

**DAVID LIVINGSTONE**

MISSIONARY EXPLORER OF AFRICA

by

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**CHAPTER NINE**

**BACK IN DEAR OLD ENGLAND**

"A hundred thousand welcomes, and it's time for you to come  
From the far land of the foreigner, to your country and your home.  
Oh, long as we were parted, ever since you went away,  
I never passed a dreamless night, or knew an easy day."

This is only a small part of the touching poetic welcome with which Mrs. Livingstone greeted her husband when he arrived at Southampton.

The trouble on the Mediterranean had changed his course so that he had landed at Dover instead of at Southampton. But quickly as possible he made his way to where his wife awaited him. Long and bitter had been the years since she had bade him farewell at the Cape. Their letters had often gone astray so that she was sometimes months without a single word from him. Whether he was dead or alive she knew not. She was left among strangers in England with her family of four to care for.

But now all was different. Congratulations came pouring in from every side. And best of all, her David was there. Among the letters of congratulations was one from her own mother in which she says regarding Livingstone:

"He is certainly the wonder of his age, and with a little prudence as regards his health, the stores of information he now possesses might be turned to a mighty account for poor, wretched Africa."

On December 15, just a few days after his arrival in England, the Royal Geographic Society held a special meeting to welcome him. They presented him with a gold medal. And in the midst of a shower of praise for his remarkable achievements he humbly replied that he had only done his duty as a Christian missionary in opening up a part of Africa to Christianity. He said further that the enterprise would never be complete till the slave-trade was abolished and the whole country opened up to commerce and Christianity.

The following day a reception was given him by the London Missionary Society. At the close of his speech in honor of Livingstone, Lord Shaftesbury, the chairman, paid a beautiful tribute to Mrs. Livingstone. He mentioned the encouragement she had been to her husband while with him and how patiently she had endured the lonely, anxious years without him, all that he might do more for poor, dark Africa.

As soon as he could break away from his other appointments Livingstone went to Hamilton to see his mother, his children, and other relatives.

At the sight of his father's empty chair he burst into tears. And that evening as they gathered around the family altar the memory of his father was very near. "We bless thee, O Lord, for our parents," David said in his prayer; "we give thee thanks for the dead who died in the Lord."

Three or four months were all Livingstone thought he could stay in England. Once more he must fulfil his promise to his Makololo men to return with them. But he had received a letter from his friend, Roderick Murchison, saying, "Mr. John Murray, the great publisher, is most anxious to induce you to put together all your data, and to make a good book."

This he consented to do when he had received a promise from the Portuguese government that his men would be looked after.

Though Livingstone had a good store of materials in his journals, yet the task of arranging them into proper book form was an irksome one. He once said that he would rather cross Africa than to write another book. To a man of action such as he was it was hard to sit for months writing, writing, when his heart was in Africa.

Yet these irksome days had their joys also, for the writing was done with his children laughing and romping about him, and often he would stop for a romp or a walk with them.

Then imagine the surprise one autumn morning when he picked up the newspaper to see advertised a book entitled, *Travels of David Livingstone in South Africa*. He did not even know the writer. And to think that while he was still laboring over his manuscript this unknown author had collected material from newspaper articles and from Geographical Society reports and had written the book.

Livingstone complained to the publishers and they generously recalled and destroyed the book.

In November, 1857, Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* was published. Ten thousand copies of the book were sold in London alone. The first edition did not cover the number of orders awaiting the first output. So a second edition had to be printed immediately.

Some readers complained that more space was given in the book to science and geographical matters than to real missionary work. But we must remember that Livingstone was a pioneer missionary. His task was to prepare the soil and plant the seed that those following him might reap the harvest. However, he had preached to thousands of Africans and could report a number of conversions. But as he was not inclined in the least to exaggerate, his work seemed small when compared with those missionaries who had reported hundreds of conversions.

True, much of his work was geographical, but he felt that "the end of the geographical feat is only the beginning of the missionary enterprise."

However, in spite of criticisms, his book became popular enough to yield him a small fortune.

Yet, instead of saving it to enrich himself and his family, he put the greater part of it into missionary enterprise in Africa. All he cared to save for his children was enough to educate them. At this time, too, he severed his connection with the Missionary Society. Since he had been accused of spending the Society's funds in work that was not really missionary, he believed that now he would be freer to carry on the work that seemed most necessary.

In February, 1858, Dr. Livingstone received a commission by which he became Her Majesty's Consul at Quilimane for the Eastern Coast and the independent districts in the interior, also commander of an expedition for exploring Eastern and Central Africa.

So the latter part of his stay in England was spent mostly in preparing for the expedition. A small steamer for shallow water was bought for use on the Zambesi, and a number of officers were appointed to assist Dr. Livingstone on his expedition. He was also treated kindly by the Portuguese Government and was given letters from the Government to the local governors instructing them to give him all the help he needed. However, these instructions were not always lived up to.

Livingstone might have been furnished with expensive equipment and a large expedition had he chosen such, but he preferred only such men and articles as he really needed.

"I shall now be able to tell the natives that I have seen my chief," said Livingstone to Queen Victoria when he had been sent for to see her at the palace.

"These black people have always seemed surprised when I told them I had never seen my chief. They often asked if she was very wealthy and how many cows she had." At this the Queen laughed heartily. She showed him much kindness and wished him success on his journey.

Just before leaving, Dr. and Mrs. Livingstone were the honored guests at a great gathering at which many distinguished people were present. The honors poured upon him there were enough to turn the head of an ordinary man. But Livingstone, as was his custom, took it all very humbly. Nevertheless, he did not fail to give due credit to his wife who was to return to Africa with him.

Mentioning her in his speech, he said:

"My wife, who has always been the main spoke in my wheel, will accompany me in this expedition, and will be most useful to me. She is familiar with the languages of South Africa.

She is able to work. She is willing to endure, and she well knows that in that country one must put one's hand to everything. In the country to which I am about to proceed she knows that at the missionary's station the wife must be the maid-of-all-work within, while the husband must be the jack-of-all-trades without, and glad am I indeed that I am to be accompanied by my guardian angel."

Only Oswell, the youngest child, accompanied his father and mother back to Africa. Dr. Livingstone was deeply affected in parting with the other children, but he believed it was for their good. So with frequent farewell notes he committed them to the care of the heavenly Father.

Here is an extract from one of these letters; and whether or not you have such a father as Tom had, you will do well to take the letter to heart:

"My Dear Tom, - I am soon going off from this country, and will leave you to the care of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps, and never disappointed anyone who put his trust in Him. If you make him your friend he will be better to you than any companion can be. He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. May he grant you grace to seek him and to serve him. I have nothing better to say to you than to take GOD for your Father, JESUS for your Savior, and the HOLY SPIRIT for your sanctifier. Do this and you are safe forever. No evil can then befall you. Hope you will learn quickly and well, so as to be fitted for GOD's service in the world."

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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