

Memoirs of Mighty Men.

ROBERT MOFFAT

THE GARDENER BOY
WHO BECAME THE GREAT
SOUTH AFRICAN PIONEER

BY

J. J. ELLIS



PICKERING & INGLIS

14 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
229 BOTHWELL STREET, GLASGOW

LIFE STORY OF ROBERT MOFFAT.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCOTCH LADDIE WHO KEPT HIS PROMISE : A
TRUANT, AND WHAT BECAME OF HIM.

" Childhood is the bow where slumbered
Birds and blossoms many numbered."

" Man ! thou art a result ! The growth of many yesterdays,
That stamp thy secret soul with marks of weal and woe."

" **H**OW fair the Firth of Forth shines in the morning
sun ; like a sheet of pure silver, shot with purple
and gold ! Yonder, too, is Queensferry. Rest
your blue bundle upon my parcels ; we have still time
for a crack, mother dear."

The speaker was a tall, slender youth, with dark hair, and eyes of the same hue, singularly handsome in their liquid pathos. A broad high forehead, slightly shaded by scanty black hair gave promise of considerable intellectual power ; a large full nose above a mouth whose lips, uncovered by moustache or beard, were tremulous with

kindly humour and suppressed feeling. Altogether a face sweetly winning by its suggestions of sleeping smiles and ready sympathy. Evidently a youth to be trusted and loved.

“Ay, laddie, ‘Kindness creeps where it daurna gang,’ says the proverb. ’Tis but little I can do now; but, oh, it goes sore to my heart that ye must go south. England is a bonny place, but it is like rending the flesh from my bones to see ye depart. ’Tis the Lord’s will, and must be accepted.”

The mother of Robert Moffat was tall like her son, but more perfectly proportioned. From her evidently he had derived his handsome face and dark eyes; her own eyes also shaded with a deeper shade of melancholy than usual as she looked upon her son, going to a situation in Cheshire. As her glance met his look, the regular rigid features softened into a smile—alike, but sweeter than her son’s; a smile which made the marble sternness of her face radiant with an indescribable charm and grace.

“Ye are eighteen now, my Robert,” she continued, ‘but it seems not long since the 21st December, 1795, when ye were born. We lived then in Ormiston, near Dalkeith, as my family, the Gardiners, had done a long time. They were poor as we were, but not a whisper was ever heard against them at the ancient cross.

“Ye were but a two years’ old laddie when we left the little charming village. Your father was appointed to the Custom-house at Portsoy, near Banff, and we all removed thither. Well I mind the dreary voyage. The ship was not over clean, and we were sore disturbed by fear of the



FISH OF BORN.

French privateers, who had but just before taken a sloop from near Leith, so bold were they.

“Behind the low line of hills, through which the burnie went into the sea, was the little fishing village, with its many herring boats. Far away were the Caithness mountains, beyond the Moray Firth; inland, we had pleasant meadows and valleys under the plough. But ye loved to watch the broad fleet of fishing boats that went out to sea, stretching across the water in the setting sun. We stayed not there many years, but came to Carronshore, on the other side of that Firth of Forth that will soon separate us (perhaps for ever). We then moved to Falkirk.

“There in the long evenings, when our red-tiled cottage echoed with the clock tick, I would teach ye knitting and sewing, while I read to ye about the missionaries that lived upon tallow, to preach Christ to the Greenlanders. Ay, but they were holy men; would God all my boys might be like them!

“Old Willy Mitchell, the parish schoolmaster, was not a man ‘to ride the water wi’,’ as the saying is; but ye might have learnt more from him. When ye ran away to sea, it went to my heart thinking when the wind blew about my sailor boy rocking upon the deep; but the captain loved ye so that he persuaded us to let ye make several voyages, for, thought we, ‘a burnt bairn dreads the fire;’ and so it proved. Ye were fain to come back to our lowly cottage, where, with your three brothers and two sisters, ye were as happy as might be in a world like this. Ye were but eleven when I sent ye to Mr. Paton’s school at Falkirk with your eldest brother Alexander, who has gone to be a soldier. Mind ye the time, Robert?”

"Yea, mother; Mr. Paton taught me writing and book-keeping. But as after school hours he taught my brother Alexander and others astronomy and geography, I used to peep under their elbows to spy what they were doing in the circle, and by listening I gathered much I shall not forget, though I was but six months there."

"Let me see, it was in 1809, when ye were but fourteen, that ye were apprenticed to John Robertson of Parkhill, Polmont, to learn the gardening."

"True, mother; and well I remember him. He would not wrong any one of a penny, or mean to be unjust to us, but he *did* make us work. When we used to turn out at four o'clock on a winter's morning so cold that we had to knock our fingers upon the spade handles to try to get some feeling into them, I sometimes felt my lot was hard. And then we were not starved, it is true, but we had no more food than we could well eat, I suppose for fear we should become dainty or lazy."

"That will never be your failing, Robert," replied his mother. "Twas then ye began Latin, and learned to do blacksmith's work."

"In 1811 we moved across the Forth into Fifeshire, and were still at Inverkeithing when ye left Parkhill and went to serve the Earl of Moray at Donibristle near Aberdour. Never shall I forget the fright we had when we heard that ye had fallen from a boat into the water, and were like to die."

"But I can swim now, mother, with the best of them. John Thomson, that is to marry my sister Mary, knows that. He was sinking for the third time when I was able to bring him to shore."

“And now, Robert, ye are going to be under-gardener to Mr. Leigh of High Leigh, Cheshire. We are proud that one so young should be so promoted; but oh, we are loth to part with ye!”

“So am I to part with father and you; but if I get on I may be able to help you all. The wages are good, and I am sure to rise.”

“I have no fear for your lacking gold, laddie; but one thing has weighed upon my heart. I want to ask a favour of you before we part. You will not refuse to do what your mother asks?”

“What is it, mother?”

“Nay; do promise me first that you will do what I am now going to ask, and I will tell you.”

“No, mother, I cannot tell; you tell me what your wish is.”

“Oh, Robert, can you for one moment think that I would ask you to do what is not right? Do I not love you dearly?”

“Yes, mother, I know you do; but I don't like to make promises which I may not be able to fulfil.”

The mother heaved a heavy sigh, and was silent. The tears ran down her cheeks as she looked upon the handsome youth going into the unknown perils of life, and going also alone. Love is a great deceiver; “Would I had been there,—he should not have died,”—“If I go with you, beloved, I can shield and protect you,” we say, when experience proves that we can do nothing, but must leave ourselves and our dear ones in the hands of God.

Robert looked at his mother for a moment; and his tender soul melted at the sight of her distress.

“What is it, mother?” he said. “I will do it if I can.”



LEAVING HOME.

"I only ask you to read a chapter in the Bible every morning and another in the evening."

"Mother, you know I read my Bible," interrupted the young man.

"I know you do, Robert; but not regularly and as a duty that you owe to Almighty God. But I shall go home with a light heart, for you will now read the Scriptures regularly. Oh Robert, my son, read much in the New Testament. Read much in the Gospels—the blessed Gospels. Then you cannot well go astray. If you pray, the Lord Himself will teach you."

"Yes, mother, I will certainly do as you desire. I have not yet found all that I want; perhaps the time has not come for the Lord to call me. Yet when I have sat in the kirk and hearkened to Mr. Caldwell, 'That man means what he says,' I have thought; and I have longed to be as he is. He is not perfect, but I am sure that he is a true Christian, and I would fain be one too."

"Well, Robert, ye cannot in your own strength find salvation; for even faith is the gift of God. But I have given ye over unto the hands of Christ, and I am sure ye will be found at the right hand of the Lamb. God grant not one from our family may be left out."

"Amen, mother; but we must now say farewell." And in a few moments mother and son parted only to meet once or twice again on earth.

Little thought the passengers who met that tall dark Scotchwomen on her return journey home, what bitter agony she was keeping down in her heart; nor probably did any one suspect that the young gardener who then, 5th November, 1813, crossed the Firth of Forth, was to

become aught more famous than a skilful grower of flowers.

Next day Robert went by ship to the Clyde, through the canal, and on the 18th arrived at Greenock on the Firth of Clyde, after leaving which, through a heavy sea the ship laboured until, at last, the breeze right in their teeth compelled the sailors to take shelter in Rothesay Bay. A man belonging to a ship of war, also in the harbour, was drowned while attempting to reach the shore; a press-gang boarded the ship on which Robert was sailing, and carried off a sailor to serve his Majesty in the dead man's place. What if Robert Moffat had been taken instead? The king would have had a good sailor, but what would the Church have lost? But these things are under God's rule. The ship put in at Liverpool, on Friday 26th, and at five o'clock on the next night the young Scotchman arrived at High Leigh.

In a tiny lodge, one storey high, in a somewhat secluded part of the beautiful gardens, built expressly for him, Robert Moffat found his home. Winning the good opinions both of the head gardener, Mr. Bearpark, and of his employers, who lent him books, it seemed as if he were to become famous, in what is certainly the most ancient as it is probably the most healthy of the pursuits by which men obtain their daily bread.

CHAPTER II.

THE ERRAND BOY WHO FOUND A NEW SERVICE; OR, MORE PRIZES THAN WERE EXPECTED.

“There is nothing in the earth so small, that it may not produce great things.”

“Commit thy trifles unto God, for to Him is nothing trivial.”

