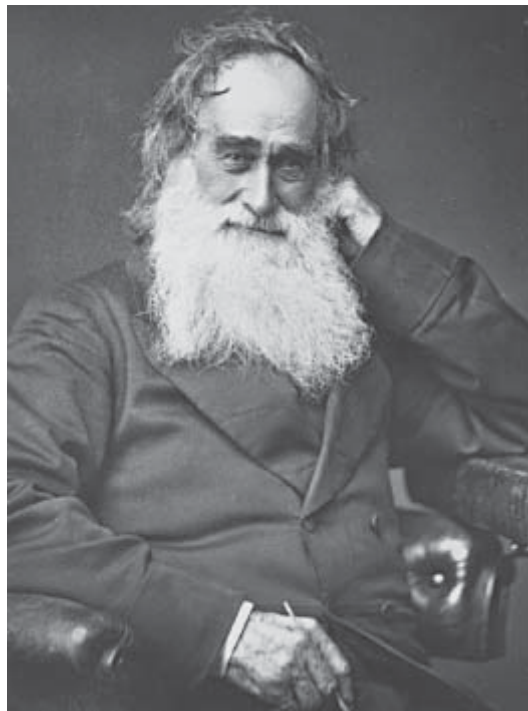


other. Though Moselekatse himself was never converted to Christianity, in later years he did allow missionaries, including Moffat's son John and daughter-in-law Emily, to establish a mission station among his tribe.

As far away as Moffat often traveled, his thoughts were never far from Kuruman. Over the years, Kuruman had become a showpiece of African civilization, where his philosophy of "Bible and plough" was practiced. Their stone house had a large enclosed backyard where their five servants did domestic chores around a huge open brick oven. It was a homey atmosphere, with children always at play. (The Moffats had ten children, though only seven survived to adulthood; and of those seven, five became actively involved in African missions.) Though Kuruman was an out-of-the-way settlement, not on the main route to the interior, it attracted so many visitors that Moffat sometimes regretted the circus atmosphere that interfered with his Bible translation and revisions.



Robert Moffat, missionary patriarch of South Africa.

After fifty-three years in Africa with only one furlough (1839–43), the Moffats were ready to retire. They had suffered some severe tragedies, particularly the deaths of their two oldest children within the space of a few months in 1862, but the work was moving forward. There were several native pastors active in the work, and their son John, who had joined them at Kuruman, was prepared to take over the mission. It was a sad departure from Kuruman and perhaps an unfortunate mistake. Kuruman was the only home they had known for half a century, and readjustment back in England proved difficult, particularly for Mary, who died only months after their return. Moffat lived on for another thirteen years, during which time he became a noted missionary statesman, traveling throughout the British Isles challenging adults and youth alike with the tremendous needs of Africa.

David Livingstone

David Livingstone was the hero of Victorian England—and a hero for generations to follow. "After his death and his burial in Westminster Abbey," writes Geoffrey Moorhouse, his "reputation was secure from assault by anyone but the most reckless heretic. Even in the middle of the twentieth century, historians would still acknowledge him as the greatest

missionary of them all. For almost a hundred years he would ... be considered in the same breath as St. Francis of Assisi and St. Joan of Arc.”¹²

Livingstone had unparalleled influence in the realm of African missions, but his own missionary work was slight. He was a frail, temperamental human being with serious personality flaws that hindered his ministry throughout his entire life. But despite his weaknesses, he, more than anyone else, focused the world’s attention on the needs of Africa.

Like his father-in-law, Robert Moffat, David Livingstone was born in Scotland and raised in humble surroundings. But unlike his father-in-law, his brilliant mind and insatiable desire for learning impelled him to seek a higher station in life. His fourteen-hour days at a textile mill beginning at the age of ten did not prevent his education. He bought a Latin grammar book with his first week’s pay, and he continued his schooling by enrolling in evening classes. He survived his difficult years of schooling by snatching glances at a book propped up on his spinning jenny and poring over homework assignments until midnight. His love for science caused a serious rift between him and his father and might have pulled him away from his Christian upbringing—but for the writings of Thomas Dick, who emphasized the compatibility of faith and science.

