HISTORY SHAPERS

THE STORY OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE

VAUTIER GOLDING

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The Story of David Livingstone

by

Vautier Golding

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The Story of...

David Livingstone	Robert Bruce	Chalmers of New
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Abraham Lincoln	Lord Clive	Bishop Patteson
Sir Francis Drake	Captain Cook	Joan of Arc
Sir Walter Raleigh	Nelson	Napoleon
Columbus	Lord Roberts	Cromwell

PLEASE NOTE

In this series, you will read about historical figures who displayed courage, bravery, self-sacrifice, and many other admirable traits. Their stories remind us that many people in history took bold actions and made tough choices. Yet, even those who achieved great things sometimes held ideas or pursued goals that were not beneficial to everyone. History is full of complex individuals—parts of their lives inspire us to be brave and stand up for what is right, while other parts remind us to consider the unintended consequences of our actions.

As you explore these biographies, we invite you to reflect on the qualities that enabled these figures to achieve greatness and the lessons we can learn from their mistakes. Maybe you too can become a History Shaper—someone who learns from the past and helps to make our world a better place for everyone.

Contents

LIGHTS OF LIFE

THE dewstands on the dormer panes,
The cross November sun
Has sent the daylight off to bed
Before the night's begun;

The dull red embers, half aglow,
Are sulking in the grate,
And let the lonely shadows grow
All dark and desolate;

Shadows of things that go awry,
Or waver to and fro;
Shadows of playthings bought so dear
And broken long ago;

Shadows of friends who played till mirth
Grew sad and went in pain:--
Where is the merry light that makes
Old shadows smile again?

Hark I little sandals softly beat
Upon the attic stair,
And truant mischief breathless creeps
With whispered, "Is he there?"

A story ‘Tis a fateful task
To fill the open brow:
Who knows what plans of God depend
On all it garners now?

Where shall we lead the clambering limbs,
The big blue fearless eyes?
Down to the gold mine’s narrowing drift,
Or to the widening skies

Where, in the space around the stars,
Are countless worlds astray,
Whose peoples call for pioneers
To find the safer way?

Ay, let us tell the generous tale
Of giants real and bold,
Who grew so great they would not stoop
To gather fame and gold;

But hurled the mountains from our path,
And drained our quagmires dry,
And held our foes at bay the while
They bore our weaklings by;

Giants by whose unselfish toil
Our land was first begun,
Where good and useful men and maids
Make merry as they run.

Ah, may you miss the dismal tracks
That aimless feet have trod,
And follow where our pioneers
Make open ways to God.

VAUTIER GOLDING.


R. Congo
Nile
Victoria Nyanza
Manyema
Stanley Pool
Kasai
R. Congo
Nyangwe
Kabambare
Ujiji
Unyanyembe
Tabora
Lake Tanganyika
Zanzibar
Bagamoyo
Quango
Loanda
Chiboque
Lualaba
Lake Moero
Kazembe
Chitimbe's
L. Bangweolo
Chambeze
Chitambo
Rovuma
Benguela
Angola
Central Africa
Loangwa
Manganja
Marenga's
L. Shirwa
Mozambique
Barotsi
Kebrabasa Falls
Magomero
Chobe
Kubango
Tete
Murchison Falls
Zambesi
Sesheke
Banyai
Linyanti
Shupanga
Quilimane
Victoria Falls
Kongone
Kunene
Ovambo
Matabele
L. Ngami
Zouga
Makokonyani
Kalahari
Serotli
Limpopo
Desert
Kolobeng
Chonuane
Indian
Mabotsa
Namaqua
Atlantic
Bechuanaland
Transvaal
Delagoa Bay
Land
Kuruman
Ocean
Ocean
Vaal
Orange R.
Natal
Orange
Durban
Cape Colony
Note
Missionary Journeys
Zambesi Expedition
Last Journey
Cape Town
P. Elizabeth
English Miles
0 50 100 200 300 400 500

Early Life

The story of this brave and gentle hero, and of his noble toil for the sake of other men, is truly a tale of more than ordinary wonder.

