

into young Moffat's plans. So likewise did their daughter Mary, some months Moffat's senior. She had been carefully and religiously brought up and schooled at the Moravian Seminary at Fairfield, whose traditions are so full of missionary romance. Here she spent some happy years, and had engaged in home-mission work. She was strongly drawn to Moffat, as he to her; and both earnestly devoted themselves to work among the heathen. This union of heart and work at home was subsequently renewed in Africa, where, for a long and eventful period they worked together as husband and wife.

As the biographer says, Moffat did not become a great missionary by virtue of his collegiate opportunities. He valued learning highly, but he had no chance to become a great scholar. But he had a knack of seizing what was essential to him, and a gift for forgetting what was useless or secondary. His studies, in face of the greatest difficulties, completed, he was accepted by the London Missionary Society, and would have been designated for the South Pacific with the venerated Williams, had it not been for his youth—he was only twenty years of age. Says the biographer:

“During the discussions in the Missionary Committee as to how the present band of men was to be distributed, it had been first proposed that Williams and Moffat should both go to Polynesia; but this was overruled at the suggestion of Dr. Waugh, who deemed that ‘thae twa lads were ower young to gang thegither;’ so they were separated. On these small links hang our lives.”

Moffat was not long in South Africa before he gave proof that years are not the only gauge of wisdom and self-reliance and tact in management. His first difficulty arose from the caprice of the Governor, who refused, on account of disturbances, to allow the party to proceed beyond the limits of Cape Colony. Moffat at once set himself to learning Dutch, that he might the more efficiently do his work when he did reach Namaqualand. At last the Governor gave his consent; and for more than a year in Namaqualand, and for more than five-and-forty in Bechwanaland, his life was one ceaseless labor and difficulty and danger, fearlessly faced. He was builder, blacksmith, carpenter, thatcher, ditcher—for he dug canal after canal to bring water to his garden and field—gardener and dairyman by turns—and everything to which he set his hand he did well—even down to darning and sewing, which he was thankful that his mother had taught him how to do.

His life at the Cape, and in Namaqualand, however, was but a preparation; his real work began at Kuruman, where he was assisted by his wife (Miss Mary Smith having joined him at Cape Colony, where they were married), whose noble character and remarkable gifts are brought out in the volume by means of her letters. She was helper, inspirer, and a strong supporter.

Soon after their settlement at Kuruman, Mrs. Moffat writes to her parents: