Men are wanting to learn, & I hope they will learn the best of all lessons – to believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Pray for them, dear Amy, that all may give their hearts to the Saviour, & so become useful men & women, & some of them preachers to, & teachers of their fellow men.

Here we have a beautiful little fawn in the house. It is a Duiker buck or 'nyiska' as the people here call it. It is quite young & when standing comes about half way up to my knee. It drinks milk when it is warmed a little, but shivers if the milk is cold. It has found its way into my bedroom & lies on the floor at the head of my bed. I have had a bigger rabbit many a time. We call it Fanny. The dogs try to play with it, & it is not at all afraid of them though sometimes they take half its head into their mouths. It is very gentle & pretty.

It is very warm here just now, in two days the sun will be overhead, & the sand is so hot that our feet are like to be burned by the sand.

Today in Church, there were so many people & I was so hot, we were glad to get out to the fresh air when the service was over, so as to get our headaches blown away. The school-church is now far too small, for the number of people who attend.

How many answers to the questions of the shorter catechism have you repeated to-day I wonder?
How many did you repeat correctly to Miss Melville & to Grandpa.

Now good night darling, with love & kisses to Aunt Mary & yourself

from Your loving Father

Robert Laws.

MS3290/12/14

Livingstonia,

December 1st, 1895

My Dear Amy,

And so you have been at Drumnahoy & learned to milk Janet, the cow. I am glad you have been in the country for some time, & have enjoyed the fresh air, and the sunshine, & all the rest of the beauties of nature at Cluny ere you begin school work for the winter. Ere you get this I suppose you will have begun your lessons at your new school, and have seen many new faces, & found new classfellows with whom you are associated.

All these will interest you at first, & perhaps make you feel strange, but then you will settle down to your lessons, striving to learn them well, so as to please the Lord Jesus, and gratify your teachers & dear Aunt Mary who has been so kind to you during all these years.

One thing I hope you will always remember in your new school, or wherever you may be, that you belong to Jesus Christ, & as His girl you must shew your love to him, & your obedience by clinging to Him in prayer each day, and by seeking to Love Him more & more. When your heart is full of love to Him, you will, I am sure be glad to help your class fellows to be happy, and it may be, help them to learn to love Jesus also. Remember nobody in the world has the same right to be happy as a Christian, and so I hope you will not only be happy at your lessons, and at your music, but also in your play, enjoying yourself as much as you can, playing heartily and honourably at your games, during your play hours.

I suppose you have been helping Aunt Mary so much, you know to do more now than dust a chair. I wonder if you could make me a cup of tea were I to pay you a visit to-morrow evening, or if when mother & I are permitted by our Heavenly Father to visit Scotland again, we shall find our little Amy no longer little but big Amy, and able to cook a dinner for us. I hope so, as we cannot get home for a long time yet.

Now perhaps you would like to hear something about the people here. As you know I was at Bandawe, & a number of boys & girls & young men & women came up here to learn more, & to learn how to work. One of these is a little boy, who, when Cazembe's village was burned while we were at home, was found alone by a Sikh soldier at the door of a house. He was taken on board the S.S. Domira, & was given into the charge of a man named Bandawe, & was taken to Bandawe for a time, & now he is up with us here, & will go to school as soon as school is opened. We hope he will not only learn to read but also learn to love the Lord Jesus & serve Him with his whole heart.

Of the other children who come about us, I cannot tell you much at present, as school is closed, but we hope to begin it soon. They live with their fathers & mothers in poor miserable houses or huts on the hill sides. The people often choose a steep slope, & cut out a flat place sufficient for them to build a hut upon. Perhaps it is 6 or 8ft in diameter with a low roof & lower door, & often they put branches of thorn trees on the roofs to keep the lions & leopards from breaking through to catch the people inside. Last week Kande, our dog disappeared, & we fear a leopard or some other wild beast

has seized him, & carried him away. These wild beasts have not been so common recently, of which we are very glad.

May God bless thee, darling, is the earnest, daily prayer of

Your loving Father,

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/15

Livingstonia,

January 28th, 1896

My Dear Amy,

Mother has written you a nice long letter which I am sure you will enjoy much, & think often about. We were both glad as mother has told you to get your letter, & glad you found out about the eyes of the chameleon. Besides this there is it[s] strange power of changing its colour, so that sometimes it is white, again red or black or spotted. It is a queer creature.

