

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

MISSIONARY EXPLORER OF AFRICA

by

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FALLEN AMONG THIEVES

"The object of my expedition," Livingstone wrote to his son Thomas, "is the discovery of the sources of the Nile. Had I known all the hardships, toil, and time involved, . . . I should have let the sources 'rin by' to Egypt, and never have been made 'drumly' by splashing through them. But I shall make this country and the people better known. . . . By different agencies the great Ruler is bringing all things into a focus . . . The day for Africa is yet to come.

And so he set out for Manuema, a region northwest of Lake Tanganyika. There he expected to examine the river Lualaba and determine the direction of its flow. This would settle the question of the watershed, and in four or five months, if he could get guides and canoes, his task would be completed. He had spent four months in Ujiji, and before he left he dispatched forty-two letters, but not one of them ever reached Zanzibar. The Arabs were afraid they would be reported.

"Do people die with you?" asked two young men who met Livingstone at Bambarre, in Manuema. "Have you no charm against death?"

"Where do people go after death?" Then he told of the great Father and of how he answers the prayers of his children.

After being detained again for about two months by fever, Livingstone pushed on, admiring the beautiful country, where "Palms crown the highest heights of the mountains, and their gracefully bended fronds wave beautifully in the wind; and the forests, usually about five miles broad, between groups of villages, are indescribable." His desire now was to find the place where the

two arms of the Lualaba River unite, and then to return to Ujiji for his supply of goods.

The beginning of 1870 found him ill with fever, but still pressing on toward the river, with the prayer, "May the Almighty help me to finish the work in hand, and retire through the Basango before the year is out!" But he was so ill and weak that he had to stay at Katomba's camp from February to June. Then with only three attendants, Susi, Chuma, and Gardner, he set out. One day they crossed fourteen streams, some of them thigh-deep, which made his feet sore. And finally, to his disappointment he learned that the Lualaba was not where he had expected to find it. It flowed away to the southwest in a great bend. So now with only three companions and with his feet eaten with great ulcers.

He had to limp back to Bambarre. There for eighty days he lay in his hut suffering from fever and from the terrible ulcers. But still he made the best of his time, gaining all the information he could from natives and traders who visited the village, reading the Bible and praying, and telling the benighted people the story of JESUS. "I read the Bible through four times while in Manyuema," he wrote some time later.

On the tenth of October he was able to leave his hut. But news of a caravan on the way from the coast induced him to wait. They would probably bring him news from home. And what could be more cheering to a man who had been so many years in the heart of Africa with never a word of news from home and never the sight of a fellow countryman - no wife nor child nor brother to cheer him with words of sympathy or even with a smile - "I am in agony for news from home," he wrote. But the delay was so long and he was so eager to finish his work that he could hardly wait.

Toward the end of January the caravan arrived, but his goods and letters had been left at Ujiji. A week later he heard that more of the men were coming. But when they did come they brought only one of the forty dispatches that had been sent. The rest had been destroyed or lost. The men who brought them were the carriers that Livingstone had ordered. But he had asked for honest freemen and these were Mohammedans and terrible liars. Their two head men had remained in Ujiji, where they were making away with Livingstone's goods. The men swore that they had been sent by Doctor Kirk to bring Livingstone back. They would go not one step forward. Livingstone found out afterward that this was only a plan to get extra pay.

Finally they moved on. Passing through one beautiful little village, Livingstone longed to stop there to rest, but the people did not want him. There was only one person, a woman with a leprous hand, who let him have her hut - a nice, clean one - just in time to escape a heavy rain. Then seeing he was weak from hunger, she quickly prepared some food and brought it to him, urging him to eat it. Though he saw her leprosy he had not the heart to refuse the food, so grateful was he to have some one show him kindness.

At last, on March 29, they reached Nyangwe, on the banks of the Lualaba. This was the farthest point west he reached on this expedition. The slave-trade in this region was sickening, and Livingstone himself was threatened and almost attacked by the natives. But even there it soon became known that he was not a slave-trader, and he was called by some "the good one."

However, because of the false reports made by the Arab traders he was unable to get boats. "He does not wish slaves or ivory," they said, "but a canoe in order to murder the Manyuema," Day

after day he was promised canoes, only to be disappointed, while the traders got all they wanted.

The world owes much to Livingstone's minute care in entering in his journal all the details of his journeys. But now both his ink and his paper were gone. Must he stop? No. On an old newspaper made into a book he wrote with red ink made from the juice of berries.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of Nyangwe is its market. Every fourth day the women came to the market with their wares. And when the market is opened "everyone is there in dead earnest; little time is lost in friendly greetings." Other villages had similar markets.

It was on a sultry morning in July that Livingstone happened to be in one of Kimbura's villages in time to witness one of the most terrible scenes ever recorded. Two Arab traders had entered the market accompanied by three attendants with their guns. Soon they were engaged in a quarrel with some of the natives. Other traders followed them. One shot followed another, and soon a volley was poured into the midst of the market. The panic-stricken women fled to the creek. Some had canoes; others swam. And the creek became so crowded that they could scarcely move. A long line of heads was seen in the water - people striking out for an island a mile distant. But shot after shot continued to be fired and some of the heads disappeared. When the affair was over the Arabs themselves estimated that between three and four hundred people had been killed. And not satisfied, the murderers went on to other villages, burning them and killing the inhabitants. When the poor natives of Kimbura's villages returned, they crowded around Livingstone begging him to stay with them. Though they themselves were cannibals, they could not help but love the one man they knew who showed kindness.

Before this terrible massacre Livingstone had planned to go up the Lomame to Katanga and then return to Ujiji in company with Dugumbe and the rest of the traders. But now he could not think of going with them. The Banian men who had been sent him were almost worthless to him. And the only thing left for him to do was to return to Ujiji to try to get better carriers. He was very thankful afterward that he had not gone with Dugumbe, for his party had been attacked and two hundred of them killed. GOD's hand was still over his servant.

On the journey back to Ujiji, Livingstone could scarcely get any food from the natives, for he could not persuade them that he did not belong to the same set as those murderers.

Ambushes were set for him and one day a spear from the hand of a native only ten yards behind him just grazed his neck. He knew that the hand of GOD alone had saved him. The same day another spear missed him by a foot, and a large tree which had been set fire to, fell within three feet of him.

On he went through the forest ready to meet whatever dangers awaited him. Before long he lost all his remaining calico, his chief article of currency. Then he became so ill that he could hardly walk. But he was nearing Ujiji. There, he felt sure, plenty of goods and comforts awaited him. So he kept up spirits.

At last, on the twenty-third of October, starving, feeble, and with bleeding feet, he tottered into Ujiji. But of all bitter disappointments - not a single yard of calico out of the three thousand and not a string of beads out of seven hundred pounds remained for him. The trader to whom they had been consigned had divined by the Koran that Livingstone was dead and would not need

them. He compared himself to the traveler in the Bible story who had fallen among thieves, only he was worse off; for where was the good Samaritan? Had he only known it, there was one coming to him as fast as he could.

First, a friendly Arab offered to help him. But remembering that he had a little of the old goods there yet Livingstone declined the offer.

And then came the greatest surprise - Susi running toward him at top speed gasped out, "An Englishman! I see him." Then he darted off to meet him.

~ end of chapter 15 ~