“They told their purpose, each o'erjoyed to find
His own idea in his brother's mind.”

“He followed Paul; his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity, the same,
Like him, crossed cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friend, and ease,
Like him, he laboured, and like him, content
To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.”

“**W**ONDERFUL! wonderful! the world is indeed wonderful! What a pity a poor man can see so little of it! If one were rich, how delightful to visit other lands, to see the works of God, and especially that country, hallowed by the life and teachings of Jesus! But it could scarcely show more of beauty than this landscape. Not a breath stirs the corn-fields, scarcely a leaf moving, not a cloud in the sky; everything seems resting in the clear evening sun. How

beautiful God must be, to have produced such splendour in a world of sin! And how gracious to *me!* To die for me! What have I done to show my gratitude? Simply nothing. But wait, I shall soon be in a position of honour and trust. When I have money and influence, I shall be able to glorify His name, and help His people. How happy I shall be to give my money and do all that I can for Him."

Filled with such thoughts, and weaving for himself a bright future, never to be realised, except under far different circumstances than he imagined, Robert Moffat trudged along the six miles of road that lay between High Leigh and Warrington town.

We all weave out of our hopes a fairy splendour in which we shall be perfectly happy and wonderfully useful, and by-and-bye we look back upon our dreams with deep thankfulness that they did *not* come true. The future that our God prepares for us is so much better than anything we can think out for ourselves; as we discover to our surprise, if not always to our delight.

The young gardener bent upon his errand was crossing a bridge, when a placard pasted upon the brickwork caught his eye. Occupied with his own thoughts, the young man read, at first without fully realising the kind of meeting described upon the bill. It related to a missionary meeting, at which a Rev. William Roby of Manchester was to take the chair. It was impossible to attend the gathering, for the date was now past; but the bill started Robert Moffat's mind upon a very different track. The stories he had heard of Moravian missionaries in Greenland and Labrador, read by his mother to

the company round her winter evening's fire, rushed upon his memory now. All the way into Warrington, and thence into High Leigh, the young errand man walked, considering how he might serve the missionary cause. He had never been at college, no Society would receive him : the only practicable plan appeared to be to become a sailor and get landed upon a foreign shore, and there seek to teach the heathen natives about Christ.

A few weeks after this incident Robert Moffat might have been seen walking through the streets of Manchester with a young man about his own age.

"Hamlet Clarke, I am going to see Mr. Roby; do come with me."

"I will walk with you, Robert, willingly, and will wait at the end of the street while you go in to see the great man; but you must go alone."

"It's nearly a mile from here," replied Robert; "but, oh, I wish the interview were over, Hamlet."

"I won't talk to you," replied Clarke. "You just arrange your thoughts before you come to the house."

After some half-hour's walk in silence, the friends parted at the end of a somewhat retired street.

"Here's the road. Don't hurry," said Clarke. "I'll wait for you. Good luck to you, friend."

"I wish it were two miles off still, and yet I want to go," returned Robert, walking very slowly towards the house. Clarke was somewhat surprised to see him reach it and then turn back a little distance. Evidently his courage revived; for Clarke, who moved forward to meet him, stopped as Robert turned round again and walked boldly towards Mr. Roby's house. He began to ascend

the steps, but again his heart failed him. At length, after pacing backwards and forwards once or twice, he ventured to lift the knocker, and in a few moments Clarke watched him enter the minister's dwelling.

After a long time, as it appeared to Clarke, Robert came down the steps and hurried to meet his friend.

"I'm so glad I went," he exclaimed. "He received me so kindly."

"What did he say?" asked Clarke. "Tell me all about it, Robert."

"Why, after that I had knocked at the door I would have given a thousand pounds, if I had them, not to have done so. Oh, how I longed to hear that he was not at home! But when he came into the parlour and smiled upon me, I was soon at my ease."

"And what did he say? Was the cross-examination severe?" asked Clarke.

"Not at all. I told him all about my home in Scotland, and how I had been impressed with the sense of sin at times under Mr. Caldwell's preaching. The reading of the Bible since I came to England, I told him, had made me deeply wretched, and yet I could not for my promise's sake leave it off. The Epistle to the Romans especially distressed me; but I could not leave the book alone. It seemed as if all my sins, like a mountain, were falling upon me, though I did the best I could. At length I went, as you know, to attend the Methodists, who had just opened a chapel in High Leigh. I was afraid to mention the Methodists, for fear it should anger Mr. Roby, as it did my master."

"Did it?" asked Clarke.

“No; Mr. Roby said they were good people, and I was quite right not to give up attending their services when I found help from them. And when I told him that my father did not much believe in them, and had cautioned me against them, Mr. Roby only smiled, and said good people often differed, but it was of little moment so long as they agreed in the main thing, Christ crucified.”

“Well done!” exclaimed Clarke. “I love him for saying a good word for us despised Methodists.”

“And when I told him how angry my master and mistress were that I should attend the Methodist services and help in their Sunday school, he bade me not to mind losing their goodwill, for God would make it up to me by-and-bye. But then he said: ‘Now, Robert, tell me are you *really* trusting in Christ? For a man may know much of religion, and do some things for Christ; ay, and I think suffer persecution for the Lord, and yet not be saved by the atonement of Christ.’

“That brought me to a standstill, but I told him how, one evening, while sitting poring over the Epistle to the Romans, I was filled with wonder at many passages I had read over many times before. I felt that there was a black cloud between my soul and Christ, but as I read the Bible again, light seemed to break from each text and the Book was opened to me with new meaning, and I saw how God loved and gave Himself for me.”

“What said he then?”

“Why, he asked if I were relying upon my own faith, or upon the merits and mercy of our Lord Jesus in connection with His atonement. I answered, ‘Sir, I am a guilty, hell-deserving sinner, yet God loves me, and laid

all my sins upon Jesus Christ, my Substitute. He died in my place, and because He died I am forgiven. I have in my own soul the witness that I am born again.'"

"But what about being a missionary?"

"He encouraged me to wait upon the Lord, to see if it were really His will that I should go abroad, and promised to write to the directors of the London Missionary Society on my behalf. He thought that I might take a situation near him, and he would train me as far as he was able for the work before me."

"Then we shall lose you soon, Robert; that's certain. You will have to run on other errands, and do other service. Ay, but we shall miss you."

"Yes, Clarke, but we must do our duty. I will not go unless I am tolerably certain that it is the right way and that I have ability. But here we are at our lodgings, let us go in to dinner."

Some weeks after this conversation, Robert Moffat moved to Dunkinfield, where in Mr. Smith's nursery garden he found employment five days per week, receiving twelve or thirteen shillings per week for his services.

While there, he won the heart of Mr. Smith's only daughter, Mary. Rev. J. De Kewer Williams, when preaching upon Thwaites, remarked, "He pleased his master and he pleased his master's daughter; I wish young men would never get married until they marry their master's daughter." Moffat evidently pleased Mr. Smith; that he pleased Mary Smith may be gathered from the following conversation which took place in the parlour in which they had first met. Robert had come over from Manchester, where he had been residing in

order to be near Mr. Roby, and now sat taking his farewell for life, as it seemed, of the beautiful, accomplished girl before him.

"Yes, Robert, had I been free," said Mary Smith, "I would willingly have gone with you to Africa."

"But you are in a different station in life. You will probably inherit a fortune. I don't wonder that your parents are unwilling to entrust you to me."

"It is not *that*, Robert. My parents have no other daughter, and my mother's health is very frail. They would give me to you willingly, if you were only going to stay in England; but they cannot endure the idea of my crossing the seas."

"Of course it is a fearful parting, and the Cape is worse than India or any other foreign part. I am to penetrate far beyond the borders of civilisation. Little is known of Namaqualand, to which I am going, but what is known shows it to be a terrible place."

"I should not dread that, Robert, or mind it much. It has been the hope of my heart to go as a missionary to the heathen; and long ago, when I heard Mr. Campbell speaking of Africa, my heart said, 'O Lord, send me there!' I feel that I am not fit to become a missionary; but I should so love to serve the heathen by waiting upon you. But it cannot be."

"I see, alas, that it cannot! I must go alone; but, Mary, I shall never forget you."

"Oh, I should be so glad, Robert, if you could see your way to marry someone else. I love you dearly, and always shall; but I can't endure the thought of your going alone. You are the kind of man needing especially



ROBERT MOFFAT AND MARY SMITH.

a woman's care; you will never keep yourself in order unless you do get married."

"But what if I did marry another woman?"

"I should understand, and not despise or cease to love you. And, Robert, dear, we could be together in heaven. I can't go with you myself, but I dread your going alone, where you will be among savages, without a friend or helper."

"But, Mary, I shall never marry where I don't love. You have grown into my heart and life, and I *could* be happy with you and none else. And then, it would not be just for me to marry a woman to whom my heart could not be given. It can never be given to another. Beside the wrong done to her, what sort of wife might I not get? I consider marriage is like a lottery—some get very badly off in the matter. I know I should get a good wife in you."

"You would get one who loves you, but who sees the way to marry you quite closed. No, Robert, I am impelled to go to Africa by an impulse I cannot master, and held back by a tie I cannot, dare not, break. When as a child I attended the Moravian school at Fairfield, I caught their enthusiastic love for missions; and I so long to gather the poor dear heathen, to tell them about my Christ. While I have been working looking after strangers in our new church, I have been quietly saying to myself, 'It is training Mary Smith for mission work.' It is hard to give up what I feel to be a duty, at the call of another claim."