Mother wishes me to tell you about a little baby girl here. She was born when I was at Bandawe in October, & she & her two brothers & her mother came up with me here, & her father followed to be at school, & learn to be a teacher of his countrymen, about Jesus Christ. On the last Sab. of Dec. I baptized the little girl, & for the first time the new font given by Mr & Mrs Gill Aberdeen was used. You know Mr & Mrs G. gave this in memory of a little girl of theirs who had gone to be with Jesus. The little baby was therefore named Mary Penelope Gill, & a happy little baby she is, & crows to mother many a time when her mother comes up to get her lesson from Miss Stewart.

Mother has told you about the 8 pretty ducklings. They have two white mother ducks who hatched the eggs, & so both ducks go with all the ducklings, as they both sat on the eggs. There are two black ducks sitting on another nest just in the same way, & so perhaps we may have a few more soon.

There is a little mouse here with a bushy tail like a squirrel. I wonder if you could find out anything about it in your book.

I must stop & be off to bed as the house is getting cold for Mother.

Wishing you & dear Aunt Mary a Happy New year & many of them

I am, Your loving Father,

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/16

Livingstonia, B.C.A.

Feb 9th, 1896

My Dear Amy,

I begin my letter to you tonight because I hope to get letters sent away this week & wish you to have a line or two.

I am sorry to tell you that mother has had a fever She had to go to bed on Friday afternoon, & was in bed all day yesterday, but was able to be up to tea this afternoon & is sitting in the chair by the fireside now, very much better indeed. I thank God for restoring mother so soon again, & we hope she will keep well now. A number of the boys have had fever during the last fortnight, but most are well again now.

Lions have been causing much trouble recently. One killed an ox at a place about 2 or 3 miles from this, & I sent poison to put in part of the meat he had left. The natives said he had taken it but got away, & that they had followed his spoor a long way, but had not seen him. I fear they told lies & had not gone after him.

On Thursday night however a lion attacked a native but not far from this. In the hut were two women & a boy. When they saw that the lion was pulling the sticks out of the house & would soon get in to them they ran out of the house to try to get to a place of safety. The lion pursued them, & caught & killed them all, & began to eat part of one of them. Next morning a woman, who had heard the noise during the night, left her house to go to see what had happened. The lion met her on the road & caught & killed her next. Two men came with the news, & I sent Ywaia & another lad back with them to lay poison for the lion. Next morning (Saty) the men came to say the lion had come & taken the poison, but they were afraid to follow it. Mr Henderson, Ywaia & other three lads got their guns to go to the place & with natives to see if the lion was dead. They found the place where he had eaten the poison, but he had vomited it and gone away. Mr Henderson & the others followed the spoor for two miles or so. Then they saw a bush buck near some reeds, & Mr Henderson fired at it. The shot roused the lion who jumped up from among the reeds & ran along the other side of a stream bounding up hill at the same time. Mr Henderson fired at him & so did Ywaia. They ran along the other side of the stream & fired at the lion & wounded him & at length the lion stopped under a tree. He had already received 10 bullets. Mr Henderson knelt down & fired & I think Ywaia fired also. The lion roared at them & charged forward to come across the stream to them. Mr Henderson was still kneeling & had reloaded his rifle. Again he fired at the lion & struck him in the forehead, & the lion tumbled down dead.

In the afternoon a great procession of men & children came to the station bringing the lion with them. They were singing & dancing because the lion had been killed. It was a large lion, so heavy that i could hardly keep one end of the pole to which it was tied on my shoulder. We measured it & found that from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail was nine feet one inch: the tail measured two feet 10 inches.

Was not God good to help Mr Henderson, Ywaia & the others to kill this terrible creature.

We have had more of the people at service to-day than there has been for a long time. I think they see that we are really their friends & some of them are beginning to learn about Jesus. One of the women who was killed by the lion, was working here for Mr Murray a short time ago.

Do you know who is spoken of in the Bible as going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? Try to find out & tell me the place where you found it in your Bible.

