

THE LIVES
OF
ROBERT & MARY
MOFFAT



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THE LIVES OF
ROBERT AND MARY MOFFAT.

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LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.



Robert Moffat

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THE LIVES OF
ROBERT & MARY MOFFAT

BY THEIR SON
JOHN S. MOFFAT

TWELFTH EDITION

WITH PORTRAIT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

London
T. FISHER UNWIN
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PREFACE.



IN issuing a Popular Edition of this work, the Editor repeats his thanks for the willing help rendered to him in the compiling of the First Edition by many friends, including the Directors of the London Missionary Society. Still more, old friends, whose confidence in committing to him the family correspondence of long years between their parents and his, furnished him with much that has proved of great interest. Besides these, he thanks the friends of later years, whose reminiscences are the more valuable as letters of that period became less copious.

It was not till most of these pages were in print that the Editor had the opportunity of visiting Ormiston, his father's native village, on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument to his memory, of which an illustration will be found in this work. The monument owes its existence to the zeal of a few friends in Edinburgh. They found an unwearied secretary in Mr. Thomas Fairgrieve, to whose hearty exertions much is due. The Editor is thankful that Mr. Stevenson has been successful in producing one of the best portraits in existence of Robert Moffat, in so permanent a form as that of the bronze medallion which forms the chief feature of the memorial at Ormiston.

Round that quiet nook in East Lothian cluster many associations. Close by is the Hall, with its great yew-tree, one of the finest in Scotland, so closely bound up with the memory of John Knox and of Wishart; and from the old Hall—part of which still stands—Wishart was taken by night, to be carried away to his martyrdom.

At the entrance of the grounds stands the gardener's house, a substantial stone building in which Robert Moffat's mother spent her youth a hundred years ago; and in the churchyard stands a

stone to the memory of her parents, William Gardiner and his wife, erected by the Earl of Hopetoun of that date, in whose service they had lived and died. A short walk from Ormiston is the village of Tranent, where the first coal mines in Scotland were worked ; and a little further on is the field of Prestonpans, perhaps less remembered for its battle than for the fact that the pious Colonel Gardiner fell there within sight of his own house.

Besides that of the monument, three other illustrations are given in this work. The first is the cottage at Carronshore, still standing, Robert Moffat's home in boyhood. The second is the Kuruman street, with the house which was the home of Robert and Mary Moffat for nearly fifty years ! It is taken from the least picturesque side unfortunately, but no better view is available. The church is seen beyond, and farther still is the other mission-house. The third is Park Cottage, Leigh, where Robert Moffat's last years were spent, and where he died.

Very little can be said to any purpose in a further issue of this book. The work has been appreciated far beyond the expectations of those who are responsible for its production. Most of the Reviewers have shown a generous willingness to understand that the Editor had no ambition to emulate the skill of those practised hands who can invest any story with a charm by an artistic arrangement of colour. In this particular case such painting would have been beneath the dignity of the subject. The best tribute to the worth of the Lives and Letters is the fact that they have shone out and charmed their readers, all the more perhaps for the duller lustre of their homely setting.

It has been well said by several Reviewers that the "Lives" ought to be read along with the older work by Robert Moffat himself, the "Labours and Scenes."

The Editor is once more back in the land his parents loved so well. He is there under changed conditions, but his desire is to be allowed to do something for the Bechwana. The problem is not a simple one as may be gathered from the diversity of opinions which have been freely expressed from opposite sides of a dividing line. Speaking as an official himself, he is bound to confess that political intervention on behalf of the natives has mostly ended in failure, at all events in South Africa. This sense of failure is pressing heavily on the truest friends of the natives among the official class at the present time. We see our efforts frustrated by some turn in politics, some party move at home.