Few men's lives can better show how even the poorest and weakest can gain for themselves the power to do great things, and to make the harder paths of life more easy for those who follow. For David Livingstone began life in a workman's cottage, without knowledge or skill, and without money to obtain them. Yet, when he died, the world was so full of praise and wonder at his work that his body was brought from Africa to rest in Westminster Abbey among the graves of his country's greatest men. He had grown to be a great pioneer, an explorer, a scientist, a doctor, a missionary, a freer of slaves.

In thirty years he travelled 29,000 miles, through the wild and unknown parts of Africa, exploring rivers, lakes, plains, forests, and mountains. He found out places where white settlers might make farms and plantations in health and safety. He sought for paths and waterways by which they might bring their cotton, grain, coffee, sugar, ivory, and skins to the seaports for sale. Among the black tribes he made many friends, doctored their sick, and lost no

chance of showing them how to do their duty to God and make better use of their lives.

But his last and greatest work was to follow up the slave-hunters, and make known in England all the brutal and wicked horrors of the slave-trade. This was the work that wore him to death, but his noble self-sacrifice roused his countrymen to take possession of Central Africa and put an end to slavery. And if we look into his life, we shall find that the power to do all this came little by little, and day by day, from one simple source, namely, his earnest and unselfish desire to show his love for God by doing good to men. He was always trying to help and befriend others, and this made other men befriend him and give him the means of carrying on his work.

Livingstone's forefathers were Scotch Highlanders, and lived in the lonely island of Ulva, till hard times drove the family to settle in the village of Blantyre, among the Lanarkshire cotton-mills, where work was more plentiful.

Here David was born in the year 1813. His father, Neil Livingstone, an honest, steady, and hard-working man, took a great interest in all that was going on in the world. He was a great reader is many subjects, but was especially fond of books on missionary work. From him David inherited his Highland pluck and hardihood, and also his thirst for every kind of knowledge.

His mother, Agnes Hunter, came of an old family which, in the days of the Covenanter persecution, had been driven from home to the hills, and had risked torture

and death rather than do what they believed to be wrong. She gave him her gentle and kindly nature, and taught him to be neat, orderly, and exact. From her tender but firm upbringing also, he gained the brave grip of truth, honour, and justice that makes men do and dare all things for duty's sake.

This was his heritage from his parents, and it proved of more value to him than all the money on earth.

At the village school of Blantyre David soon learnt to read and write. So poor, however, were his parents, that they had to take him away from his lessons at the early age of ten, and set him to work in a cotton-mill. Summer and winter, wet or fine, he had to appear at the factory at six in the morning, and stay there till eight at night, with short spaces allowed him for meals. Fourteen hours a day at the mill might well have broken his pluck and ruined his health, as, indeed, happened to many poor children, but David was made of harder stuff. He was bent on getting knowledge by some means or other. Very quickly he learnt to work the machine called the "spinning jenny," and was then raised to be a spinner with a small wage.

The first half-crown of his earning he took home, and slipped it into his mother's lap. To him it was a small fortune, and would have bought him many coveted things, but he thought of his mother's wants before his own. Later on, as he earned more wage, he bought himself books, and these he used to fix on the "jenny," snatching a few lines from them whenever he could spare an eye from his

work. His hard and tiring day at the mill was long enough for any one, but in spite of this he joined night classes and sat up reading till sometimes his mother took away his books and drove him to bed.

His holidays were spent in ranging over the countryside with his brothers and sisters, and here too nothing escaped his keen eye and love of knowledge. Every animal, bird, insect, and plant was an interest to him, and he studied them closely, trying to find out all he could about their forms and habits. And while he thus began to learn the wonderful science of nature, he never dreamt that one day in the wilds of Africa he would use his knowledge in digging roots for his supper, or in avoiding vicious beasts and poisonous snakes.

As the years went on he grew restless, and was sometimes not very happy, without quite knowing why. In reality his mind was growing very fast, and wanted bigger and better work than watching the mill-wheels. Spinning cotton was useful enough in its way, but he wanted to do for mankind something greater and more lasting than that.