We are glad you are liking your school & your lessons & hope you will learn them as well as you can & shew your love to Jesus in this way. You know Mother & I are very sorry when we hear of anything not being done by you as Aunt Mary tells you, & are very glad when Aunt Mary tells us of your being good, loving, and obedient as Mother taught you to pray to God to help you to become. Every morning, Mother & I pray for our dear little one & seek that God may keep you pure & unspotted from the world. Your loving Father

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/17

Livingstonia,

Feb 21st, 1896

My Dear Amy,

Yesterday we got a mail when we were not expecting it, & in Aunt Mary's letter came the one from yourself. We were sorry to hear that you have had fever & a cough, but hope that long ere now you will have recovered & that you are well & strong again.

And so you saw a little baby 3 weeks old, & Mrs Cowan trusted you to hold her little boy on your knee. I hope you took great care of him, & thanked Mrs Cowan for trusting you. It is very kind indeed of Mr & Mrs Cowan to think so often of you & to be so kind to you as they are.

We are glad to know you are liking your school work in the way you are doing, and we hope that you will enjoy it more & more, & enjoy the music & other things in after years. How often I used to wish when I was a boy that I had some body with an instrument who would teach me music, but I could not get it; there was no Aunt Mary to teach me.

Ywaia is busy here at school in the forenoon, & so also is Charlie Domingo. In the afternoon Charlie teaches in the junior school, and Ywaia looks after the buying of food & other work in the store.

I think mother told you of our having a brood of 8 ducklings. One of these was killed by a dog but the other are growing big & will soon be leaving their mothers. There was another brood with two black mother ducks but of the 5 only two are alive. They too are growing. The trouble of the ducks is that they destroy our young banana plants & have killed a number of them in this way. We had our first pine apple here recently. We have had English potatoes grown in our garden here.

Now I must turn to write a little bit to Aunt Mary. We enjoyed your new hymns hope you like them also.

Your loving Father

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/18

Livingstonia, B.C.A.

March 6th, 1896

My Dear Amy,

The steamer has not come with any letter from you for me to answer, but I write to you now so as to have a letter ready when there is a chance for it to go.

I am sorry to have to tell you that mother is still ill. She has not much fever, but is sick and frequently vomiting. She was better for a few days but the sickness returned again, & she has been in bed most of this week till to-day when she got up a short time this forenoon, & is now stretched on the ship chair near the fire. I hope she will soon be better again.

We have been having much rain recently, and when there is much rain here, we often have misty days as well, & they are not very agreeable.

Mr Murray is away on a holiday at present. He went down to Bandawe by last steamer & is to come up by Ngoniland & then on here.

Walter Elmslie has got a little brother John – I forget whether you were told of this in a former letter. Little John is now getting his teeth, & Walter is growing a big strong boy.

Here, the first brood of ducklings, is getting to be quite big. They sometimes go away out to a muddy place & stick their bills into the mud in search of worms or other creatures, & then come home at night with lumps of hard clay covering their nostrils. They look very queer, literally at times up to the eyes in mud; and then it looks so strange to see them trying to breathe their nostrils closed up with mud they must breathe by their mouths & they do this as if they were gasping for breath which they really are. The second brood of ducklings is all dead except one. I think some of the older ducks pecked one or more till they killed them.

We have three pigs on the station also. They came from the North End nearly a year ago, & have grown to be quite big now. We have just got a house built for them near the garden to be away from the station. They eat a lot of grass and other green things & when they see the girls pounding maize or sifting it they run to them, hoping to get the bran to eat. Sometimes they quarrel over their food & try to bite each other, but not often.

I forgot to tell you that yesterday an eagle came & perched on a tree not far away, trying to get a chance of catching one of the ducklings. The workers came & called me, & I got my rifle & sent a bullet close to it, & this made the eagle get up & fly away.

About 6 P.M. it is very beautiful here in clear weather. We can stand on our verandah & look across the Lake, & see the other side, & look at Amelia Bay & of course we cannot do this without thinking of Aunt Amy and yourself, & wondering how you both are.

We have got a number of crows here also. Some of them have white neckties and white shirtfronts just like the ones at Bandawe, but some others seem to have forgotten to put on their white fronts, & some have hardly even a necktie, they are so black.