The missionary has no such misgivings, or ought not to have, in the presence of witnesses like Robert and Mary Moffat. His commission is clear, and he knows that no faithful labour in the

name of Jesus Christ can be lost ; for the Lord of missions knows the end from the beginning, and is working all things according to one harmonious plan. No more impressive lesson is taught in this book than the lesson of faith in a Divine purpose ; and that it may go and teach this and similar lessons, the Editor once more launches his venture and bids it God speed !

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS IN SCOTLAND.

1795—1814.

ROBERT MOFFAT was born on the twenty-first of December, 1795, at Ormiston, in East Lothian. Of his father's origin and family little is known, but his mother, Ann Gardiner, came of ancestors who had lived for several generations at Ormiston in a lowly walk of life, their only distinction having been a steady and unobtrusive piety. It is uncertain what was the occupation of the elder Moffat at Ormiston for some years after his marriage, but in 1797, when the subject of this memoir was two years old, his father received an appointment in the custom-house at Portsoy, near Banff, and removed thither with his wife and young family. In those days the voyage was long and venturesome, not without serious risks, as would appear from some of the letters written at this time. A visit which had been promised by some of the family is deferred till a more convenient season on account of a fear of being "captured by the French;" and that this fear was not altogether groundless appears from another item in the same letters, to the effect that a French privateer had chased an armed brig into Leith roads. An account is also given of the raising of volunteer forces to repel an expected invasion, towards which force the quiet landward parish of Ormiston furnished its quota of sixty-nine men.

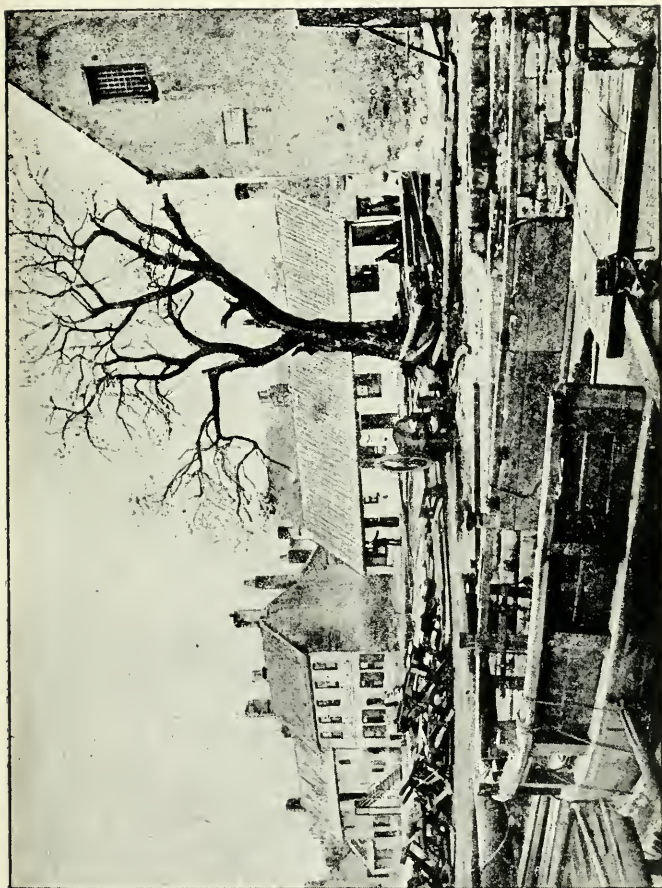
The Moffats remained only a few years at Portsoy. In 1806 we find them established at Carronshore, on the southern side of the Firth of Forth, and a short distance from Falkirk. The cottage in which they lived still stands, a small and unpretending abode, surrounded by others of the same class. It was visited and recognized by Robert Moffat when in his old age he re-visited some of the scenes of his youth. The family which found a home here consisted of four sons and two daughters, besides

Robert himself. These have all passed away ; only one of them left children, and of these scarcely any remain.

