

DAVID LIVINGSTONE
MISSIONARY EXPLORER OF AFRICA

by

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE LAST JOURNEY

"What shall we do?" asked Chuma and Susi, when they had called the men all together.

"You are old men in traveling and in hardships; you must act as our chief, and we will promise to obey whatever you order us to do," they answered.

So from that moment Chuma and Susi were looked upon as captains. The first task was to examine the contents of the master's boxes and take an inventory of them. This was done by Jacob Wainwright.

The master's body, they agreed, should be taken back to England for burial. There were many difficulties, they knew. They would not dare let it be known to the natives that they were carrying a corpse through their country, for these people believed that the spirits of the dead haunted them to do them mischief. Even Chitambo must not be told, for he would inflict upon them such a heavy fine for damages that they would not be able to reach the coast. Chuma set off to see Chitambo to ask if they might build a place outside the village. They did not like living among the huts, he said. Chitambo willingly gave his consent. Their purpose was to take the body some distance away to prepare it for the journey.

But a little later in the day two men who were sent to buy food let the secret out, and it was soon told to Chitambo.

"Why did you not tell me the truth?" he asked Chuma. "I know that your master died last night.

You were afraid to let me know, but do not fear any longer."

When they told him of their plans to take the body back to England he tried to persuade them to bury it at his village, but they would not listen. However, with Susi's consent, Chitambo and his people carried out the regular, elaborate mourning service. Chitambo himself appeared in a broad red cloth which covered his shoulders. Two drummers joined in the loud wailing, while a band of servants fired volley after volley into the air.

After that the preparation of the corpse began. A new hut had been built, open to the sky. After removing and burying the heart and other viscera they dried the body in the sun in this open hut for fourteen days. Then it was wrapped first in calico and then in a large piece of bark from the Myonga-tree.

Over this was sewed a large piece of sail-cloth, and the package was fastened securely to a pole so that it could be carried by two men.

The body was to be buried in England, but Africa claimed his heart.

It had been buried under the mvula-tree under which the body had been prepared. And there on the side of the tree Jacob Wainwright carved an inscription. Then they asked Chitambo to keep the grass cleared away and to protect the two posts and the cross-piece which they had set up to mark the spot.

And now the homeward march was begun.

For nine months these faithful servants guarded their precious burden. For a month of that time many of the men were sick from exposure. For days they marched through swamps and water, where the only places for encampment they could find were on the great ant-hills. Everywhere the news of their loss had gone before them, sometimes causing the people to pity them, but more often causing the natives to take advantage.

They arrived at last at Unyanyembe and laid their precious burden in the tembe where Livingstone had waited for them two years before.

There they met an expedition under Lieutenant Cameron, who had started out in search of Livingstone. Chuma had heard of them on the way and was disappointed not to find Oswell Livingstone, who had been one of the company, but had returned with Stanley.

So far, not one article of Livingstone's property had been lost. The worst of the journey was now over, and they consented to Lieutenant Cameron's taking charge of the expedition. Yet, when he tried to persuade them to bury the body there, they positively refused. They could not prevent him, though, from opening the boxes and taking for his own use the instruments with which Livingstone had made his observations in the past seven years.

Cameron's fears of the Ugogo were not groundless. At one place the people tried to rob them of their burden, but the men wisely resorted to stratagem. Secretly they unwrapped the body and wrapped it again in such form that it looked like an ordinary bale of merchandise. Then they made a fagot of mapira stalks cut into lengths of about six feet and wrapped it in cloth to imitate

a dead body ready for burial. This was borne by six trusty men back toward Unyanyembe, as if they had changed their minds and were sending it back there for burial. Safe from detection in the jungle at nightfall, the bearers began to dispose of their burden a stick at a time, then the wrappings, until everything was well scattered. Then they made their way back through the darkness by different paths and at last overtook the company. After that they marched safely on, no one suspecting that they still bore the body of their beloved master.

In February, 1874, they reached the coast, and soon a cruiser bore the remains to Zanzibar, whence they were shipped to England. Would that those faithful servants might have been rewarded or honored in some way during their lifetime!

They had proved to the world Africa's gratitude to the man who had loved her and laid down his life for her. And it remained for the civilized world to finish the great task. Already before Livingstone's death two expeditions had been sent out for the definite purpose of suppressing that awful traffic in human beings.

And what of the work done since that day?

Who knows but that that great soul looks down from his abode of peace and with joy sees a redeemed host in that Dark Continent praising the GOD of Heaven?

The work begun by him has been carried on by other noble men. But still Africa is the Dark Continent. It has been said that Livingstone did more for Africa than any other man has done. His labors added a million square miles to the map of the known world and left in that great region a few Christians.

What of the millions more for whom he opened to us the door of opportunity? Young reader, Africa lies before you in gross darkness. Are you not as brave as Livingstone? Can you not trust the same GOD to lead you in his footsteps to bear the light to those souls?

To Jacob Wainwright was granted the honor of accompanying his master's body to England.

Mr. Thomas Livingstone, who was then the eldest living son of the Doctor, was in Egypt and was taken on board at Alexandria. There had been some doubts in the minds of Englishmen as to whether this was really the body of Livingstone. So when the ship reached Southampton the body was turned over to the Geographical Society. The features were changed beyond recognition but the arm which had been crushed by the lion and had never healed proved his identity beyond a doubt.

On Apr. 18, 1874, the body which had traveled so many thousands of miles over land and sea was lovingly committed to its last resting-place in Westminster Abbey.

Of the eight pall-bearers, all faithful friends of the Doctor, the two whom we know best are Mr. Stanley and Jacob Wainwright.

And there amid the kings and great men of the earth was laid the factory boy who became a great missionary. On the black slab which marks his resting-place are inscribed these words:

**BROUGHT BY FAITHFUL HANDS
OVER LAND AND SEA,
HERE LIES
DAVID LIVINGSTONE,**

Missionary, Traveler, Philanthropist,

Born March 19, 1813
At Blantyre, Lanarkshire

Died May 4, 1873
At Chitambo's Village, Ilala.

But in more enduring characters is his record written in the world's history and in the hearts of men.

"Droop half-mast colors, bow, bareheaded crowds,
As this plain coffin o'er the side is slung,
To pass by woods of masts and ratlined shrouds,
As erst by Afric's trunks, liana-hung.

" 'Tis the last mile of many thousands trod
With failing strength but never-failing will,
By the worn frame, now at its rest with GOD,
That never rested from its fight with ill.

"Or if the ache of travel and of toil
Would sometimes wring a short, sharp cry of pain
From agony of fever, blain, and boil,
'Twas but to crush it down and on again!

"He knew not that the trumpet he had blown
Out of the darkness of that dismal land,
Had reached and roused an army of its own
To strike the chains from the slave's fettered hand.

"Now we believe, he knows, sees all is well:
How GOD had stayed his will and shaped his way,
To bring the light to those that darkling dwell
With gains that life's devotion well repay.

"Open the Abbey doors and bear him in
To sleep with king and statesman, chief and sage,
The missionary come of weaver-kin,
But great by works that brooks no lower wage.

"He needs no epitaph to guard a name

Which men shall prize while worthy work is known;
He lived and died for good - be that his fame:
Let marble crumble: this is Living-stone."

~ end of book ~