This evening the boys were singing the psalms & hymns for the Sab. services, and I heard the girls practising some of the hymns with Miss Stewart. We hope to have them singing together some evening to form a choir. Even already they have improved greatly in singing, and will do so still more I hope.

Some of your home flowers have been growing very nicely here. Balsams have grown to be very big & having very beautiful blossoms. Azineas also & marigolds have been very pretty & make the place look much neater & home like.

The boys & girls are learning to read & write & speak English, but they think English a very hard language, even though it has no clicks in it like the Ngoni, spoken at Njinya & Ekwendeni.

The children in school here are learning to read. They have also learned several of the hymns & sing them very nicely at their villages, & so the people are learning about Jesus Christ from the lips of their children. We have some people at work with us who have come down from the high mountains away to the S.West. They are a strange people & speak a different language from that used by the other people in this neighbourhood.

Mother has been sick again & has had to go to bed, so I also must stop.

With love to Aunt Mary & many kisses to yourself, I am your loving Father

Robert Laws.

MS3290/12/19

March 18th, 1896

Dear Amy,

Here is a little letter to tell you Mother has been very ill, but our loving Heavenly Father has spared her to us, & she is able to be up again, & is writing now. Your little letter with the Xmas Card, was the first letter she was able to read, & you should have seen how glad she was to see your writing, "To my dearest mother". I thank you also for your beautiful card, & when Mr Murray comes back we shall give him the one you sent to him. Your loving Father

Robert Laws

My dear fast-growing Amy,

Such a delight it must have been for you & Aunt Mary to choose such beautiful Cards. They greatly add to our small pleasures of the passing days when each one is fighting with feverishness, "jiggers", & lack of appetite.

We are very highly pleased with the results of your Exam Papers; but do not be too eager. Remember, we desire you to enjoy your childhood for a few years yet. Also, try to reduce the 2 hours' preparation of Lessons by 5, & 5, & 5 minutes, so that there may be time for walking & change of exercise.

"Sechs tänze" (that mark over a makes it sound an Italian e) means Six dances, as you have long since found out fr the style of music; but the future wd you respectfully & gently ask the teacher to pronounce such pi[e]ces so that you may the more intelligently play them.

With many, many kisses to your own dear self & to dear Aunt Mary who is so kind to you I am

Ever your loving mother

M. Laws

MS3290/12/20

Camp, Tanganyika Plateau

May, 1896

My Dear Amy,

On board the S.S.Domira, I wrote you a short letter, telling you that I was on my way to Mwenzo, about halfway between Lake Nyasa & L.Tanganyika. Now I am on my way back & tomorrow night we hope to be at Karonga.

When we left Kondowi, which we now call Livingstonia, we had very rainy weather & we feared we would have the same on the journey. I am thankful to say we have had only one shower all the time & that did not wet us much, as we were near Mwenzo when it began.

On the Thursday I wrote you we reached Karonga about 10.30am, & started on our journey between 2 & 3 after having dinner with Dr. Cross. We went some 12 or 15 miles & passed through the 3 Arab stockades which were destroyed in the recent war. All the houses are down & the people scattered, & from the grain that was strewn about a large crop is ripening. It was sad to see the bones of people who had been killed in the war, & scenes such as there shew what a terrible thing war is. Yet God often uses this terrible scourge to work out His purposes of mercy, & I believe there will be now peace & happiness to the people in the country after the breaking up of the power of the Arab slavetraders. Friday & Sat we were climbing hills. I was carried most of the way for my toes were painful from ulcers resulting from jiggers having got into them nearly two months ago. On Sat afternoon we reached Chirenji or mweniwanda's where Mr Bain lived so long & wrought among the people. The school-Church was burned some months ago & Dr Cross' house is also down but Mr Bain's house is still standing. Other two long days marching brought us to Mwenzo where Mr & Mrs Dewar are living. There we held our Meeting of Mission Council. Mr MacAlpine & Mr Henderson, Mr Dewar & myself. The country there is very flat with lots of trees, but there are not very many people at present. An hour further on is a Fife station where the A h Co have a store. We found the air fresh & bracing at Mwenzo station & it is likely to prove a nice place. There is a school there & another at Fife & many children are coming to learn to read, & many sing very nicely the hymns translated into their language.