"Suppose we leave the matter, Mary. It is in God's hands, and He may yet bring us together. I shall perhaps be able to prepare the way, and who can tell but

that God may yet answer my prayers? I can see nothing but for me to go to Africa and you to wait in England, until the way is more clearly opened."

"If my father and mother relent, and consent to allow me to come—eh, Robert?"

"Then you will come, of course, my dear. But let us do nothing to choose our own path. Mary, when I gave myself to Christ, I gave ALL of myself. I go to Africa relying upon His help; and He who will open my path in the desert shall rule my love affairs too. I mean to marry only in the Lord; let us leave it to His decision, and whatever happens will be for the best."

Some three years after this Mary Smith's parents altered their minds, and, without being influenced by any human being, consented freely to give up their beautiful daughter to Robert Moffat, and this with the consciousness that in all probability they would never see her again. But they lived to rejoice in the sacrifice, and recognise the loving wisdom of God in honouring their daughter among the rude tribes of Africa.

CHAPTER III.

THE TAME MAN WHO LOVED SAVAGES; OR, TRIED IN EVERY WAY BUT FOUND TRUE.

“ In endless warfare with men's sinful hearts,
He softens human rockwork into men.”

“ Pleasant 'tis to sit and tell
What we owe to love Divine,
Till our bosoms grateful swell,
And our eyes begin to shine.”

“ ND what do you get for it, man alive! How much gold do they send you from rich England?” asked a burly Dutch farmer as he sat at supper with Robert Moffat, who was on his way with another missionary, Mr. Ebner, to Great Nam-aqualand.

“ I can't say. I came out to Africa, not to seek gold, but men; I know the missionary's name is despised here, but I would not be otherwise than as I am for all the gold of England.”

“ But you must live.”

“ Yes, and the directors will send me what they can spare; perhaps £20 for the first year.”

“ Twenty pounds! Why, man, it is not half what a decent artisan can get anywhere at the Cape! I wonder

how some of these directors would manage upon the money! Talk about meanness! A Dutchman is bad enough, but to be so consumed with love for the heathen, that they send you to starve among them! Bah! Bah! Do you know what sort of a country you are going to?" he added, seeing that the young Scotchman was silent.

"Yes; not a garden of Eden, of course."

"A garden of misery, you mean! You'll find nothing but sand and stones, few people, and each suffering from awful thirst; plains and hills roasted like a burnt leaf under the scorching rays of a cloudless sun! And the chief of the country, Africaner, will set you up as a mark for his boys to shoot at; or mayhap make a drinking cup of your skull, or make a drum out of your skin to dance to."

"It wouldn't matter if you were an old man," said the farmer's wife; "but such a comely youth, and to become the prey of such a monster! It is dreadful!"

"Well, Scotchmen, if they attempt a thing, ever go through with it; so say no more, goodwife. You'll give us a service, won't you?"

"With pleasure; but you'll bring in your servants."

"What servants?"

"Why, the blacks, the Hottentots, of whom I saw so many."

"Hottentots! Let me go to the mountains, or call the baboons; or, stop! I have it! William, call the dogs in, they'll make as good a congregation as the blacks."

Robert Moffat made no reply; but he gave out a hymn.

After he had offered prayer, he opened the big Bible, and read the story of the Syro-Phœnician woman, selecting as his text—"Truth, Lord, but even the dogs do eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." He had but proceeded a few minutes with his sermon, when the farmer interrupted the preacher by saying, "Will Mynheer sit down and wait a little? he shall have the Hottentots."

Into the apartment accordingly soon thronged the dusky servants, until the room was quite full. When the service was over, the Dutchman said to Moffat—"My friend, you took a hard hammer, and you have broken a hard head. Who hardened your hammer to give me such a blow? I will never object to preaching to the blacks again."

The next morning, through barren and stony hills, over sandy wastes, without a path, the waggon, drawn by oxen, slowly toiled, until the travellers reached the banks of the Orange River. A raft made of dry willow logs, fastened by the creepers that grew upon the river's bank, floated the waggon over. The current here is strong, the stream being five hundred yards wide. The raft had to be taken to pieces each time, and each log conveyed back by a swimmer. After several days' delay, all the goods were safely over, and Mr. Moffat was requested to place himself upon the frail raft. Not liking its appearance, and wishing to save trouble, the young man took off his clothes and sprang into the river. Thinking that he might drown, some of the best native swimmers plunged into the water after him, but were unable to overtake his swift strokes. As they panted up the



MOFFAT PREACHING AT A BOER'S FARM.

river side they asked, "Were you born in the great sea water?"

On the 26th January, 1818, he reached Africaner's village, which was to become his home for some twelve months. The whole of this period he lived alone (Mr. Ebner having left the mission), in one of the native huts, made by tying long wands together into a bee-hive shape, which framework was afterwards covered with native mats. This hut neither excluded rain, dust, nor even serpents. Two bulls fighting near it would sometimes demolish it, or the native dogs make their way through the mat wall.

He turned his attention chiefly to the children, many of whom were induced to wash themselves and their filthy sheepskin dresses.

No wonder that many a time the exile's heart was sad. But when depressed, Moffat would take his violin and, seated upon a rock, pour out his sorrows in music, singing most frequently his mother's favourite hymn—

"Awake, my soul! in joyful lays,
To sing the great Redeemer's praise."

But the evening was generally occupied by conversation with Africaner, the chief, who would sit upon a big stone at the door of Moffat's hut and ask questions about God and the world He made so fair. The chief would listen attentively, until at last he would rub his hands upon his head and say, "I have heard enough; I feel as if my head were too small and as if it would swell with these great subjects."

The chief's brother, Titus, brought him one of his two

wives, who had hurt her hand, and who was only prevailed upon to come by her husband assuring her that Moffat was a "tame man." He would often sit and listen to the conversations between his brother and Moffat, and would say, "I hear what you say, and I think I understand, but I cannot feel; my heart is hard like a rock."

One evening, while the three were thus conversing, Moffat suddenly exclaimed, "Africaner, I must go down to Cape Town; come with me and see the wonders the gospel brings with it."

Africaner started. "Are you in earnest; are you sure you are not joking?" he asked.

"I'm not joking; I really mean it. Do come with me."

"Nay, father, but I thought you loved me; would you wish me to go to be hung up as a spectacle to justice? Don't you know that I'm an outlaw, and a thousand rix-dollars have been offered for this poor head?" placing his hand upon it.

"But no harm will come to you, friend. You are now a changed man. There is no danger."

"Well, I will deliberate, and roll my way upon the Lord. He, I know, will not leave me."

Three days afterwards, arrayed in a pair of leather trousers, a duffel jacket, and a hat neither white nor black, Africaner accompanied Moffat on his journey to Cape Town. The difficulty was to bring him safely through the Dutch farmers, many of whom had suffered injury from him during the period of his wildness. This, however, was successfully accomplished, and the waggon

was approaching the house in which the farmer lived who had at first refused to allow his servants to attend the preaching. He was walking in the garden when he saw Moffat coming. He at once put out his hands and cried, "It's Moffat's ghost! Don't come near me! I knew Africaner would kill you."

"But I'm not dead yet; feel my hands," said Moffat, setting the example.

"Then when did you rise from the dead?"

"Come, let us go a little further from the house; your wife will be frightened."

"A man told me that he had seen your bones; and Africaner had killed you."

"But Africaner is a Christian man now."

"Look, Moffat, I can believe almost anything you say, but that I cannot credit. Never! That would be an eighth wonder."

As Moffat continued to assert the fact, the Dutch farmer at length said, "Well, if it is true, there's only one wish I have before I die, and that is to see this man. He killed my own uncle, but if he really is a Christian I should like to see him."

"Should you? Then, there he is," said Moffat, pointing to Africaner, who was sitting at their feet.

"Are you *really* Africaner?"

"I am," said the chief, making a low bow.

The farmer stood silent for some moments; at length, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "Almighty God, what a miracle of Thy power! what cannot Thy grace accomplish!"

The next day the waggons wandered over a waterless

waste, and the following day brought them no nearer a river or pool. While searching for water, Moffat spied a little smoke; and on reaching it found an aged woman, almost a skeleton, in the last stage of weakness.

"My mother, fear not, we are friends," said Moffat, as the venerable sufferer lifted her head from her knees. "Who are you?"

"I have been four days here; my children left me to die."

"Your children?"

"Yes, three sons and two daughters. I cannot carry wood for the fire, or when they kill game help them to carry it."

"But are you not afraid of the lions?"

Lifting up the skin of her left arm with her fingers as if it were a garment, she replied, "There is nothing here for the lions to eat. I hear them, but they never touch me."

"Come with me, I will take you to the next village."

"No; they will only leave me again. I am nearly dead now, and don't want to die again."

"And this is heathenism," remarked Moffat to Africaner. "What is man without the gospel? I look at you, Africaner, and wonder that one so gentle could have taken delight in violence and murder!"

Africaner made no reply except a flood of silent tears.

At the Cape, the Governor received Africaner kindly, and presented the once outlaw with a waggon valued at eighty pounds.

But Moffat was not to return with him to Namaqua-

land. This district lies to the north of Orange River, along the south-western coast of Africa. To the east it is bounded by a great waterless desert, beyond which, northward still, is the Bechuana or Bechwana country.