Livingstone grew up in a pious, church-going family who had left the established Anglican Church to attend an Independent chapel. After his conversion he dreamed of becoming a missionary doctor to China, but due to family hardships, further education was delayed. Finally, in 1840, at the age of twenty-seven, he was ready to begin his missionary career with a background in both theology and medicine.


Livingstone’s application to the London Missionary Society was accepted in 1839, but his plans to sail for China were thwarted by international politics—friction between Britain and China, which eventually led to the Opium War. The LMS directors thought Livingstone should go to the West Indies instead, but in the meantime Livingstone had been introduced to the striking, six-foot-tall veteran missionary to Africa, Robert Moffat. Moffat had a profound influence on the eager missionary candidate and tantalized him with the thrilling opportunities for evangelism beyond Kuruman in “the vast plain to the north” where he had “sometimes seen, in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages, where no missionary had ever been.”¹³

It was with great anticipation that Livingstone sailed for Africa in December of 1840. After spending thirteen weeks in language study aboard ship, he arrived at the Cape in March of 1841 and remained there a month before beginning his journey to Kuruman, where he was to help with the work until the Moffats returned. He enjoyed his overland travel to Kuruman, describing it as a “prolonged system of picnicking.” He was critical of the missionary work at Cape Town, however, where having large numbers of missionaries concentrated in a small area discouraged indigenous leadership. Further disappointment awaited him at Kuruman. With the mental image of “a thousand villages,” he was surprised to find the region so sparsely populated, and he was shocked to discover the discord among the missionaries: “The missionaries in the interior are, I am grieved to say, a sorry set.... I shall be glad when I get away into the region beyond—away from their envy and backbiting.” Livingstone’s presence only complicated the situation, and most of the missionaries were only too anxious for him to “get away into the region beyond.” He complained that there was “no more Christian affection between most if not all the ‘brethren’” and himself than between his “riding ox and his grandmother.”¹⁴

While waiting for the Moffats to return from their furlough, Livingstone made several exploration treks northward. Of his two-and-a-half-years at Kuruman, more than a year was spent away from his base, and this practice of “riding off” continued during the rest of his career. In 1843 Livingstone rode off to stay. He set out for the wooded and well-watered area of Mabosta, two hundred miles north, to establish a second Kuruman. With him was

Roger Edwards, a middle-aged artisan-missionary, and his wife, both of whom had served for ten years at Kuruman. There were problems from the start. Edwards resented the imposed leadership of Livingstone, who was not only new on the African scene but was also eighteen years his junior.

Mabosta became Livingstone's first African home—a large house with glass windows brought up from Kuruman. There he first encountered the ever-present dangers of the African jungle. While taking part in a lion hunt he was attacked and badly mauled. Though he was grateful to have survived, thanks to his African companions, his left arm was severely injured and maimed for life.