Last Thursday we started homeward. We intended to go a new road, but heard the steamer was due at Karonga & perhaps Major Forbes (whom I wish to see) may be on board & so we came straight on here & camped here last night & are spending the Sab. in quiet rest. Our men are glad of it, for their feet are sore with the sharp stones on the road.

From Mwenzo Mr MacAlpine brought two young leopards, the natives had brought to Mr Dewar. They have been prowling a good deal. They get a fowl every day as their food. At present they are about the size of small dogs, but are strong & fierce.

From Mweniwanda's 3 boys came with us to go to school. Early next morning other two came up ere we had started, & mweniwanda came on to see they had reached us safely. I hope they will become

good boys & learn well, so that they may become teacher of their fellow men when they go back to their homes again.

This forenoon we had service with our men, and then after food, I thought I would like to write a little to my dear girl so far away, I have been wondering what you have been doing, & what you have learned to-day about Jesus, and also I sometimes wonder what you are doing to try to serve Him. Remember He will accept all your lessons faithfully learned, & any household work, even to the setting of a char or the dusting of a book – well done, as service to Him. This is a great help in learning a hand lesson, & in daily trying to do what is right.

Was not Miss Carnegy very kind & wise & good in giving you the proper medicine in a capsule to cure you. No doctor could have given you anything better, & I fear I might have given you the rhubarb without the capsule. So you know, I sometimes wonder whether my Amy would like some day to do this like Miss Carnegy, & cure not only one little girl, but many little girls, & be able at the same time to tell them about the loving Jesus who died that their sins might be taken away. That is the Future now however, & what you have to do now is the daily lessons & work our Heavenly Father gives you & in this time He will open up the path of life for you as He has so kindly done to your Father & grandfather before you.

Shall stop now, with kisses from Your loving Father

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/21

Livingstonia, British Central Africa

23rd June, 1896

My Dear Amelia,

And so you have had measles for your holiday. Well, I am glad you are safely over them, & that you have had good Dr Carmichael, & kind Aunt Mary to look after you. I trust you are safely over all the after effects of them, for sometimes these can be serious enough.

You have made a good appearance in your examinations, & what is better Aunt Mary told us you worked steadily & diligently before them so that you knew the work you had done. True, earnest work will bring its own reward, and we are glad to find you using the opportunities you had, which are so much greater than those mother & I enjoyed when like you. Best of all, I am pleased to see the improvement you have made in your bible knowledge. This I count of the highest value, & it will last you & be useful to you when all else has served its day.

I wonder what you were doing y'day in Edinb. To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of our Queen. I suppose there were great rejoicings, which we shall hear about by & bye. Here we had a service at 7AM & our workers & schoolboys had a feast of an ox & a sheep. The Mr Henderson, Mr MacGregor, Mr Imrie, Dr Prentice Mr & Mrs Thomson & Amy went a picnic to Mount Waller while Mr Murray, Mr Moffat, Miss Stewart (& J) & I remained Home. In the evening we had a Magic Lantern exhibition & so ended the day. There was one other thing I must mention. At the morning service I told the natives the wish of the Queen as to the memorial she wished in London. – The Hospital Fund, & then I told them of the famine in India, & of the children there, our missionaries were caring for & feeding, & asked if they would not help. They have not many pennies, but soon after breakfast Yokobi came with 3d and others followed with 1d, & so on while a number of girls wanted to carry sand from the stream. I gave them 1d for each basket & they went with these to Miss Stewart, to give them to the Famine stricken children. One girl had 1/2d left of a prize of 6d she got some months ago & she gave this. Some old Ngoni warriors came & asked me if the money must go by this steamer, because they had no money till they get their pay at the end of the month. Of course I told them it would be welcome then. The sum raised will not be much, when all the pennies are gathered, but it will certainly do the people good to think of the needs of others, & try to help them.

The clock is striking the hour to stop so good night from

Your loving Father

Robert Laws

I will write soon M.L.