Among the Batlaping, a tribe of Bechuanas, two missionaries were labouring, Hamilton and Read by name. It was decided that among this people Moffat should labour. Before doing so, however, the young missionary was to accompany Drs. Campbell and Philip on a visit of inspection to all the London Missionary Society's stations in the eastern part of the Colony and Kaffirland.

But that tour was now completed; and when Robert Moffat returned to the Cape he had the joy of welcoming Mary Smith, his former employer's daughter, who had come out to Africa to share his life and toils.

Her parents had been very reluctant to give up their only girl, but had at length consented to spare her for the life God seemed so plainly to indicate. On 27th December, 1819, Robert Moffat and Mary Smith were married at Cape Town, and early in the following year started to Lattakoo, the headquarters of the Batlaping tribe. They were accompanied by John Campbell, of Kingsland Chapel, London.

The ignorance of the natives may be gathered from the reply of a South Africa chief, who, when asked if he were willing to receive missionaries, answered seriously, "Yes," if they could tell him how to become a young man again. And yet it was with considerable difficulty that permission was obtained from the supposed Christian Government for missionaries to visit and teach these people.

The Government, too, set their minds upon securing Moffat as their missionary to Kaffirland, and determined to force him into compliance with their wishes by refusing him permission to go to the Bechuanas. But at last they relented, and Robert and Mary Moffat settled down to labour among the people, to live with whom "required a strong stomach as well as a warm heart," said Robert Moffat.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KING OF SPADES WHO PROVED THE KING OF
HEARTS; OR, ALL MEN NOT ALIKE, YET IDENTICAL.

"Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony disposed aright."

"For a' that, and a' that,
It's comin' yet, for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be, for a' that."

"How idle each heroic art
By the least suffering of love?"

"Life's kind purposes, pursued
With ordered freedom, sweet and fair."

"**R**A Mary, your customs are good enough for you, but I see they will never fill the stomach," said a Bechuana to Robert Moffat. "Just think, it was but the other day you brought home a boy and girl the Bushmen were intending to bury with their dead mother, and now Ma Mary has brought home a baby that had been buried alive by its mother."

"Yes, I know that you are in distress, friend; that there has been little rain lately, and that the people are suffering."

"Then why take extra mouths to feed? Let the babies die; what good are they? Besides, if their own mothers don't want them, why should we trouble about them?"

"But, dear friend, we love the children, and our God bids us teach them about Him."

“ Well, you'll have enough to do to look after yourself, for the people are angry with you. They say it is your long black beard that frightens away the clouds; or perhaps it's your white face that frightens the rain.”

“ Well, I won't look at the sky.”

“ Then others say that you kneel and pray to a thing in the ground, and that is why it does not rain.”

“ We do kneel and pray, it is true. You worship one spirit called 'One who produces pain.'”

“ Yes, I wish I could get it, I would transfix my god with my spear, I would !”

“ We worship the God who sends rain upon the earth, and who loves us dearly.”

“ Well, the man who has come to make the rain went into his house to make rain yesterday, as men thought, and one of the chiefs went in, and there he was lying asleep. But he jumped up and, would you believe it? there was his wife with a milk-sack churning. 'There,' said the rainmaker, 'my wife is churning rain out of a milk-sack.' One thing the chief means to do is to turn you out of the country, and, if you wont go willingly, to kill you.”

“ Well, what must be, must be. I shall not leave the post God has given me unless compelled. But, who is that calling ?”

“ Ra Mary, you are wanted,” said a loud voice.

“ What is it ?” replied Moffat, going to the door of his hut; his wife, who had been superintending the sprinkling of the floor with cowdung (which did instead of sweeping among the Bechuanas), came with her child behind her husband. A number of armed men brandished their spears in a threatening manner; the leading men, addressing Moffat, declared that the Bechuanas had determined that the missionaries should be expelled the country, and threatened force unless they went.

“ We love you, are anxious to serve you, and cannot leave you in your distress. Here,” exclaimed Moffat, throwing open his coat, “ thrust your spear into my

bosom, and then my companions will know that it is time for them to retreat; but we will not leave you unless we are compelled."

The chief lowered his spear, and shook his head. "These men have nine lives, they are so fearless of death; there must be something in immortality," he remarked to his companions.

"We are saved, wife, from this peril; but the work is still very difficult."

"I asked a woman to leave my kitchen while I went in to service, and she seized a huge piece of wood and hurled it at my head," replied Mary Moffat. "I left her in the kitchen and she seized everything movable."

"Yes, one of the men stole an iron pot last week, and it being hot dropped it on a stone and cracked it. They took the pot to the native smith, who promised to make the iron into knives. But it flew into pieces when he struck it, being cast-iron, so they declared it was bewitched.

"It is hard indeed to live with people so degraded and filthy, but we must labour on," replied Mary Moffat.

"Yes. In due time the harvest will come."

Some months passed in quiet work, the hostility of the natives giving place to stolid indifference. At length as the missionary and his wife sat talking far in the night-time, Robert Moffat broke silence by saying, "You know, wife, that we have some time longed to know more of Makaba and his warlike Bechuana tribe, the Bangwaketsi, who live some 200 miles off. I think I should like to go and see him; there might be an opening for the gospel among his tribes. And there have been disquieting rumours flying about concerning Chaka, the Zulu king. One of his chiefs, Moselekatse, has scattered the Basuto and Bapedi tribes, and founded the Matabele kingdom. The fugitives that have fled before him are gathered into a horde, called Mantatees, that are sweeping over the country destroying everything before them. They may come in this direction. If I went to visit Makaba, perhaps I could hear about these Mantatees."



"THRUST YOUR SPEAR INTO MY BOSOM."

Accordingly, against the advice of Mothibi, the Bechuana king, Robert Moffat started, but in a few days returned with tidings that thousands of homeless Mantatees were spreading like a swarm of locusts across the country, devouring, burning, slaying all in their path. By the assistance that Moffat procured from Griqualand, this danger was averted; the help he rendered in this peril giving him some influence over the people he had saved from destruction. But while no one threatened to persecute him now, still no one would listen to his teachings. He at length determined to resume the visit to Makaba that the Mantatee invasion had interrupted.

On the way Mr. Moffat saw plainly that the guides had missed their path, but they refused to believe him, saying that his compass (or "self-seer," as they called it) did not know its way in Africa. Presently the moon rose, but they were still unwilling to admit their blunder, and declared that for once the moon had risen on the wrong side of the world!

Makaba received them kindly.

"I wonder that you cared to trust yourself with such a villain as they declare I am," he said. "But my heart is white as milk—now let me see the waggons march through my village."

On the Sunday morning Moffat paid a visit to the king. He was seated upon the ground, surrounded by leading men, who were either preparing hyena skins, cutting them, or sewing them into mantles.

Sitting down among the company, Robert began to talk about Jesus, but none heeded until some mention was made of His having raised the dead.

"What an excellent doctor He must have been to have raised the dead," remarked one of the men.

"The dead live! Never!" exclaimed the king.

"Yes, they shall all rise again," said Moffat.

"What! all that have been eaten by wild beasts; all whose bodies have been left in the desert, will they live?"

"Yes. and come to judgment."

"Will the slain in battle rise again? Will my father rise?"

"Yes, most surely."

"Hark ye, oh men," said Makaba, turning to his companions, "ye have heard the tales of long ago—did ye ever hear such words as these?"

"Never! never!" was the universal response.

"Father, I love you much," he said to Moffat. "The words of your mouth are like honey to me. But it is too great a thing for the dead to rise. The dead must *not* rise. Hark you," he exclaimed, shaking his spear, "I have slain thousands, and they must not rise. They *shall* not rise; they are dead for ever!"

"Why don't you cure this lame man, and then they will believe?" whispered a man sitting by.

Within a short period of the interview, Moffat had to retrace his steps to his home, which was now shifted to a slightly better locality, called the Kuruman, from the adjacent river.

At the end of 1826, Moffat, having shifted his family to this new station, resolved to start and spend some time among the Baralongs (a Bechuana tribe), to live with them and learn their language.

Some ten weeks he spent among them, and at the end of that period he could speak Sechuana perfectly. This people may be understood from the remarks of one of the most thoughtful of the Baralongs, who, when asked what was the finest sight he could desire, replied, "A great fire covered with pots full of meat;" adding, "How ugly a fire looks without a pot!"

When Moffat returned, the Batlapi Bechuanas were amazed at the skill with which the Scotchman could speak their language. Their interpreters had made singular blunders in repeating his teachings, on one occasion saying "the salvation of the soul is a *great sack*," instead of an "important subject;" henceforth Moffat needed no interpreter, but could speak himself directly to the people

CHAPTER V.

THE SOWER WHO REAPED THE HARVEST; OR, WAITING ALWAYS WINS AT LAST.

"The weary nicht o' care and grief
May hae a joyfu' morrow,
So dawning day has brought relief—
Fareweel, our nicht o' sorrow!"

"Sad is the tale, and wonder much did we,
Such hearts of stone there in the world could be."

"Weary expectation hath been blessed
With sudden happiness beyond all hope."

