

# Northern Messenger

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## The Last Days of David Livingstone.

(‘Friendly Greetings.’)

On February 14, 1873, David Livingstone had written in his journal, ‘If the good Lord gives me favor, and permits me to finish my work, I shall thank and bless him, though it has cost me untold toil, pain, and travel; this trip has made my hair all gray.’ There is just a trace of misgiving and anxiety in these words. Yet more than a month later, on March 25, when he must have been weaker and more worn out, the old indomitable spirit

On the 29th they halted at Chitambo’s village, on the south side of Lake Bangweolo, and a little hut was built expressly for him by his faithful followers. A fire was lighted outside, nearly opposite the door, and the boy, Majwara, slept just within, to attend to his master’s wants in the night. The next day he was too exhausted even to speak. The men silently went to their huts, except those whose turn it was to keep watch. They sat round the fire, all feeling that the end must be near.

About 11 p.m. Susi was told to go to his master. There was at that moment

he half sighed, half said, ‘Oh, dear, dear!’ and then dozed off again. An hour or so afterwards he said, in a low feeble voice, ‘All right, you can go now.’ These were the last words he was heard to speak.

It must have been about 4 a.m. (May 1) that Susi heard the boy’s step once more. ‘Come to master,’ he said; ‘I am afraid; I don’t know if he is alive.’ The lad’s evident alarm made Susi run to alarm Chuma, and the other four attendants, and all went immediately to the hut.

Passing inside they looked towards the bed. Dr. Livingstone was not lying upon it, but appeared to be engaged in prayer, and they drew backwards for an instant. Pointing to him, the boy said, ‘When I lay down he was just as he is now, and it is because I find that he does not move that I fear he is dead.’

They asked the boy how long he had slept. He said he could not tell; but it was for some long time. The men drew nearer. A candle, stuck by its own wax to the top of the box, shed a light sufficient for them to see his form. He was kneeling by the side of the bed, his body stretched forward, his head buried in his hands upon the pillow.

For a minute they watched him; he did not stir, there was no sign of breathing. Then one of the men, Matthew, advanced softly to him, and placed his hands to his cheeks. It was sufficient; life had been extinct some time, and the body was almost cold. Livingstone was dead.

The faithful negroes, Jacob Wainwright, Chuma, and Susi, ‘the Nasik boys,’ almost as soon as they knew that their master was dead, determined that his body must be borne, at all hazards, to Zanzibar. There would be much labor, and possibly much peril; but it does not appear that it occurred to them to act otherwise than they did.

Finding some one who had skill in preparing the dead for removal, after burying the heart and other parts at Ilala, they got the body dried or mummified, wrapped in calico, surrounded by bark, with an outside covering of sailcloth. Finally, the whole was tarred, and lashed to a pole, so as to be carried by two bearers.

How sickness attacked the caravan soon after it started, and detained it for another month on the shores of the pestilential lake; how they crossed the great river Luapula—which Livingstone inquired after in his last half-unconscious moments—and found it there nearly four miles wide; how, the natives opposing their advance, they had to fight their way at times, and then to reach the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, thence striking a direct route to Unyanyembe, route never till then traversed by white men, and easier than the circuitous route followed by Livingstone,—all these things and many others of thrilling interest, are recounted in the closing pages of his ‘Last Journals.’

From Zanzibar the embalmed remains of the traveller were brought to South-



HE WAS KNEELING BY THE SIDE OF THE BED.

appears. ‘Nothing earthly will make me give up my work in despair. I encourage myself in the Lord my God, and go forward.’

But the end was not far off. On April 19 he says: ‘I am excessively weak, and but for the donkey could not move a hundred yards.’ Two days later he was unable to ride or sit up, and fell to the ground exhausted. He was carried forward in a kind of litter, or rude palanquin, for eight days more, suffering excruciating pains, as well as oppressed by weakness.

loud shouts in the distance, and the doctor said to Susi as he entered, ‘Are our men making that noise?’ Susi told him that it was some of the villagers scaring away a buffalo from their fields.

A few minutes later, and evidently wandering, he said, ‘Is this the Luapula?’ Susi told him they were in Chitambo’s village, and then he was silent again for a while. Again speaking to Susi, he said, ‘How many days is it to the Luapula?’ ‘I think it is three days, master,’ replied Susi.

A few seconds after, as if in great pain,