

For Dominion Presbyterian.

David Livingston

By James Croil.

PART I.

Few visitors to Westminster Abbey can have failed to notice the large black marble slab on the floor of the nave, near its centre, which bears in letters of brass the following inscription:—

"Brought by faithful hands over land and sea, here rests

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

MISSIONARY, TRAVELLER, PHILANTHROPIST.

Born March 19th, 1813; died May 1st, 1873, at Chetamba's village, Ilala. For thirty years his life was spent in an unwearying effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, to abolish the desolating slave trade of Central Africa, where, with his last words, he wrote: "All I can add in my solitude is, Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world."

On one edge of the slab are the words:

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my name."

On the opposite edge is the Latin couplet:—

"Tantus amor veri nihil est quod noscere malim
Quam fluvii causas per secula tanta latentes."

Which may be thus rendered:—"So great is my love of truth that there is nothing I would rather know than the causes of the river that have lain hid through so many ages," the reference evidently being to the source of the Nile, the discovery of which had been the unfulfilled dream of his life.

This tribute to the memory of our hero, in itself so interesting, is specially remarkable as the only recognition of the kind within the historic precincts where kings and queens, princes and nobles, warriors, statesmen, philosophers, poets and historians have been buried and eulogized from time immemorial. Many have elaborate monuments here who have no title to honorable distinction.

"A fond attempt to give a deathless lot

To names ignoble, born to be forgot!"

and many really great names are conspicuously absent. Of all the grand missionaries of the centuries, David Livingstone is the only one who attained "the honors of Westminster."

It's a far cry from Blantyre to Westminster Abbey. It took Livingstone the best part of sixty years to overtake the journey, and many weeks were years to him.

Whether we look back on his wonderful life in the light of science, or think of him as a missionary and philanthropist, or regard him merely as an adventurous traveller, we may search history in vain to discover any biography that presents so many points of admiration. Honesty of purpose, firmness, indomitable perseverance, complete self-abnegation, modesty, tender humanity towards the most abject and degraded of mankind, personal piety, not to speak of physical endurance and bravery, so conspicuously marked his character, he may be said to have embodied them all in his own person. As to the results of his life, the fruits of his labors, and the benefit to the

world of his example—they are unspeakably valuable.

Livingstone's forefathers had for generations cultivated a bit of land in one of the Hebrides Islands, and he was proud of his poor ancestry. Of one of these he used to tell the story, with conscious pride, that, when the old man was on his death-bed, he called his children around him and said to them: "I have searched carefully through all the traditions of our family and I could never discover that there had ever been a dishonest man among them. If, therefore, any of you, or of your children, take to dishonest ways, it will not be because it runs in our blood. It does not belong to you. I leave this precept with you—be honest."

David's grandfather, finding the Hebrides farm inadequate for the support of his large family, moved southward and found employment in the cotton mills at Blantyre—a small village on the Clyde about eight miles above Glasgow—where he was trusted and valued for his honesty, and liberally pensioned in his old age. Most of his sons went out into the world to seek their fortunes; some entered the army and some the navy. Neil remained at home—a trader on a small scale. So small were the profits of the tea store, Davie, his second son, was sent to work in the cotton factory as "a pricer." With part of his first week's wages he purchased a Latin grammar and began attendance at a night school when his day's work was done. After leaving this school he used to continue his studies till past midnight, but was always ready for his work in the morning. He soon mastered enough Latin to be able to read many of the classical authors and, at sixteen, he was a fair self-taught classical scholar. Scientific works and books of travel became his delight. Many a time his mother had to snatch the book from his hands at midnight and send him off to bed—reminding him that he must be up at five and go to his work at the mill. Even at the mill his mind was in his studies, and, with his book beside him on the spinning jenny, he caught up the spirit of sentence after sentence as it flitted to and fro.

Two kinds of books David had no fancy for—religious books and novels. His good father tried to impress him with the idea that "The Cloud of Witnesses" and Boston's "Fourfold State" were more edifying than Virgil and Horace and Mungo Park's Travels. The difference of opinion is said to have reached its climax one morning when the old man thrashed the lad soundly for refusing to read "Wilberforce's Practical Christianity." He might have spared the rod and his pains, for it only increased David's dislike to this kind of literature—a dislike which the young man claimed to be an intelligent one founded upon doubts in his own mind as to the consistency of science and the scriptures. But such misgivings could not and did not long obtain the mastery in his honest and good heart. The sound principles of

Christianity early instilled into his mind were still there, and, as he grew older, religious convictions became stronger and deeper. Though never very demonstrative, so far as his own experience was concerned, there came to him that change of heart which gave evidence of an inner spiritual life that impelled him to devote all his energies to the alleviation of human misery. He resolved to become a Missionary, desiring to minister to the teeming millions of China.

He must therefore study both medicine and theology. In the meantime he got promotion and better wages at the mill, enabling him to lay by enough money to attend classes in Glasgow University. He worked hard at college—very hard; but he ever afterwards looked back to this period of toil with thankfulness for the courage and hope it inspired. It was the making of the man. He had never received a farthing from anyone but what he had earned.

Acting on the advice of friends, he offered his services to the London Missionary Society in 1838. Having passed his entrance exams, he was sent to their training college at Chipping-Ongar, where he studied along with others who afterwards became missionaries, and in whose society his long-cherished desire to engage in a life of usefulness was fanned into a glow of Christian philanthropy. It was here too, that he first made the acquaintance of Robert Moffat, who exercised a powerful influence over his mind, and helped to shape his future career. Moffat had been at that time twenty-three years a missionary in Africa. "I found Livingstone," he said "preparing to go to China as a medical missionary, but partly owing to the disgraceful opium war which had closed the country against missionaries, and partly from listening to speeches on missions to Africa, he soon began to feel his sympathies drawn in that direction. After several interviews and much serious thought he decided for Africa, whither he went with the fullest conviction that God had made plain his path."

Livingstone left England in 1840, landed at Capetown after a three months' voyage, and proceeded in a bullock-cart to Kuruman—some 700 miles inland, in the country of the Bechuanas, where Moffat and Hamilton had many years before founded a flourishing mission. He was astonished to find the shapely mission-house and church, the well-stocked garden, and the general order and comfort that prevailed. He remained at Kuruman several months, awaiting Moffat's return, and at length fixed upon Kolobeng, 300 miles beyond, where he pitched his tent—his "castle," as he called it—among the Backwains, or Alligators, who inhabited the borders of the great Kalahari desert. His first discourse to the natives was on "The Day of Judgement." "You startle me," exclaimed an old chief, Lechole by name. "These words make all my bones to shake. Did your forefathers know of this future judgement?" Livingstone assured him that they did. "But my forefathers," he continued, "were living at the same time yours were: how is it they did not send them word of these terrible things? My forefathers all passed

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