His father had many books and papers on mission work in China and India, and as David read of the wonderful beauty of these countries, and the ignorance and cruelty of their peoples, he sometimes thought he would like to be a missionary. The idea returned to him again and again, but he kept doubting whether he was the right person for the work. One day, however, when he was twenty years

old, he happened to read a booklet that told such sad tales about the poor of China that his mind was troubled and stirred. So heavily did the story of human suffering and wrong weigh upon him that he began to take his country walks alone, in order to think the matter over undisturbed. Every morning he asked himself if he could do nothing to help, and every night he went to bed with the question still unanswered.

But at last there came an evening when he found an answer that made his way quite clear. He watched the sunset lights creep off the hills and clouds and die away in the growing starlight. He heard the thrush, all grateful for the joy of life, sing out its evensong till the calm hush of night stole over the tired world. The peace and beauty of it all seemed to make him sadder than ever. In such a lovely world, where there was room for all, food for all, and joy enough for all, it seemed to him so utterly strange that men could ever even want to cheat, rob, bully, and kill each other, and grab for themselves more than they could possibly use. The depth of his own sadness made him remember how once, in the stillness of the sunset hour, Jesus of Nazareth had wandered into an olive grove, and there had wept in bitter grief over the troubles of men.

Then suddenly the idea flashed into his mind that at least he could try and imitate the life of Christ as far as lay in his power. In a moment his mind was made up. He walked home with a brisk step and light heart, and told his parents that he was going to college at Glasgow to learn

to be a doctor; and then he would go out to the far East to help the sick, and to tell men how they could make the world better and happier by imitating the life of Christ.

David lost no time in carrying out his plan, and at once began to put by all he could from his earnings at the cotton-mill. Want of money was his chief difficulty. Indeed, when at last he went up to Glasgow, he and his father walked all the way, and then had to trudge the streets till they found a lodging for David that cost no more than two shillings a week.

It was a hard struggle for young Livingstone, but still, by spending his savings very carefully, he managed to keep at his studies for a whole winter. Then he was forced to go back to the cotton-mills in order to save more money to pay for another winter's training. He was a quick and thorough learner, and at once it became quite clear to those who taught him that he would soon be fit for the life he had chosen.

Livingstone thought a good deal about the kind of a missionary he wanted to be. His idea of true mission work was to go among the people as a plain and simple man, trying every hour and minute of his daily life to do as Christ had done; and in this way he hoped to win their love and respect, and to lead them towards a nobler life of duty, to God and man. At first he thought he did not need to study to be a preacher as missionaries usually did. But wiser friends showed him that if he became a missionary he would often have to preach to the natives, as well as

live among them; and that he needed the regular course of study. So he offered himself to the London Missionary Society. The directors of the society examined him and sent him to Ongar in Essex for a three months' training among the other missionary students.

Here, with his usual care and thoroughness, he quickly learnt all that was set before him, but there was one thing he never could master: do what he would, he never could learn to preach. Once he was sent to a neighbouring parish with a most carefully prepared sermon; but he could get no further than the text, and so with a hasty apology he fled from the pulpit. Probably that was the only time in his life that he ran away from anything, but the event nearly ended his career.

His failure in preaching vexed the soul of his pastor so much, that Livingstone was sent back to the directors at the end of the three months with a bad report of his powers as a missionary. On the strength of this report he was nearly sent away as useless. One of the directors, however, who was wiser than his fellows, saw that Livingstone could both think well and do well, although he could not talk well. He accordingly took the young student's part, and insisted that he should have a further trial at Ongar. The result of this timely aid was that, after three more months of study, no one doubted Livingstone's fitness, and so in the year 1840 he was formally ordained a missionary.

Meanwhile, war had broken out in China, and no one could go there in safety. This was a disappointment to

Livingstone, but while waiting for peace he would not be idle, so he went on with his medical studies at London, and also took his degree as a physician and surgeon at Glasgow. But the war still dragged on, and rather than waste any time, he decided to go to Africa; and accordingly, on 8th December 1840, he set sail for that vast and unknown continent, into which he was one day to bring new light, new hope, and new freedom.