"**T**EN long years of work, Mary! It is now 1829 and not a ray of comfort or success until now! No wonder the directors in London talk of giving up the work here; but oh, it is worth the waiting! Do you remember what you have so often said: 'We may not live to see it; but the awakening will surely come, just as certainly as the sun will rise to-morrow!' Now it has come. The chapel has been crowded long before service each Sunday, and it was delightful to see the people. They used to crouch upon the forms, and when one fell asleep and tumbled to the ground his companions were delighted. Now they listen as if they had never heard before."

"True, Robert; I knew it would come. If we will only wait, good work cannot be lost. It seems to me you can no more expect the Church of God to be built up in a day than expect oak trees ready grown before you plant

the acorn. What I say is, let us do our part and, if we are faithful, either we or some others shall see the reward. But I wish the people would not shout and cry so."

"Yes, but the Bechuanas are like the Scotch; they generally keep down their emotion, but when it does break out it is terrible.

"'I seek Jesus,' said Umsilu to me the other day. 'I am feeling all I can after God; I have been like a hunter who wanders unarmed through the forests, where beasts of prey prowl on every side. But now, thank God, the day has dawned, and I can see my danger!'"

"Yes, Robert, it is indeed delightful. This very morning I was speaking to the man who killed his wife because she did not work hard enough to please him. How changed he is. 'Oh!' said he, 'I have been sleeping in the lion's den; what a mercy that I have not been devoured! I have been blown to and fro like a cabash upon the water, and might have sunk.'"

"But what pleases me more than anything else, Mary was the vile old Matabogie, who has been such a persecutor and chief blasphemer. She hated the sight of the chapel, and would have destroyed it had it been possible. She wandered in the other day in search of her grandchild, and heard only a few sentences of my sermon. She met me this morning as I walked from the corn store. 'Oh, Ra Mary, my sins! my sins!' she cried. Tears ran down her furrowed cheeks, as she exclaimed bitterly, 'To live I cannot; to die I dare not. Oh! what shall I do?'"

"I directed her to the blood of Jesus, but she interrupted me. 'Look at yonder grassy plain; you cannot count the dewdrops pearly on each grass blade, neither can you count the number of my sins. What shall I do?'"

"'My mother,' I said to her, 'consider how precious is the blood of Jesus. He is God and man; quite holy and without sin. By His death upon the Cross, He procured our pardon. Is not *His* blood sufficient for all sin? I am sure it is. Why, sister, hearken! I myself felt when far

over the seas the same distress of heart; but, blessed be God! I also saw that, however many my sins were, Christ was able to forgive and cleanse away them all. I was walking through the scorched fields when the storm came on. It poured down rain, oh, how quickly the ground was covered with grass! Is there not enough water in the great river for all that will come? My sister, Jesus is all-sufficient.'

" 'Well,' said she, 'continue to teach me. I am very old and sinful in the world, but I am only a child in the school of Jesus Christ!'"

The people now began to find out, that instead of rubbing grease and red ochre upon their bodies, it was better to make the fat into candles. They began also to prepare skins for garments, which they brought to Mrs. Moffat to cut out and arrange for making.

Frequently a man would be seen with a coat with sleeves of different colours; sometimes with only one sleeve, the other not being yet made. Now and then a man would complain that his jacket would not fit him, the reason being that he had sewed it upside down. Yet it was a victory to have induced them to wear clothing; the gospel, after changing the heart first, changed the dirty, naked savage into a cleanly, becomingly, well-dressed believer.

In the latter part of the same year two messengers arrived from Moselekatse, the king, who had once been a sub-chief under the Zulu king. They examined with great curiosity all the work of the missionaries; their houses, walls, and the ditch which brought water to irrigate the garden. "You are men, we are but children; our king must be told of all these things," they said.

To protect them, Moffat accompanied them upon their journey home, going all the way to the territories of their master. They had not been travelling many days, when, spying a strange object upon a tree, Moffat went to it. "Why," said Umbate, "it is only a tree house. There are twenty houses in that tree."



MOFFAT'S CHURCH.

“And do people live in these nests?”

“Yes, oh yes. It is because of the lions. The one room of each house is high enough for a man to stand upright in, and about six feet each way. They climb up by a notched tree-trunk.”

Upon arriving at Moselekatse's village, this chieftain entertained his visitors with a sham fight; but, brave as he was, the king was afraid of the waggons. With one hand on his mouth, he approached these singular structures, being especially interested in the construction of the wheels. “If this be made of many pieces of wood, how came the iron round it?” he asked. “Why, there is no end or joint!” he remarked.

“No,” said one of his men, who had come with Moffat; “my eyes saw his hand cut these bars of iron. He cut off a piece from the end, and then joined it as you see them.”

“Did he give medicine to the iron, or was there any enchantment?”

“Nay, nothing but fire, a hammer, and a chisel—nothing more.”

“O Machobane, my heart is white as milk. You fed me when hungry, and when I was in danger you helped me; for when you did it to these two men, my friends, it was to me that you did it—even to me.”

“Then, O king, let me tell thee. This morning I saw a man come to one of thy great nobles. His two boys had been seized by a war party, and are slaves to one of thy chiefs. The poor man laid down a few strings of beads and some trifling ornaments, and offered them to buy back his boys. But when the chief looked scornfully upon these things, the father put a half-used knife and a few trinkets he had borrowed, but alas! he was repulsed with scorn. Oh, but it went to my heart to see his look of woe! The chief said that he wanted an ox, and the old man hath not even a sheep. I will pay for the boy (for one, I hear, is dead).”

“O Machobane, it shall be so; the chief shall sell the

boy to thee, the stranger's friend, and thou shalt make the father's heart white as milk."

Many days after, upon his return journey to the Kuruman, Moffat restored the boy to his delighted parents, and no doubt his own children will receive the reward.

"The gospel of St. Luke is now translated into Sechuana; what shall we do to get it printed?" said Moffat one day to his wife after his return home. "It has been a hard task to reduce the language to writing, but it is done now."

"Go to the Cape, and then the hymn book can be printed at the same time.

"So I will," and to Cape Town the missionary went. But the printers at the Cape could not undertake the work; and so, having learned how to print, Moffat returned home, bringing a printing-press which had been sent as a present from England.

"Look!" shouted a man, rushing through the Kuruman village, and holding up a sheet of paper upon which printed characters were scarcely dry, "Moshete made it with a ball and a shake of his arm. Isn't it wonderful, what these foreigners can do?"

In 1835 Mary Moffat fell ill; but just at the critical time, when her life was despaired of, a scientific expedition for the interior reached Kuruman. Dr. Smith, its head, at once took the case in hand, and by his skill, under God's blessing, Mrs. Moffat arose, as one from the dead. To aid Dr. Smith, and also to provide timber for the roof of the church now being built at Kuruman, Moffat visited the dominions of Moselekatse, the Zulu king, a second time. Moselekatse was delighted to see his friend, and kept him as his own guest, permitting the expedition to visit any part of his dominions that they desired. With the timber to roof the church Moffat returned home to find his wife was still weak and ill.

By Dr. Smith's advice she was sent to the Cape to regain strength, and Moffat during her absence set off to

visit Mosheu, a chief who resided about a hundred miles from Kuruman.

"When I first saw you," said the chief to Moffat, "I had but one heart, now I have two. I want to do wrong, and yet I do not. Come with me to my village. I forget so much on the road; let us go together."

But the request could not be complied with at that time. But, at last, the time came when the promised visit was to be paid.

"Here he is! The white teacher! The black man's friend! Run, collect the people! Ra Mary is here!" And the villagers of Mosheu's villages thronged round Moffat, touching his hand, and then trembling at their own boldness, until, what with hand-shaking and squeezing, the kind Scotchman was almost worn out. It was nearly midnight when at length he lay down in his waggon to snatch a little sleep, and when at daybreak he appeared at the waggon front, there arose a glad shout from the throng that stood waiting to see him.

"Here he is, awake at last! Preach, Ra Mary! preach love! Mosheu has told us about your Jesus, and how He loves the black as well as white. Tell us more! more! We are very thirsty, and can take much water!"

And for an hour, "God so loved the world" was the subject of a sermon such perhaps as never was preached under similar circumstances. The milkmaids paused with their pails in their hands, having tied their cows to posts, to attend to the sermon, while every dark face glowed and reflected the love that burned in the weather-beaten, loving visage of the tall Scotchman.

He had hardly finished his sermon when an old woman hobbled off to her house and brought back a large bowl full of sour milk. "Here, drink that!" she said. "Drink away, drink much, and then you can preach a long time. We are thirsty to hear. Tell us all you can, and don't leave off until you are too tired to speak more!"

A second time the missionary preached. When he had finished, he said to Mosheu, "There was a young



MOSHEU'S VILLAGE.

man who wore what had been once a pair of trousers with only one leg remaining. He had the skin of a zebra's head with the ears attached, and a hat, and some strange thing round his neck."

"Oh, he is a wonderful young man. When he hears anything great it remains in his head. Listen, he is now preaching over your sermon. Come and you will find that not a word is misplaced."

"No, and the gestures are exactly mine. He is certainly a remarkable man."

"Now, Ra Mary, you go and rest; when the moon rises and the cows are milked you must preach to us again. We will chew over the cud of what you have told us, and we shall be ready for more very quickly. The more I hear the more I want to know. It is wonderful, and wonderful! but so sweet to hear about Jesus."

The next day was precisely similar, except that the people were even more eager for teaching, and that they begged to be taught to read.

"Give us medicine to teach us to read," they cried.