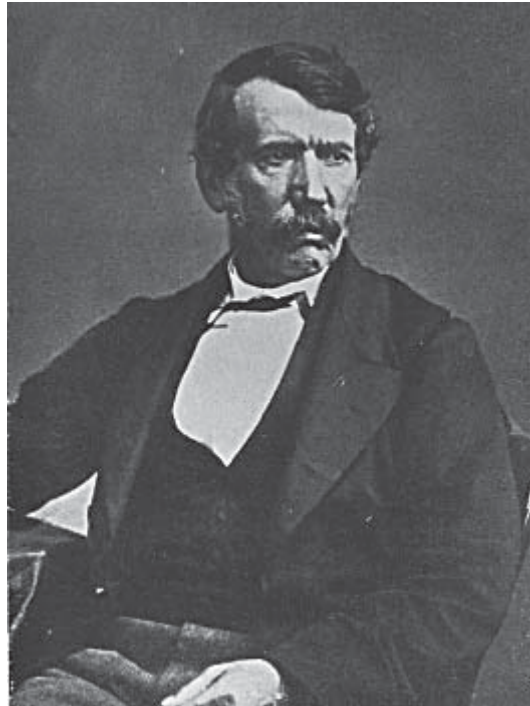


WHEN in the act of ramming down the bullets I heard a shout. Starting, and looking half round, I saw the lion just in the act of springing upon me.... He caught my shoulder as he sprang, and we both came to the ground below together. Growling horribly close to my ear, he shook me as a terrier does a rat. The shock produced a stupor similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first shake of the cat.... The shake annihilated fear, and allowed no sense of horror in looking round at the beast. This peculiar state is probably produced in all animals killed by the carnivora; and if so, is a merciful provision by our benevolent Creator for lessening the pain of death. Turning round to relieve myself of the weight, as he had one paw on the back of my head, I saw his eyes directed to Mebalwe, who was trying to shoot him at a distance of ten or fifteen yards.... The lion immediately left me, and attacking Mebalwe, bit his thigh.... Another man ... attempted to spear the lion while he was biting Mebalwe. He left Mebalwe and caught this man by the shoulder, but at that moment the bullets he had received took effect, and he fell down dead.... Besides crunching the bone into splinters, he left eleven teeth wounds on the upper part of my arm.”

(David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*)

By May of 1844, three months after the incident, he was feeling well enough to travel—on important business. He headed for Kuruman “to pay his addresses” to the Moffats’ oldest daughter, Mary, who at twenty-three had just returned with her parents from England. His period of convalescence no doubt convinced him that there were drawbacks to being single, and so, during that summer, he “screwed up ... courage to put the question beneath one of the fruit trees.” Later that year he wrote to a friend, “I am, it seems, after all to be hooked to Miss Moffat,” whom he had described to another friend as being a “sturdy” and “matter-of-fact lady.”¹⁵

The wedding took place at Kuruman in January of 1845, and in March the Livingstones left for Mabosta; but their stay there was short-lived. Further problems developed with the Edwards, and later that year, after delivering his first child, he moved his family to Chonwane, forty miles north. The time at Chonwane was a happy one for the Livingstones, but it only lasted eighteen months. Severe drought in that area necessitated a move with the tribe northwest to the Kolobeng River. In the summer of 1847, after their second child was born, they moved into their third home.



David Livingstone, the world-famous missionary-explorer.

For seven years, the family lived a seminomadic life in Africa. Sometimes Mary and the children stayed at home alone, and other times they joined the expedition. Neither situation was satisfactory. On one occasion, when Livingstone was away from Chonwane for an extended period of time, he wrote: “Mary feels her situation among the ruins a little dreary and no wonder, for she writes me that the lions are resuming possession and walk around our house at night.”¹⁶ But accompanying him was not suitable either. In 1850, after an exploratory trip with her husband, she gave birth to her fourth child, who died soon after, while Mary was suffering from temporary paralysis. All this became too much for the more sedentary Moffats of Kuruman to tolerate. In 1851, when they heard from their daughter (who was again pregnant) that Livingstone was planning to take her and the “dear children” on another long jungle trek, Mrs. Moffat wrote her son-in-law a stinging letter:

Mary had told me all along that should she be pregnant you would not take her, but let her come out here after you were fairly off.... But to my dismay I now get a letter—in which she writes ‘I must again wend my weary way to the far Interior, perhaps to be confined in the field.’ O Livingstone what do you mean—was it not enough that you lost one lovely babe, and scarcely saved the other, while the mother came home threatened with Paralysis? And still you again expose her & them on an exploring expedition? All the world still condemn the cruelty of the thing, to say nothing of the indecorousness of it. A pregnant woman with three little children trailing about with a company of the other sex—through the wilds of Africa among savage men and beasts! Had you *found a place* to which you wished to go and commence missionary operations the case would be altered. Not one word would I say were it to the mountains of the moon—but to go with an exploring party, the thing is preposterous. I remain yours in great perturbation, M. Moffat.¹⁷