First Years in Africa

The sea voyage out to the Cape was a new life to Livingstone, and he made the most of it. With his usual determination to know all about everything, he made friends with the ship's captain, and soon began to learn how to manage the ship.

The captain taught him how to use a sextant and chronometer, two most important instruments, by whose help voyagers can tell exactly how far they are to the north or south, to the east or west. To "take an observation," as it is called, is no easy matter; but by hard and steady practice Livingstone in time became able to find out the ship's exact position and to mark it down neatly on the chart. And often in after life the captain's kindly teaching came to his aid when he lost his way in the wilds, or when he marked some new discovery on the map.

In his spare half-hours Livingstone would enjoy the many delights and wonders of the southern sea. He watched the dazzling little flying fish dart like tiny rainbows from beneath the bows, glimmer over the water, and flash into the white comb of a wave. The dolphins, too, like clowns of the sea, amused him with their antics as they leapt and turned somersaults over the waves or

sportively raced, two or three abreast, close ahead of the cut-water. Occasionally a monster sperm-whale would rise to the surface like a floating islet, spout his double fountain into the air, and plunge down again into his home. Sometimes, also, a grim and wicked-looking shark would prowl about the ship's wake in the greedy hope of human prey.

At last the long voyage was over and Livingstone landed at Cape Town. Here he found more sights and wonders awaiting him. He kept his eyes open, observing the customs of the natives, and especially the methods of missionary work. He soon found out that there were enough missionaries in this southern tip of the African continent to teach and preach to all the black men that lived there. He saw that new missionaries ought to go farther north where there were more natives and fewer mission stations.

Livingstone was very glad to do this himself. Although it would have been pleasanter and more comfortable to settle down where there were more white people, he was eager to do what was best for the black people he had come to help. In his student days he had decided to go to Africa because he had heard Dr. Moffat say, "I have sometimes seen in the morning sun, in the vast plain to the north, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been." David Livingstone decided then that he could make his life count for most in the regions of most need. And now that he had reached Africa, he saw that he was right.

So, during these first weeks in Africa, Livingstone made two plans: first, to make mission stations far up in the thickly-peopled native districts, and win over the most powerful chiefs; next, to make a training college whence native teachers could afterwards be sent to educate the many tribes. It was the first of these plans that decided the course of his after life, for he now was very sure that he could do better service to his cause by pioneering Central Africa than by settling down at the Cape to preach.

After a short stay at the Cape, Livingstone was sent into Bechuanaland to Kuruman, the most northern of all the mission settlements in South Africa. This station was worked by a good and capable missionary, Dr. Moffat, who was then away in England, and Livingstone had been ordered to await his return. Livingstone, however, did not mean to be idle, so he decided to spend the time in exploring the almost unknown country to the north of the station.

Accordingly he made a number of journeys in many directions, travelling about from tribe to tribe until he had thoroughly learnt the nature and resources of the country, and also the language and character of the natives.

On the first of these journeys Livingstone had an object-lesson in slavery that set his noble heart aching for the freedom of Africa. One day when he had outspanned his oxen for rest and food, he suddenly noticed that a young native girl had crept into camp, and was hiding under his waggon. He gave her some food, and

in answer to his questions she told him her story. She and her sister had been left orphans, and they had lived happily together till the latter died. Then she was taken by another family, who kept her, not out of kindness, but with the cruel intention of selling her to some chief as a slave wife. On learning what was in store for her she ran away, meaning to trudge behind the waggon all the way to Kuruman, where she had friends.

While thus telling her tale, her face suddenly fell with fear, and she burst into tears. Livingstone looked up and saw that a native, armed with a rifle, had come to claim the poor child and take her back to slavery.