"But I can't. You must learn the alphabet first."

"Then we will. Oh, teach us!"

Moffat went into his waggon, and found an old A B C, with a corner torn off. This he spread upon the ground, the people kneeling around in a semi-circle. Pointing to the letters in order, Mr. Moffat named each letter in succession. The noise was deafening; each man shouting a different version of the name.

"I think, perhaps, we should do better if we had a little less noise," said Moffat, rising to stretch his back, that ached with stooping.

"No, I'm sure I can't learn unless I shout. The louder I roar, the quicker my tongue will get used to the seeds," cried one man; and the din increased.

As Moffat moved away, some young people came running towards him, and, seizing him, exclaimed, "Oh, Ra Mary, do teach us the A B C to music!"

“Well, let us get into one of the other houses, and I’ll try.”

The hut was instantly crowded, and the strain of “Auld Lang Syne” was pitched. Each round was taken up more heartily, and the melody so melting to British hearts gave equal satisfaction to the swarthy sons of the desert, who sang to it our familiar A B C. Two long hours the lesson continued, and then after Moffat left far into the night the tune arose upon the darkness. Sleep was utterly impossible, until nearly three o’clock in the morning; and when, soon after daylight, Moffat awoke, it was to hear “Auld Lang Syne” re-echoing from every corner of the village. The boys herding the calves, and the milkmaids at their work, sang “Auld Lang Syne,” A B C being substituted for the words that are part of our national heritage and pride.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FINISHED TASK THAT CANNOT END ; OR, THE
PRINTER WHO KNEW NOT WHAT HE DID.

"He had built up, glorious architect, a monument more durable than
brass.

His children's children shall talk of him in love, and teach his sons
his honour,

Whose sound is gone out unto all the lands, and their words to the
end of the world."

"This Book, this holy Book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high Divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love.
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow :
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs to read, believe, and live."

"**W**ELL, David Livingstone, we are glad to be back.
When we got down to the Cape with the
Sechuana New Testament it was a grief to find
it could not be printed there. 'Don't wait here,' said the
governor, 'just jump on board ship and get it done in
England.' Oh, but it was a sad voyage. Our little
Jamie died, just after a little stranger came to enlarge our
circle. Jamie was a lovely child, and would ask such
strange questions about the world beyond the grave ; now
he has seen with his own eyes the King in His beauty.
He was singing, 'O that will be joyful, when we meet to
part no more,' and to our bitter sorrow he was parted
from us. It was under the cloud of this sorrow that the

ship cast anchor at Cowes, 6th June, 1839, and it is now 10th December, 1843. My parents are both alive, but my Mary's mother has gone home. O Livingstone, what responsibility rests on England to send the gospel to the world, and yet how few care about the heathen! It grieved me to see men who spared nothing for their own comfort, and who would give vast sums for a book or a picture, dole out a guinea for the gospel! Said a man to me, 'Bosh about the heathen! They're just like moths, unless they're saved. If they do die without hearing the gospel they only lose heaven!' They don't believe in a hell in England now; alack! alack!—the belief in immortality seems going out in England."

"Never mind, we must do our best. These new fancies will pass as other follies have. I am sure of this, that neither in Scotland nor Africa will anything satisfy the heart's hunger and give it peace but the atonement of Jesus Christ appropriated by faith. In death we want no husks; nothing then but the blood of Jesus!"

"True, and now I am intending to toil at the Scriptures. I want to see the whole Bible in the Sechuana tongue before I die."

To this work Robert Moffat gave all his strength, and in 1857 his task was accomplished, and the Scriptures were finally printed in the Sechuana dialect.

"What about this book?" asked a heathen of a native convert. "I can't understand it; does it speak?"

"Yes, it does; it speaks straight to my heart, and its words are sweet and strong. They comfort and yet they purify the heart. Did you but know how good it is, you would long to read it too."

Before this work was finished (if it can be said to have been finished while the influence of the work is still increasing) Livingstone, who had come out to Africa a bachelor, had married Mary, Mr. Moffat's daughter, taking her to his station at Chonwane, where he resided with Sechele, the chief of the Bakwena.

"I feel so unwell, Mary," said Moffat to his wife, "the

work of years has been done. I can't tell if I'm in the world or no. I feel as if I wanted to die, for my work is over."

"Nonsense, Robert, your work is never done. Go on; read the manuscript of the Bible over again. See if you can't find a mistake, and then tell me how you feel."

"Well, wife, the remedy was efficacious," he said an hour or two afterwards. "I'm all right now, and don't want to die until my time comes!"

"And here is more work, Robert, for you. Livingstone's discoveries have stirred up English Christians to send missionaries to the Matabele. Our directors want you to take ten young men with you, and stay a twelve-month with them until the mission is well established. Will you go?"

"Yes, certainly. Oh, yes; I will go."

"But you are now near sixty-two years of age, and have seen forty-one years' service in the mission field."

"Yes, dear wife, and I would choose the same lot if I had my time over again. It has been a delight; indeed it has, but oh, those years of weary waiting before we saw any success."

"Thank God, we were able to hold on until the tide turned; but, Robert, the progress is still very slow."

"True; but it is progress. And now we have the word of God in the native tongue. We have passed on our toil to an unsleeping, undying witness."

"'Twas the best thing that ever you did when you translated the Bible, Robert. The printer little thought when he printed the pages what that blessed work would accomplish among the pretty copper-coloured sons of Bechuana."

"True; but we shall know when God divides the rewards among those He loves. May we hear Him say, 'Well done!'"

"Amen," replied Mary.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AGED WORKER WHO COULD NOT REST ; OR, USING UP THE FRAGMENTS OF LIFE.

“ Who hath learned lowliness
From his Lord's cradle, patience from His cross ;
Angels, He calls you ; be your strife
On earth to lead an Angel's life.”

“  EVEN hundred miles of sandy waste ! Seven hundred miles is a long journey, but I will take all care of the station until you return,” said Mary Moffat.

“ I feel you could not bear the discomforts of the life among the Matabele, Mary. Your health, I know, is shattered by the climate. It goes to my heart to part from you so long ; but if I go I may smooth the way for the new missionaries. We must make the sacrifice, my dear.”

“ If you think it best for the mission, I am quite content,” replied Mary.

And without long delay the unwearying veteran started for the north, into the remote regions whither the Matabele had retreated to avoid the outrages of the Boers. Calling upon the way to see the chief who had been Livingstone's friend, in due course Moffat reached Moselekatse rather tired.

“ Moshete, my heart is white as milk to look upon you ; but wherefore are you come ?” asked his friend.

“ It is the purpose of the English, who love the Matabele, to send teachers to live with you, that you may learn the way of peace.”

"But I know not these new men. I love you, but all men are not alike. Stay with us yourself; I want no other white faces."

"But you will not refuse to receive them?"

"Nay, but I had rather traders came. I want men to make me guns and houses, men who can teach us how to fight; they are the men I want. Why not send me some of these kind of men? Don't the English fight?"

"Alas, yes!"

"Then it can't be wrong."

"Nay, Moselekatse; but the Gospel bids us love one another, and to do good. The missionaries will teach you of the love of God."

"Well, they can come, as you wish it; but I had rather have a keg of gunpowder. But I can deny you nothing; you know your way to the heart of man."

"Would I were able to make your heart what I desire. O Moselekatse, hearken to the words of a friend! You are aged, and must soon die; could you not love Jesus and go to heaven?"

"I should like to; but I love not the thought of death."

"Ay, but you must die all the same. Where will you be after death? O king, think of that."

"It is that I often do think about; but I love not such thoughts. Death is bad in itself; but that *after* death is dreadful. It is like jumping into a deep pit; who can tell what misery there may be in the darkness?"

"There need not be. Jesus loves you, and died for you. O friend, do love Him, and ask Him to save you. Do you pray?"

"Sometimes I say the prayer that you taught me; but, oh, I would I were other than I am."

"Jesus will make you so. Listen, there went a man out one day a-hunting, and he fell into a trap. The poisoned spears rent him, and he could not get out. What will become of him?"

"He must die, certainly."



BULLOCK TRAIN ON A JOURNEY.

"But one came by and pulled him out, and pulled out the spears from his body."

"But the poison remained in his blood, and it will kill him."

"True, but the stranger cured that; and made him a stronger man than before.

"It is impossible!"

"O king, you are the man who fell into the pit. None can help you out but Jesus. He will do it; and will cure you of the poison in your wounds, and make the old man to become young again."

"How can He do all this?"

"Because He is more than man. O king, love and trust Him."

"That I will try to do. But it is hard to do so."

"Pray for Him to help you, and when we part it shall be to meet in heaven."

"I will do all I can to please you, Moshete, and for your sake I will let the captive I have go free."

"I am thankful; but I shall be the more delighted if you will love the best Friend I have, Jesus Christ."

"I do try, and will try, but it is so hard; for my mind is like a cavern in which the lion dwells. When will the light shine in; oh when? Would you were with me always!"

"There is one better than I am, Moselekatse, who is always with you; Jesus is always near, and He is able to help you to know what is right, and to do it too. Ask Him to help you."

"We part; but I shall never forget the white man who is the stranger's friend. May the Great Spirit care for you, and bring you to your loved ones again." And so they said good-bye to meet no more below.

Early and late at the saw pit or the blacksmith's forge, talking to the people, twelve long months of toil succeeded the Sunday morning, 17th June, when the two friends parted.

