

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

MISSIONARY EXPLORER OF AFRICA

by

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A STORMY VOYAGE

Rocked on a storm-tossed sea on setting out for India, Livingstone felt that he was as near death as he had ever been, as near even as when the lion shook him as a cat would a mouse.

In a letter to his daughter Agnes he describes the storm. We shall give only a part of the letter:

"On fifteenth we were caught by a hurricane which whirled the Ariel right round. Her sails, quickly put to rights, were again backed so that the ship was driven backward and a hawser wound itself round her screw, so as to stop the engines. By this time she was turned so as to be looking right across Lady Nyassa, and the wind alone propelling her as if to go over the little vessel. I saw no hope of escape except by catching a rope's-end of the big ship as she passed over us, but by GOD's goodness she glided past, and we felt free to breathe. That night it blew a furious gale. The captain offered to lower a boat if I would come to the Ariel, but it would have endangered all in the boat: the waves dashed so hard against the sides of the vessel, it might have been swamped, and my going away would have taken heart out of those that remained.

"We then passed a terrible night, but the Lady Nyassa did wonderfully well, rising like a little duck over the foaming billows. She took in spray alone, and no green water. The man-of-war's people expected that she would go down, and it was wonderful to see how well she did when the big man-of-war, only about two hundred feet off, plunged so as to show a large portion of copper on her bottom, then down behind so as to have the sea level with the top of her bulwarks. A boat hung at that level was smashed. If we had gone down we could not have been helped in the least-pitch dark, and wind whistling above; the black folks, 'ane bocking here, anither there,' and

wanting us to go to the 'bank.' On eighteenth the weather moderated, and, the captain repeating his very kind offer, I went on board with a good conscience, and even then the boat got damaged."

Livingstone's plan was to sail for Bombay in the Lady Nyassa and try to sell her there before returning to England. He would have had no trouble in selling the vessel to the Portuguese for a slaving-vessel; but he said he would rather see it go down to the bottom of the sea.

On reaching the mouth of the Zambesi, he had been fortunate in finding the English vessels the Ariel and the Orestes. They had offered to tow the Lady Nyassa and the Pioneer to Mosambique. The Pioneer was being returned to the government and was taken to the Cape laden with those twice-rescued slaves. It was not long after leaving the coast that they had this fearful, storm-tossed experience.

At Zanzibar, Livingstone stopped long enough for necessary repairs. There he had an offer from a man who wished to buy the Lady Nyassa, but he would not sell it. The offer was too small, and furthermore, it seemed to him that to sell his vessel meant to abandon all his hopes. But when his engineer, Mr. Rae, wished to resign, having been offered another position, Livingstone could scarcely see how he was going to reach Bombay. However, he let him go.

Then with a crew consisting of four white men including himself, seven native Zambesians who knew nothing of the sea, and two other African boys, he started out on April 30. Before him lay a twenty-five-hundred-mile voyage over an ocean which he had never crossed. Then, too, he was told that the breaking of the monsoon occurred at the end of May or the beginning of June. But believing that he could make the voyage in about eighteen days, he hoped to escape the monsoon. Ah, those eighteen days wore on to a month and a half. And such a voyage!

On the first day one of his white men became ill. But one of the black men soon learned to take Livingstone's place at the wheel so that he could care for the sick man. Then another fell ill and on account of their illness the vessel could not steam and the sails were of no use. For twenty-five days they were becalmed, and the rest of the time they could make little headway. The effect was so oppressing that Livingstone felt as if he were going to die on the voyage. However, when a breeze did come up and flying-fish came on board, Livingstone was as interested as ever in observation.

On May 28 they had a sort of foretaste of the breaking of the monsoon. The wind tore the sails, and the vessel rolled till it almost rolled over. Everything was upset. But before long the sea calmed and the sky brightened.

Toward the end of the journey they met with more squalls, and some of the sails of the vessel were torn to ribbons. At last, on June 13, they steered into the harbor of Bombay. In his journal at this time Livingstone wrote, "I mention GOD's good providence over me, and beg that he may accept my spared life for his service.

A short time was spent in India, for he had a number of friends both among missionaries and government officers. He visited several mission schools and of course could not help but observe their methods. Then he visited the merchants of Bombay who had the East African trade in their hands. These men gave him the hope that a trade settlement might soon be established north of

the region over which the Portuguese claimed control. This thought filled him with new hope.

Chuma and Wikatani, the two boys who had accompanied him were to be left at a mission-school in Bombay. Arrangements were also made for the Lady Nyassa to be taken care of. Then, accompanied by John Reid, one of his men, he embarked once more for old England.

Two projects occupied his mind on this journey.

The first was to expose the terrible slave-trade carried on by the Portuguese in East Africa. The second was to find means for establishing a new settlement at the head of the Rovuma or somewhere beyond the Portuguese lines. After all his discouragements and hardships he was willing to "try again."

On July 23 he was greeted once more by the sights and sounds of old England after nearly eight years' absence. This time he spent more than a year in the homeland and received honors on every hand. One day, when going with his daughter, Agnes, to see the launching of a new Turkish frigate in the Clyde, he rode in the same carriage with the Turkish Ambassador.

At one of the stations they were showered with cheers from the people. "The cheers are for you," Livingstone said to the Ambassador. "No," said the Turk, "I am only what my master made me; you are what you made yourself."

A little later, when the party reached the Queen's Hotel, a working-man rushed across the street and grasping Dr. Livingstone's hand, exclaimed, "I must shake your hand." When the man had gone, the Ambassador said, "You'll not deny now that that's for you."

Many happy hours Livingstone spent with old friends and with his children, his aged mother, and his sisters. Yet he did not forget the great work to which he had dedicated his life. And several months of his stay were spent in writing his *Zambesi and Its Tributaries*. Then he was called upon to lecture quite often. In one speech he got the Portuguese very much incensed against him because he exposed the work of the slave-traders in Africa.

While working on his book he was kindly entertained for eight months at the Newstead Abbey, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Webb. The abbey was a beautiful old mansion which had been the home of Lord Byron, and still contained much of his furniture.

Contemplating on the life of Lord Byron, Livingstone was made sad to think that such a brilliant life should have been so horrid. He had even made a drinking-cup of a monk's skull.

Two sad events occurred during this, Livingstone's second visit home. One was the death of his aged mother. Once more he was made to feel renewed gratitude for godly parents, as with a sad heart he laid his mother away. She had lived to a good old age-eighty-two.

The other event was the death of his eldest son, Robert.

Robert had gone to America and joined the Union Army in behalf of the oppressed slave. His father was grieved at the boy's joining the army, though he was glad to have him doing something for those oppressed blacks for whom he was willing to give his own life. Even in the

hottest of the battle the boy purposely avoided taking life. He did not die on the battle-field, but from sickness resulting from exposure. Though grieved deeply at the death of his son, the father was ready to fight on for the same cause in which his boy had fallen.

~ end of chapter 13 ~