Whether the letter would have changed Livingstone’s mind is impossible to say, but the fact is, he did not receive it until he and the family were well into their journey. On September 15, 1851, a month after departure, Mary delivered her fifth child on the Zouga

River, an event to which Livingstone devoted only one line in his journal, leaving more space for his exciting discovery of crocodile eggs. Apparently ignoring his own culpability, Livingstone bemoaned his wife's "frequent pregnancies," comparing the results to the output of "the great Irish manufactory."¹⁸ Yet, he seemed to have genuinely loved his children and in later years regretted that he had not spent more time with them.



By 1852 Livingstone had come to realize that African expeditions were no place for a mother and little children. Earlier he had justified the risk: "It is a venture to take wife and children into a country where fever—African fever—prevails. But who that believes in Jesus would refuse to make a venture for such a Captain?" But no longer could he endure the criticism of his in-laws and others, so in March of 1852 he Livingstone's Travels in Southern Africa saw Mary and the children off from Cape Town en route to England. How could he sacrifice his family for African exploration? "Nothing but a strong conviction that the step will tend to the Glory of Christ would make me orphanize my children."¹⁹

The next five years were depressing for Mary. A biographer wrote that she and the children were not only "homeless and friendless" but also "often living on the edge of poverty in cheap lodgings." It was rumored among the resident LMS missionaries that she had lapsed into spiritual darkness and was drowning her misery in alcohol.²⁰ But for Livingstone, now free to explore, it was an exhilarating time. He had little to show for his first eleven years—neither converts nor a mission station. Now he was free to move. The interior of Africa was beckoning.

Livingstone's first and greatest expedition took him across the continent of Africa along the Zambezi River. After seeing his family off at Cape Town, he leisurely headed back north, stopping at Kuruman and then going on to his favorite tribe, the Makololos, where he recruited a number of them to accompany him on the expedition. Beginning in central Africa, they followed the river northwest to the coast at Luanda. It was a hazardous journey with continual threats from hostile tribes and the dread of the deadly African fever, but Livingstone was never tempted to turn back. Although he was primarily an explorer, he never entirely abandoned evangelism. With him he carried a "magic lantern" (an early

version of a slide projector) with pictures depicting biblical scenes. After six months of arduous travel, he and his men made history when they came out on the coast alive.

Despite offers from ship captains to return him to England, Livingstone, under a personal obligation to return the Makololo tribesmen to their homeland, turned back and started his trek down the Zambezi to the east coast. His journey east moved at a slower pace, hampered by dozens of bouts with African fever. In twelve months he reached Linyanti, his original starting point, and from there he continued on to the great falls that he named Victoria in honor of his queen. From this point, his single aim was to explore the Zambezi as a possible trade route from the East. The more he encountered the inhumane slave traffic of the Portuguese and the Arabs, the more convinced he became that only the combination of “Commerce and Christianity” could save Africa. He was convinced that slavery required the help of Africans (supplying slaves from enemy tribes), and his solution was to bring legitimate commerce to Africa by way of a navigable trade.

Although the expedition did not follow the Zambezi the entire route, Livingstone nevertheless arrived on the coast in May of 1856, confidently (though incorrectly) proclaiming the Zambezi to be navigable. It was a happy occasion, though he was disappointed again, as he had been on the West Coast, not to find a letter from Mary among all his mail.

Back in England in December of 1856 after fifteen years in Africa, Livingstone was heralded as a national hero. After only three days with his family, he went to London where he launched a year-long whirlwind speaking tour to adoring crowds and received some of the nation’s highest awards. During this year in England, he also wrote his first book, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*. As a result of his high profile, new mission societies were formed—though he himself went in a different direction. Before returning to Africa in 1858, he severed his connection with the LMS and accepted a commission from the British government that allowed him more funds and equipment.