Henceforward Moffat visited no more northward than

Kuruman. That station became a sort of central home for all who were pressing northwards.

Incessant activity for the well-being of others marked every day. It seemed that the now aged pair could never rest. But a dark cloud fell upon them when their eldest son, Robert, was taken away by death. Then their daughter, Mary Livingstone, was called home. The circle was beginning to decrease—a bitter experience known to us all.

One evening, while returning home from the service, a man rushed upon him, and dealt him several blows with a heavy stick. Before Moffat could defend himself the lunatic (for such he was) had fled, leaving his victim fearfully injured.

It was many months before he fully recovered, and then his heart was sorely wounded, at the fact that one of the mission people had inflicted the injury.

“I should not have minded it so much had it been a stranger. But to think that one I loved and had helped should have served me so !”

“He knew not what he did, Robert.”

“True, but to think that he was one of our own people.”

“Robert, we have before seen that those we expect most from often repay our kindness with ingratitude. It is enough to break the heart to help the saints. Did not the Jews, who were benefited by Christ, cry ‘Crucify Him !’ Shall we have better treatment than He had ?”

All alone until 1870 Moffat laboured at the Kuruman, though his sleeplessness and cough disturbed and distressed him. Yet he did not relax his efforts, but continued to undertake labours that might well have exhausted a younger man.

On Sunday, the 20th of March, 1870, Robert Moffat preached for the last time in the Kuruman church. On the Friday following the departure took place. For weeks before messages of farewell had been coming from the

distant towns and villages, from those who could not come to shake the missionary's hand.

At length the crowds caught sight of the aged pair as they came out of their door and walked to their waggon.

"Let me touch his hand! Let me come near her. Oh, never to see them again! Oh, Ra Mary, and Ma Mary! we shall miss you sorely!" shouted the throng.

With his eyes streaming with tears, Moffat took his place at last in the waggon.

"This is more my home than any spot on earth. Here my children were born; here some are buried. Would I could lay my dust here with them."

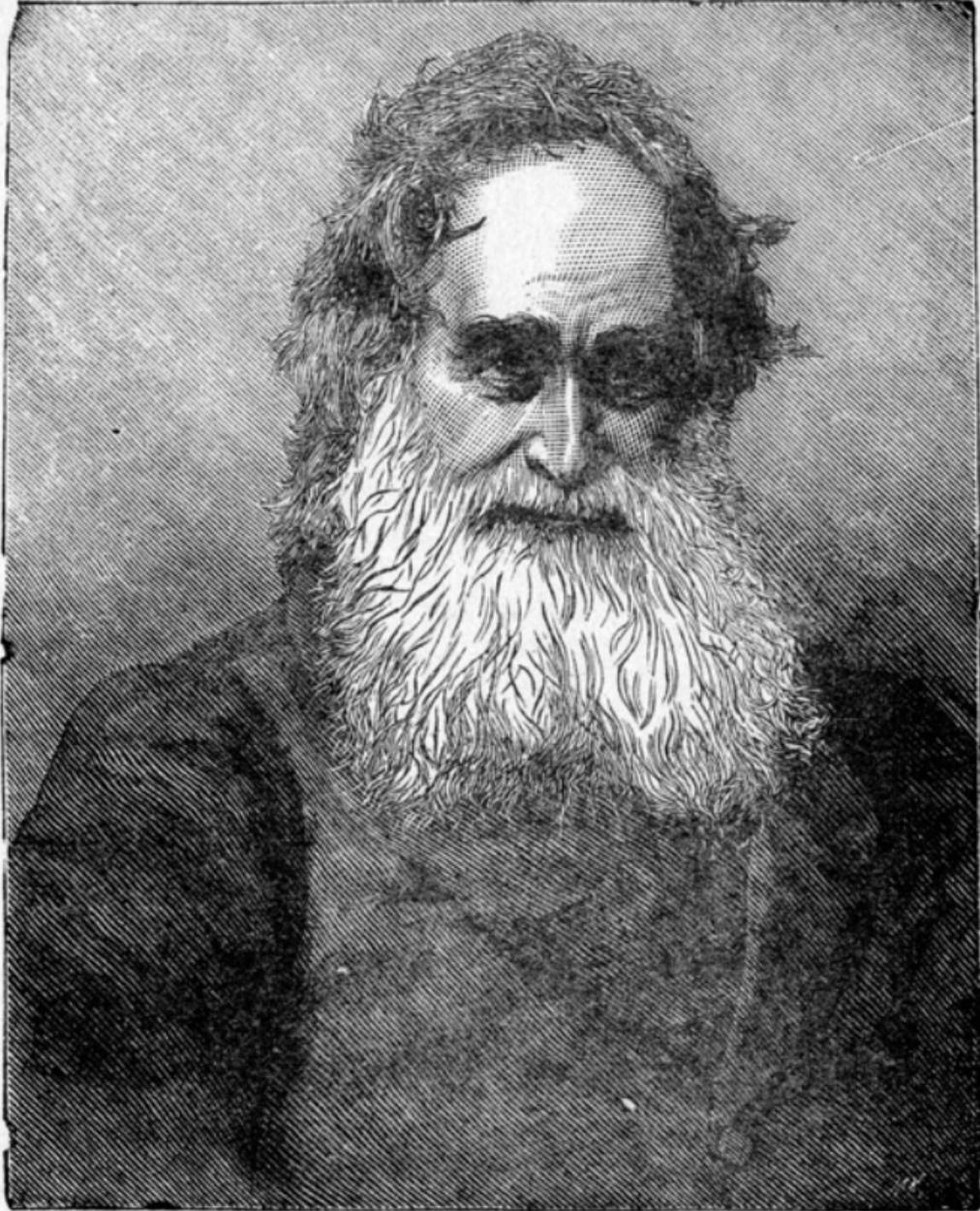
"John," said Mary Moffat, as she bade farewell to her son, whom they were leaving behind, "do have the poor lunatic who attacked your father put right with the people. I hear that men are avoiding him. He should not have become intoxicated. I know drink deranged his reason; but oh, beg them to deal kindly with him for our sakes."

"I will," said her son as he bade her good-bye.

As the waggon left the village a long, bitter cry went up from the weeping crowd; a wail such as rises from the deathbed of a first-born and only child. When the heart feels deeply, then is it bereaved indeed!

Accompanied by their youngest daughter, the Moffats went slowly to the coast. A public farewell breakfast was arranged at Cape Town, after which they sailed for England. As the white cliffs of England came in sight, the shy, diffident man who seemed unable to realise what a hero he was, said to his wife, "Mary, do you remember our first visit to England? We sat in the congregation at Walworth. The Misses Esden came to us, thinking I was captain of a ship. I hope they will not bring me much to public meetings again. I had rather face the lions in Africa than the eyes of an English crowd."

"You must not be so shy, Robert. They love you



ROBERT MOFFAT.

dearly, and it does men much good to look upon one who is, like yourself, a living witness to the faithfulness and mercy of God."

On 24th July, 1870, the ship arrived in England, the Moffats landing at Southampton exactly four months after leaving the Kuruman! But the patriarchal pair came home almost completely worn out in the Master's service.

Many have suffered and died for Africa! But of all who have laid down their lives for the Dark Continent, none died with more heroic cheerful self-surrender than Robert and Mary Moffat.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ACCEPTER OF GOD HONOURED OF MEN ; OR, UP TO HIGHER SERVICE.

“ What for itself love once began,
Now love and truth will end in man.”
“ When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past ? ”



AFTER visiting the North of England, the Moffats went to reside in Brixton. On the 21st of December a birthday present of £1,000 was presented to Robert Moffat, as a tribute of esteem, love, and reverence. But about the same time Mary Moffat became unwell. A slight cold increased into bronchitis, and though she was with difficulty kept in bed, her rambling conversation gave uneasiness to her friends.

Suddenly her cough ceased, she drew a few deep breaths, and then her spirit fled away !

“ Mary, my dear, only *one* word,” said the sorrowing husband.

But not a word came back, as the bereaved widow sobbed out to his loving daughter, “ After labouring lovingly with me for fifty years, she has left me all alone without saying once good-bye ! For fifty-three years I have had her to pray for me,” he continued ; “ who will pray thus for me now ? I have no more home below. Mother is gone, Jeanie, and I, too, shall soon be flitting.”

And so father and daughter travelled about the country, living first in apartments at Brixton, and afterwards at Ventnor, before settling into a house of their own at Brixton.

During a visit to the scene of his childhood, 63 years

after leaving it, Robert Moffat found the red tiled cottage that had been his father's dwelling.

"Know ye the M'Killops?"

"No, no such folk live in Carronshore."

"The Patons?"

"No; my father used to mind of some of that name, but they are gone long ago."

"William Monteith?"

"Ah! did he drive the carrier's cart from Falkirk to Edinburgh?"

"Yes, sure, that's the man."

"Well, he's deid lang syne; but the woman you see standing at yon door is a dochter of his."

"Nearly all gone! Well, let us go and speak to her. But who is this?" he exclaimed.

A little woman ran up to Dr. Moffat, and seizing him with both hands, stood looking into his face.

At length she gasped out with difficulty, "Are—you—really—the *great Moffat*?"

"Well, I believe I must be the person you mean, whether small or great. But why do you ask?"