Livingstone could not bear the thought of giving her up, but he was at his wits' end to know the best way of saving her, till one of his native teachers, named Pomari, came to the rescue. The girl was attractive enough, with her bright eyes, white teeth, and soft, healthy skin, and her captors had loaded her in savage fashion with strings of beads. Pomari stripped the beads off the girl, and gave them to the man, who, after a little persuasion, took the bribe and went his way. Livingstone took care to keep the girl out of sight till they were safe out of the district.

Many other adventures befell the missionary on his travels; for wild animals, drought, fever, cattle-sickness, and the deadly tsetse-fly, whose bite kills oxen and horses in a few hours, always bring risk and excitement to an African journey. Once, when he was "trekking" several hundred miles through Bechuanaland in an ox-waggon,

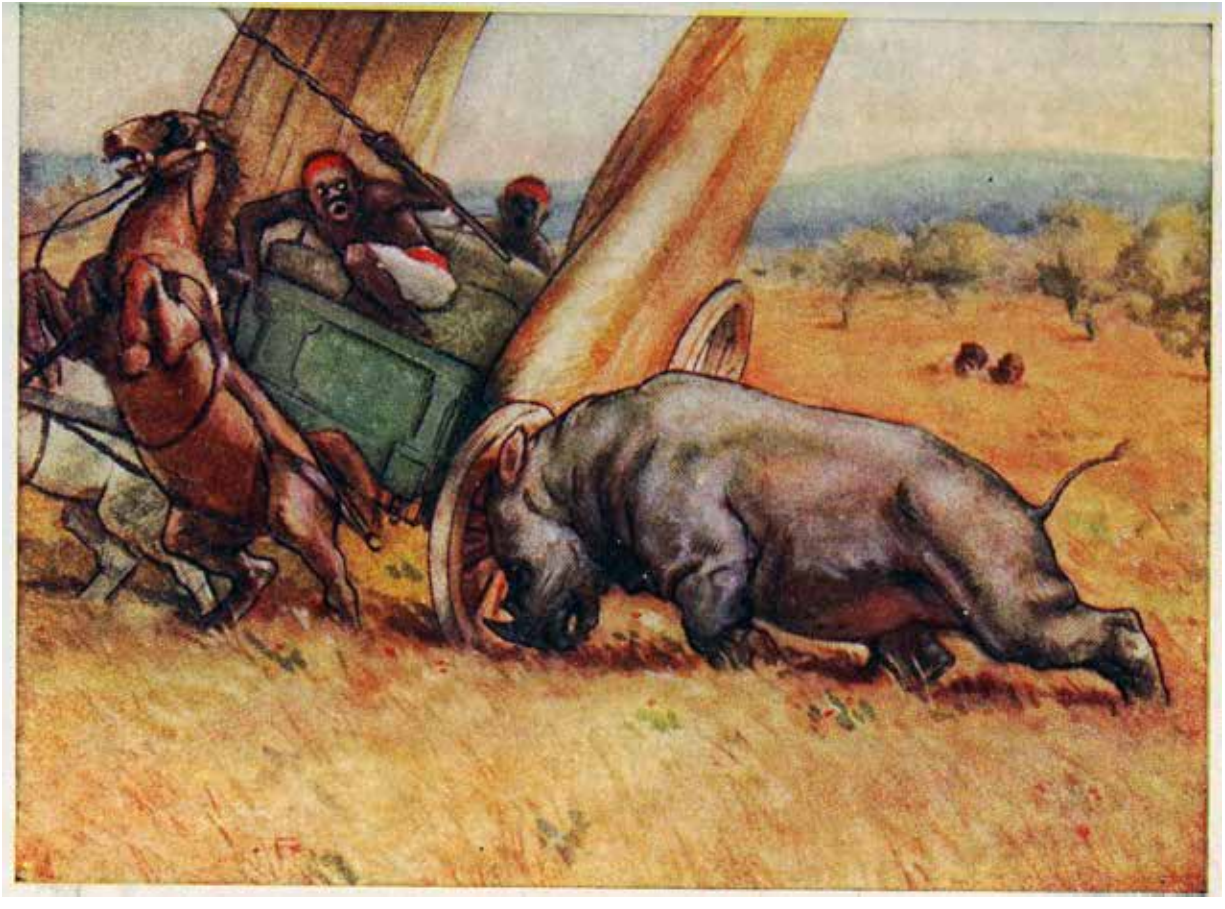
the fatal cattle-sickness fell like a plague upon his oxen and killed them all.