The remaining fifteen years of Livingstone’s life could never recapture the glory of 1857. He returned to Africa with an official entourage for his second expedition, only to discover that the Zambezi River was not navigable. The section of the river he had bypassed on his previous journey contained rocky gorges and white rapids. Disappointed, he turned northward (nearer the east coast) to explore the Shire River and Lake Nyasa. Unfortunately, slavers followed in the wake of his discoveries, and thus for a time his exploration was doing more to open the area to slave traffic than to missions.

Missionaries also followed his paths to the Shire River region, but not without painful sacrifice. The Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), founded as a result of Livingstone’s rousing speech at Cambridge, entered the area with enthusiasm and false assurance of favorable living conditions. Livingstone was not an organizer, and soon the mission was in chaos. Bishop Charles Mackenzie, the leading cleric in the party, was a controversial figure. He was reported to have “arrived in East Africa with a crosier [bishop’s staff] in one hand and a rifle in the other,” and he did not hesitate to use his rifle and distribute others to friendly Africans for military action against the slave-trading Ajawa tribe.²¹ His behavior created a scandal and seriously hurt the UMCA. In less than a year, however, Mackenzie was dead, and others in the mission party soon perished also, including Livingstone’s wife, Mary, who had left the children in England to join her husband in 1861.

Livingstone returned to England in 1864, this time to much less acclaim. His second expedition had not been the success he had hoped it would be, and his reputation had been tarnished. Most of the members of his party, once enamored by their fearless leader, were complaining bitterly about his autocratic rule and difficult personality.

In 1865 Livingstone returned to Africa for the last time to begin his third and final expedition, this time for the purpose of discovering the source of the Nile. He took no

Europeans with him, and in fact, did not see another European for nearly seven years. It was a difficult time for him. His body was racked by malnutrition, fever, and bleeding hemorrhoids, and often his supplies were stolen by Arab slave traders. Yet he was where he wanted to be. While he failed to discover the source of the Nile, he made other discoveries, and he was at peace with himself and his surroundings (except for the ever-present slave trade that tortured his conscience). As time passed, the Africans became used to the bearded, toothless, haggard old man who often spoke to them of his Savior.

During Livingstone's last years in Africa, rumors periodically surfaced that he had died. Though his reputation had been marred, people the world over still held him in awe and were strangely curious about this eccentric old man in the wilds of Africa. It was this curiosity that spurred the editor of the New York *Herald* to send an ambitious reporter, Henry Stanley, to find Livingstone, dead or alive. After several months of searching, Stanley caught up with Livingstone at Ujiji, near Lake Tanganyika, late in 1871. The initial meeting was awkward. After dismounting his horse, Stanley bowed and uttered the often-repeated phrase that soon became the butt of jokes: "Dr. Livingstone, I presume."

Stanley was a welcome sight to Livingstone. He brought medicine, food, and other supplies that Livingstone desperately needed. And perhaps more importantly, he brought companionship and news from the outside world. The two men developed a close and tender relationship; and in a moving tribute, Stanley described the months they shared together:

For four months and four days I lived with him in the same hut, or the same boat, or the same tent, and I never found a fault in him. I went to Africa as prejudiced against religion as the worst infidel in London. To a reporter like myself, who had only to deal with wards, mass meetings, and political gatherings, sentimental matters were quite out of my province. But there came to me a long time for reflection. I was out there away from a worldly world. I saw this solitary old man there, and I asked myself, "Why does he stop here? What is it that inspires him?" For months after we met I found myself listening to him, wondering at the old man carrying out the words, "leave all and follow me." But little by little, seeing his piety, his gentleness, his zeal, his earnestness, and how he went quietly about his business, I was converted by him, although he had not tried to do it.²²

Stanley would go on to follow in Livingstone's footsteps with his 999-day journey across Africa—an expedition that intrigued the world and sent missionary societies scrambling to stake their claims in the Dark Continent. Before that, he had written his bestseller, *How I Found Livingstone*, which served as another source to the unfolding legend of Livingstone.