MS3290/12/22

Livingstonia, British Central Africa

July 22nd, 1896

My Dear Amy,

Today I have been working with a lot of men & making a road to part of our farm, & as it is a long climb of a mile or more to the house, I am staying at one of our kraals, during the dinner hour & mother is kindly sending down my dinner to me. While waiting I begin a letter to you but writing with pencil instead of with pen & ink as I have not these with me.

Last night we were wakened by a hyena crying near the houses. One night four of our dogs were taken & 2 cats have since disappeared. Soon we heard the dogs begin to bark, & I got up & as I did so a shot was fired I went out & in the moonlight saw Mr Murray, & soon after we saw Mr Henderson, who thought the hyena cried in front of his house & was trying to get at the dogs & so fired a shot to frighten it. Whether it went to the pigs or not I do not know, but if it did it did not manage to get any of them.

To-day some men are busy gathering the beans in part of a field here. They have already got several baskets full & there are a great many not yet sufficiently ripe for gathering. The boys & girls like beans very much for relish with their Nsima & they are very nourishing. We need about 45lbs of beans every day for our boys, girls & workers who get food from us.

Besides beans we have wheat growing in the next field. In some places it is very thin & nearly ripe. In others it is thicker but looks green yet. We hope to get part of it reaped this week & we think there will be a supply for us to have some to make into flour, which would be a great treat to us indeed.

In school many of the boys are learning well, though most are slow in speaking English. Some are troublesome, but many are trying to do what is right, & I am happy to say I believe many of them love the Lord Jesus Christ & wish to try to serve him. Two girls came to school this week, one of whom may be married to Ywaia Tshatonda when she learns to read & to write & to do household work. The other is her sister and is younger.

Charlie Domingo is now busy in the school & intends to be a teacher. He is doing well. Ywaia is in the store & looks after things there.

We have had very cold weather in the past, but this week it is much warmer, though still cold in the mornings & at night.

Mr Murray has 100 people making bricks & they have made 60,000 but rain came & broke a great many. They would hardly dry during the past weeks, but are drying fast now. We have now a machine for pressing them, which does well & prints LVINGSTONIA on each brick.

Now I must stop for dinner is coming & then I shall have a meeting with my men to teach them about Jesus before we begin work again. Your loving father Robert Laws.

MS3290/12/23

MS3290/12/24

Lvingstonia,

British Central Africa,

20th Sep 1896

My dear Amy,

Here is a little letter for you to go along with Mother's long one to Aunt Mary and yourself.

Your photo. has not come yet, but we are glad to hear the good reports of your work at school and of your behaviour at home. Nothing gives mother & me greater pleasure than to hear of our dear girl trying to do what Jesus Christ would do if he were in your place at school & at home with Aunt Mary. I am sure if you could see the gladness on Mother's face as she reads Aunt Mary's letter telling of your being good & working steadily at your lessons it would make you glad, & thankful that you had tried to do your best. And when we see your letters well written, and see on better than those that had come before we are very glad indeed.

I am so glad to hear of your singing & playing. God has given you a great gift, & the opportunity of improving it for future use. Pray to God to help you to use it for His glory. Just now Charlie Domingo is singing the sol-fa of some hymn tune, & he teaches singing well during the week. I must stop with much love to Aunt Mary & yourself

Your loving father,

Robert Laws.

MS3290/12/25

Lvingstonia,

British Central Africa,

Sep. 28th, 1896

My dear Amy,

This is Sab. afternoon, & before I go to the S. School & my men's class I would like to write a few lines to you. Mother & I were both glad, when we got your last letter, to learn of your diligence at your school work, and also to learn of your being kind & helpful to Aunt Mary.

We are glad also to learn of your being so happy & we hope you may long continue to be so. Now, I wonder if you ever thought of how happiness is brought about, or how one can be happy. Well, I'll tell you first how not to be really happy, & the way is easy, it is to be selfish, greedy, quarrelsome, unloving & unchristlike. These are sad ugly words, but then they will help you to understand how to be happy. It is by being helpful to others, & we can only be always this by being very unselfish, by loving others, even when they have done wrong, because Jesus loved us when we were sinners & did not love Him. The heart that is full of love does not like quarrels, & the heart that is fullest of love is most Christlike.