There was nothing to be done but to desert the waggon and tramp home. Livingstone's native servants were afraid that their master would never be able to do it. One of them pointed to his trousers and said, half in anxiety, half in scorn, that he was not really strong enough, and only put his legs into those bags to make them look stout. Livingstone, however, proved their fears groundless, and won their respect by walking them nearly to a standstill.

Once, too, he travelled 400 miles on ox-back, and found it awkward and uneasy work to keep his seat and avoid the sweep of the poor beast's horns as it shook off the flies that clustered round its eyes and nostrils. During this journey he fell down and broke his finger, and set the bone with his other hand. Not long after, a lion sprang out of the bush and raided their camp. Livingstone frightened the animal away by firing his revolver, but the kick of the weapon broke his finger anew.

Another time he had to fly for his life and hide from an angry rhinoceros which he had disturbed while she was feeding her calf. Upon missing him, the vicious brute charged full tilt at his waggon, and with the deadly upward stroke of her horn (a stroke which has been known to kill an elephant), splintered the wheel like match-wood.

All this while Livingstone was making friends of the tribes along his track. His manly fearlessness, his good humour and keen sympathy, his kindly eyes full of honesty



THE BRUTE CHARGED TULL TILT AT HIS WAGGON.

and truth, soon showed the natives that there was nothing to fear from him. His medical skill got him the fame of a wizard, and black patients from far and near thronged his waggon to be cured of their ills, while some spread the report that he had brought dead men back to life.

Apart from this, he had a most wonderful gift of finding his way into the hearts of men; and though the natives could not understand the reason of his coming, yet they soon saw that he had not come, like some of the Transvaal Boers, to shoot them down, plunder their cattle, and carry off their children to a life of unpaid labour.

One chief, Bubé, was in difficulty for want of water for his crops. Every tribe had a sorcerer, who was supposed to have the power of bringing down rain when required; but Bubé's rainmaker had failed to supply him. Livingstone, however, taught them a surer way than sorcery, for he induced the whole tribe to turn out and dig a ditch from the river to their village, and by thus saving them from famine he won their love and respect. Bubé's faith in witchcraft afterwards cost him his life. His sorcerer vowed he could take the devil out of some gunpowder by the use of certain burning roots. Poor Bubé innocently went to watch the performance, and both were blown out of existence.