Livingstone lived a little more than a year after Stanley departed. On May 1, 1873, an African servant found the "master" kneeling as if in prayer "by the side of his bed, his body stretched forward, his head buried in his hands upon the pillow."²³ It was a fitting way for this man of living legend to die. His faithful servants Susi and Chuma determined that there was no other way to pay their respects than to deliver his body and personal papers to his former associates at the coast. After burying his heart under a Mpundu tree, the body was dried in the hot African sun until it was mummified and then carried overland fifteen hundred miles to the coast.

In England, Livingstone was given a state funeral at Westminster Abbey, attended by dignitaries from all over the country. It was a day of mourning for his children, who came to say good-bye to the father they had never really known; but it was a particularly sad hour for the seventy-eight-year-old Robert Moffat, who slowly walked down the aisle in

front of the casket bearing the man who decades before in that same city had caught a vision of “a thousand villages, where no missionary had ever been.”

The death of David Livingstone had a tremendous psychological impact on the English-speaking world. Missionary fervor reached a high pitch as zealous young men and women volunteered for overseas duty, no matter what the cost.

George Grenfell

George Grenfell was one of the many British citizens inspired by the work of Livingstone and drawn to Africa in the wake of his death. He was born in Cornwall, England, in 1849. It was through reading Livingstone’s first book that he committed himself to African missions. After working in a warehouse for a number of years while serving as a lay minister, he enrolled for a year at the Baptist College in Bristol to prepare for his missionary service.

In 1874, at the age of twenty-five, Grenfell was accepted by the Baptist Missionary Society (the same mission that commissioned William Carey some eighty years before), and the following month he left for the Cameroons. In 1876, he was back home in England for his marriage to a Miss Hawkes, who returned to Africa with him but died less than a year later, leaving him bereaved and regretful: “I have done a great wrong in taking my dear wife into this deadly climate of West Africa.” He remarried two years later, this time to a “colored” woman from the West Indies who was also widowed.²⁴

After a three-year apprenticeship in the Cameroons, Grenfell was assigned to do pioneer work on the Congo River, following on the discoveries of Stanley’s 999-day journey. It was Grenfell’s hope to pave the way for a network of mission stations across Africa. His mode of travel was a river steamer, the *Peace*, which he assembled himself after three engineers who were sent one at a time to carry out the task all died. The *Peace* became a home for Grenfell and his family, who accompanied him on his exploratory trips.

The Congo lived up to the reputation of a “white man’s graveyard.” Only one out of four missionaries survived their first term of service. Yet Grenfell pleaded for more missionaries: “If more men don’t soon come, the Congo mission will collapse, and the work that has cost so much will be thrown away.” His own family did not escape the clutches of death. Four of his children were buried in the Congo, including his oldest daughter, Pattie, who had come from England as a teenager to help in the work.²⁵

But the disease-ridden jungle was not the only obstacle standing in the way of bringing Christianity to the Congo. Unfriendly tribesmen, known for their cannibalism, were a constant threat. Grenfell recalled as many as twenty harrowing experiences of “running away from cannibals.” “The people are wild and treacherous, for several times after a period of apparently amicable intercourse, without any other cause than their own sheer ‘cussedness,’ as the Yankees would say, they let fly their poisoned arrows at us.”²⁶

Grenfell’s own perspective on the situation was very different from that of others. Sam Lapsley, a young Presbyterian missionary, visiting in 1890, was disillusioned, according to Pagan Kennedy:

But lingering day after day at this remote outpost with the famous Grenfell had unsettled the young missionary. Yes, the station appeared to be comfortable enough, with its machine shop, photography studio, and observatory, its tall palm trees and its steamship, *Peace*, docked in front. But Mr. Grenfell himself was a mess—“very anxious,” Lapsley commented. Grenfell hated the natives, and they hated him. They had even threatened him with murder.... Was this what it meant