

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

MISSIONARY EXPLORER OF AFRICA

by

Jessie Kleeberger

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CHAPTER EIGHT

FROM LOANDA TO QUILIMANE

"The Forerunner went down off the island of Madeira, losing all but one passenger."

This was the message Livingstone received about the ship on which he might have sailed had he not stayed to keep his promise and return with the Makololo. Once more he could thank the Father for his protection. But with this ship had gone down letters, reports, and maps that took Livingstone weeks to reproduce. For this purpose he remained with Portuguese friends at Pungo Andongo, some distance in from the coast. Not long after this delay he was stopped again by a severe attack of fever. And little wonder at it, after wading for miles through a plain flooded ankle-deep and sleeping, too, in the wet.

This time it took about a year, from Sept. 24, 1854 to Sept. 11, 1855, to make the trip back to Linyanti.

On reaching the Barotse country they observed a day of thanksgiving. Every one of the twenty-seven men who had gone with Livingstone had returned safely. The men decked themselves in their best—the European clothing and the red and white caps which the Portuguese men had given them. Two oxen were given for the occasion and with plenty of milk and meal there was a genuine thanksgiving feast. Then they had a service to thank GOD for protecting them through all the dangers and sickness. The men were grateful, too, to Livingstone for opening up a path to the coast.

A box and a letter from the Moffats awaited Livingstone at Linyanti. Having had no word from

him for many months, they did not know whether he was dead or alive. Many a sentence in Mrs. Moffat's letter displayed her fear that he was dead. But they at least had enough hope to send him a good box of supplies - shirts, woolen socks, lemon juice, quince jam, tea, and coffee - a good taste of home for the lonely missionary. The box had come a year before Livingstone's arrival, and the supplies were still in good condition. But you will laugh when you learn that he found them out on an island. The natives, fearing that the goods were bewitched, had banished them to an island and had built a hut over them. Perhaps it was well for Livingstone that they had.

Linyanti was not the end of Livingstone's journey. Ambitious still to find a good trade route to the sea, he determined to seek one to the east by way of the Zambezi River. Sekeletu, though he had not behaved well in Livingstone's absence, could scarcely do enough for his old friend. He provided him with one hundred and twenty men, three of his best riding-oxen, and ten cattle for food, besides many other food supplies, and a right to collect tribute from other tribes that were subject to him. And the chief's mother added to the supplies a bag of groundnuts which had been fried in cream, a delicacy which the Makololo consider fit for a king.

One dark, stormy night during the journey they lost their way in the forest. The luggage carriers having passed on ahead, Livingstone had to sleep on the ground under a tree. But Sekeletu made Livingstone take his blanket while he himself lay on the wet ground.

In the morning they regained their bearings and traveled on. Not far to the east of Linyanti, Livingstone beheld for the first time those wonderful falls of which he had heard through the natives, and named them the Victoria Falls in honor of his Queen.

Rivaling in grandeur the Niagara, the stream is gathered from a mile-wide channel and poured into a chasm eighty feet wide and three hundred and twenty feet high. Then for thirty miles it boils and foams through its chasm sending up columns of steam two or three hundred feet into the air.

Farther on, as the party was about to cross the river, the natives of the village collected around them all armed. One canoe was all they would lend Livingstone, although there were two tied to the shore. So all the goods were taken first to an island in the middle of the river, next the cattle were taken, and then the men. Livingstone was the last to enter the canoe. While waiting on the shore surrounded by savage warriors, he had kept them amused with his watch, his burning-glass, and other trinkets.

Nine days later, while encamped in Mpende's country, Livingstone and his men were awakened at sunrise by wild cries.

Parties of natives had been collecting from all directions, and though they claimed it was only to see the white man, yet their demonstrations seemed of an unfriendly nature. For Livingstone and his party to go on would seem a challenge and to go back would be an indication of fear. All he could do was to wait and pray. And the text that had comforted him on so many occasions was especially precious to him now:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

And GOD fulfilled his promise.

Livingstone was making important geographical discoveries. Through a careful study he learned that the center of the African continent is a great depression flanked on either side by ridges. This discovery was an important one from the missionary point of view, for he believed that these ridges would provide what he had long been seeking, a healthful location for a mission station.

Four weary months they had been on the way from Linyanti, wading through swamps, sleeping on the wet ground, meeting hostile tribes and suffering from fever, when, oh, joy! there appeared the smoke of a Portuguese settlement. It was Tette.

Imagine Livingstone's feelings as he was welcomed once more into civilization and was made to sit down to a really civilized breakfast. So nourishing was that breakfast that he was able to walk the remaining eight miles without the least sign of fatigue. For nearly two months he was detained in Tette recovering from fever, but was kindly cared for by the Governor. It was there he left his Makololo men, bidding them wait till he returned from England.

From Tette he went on to Senna, where he was again delayed by fever. Then, provided with a comfortable boat, he reached Quilimane on May 20, 1856. In his joy of having crossed the African continent from Loanda to Quilimane he was not forgetful of the kind hand of GOD that had so miraculously protected him. But then his joy was turned to bitter grief; for he learned that seven men who had come to Quilimane by boat to take him out to the ship had been drowned. How Livingstone wished that he might have died in their stead!

After six weeks another boat came and took him to Mauritius, where he remained for about three months while regaining his health.

Then, in November he sailed up through the Red Sea on his homeward journey. Even yet his perils were not ended. When they were within sight of the Bay of Tunis something went wrong with the ship's engine and they were nearly wrecked. But once more GOD's good hand protected them, and they landed safe in the harbor of Tunis. Mrs. Livingstone and other friends had gone as far as Southampton to meet him and were disappointed at the delay caused by the ship's trouble.

At last, on Dec. 9, 1856, he sailed into port and his feet touched once more the soil of dear old England. But a great sorrow had met him on the way. Besides his anticipation of meeting his wife and children, he had cherished the hope of some day sitting beside his dear old father and rehearsing to him all the experiences of his sixteen years in Africa. But at Cairo the news of his father's death had reached him, and those hopes had vanished. To the father as well as to the son it was a great disappointment, but they classed it among their unfulfilled hopes.

~ end of chapter 8 ~