"Because I was at the schule wi' ye—my name is Mary Kay; and you'll surely come to mind me? I sat in the class next ye, and ye often helped me wi' my lessons. I h'ave aye keptit my e'e on you since you left Carronshore, and I'll let you see a lot of your ain likenesses. I was aye sure ye would come back to see this place some day; and though I didna expect ye the noo, I'm fair daft wi' joy at seeing ye."

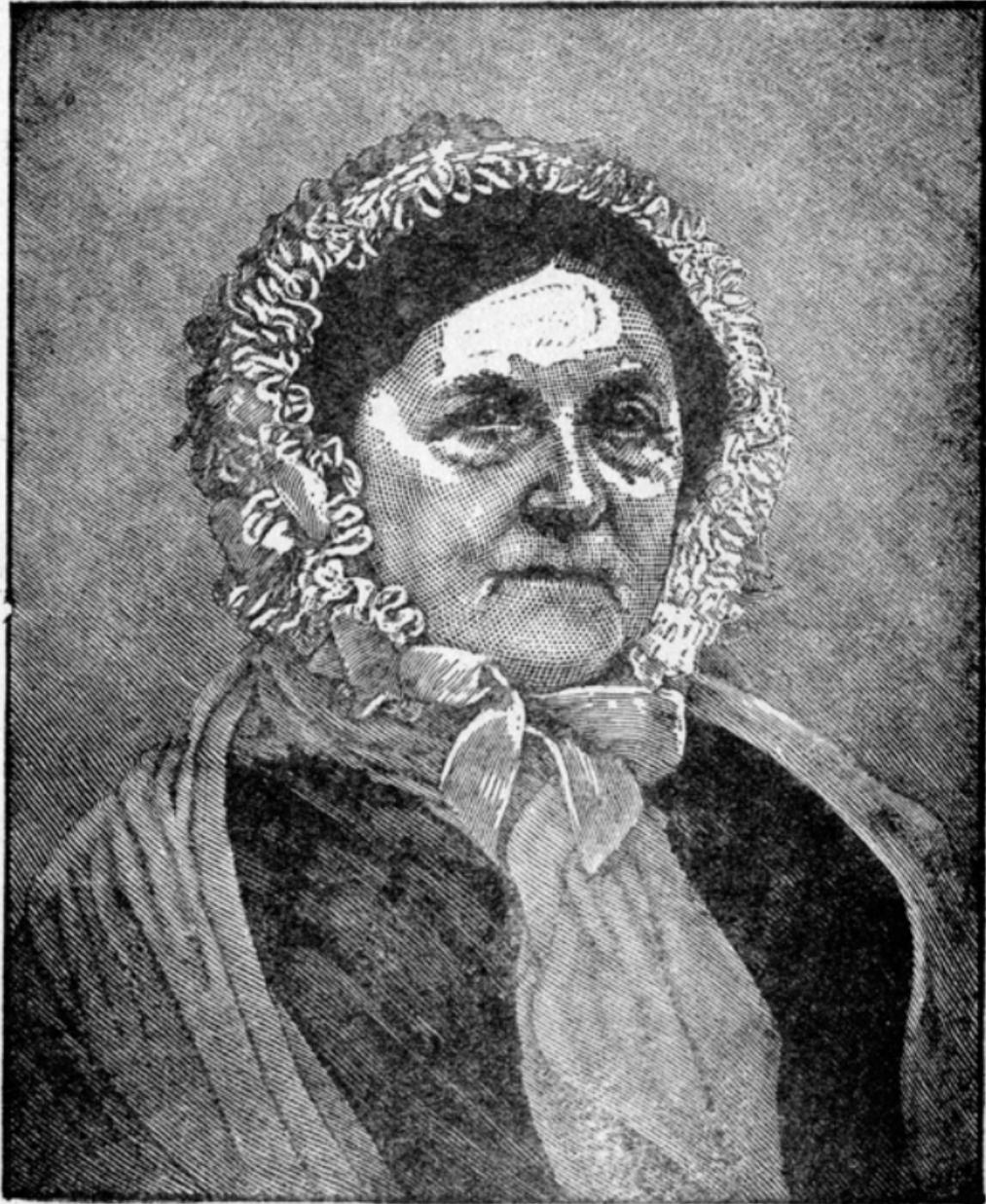
"Come then, Mary Kay, will ye show me my father's cottage?"

"Ay, and Mrs. Arthur, who lives in it the noo, will be proud to show you."

So speaking, she led the way into the cottage.

"There stood our eight-day clock," said Robert Moffat, "and the girdel (oatmeal chest) stood there, and the aumrie (cupboard) stood over in the corner."

"Ay. But, man, ye have grown a terribly long beard;



MRS. MOFFAT.

I can't thole these long beards. Not but John Knox had a long beard too, just like yersel'."

"And are any more of my schoolmates alive?"

"There's only Andrew Johnstone the tailor; would ye like to see him?"

"Ay," and they found the tailor sitting crosslegged on his board.

"Andrew, man, here's Moffat come to see ye; the great missionary from Africa," said Mary Kay.

"Ay! Ay! maybe he is, but there's plenty of folks ganging about the country noo a days passing themself's aff as great men, and they are just a when impostors."

"O man! Andrew, are ye no believing me, and I've kenned him mysel' a' my days?"

Laying down his needle, Andrew looked hard at his distinguished visitor and said, "Are you aware, sir! that if you are really the person you represent yourself to be, you would be the father-in-law of Livingstone, the African explorer?"

"And so I am."

Pushing his spectacles forward the tailor exclaimed, "Is it possible that the father-in-law of Livingstone stands before me and under my humble roof?"

"Yes, it is true."

"Well, then, I know not what to say, save that I'm proud of the day ye set foot under my roofree. But the lads are gathered round the door; will ye not hold forth?"

This Moffat did, expounding to them the charms and rewards of missionary work.

In 1873, he was presented with a sum of £5,000 as a token of love and respect, which kindly gift enabled him to dispense with the pension he had received from the Society, and provide for those dependent upon him.

In 1878 he removed to Park Cottage, Leigh, where he became the tenant of Samuel Morley, Esq.

"Why, you have got back to the Kuruman again," said a visitor as he entered the laurel cottage.

"Yes, Mr. Collard. You knew Kuruman?"

"All the missionaries knew it. But what is that doll on the mantelpiece?"

"Why, when I visited Muller's wonderful Orphan Houses at Bristol, a little girl there gave it me as a token of love, and I value it more than all. I wept at the offering of love."

"Why, it seems as if—white or red—all learn quickly to love you, Moffat. I wonder how it is!"

"I don't know, but they are all very kind."

"Father went the other day to see Cetewayo," said Miss Moffat, "and one man in the king's train could speak Sechuana. He had heard of my father, and was delighted indeed to see him. 'Are you Moffat?' he asked again and again. And when assured he was, the man exclaimed, 'I see this day what my eyes never expected to behold—Moffat!'"

Sunday, the 5th August, 1883, found Moffat too weak to attend service.

"Come let us sing and have worship at home, my dear," he said; and father and daughter sang together the praises of that Christ he was so full of.

"Don't exert yourself much," asked his daughter, as he attempted to ascend the stair.

"I feel I can do it, and I like to."

But on the Wednesday he wound up his watch with trembling hand.

"For the last time, my dear," he said to his daughter, who watched him with fear. "Oh, my dear," he exclaimed, "the end has nearly come! I am not loth to go. I shall meet my Mary in heaven! It is my delight to dwell upon the happy meeting we shall then have, to be for ever with the Lord, and to rejoice an unbroken family into which no death can come. But oh, Jeanie, my heart is full like to rending with the love of my Saviour. I sit and muse upon His goodness—my father's and mother's Christ. It is wonderful how He has brought me through one trouble and another, and here I am a monument of grace. Talk of dying love! I know not how to find words to express the delight of my heart. It is to me such a mystery—all love and yet all wisdom, all

light and all truth. How delightful Jesus Christ is, whether you muse upon His character or upon His works. His promises or His attributes; it is equally the same, Wonderful Christ! Wonderful love! My dear, I sit here and revel in the perfections of my Redeemer. He seems to be as really present to me as you are, and I just lie and talk with Him. When I used to lie awake weary nights in Africa, how real He was to me, and what delight I had in His society. But it is even more so now. Then I used to lean upon Him for strength and comfort; now it seems as if wave upon wave of loving kindness flowed in upon my soul. Talk of heaven; it is heaven to commune with Him, and I do delight to believe that whatever heaven is it can't be better than Christ."

"But, father dear, I hope you are not going to leave us yet?"

"Nay, my dear, but it will be soon. They have gone over the river, and I must go too. I mind not how quickly."

It was not for long that the pilgrim lay waiting for the crossing of the river. He signed the loving watchers to cover his cold hands, and then his looks wandering from one to another, the death struggle began.

At half-past seven on the evening of Thursday, the 10th August, 1883, the call came, "Come up higher," and the victor passed to his crown.

Around his grave in Norwood Cemetery devout and honourable men stood in deep sorrow at the bereavement that had fallen upon the Church, but far away in the sunlight of God Robert and Mary Moffat continued their service for Him they had loved and served below.

"Mid the stillness low and sweet
 Bringing strength to weary feet.
 Sometimes on a gentle breeze
 Glad, triumphant harmonies
 Come from those who went before,
 Now at rest for evermore."