Do you know, I think Christ when a little boy must have been very happy when at play with his companions & I think the boys & girls he played with must have been made happy too. Yet they did not all like him, even his brothers did not do this, & I think the reason was that his heart was so big while theirs was very little. They grew wiser when they were big & two of them James & Jude thought so much of Christ, that they did not dare to call themselves His brothers, but were happy & counted themselves honoured in being permitted to call themselves his slaves.

This does not mean that they were slaves like many you saw at Bandawe, who were sold by their masters when these masters wished to do so; but James & Jude mean to say that they so loved & honoured the Lord Jesus who died for them that they would not claim to serve him as their brother, but that they were glad to do anything He might ask them & did not count that they were their own but that they were the servants of Jesus at all times He wanted them & in every way He wished them to serve Him, just as a slave could not count himself his own but his master's property.

Now dear Amy I delighted [sic] to think of you seeking to be the faithful servant of Jesus Christ. I know no better master, & it is a joy to serve Him, He is so kind & good.

This week our schools will close, & many of the boys & girls will go back to their homes. We hope they will carry the love of Christ with them & teach others of it. Tonight I have the English service, at which all are present, & I intend to speak from the text, "Be ye doers of the Word & not hearers only." I wonder if you could tell me where this text is. Search your Bible for it & tell me when you write to us again.

Give our kind wishes to Sara & Willie Paterson & to their father & mother when you see them.

With love to Aunt Mary & yourself in which Mother joins me heartily,

I am, your loving father,

Robert Laws

MS3290/12/26

Lvingstonia,

British Central Africa,

9th Nov. 1896

My Dear Amy,

I wish to write a short letter to you to tell you how glad mother & I have been made by your success in getting so many prizes, & a certificate. We are glad because it shows you have been working diligently, & that is more valuable as a habit, than all your prizes. Then to work diligently you have used self-denial; leaving play to learn & that is Christ like. Most of all we are glad that you as a girl who loves Jesus have been able to take prizes & show people who are not Christians, & boys & girls who do not love Jesus that a Christian girl can earn prizes for Jesus' sake, & work at hard lessons for Jesus sake, & this is just what we hope you will do all your life, & it will help you to be happy.

Now goodbye

Your loving Father

Robert Laws

I write in bed but am much better.

MS3290/12/27

Lvingstonia,

British Central Africa,

Nov 29th 1896

My dear Amy,

I shall begin this letter to you by wishing you a merry Christmas & a Happy New Year, though I expect both these seasons will have passed ere my letter reach you. Amid all the happiness of play with your companions and the Christmas holidays, I hope you will remember the source of all these blessings and when you sing your Xmas hymns I trust you will thank the good loving Jesus for all His kindness in coming as the Babe of Bethlehem to be our Saviour.

I cannot tell you how glad it makes Mother's heart & mine to learn that you are striving to be Christlike, helpful & loving to Aunt Mary & all about you, & also persevering in the lessons you are getting & which will fit you for usefulness in after life. I am sure you enjoyed your holidays very much more because you were diligent at school than you would have done had you not tried to learn your lessons well.

Last week we got Aunt Mary's first letter from Selkirk which had been delayed by the way so that her second one arrived first. We rejoiced to learn of all the comfort & happiness you were having but it brought us sad news in telling of dear Mr J. Thin having been called away from earth. It is hard to part from loving friends, but then those who love the Lord Jesus are not parted for ever, but He calls one & then another to come home to heaven to be with Him. Thus the going home of our friends though making our hearts sad, should help us to realize that Heaven is our home & it is all the more homelike to know that both grandmas, & Mr J Thin and other friends are there praising the Lord in His own House.

Our school session begins next week & most of the pupils are already here. Many have come seeking admission, but we could not take all. Of those who came 20 or 30 have had to be sent away & at the other stations many who wanted to come have been refused. It is hard to have to send away pupils who wish to learn, but it is not easy to feed all. We need more than ½ ton of food each week for the boys and girls. God provides for all & will do so.

I was glad to hear you were playing & singing "Ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew." It is your mother's favourite song, & it tells of God's love & providence. I like our Scotch songs & I am glad you are learning some of them. There is much of home & country in them, which you will find in the songs of no other land.

I must stop now. Remember to pray for us & the work here Mother & I pray for you every morning & at other times as well

Your loving father

Robert Laws