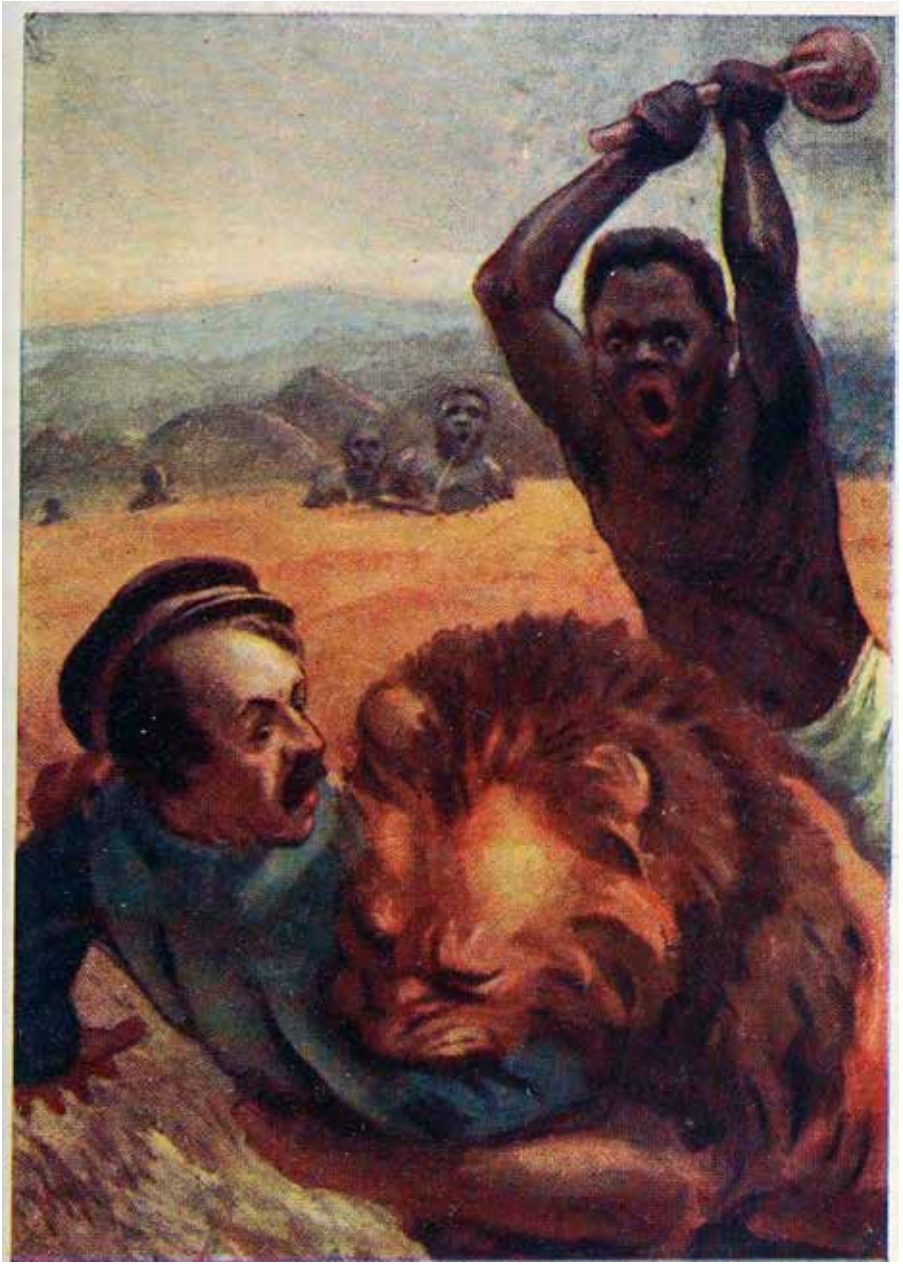
At last, after long waiting, Livingstone got leave from the directors to start a new mission-station, and this he did with the help of a brother missionary at Mabotsa, a place 250 miles north of Kuruman. Here Livingstone

had to build a house for himself at his own expense, and as his income was only £100 a year, he built it with his own hands.

His work, however, was delayed by a misadventure that left him with a weak arm for all his days. A lion one day fell upon a flock of sheep near the village and began to kill them right and left. Livingstone went out for a little wile to encourage the natives to surround it. The lion, however, broke away from its pursuers, and suddenly sprang out of the bush upon Livingstone: then, pinning him down with a paw on his head, it began to crunch the bone of his arm. A faithful follower, Mebalwé, diverted the beast from his master, and was himself attacked, but was saved by the lion falling dead of its wounds.

As soon as his arm was well enough, Livingstone finished his house, and then he brought home Mary Moffat from Kuruman to be his wife. They worked together to help the natives, and were successful and much loved. Mrs. Livingstone was very busy keeping house and teaching a big school of black children. Livingstone said that he was "Jack of all trades," and his wife "'maid of all work." While they lived here, a little son, Robert, was born, and after this the natives called Mrs. Livingstone Ma-Robert.

When a new missionary came to Mabotsa, Livingstone moved on to Chounane, 40 miles farther north, in the country of a chief called Sechélé. Water, however, was so scarce at Chonuane that Livingstone persuaded Sechélé's people to move with him still farther north, to Kolobeng.



THE LION BEGAN TO CRUNCH THE BONE OF HIS ARM.