

DAVID LIVINGSTONE
MISSIONARY EXPLORER OF AFRICA

by

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CHAPTER TEN

AMONG OLD FRIENDS

In 1852 Livingstone could hardly get a pound of gunpowder or a box of caps at Cape Town, and he had to pay a heavy fine to get rid of a crooked postmaster's accusations. Now, in 1858, he returns with the Queen's gold band around his cap and with still brighter decorations attached to his name. At a large meeting in his honor he was presented with a silver box containing eight hundred guineas (\$4,074). And two days later he and the other members of his expedition were entertained at a grand dinner.

On the way to the Cape, Livingstone had worked out some plans for the expedition. On board ship he had given instructions to the various members of the party. Then at Sierra Leone he had to take on a crew of twelve Kroomen for the navigation of the Ma-Robert on the Zambesi - the launch bore Mrs. Livingstone's African name.

Before they reached the Cape, Mrs. Livingstone's health was again threatened, and much to her husband's disappointment she had to be left at Kuruman with the Moffats for a time. The Doctor and Mrs. Moffat met them at the Cape, and from him Livingstone received the interesting news that he had visited Mosilikatse and had learned that the men whom Livingstone had left at Tette would still be waiting for him there. Accordingly he sailed up the eastern coast to the mouth of the Zambesi. Being in a fever-breeding swamp, he hastened to launch the Ma-Robert and proceed up the river.

The first important event in the history of the expedition was the discovery of the Kongone entrance of the Zambesi, the best for navigation of all the mouths of the river. He had scarcely

got the luggage and stores landed when the naval officer resigned his position. Though this was a considerable trial to Livingstone, he assumed the management of the vessel himself and went on.

"Englishmen! Englishmen! We are Englishmen!" shouted Livingstone to the crowd of natives on the shore who were about to fire on them. There was war between the Portuguese and the natives, and Livingstone's party had been taken for Portuguese. But on learning that they were English, the natives let them pass. As they proceeded up the river the people gathered on the banks to watch the apparition. To them the vessel was a Boating village. And one old man who came on board wondered if it "was made out of one tree."

The old followers at Tette were overjoyed at the sight of their master.

The Portuguese Government had failed in its promise to help them; but the Governor of Tette had helped them to find employment. Thirty had died of smallpox and six had been killed by an unfriendly chief. Had the survivors listened to the stories told them they would have given up hope of Livingstone's return. But they trusted him, and true gentleman that he was, he would not break a promise made even to these ignorant black men. And his faithfulness to them gave him a new hold upon them.

About twenty-five miles above Tette were the rapids at Kebrabasa. These Livingstone had heard of but had not seen. The question in his mind was how far these rapids would impede navigation. Twice he made the trip to the rapids and thought he had seen them all. But on his second return he learned accidentally that there was another. Determined to see all, he returned with Dr. Kirk and four Makololo.

"O Father, look at our feet," the Makololo pleaded, as they showed him the blisters on their feet burst by the hot rocks. Still he tried to urge them on. But their words cut him like knives - "We had always believed you had a heart, but now we see you have none."

Still Livingstone was determined. Leaving them behind, he and Dr. Kirk pushed on alone. But their boots and clothes were about to drop off of them and in three hours they made but one mile. The next day, however, they saw the other rapid. Believing that during the rainy season the rapids could be navigated.

Livingstone applied to the English government for a more suitable vessel to carry them inland. About the same time he wrote to a friend, Mr. James Young, authorizing him to spend 2,000 pounds (\$9,732) of his book money for a suitable ship. Both vessels were sent - the Pioneer from the Government, and the Lady Nyassa, Livingstone's own vessel. The Ma- Robert had proved to be an utter disappointment.

Livingstone now discovered a new river, the Shire, and early in 1859 began to explore it.

There he found the natives very suspicious. They had never seen Europeans before and no other strangers except man-stealers. Little wonder, then, that with bows and poisoned arrows they watched the travelers day and night.

Several days' journey above the junction of the Shire with the Zambesi their progress was stopped by rapids. So they went back and two months later returned. This time they were able to

make friends with a jolly, clever chief named Chibisa. Then, making a detour to the east, they discovered a beautiful inland lake - Lake Shirwa. This the Portuguese had never seen because the natives would not allow them to enter the region.

In a letter to his daughter Agnes, Livingstone tells of this lake and its surroundings:

"We have been down to the mouth of the River Zambesi in expectation of meeting a man-of-war with salt provisions, but, none appearing on the day appointed, we concluded that the Admiral has not received my letters in time to send her. We have no post office here, so we buried a bottle containing a letter on an island in the entrance to Kongone harbor. This we told the Admiral we should do in case of not meeting the cruiser, and whoever comes will search for our bottle and see another appointment for July 30. This goes with dispatches by way of Quilimane, and I hope some day to get from you a letter by the same route . . . Dr. Kirk and I, with some fifteen Makololo, ascended this river one hundred miles in the Ma-Robert, then left the vessel and proceeded beyond that on foot till we had discovered a magnificent lake called Shirwa (pronounced Shurwah). It was very grand, for we could not see the end of it, though we were some way up a mountain; and all around it are mountains much higher than any you see in Scotland. One mountain stands in the lake, and people live on it. Another, called Zomba, is more than six thousand feet high, and people live on it too, for we could see their gardens on its top . . . The country is quite a highland region, and many people live in it. Most of them were afraid of us. The women ran into their huts and shut the doors. The children screamed in terror, and even the hens would fly away and leave their chickens. I suppose you would be frightened, too, if you saw strange creatures, say a lot of Trundlemen, like those on the Isle of Man pennies, come whirling up the street. No one was impudent to us except some slave-traders, but they became civil as soon as they learned we were English and not Portuguese."

In August they began a third trip up the Shire, and on September 16, Livingstone and his party had the pleasure of being the first white men to look upon the magnificent Lake Nyassa. To Livingstone, interested as he was in the geography of the country, the Shire River valley was of great interest. Within a few miles there were three levels, each with its individual climate. There was the low hot plain along the river. To the east of this was a pleasant plain two thousand feet high, and three thousand feet higher still was a cold plain. The country was fertile, too, and the people were industrious. However, they were not particular as to cleanliness. The easiest way by which the travelers could rid themselves of a troublesome follower was by threatening to wash him. The women tried to beautify themselves by wearing large rings of ivory or of tin in the upper lip.

Nevertheless, to Livingstone this seemed an ideal spot for missionary and commercial stations.

It could be reached from the coast by water all except for a few miles at the Murchison Cataracts. It lay in the pathway for conveying slaves from the north and northwest to Zanzibar.

Livingstone's hope was to colonize the region with poor men from England - thus helping to banish the slave-trade and to better the conditions of the poor of England. And for such an enterprise he promised to give 2,000 pounds (\$9,732).

Bright were his visions of Christian colonies with the spread of civilization and Christian graces, of the cultivation of cotton, and of the disappearance of slave-trade. But all these hopes were not

to be realized in his own time, at least. Nevertheless he would do his part to make his dreams come true.

~ end of chapter 10 ~
