

Society's missionaries. His first purpose was to proceed to the South Seas, but his final choice was the vast and yet unexplored field of the central region of South Africa. His chief work was among the Bechwanas. His picture of what they were when he first knew them would hardly now be recognized, so entirely have they changed under the new influences which Moffat was among the first to bring to bear on them. He found them mere savages, idol-worshippers, constantly at war among themselves and with their neighbors, ignorant of the arts of agriculture, and in the utterly degraded state for which we must seek a counterpart now in the more distant tribes whom the message of civilization has not yet reached. It was Moffat's mission to civilize as well as instruct, to free those with whom he was brought in contact from the curse under which they seemed to lie, to raise them to a higher life, and so to fit them to become recipients of the sacred message of good tidings which it was his main ultimate purpose to announce. His success within the limited field to which he confined himself—a field which has been now far overpassed by the subsequent labors of other devoted men, most notably by those of his own son-in-law, David Livingstone—was very marked. His first care was to make himself thoroughly master of the language of those to whom he was sent. For fifty years, he has declared, he had been accustomed to speak the Bechwana tongue; he reduced it to written characters, and, as an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, translated the Scriptures into it. The Bechwanas, under Moffat's guidance, became new men. Mission work grew and spread among them; what Moffat had begun to do was taken up by other hands; a permanent body of native pastors was created from among the Bechwanas themselves, and the whole region was raised out of the savage state in which Moffat had found it, and became in no small degree civilized as well as Christianized. To effect this, and to make it possible for others to effect it, was the chief business of Moffat's working life. He went out to South Africa in 1816. He left it finally in 1870. During that long interval the dark continent was attacked and explored in all directions. Scientific travelers and missionary travelers were busy pushing their way into regions to which Moffat never penetrated. It is Moffat's honor to have been the first in the field, to have laid, as it were, the stepping-stones by which his successors have been able to outstrip him; to have borne the burden and heat of the day in early missionary work, and at once to have given an example of devotion to his noble cause and to have furnished proof that the ground was not barren, and that even in South Africa the good seed might be trusted to spring up and to bring forth abundant fruit.

"It is the fashion in some quarters to scoff at missionaries, to receive their reports with incredulity, to look at them at best as no more than harmless enthusiasts, proper subjects for pity, if not for ridicule. The records of missionary work in South Africa must be a blank page to those by whom such ideas are entertained. We owe it to our missionaries that the whole region has been opened up. Apart from their special service as preachers, they have done important work as pioneers of civilization, as geographers, as contributors to philological research. Of those who have taken part in this, Moffat's name is not the best known. Moffat, it may be said, has labored, and other men have entered into his labor. Livingstone has come after him, and has gone beyond him, and has linked his memory for ever with the records of the South African Church. Speke and Stanley have become household names where Moffat has been unknown or has been forgotten. In his own simple words, it never occurred to him, while working