In a letter written nearly fifty years later to one of his sons, Robert Moffat tells the story of this period :

“When I think of the advantages you have possessed, I am reminded by way of contrast of my infant years. Well do I remember, as if it were but yesterday, being sent to William—or, as he was called, Wully—Mitchell, a parish schoolmaster, to learn to read. The shorter catechism was my first book, the title-page of which contained the A, B, C, &c. That acquired, I went plump into the first question, ‘What is the chief end of man?’ I tugged away at this till I got to the Amen, but not without having my hands sometimes well warmed with the taa’s, for Wully was stern when he sat in judgment. This was my first step at school. You would be surprised to hear how little I knew. I might have received a better education. My dear father and mother were not to blame, but I wanted to be a man before the time. I lived among shipping, and ran off to sea ; and the captain becoming exceedingly attached to me, constrained my parents to allow me to go many voyages with him in the coasting trade, and many hairbreadth escapes I had. I got disgusted with a sailor’s life, to the no small joy of my parents ; and I shall always feel grateful that I was afterwards, about the age of eleven, sent with my elder brother Alexander to Mr. Paton’s school at Falkirk. It was properly only a school for writing and book-keeping, and those who chose to pay, or could afford to pay, received lessons in astronomy and geography after school hours. My brother was one of the class of young men, who were nearly all the sons of the better sort of folks. Having some distance to walk home I was allowed to remain in the large room. I felt queer to know what the master was doing within the circle, and used to look very attentively through any little slit of an opening under an elbow, while I eagerly listened to the illustrations given, the master all the while never suspecting that I was capable of understanding the wonders of the planetary system. What I could not understand my brother explained on our way home. I was only six months at this school, the last I ever attended.”

At this time he was a regular attendant on the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Caldwell. Judging from later allusions, even at an early age deep and serious impressions must have been made. All his life through, Mr. Caldwell’s earnest teaching left recollections never to be effaced. These were confirmed by a mother’s influence. Robert was blessed with a mother of a type not uncommon in those days in Scotland. In the opinion of more than one of her grandchildren who have had the opportunity of judging, she might have sat to George Mac Donald for his portrait of Robert Falconer’s grandmother. She united a sternness of religious belief bordering on gloomy vindictiveness with one of the tenderest and



THE COTTAGE AT CARRONSHORE.

most loving hearts that ever beat. Her handsome features and dark eyes usually wore an expression of melancholy, but when a smile came it lit up her beautiful face in a way that could not be forgotten.

Nor was her sombre theology incompatible with a lively interest in the movements which were even then on foot for the preaching of the gospel to the heathen, and tidings of which reached even the sequestered villages of Scotland. On the long winter evenings the lads were gathered by the fireside, and while their mother taught them—not without remonstrance against employment which they thought more fit for their sisters—to knit and to sew, she would read aloud, in such missionary publications as were then to be had, the story of the dauntless pioneers of the gospel; and more especially of the work of the Moravians in Greenland and in the East Indies.

About 1809 Robert was apprenticed to the trade of a gardener, under a certain John Robertson of Parkhill, Polmont. This John is described as having been a hard man, though withal a just one. Often, even in the bitter cold of a Scottish winter, the lads were required to be on foot in the dense darkness at four o'clock in the morning, and had to hammer their knuckles against the handles of their spades to try and bring some feeling into them. They had just enough to eat, but not a whit more than was absolutely necessary.

Notwithstanding the severe *régime* under which he lived, Robert seems to have found time to attend an evening class occasionally, and to make an attempt at learning Latin and mensuration; and it would appear that in his intercourse with the family of a neighbour—of which one member, a Mrs. Horne, still lives near Liverpool—he took his first lessons at the anvil, and also learned to play a little on the violin. He had a craving, which clung to him through life, to learn something of whatever he came in contact with, and many of the accomplishments of which he thus gained a smattering proved of unlooked-for value to him afterwards.

In 1811 his father was transferred from Carronshore to Inverkeithing, in Fifeshire; and at the end of 1812 his apprenticeship at Parkhill expired, and he obtained a situation at Donibristle, a seat of the Earl of Moray near Aberdour. For a twelvemonth he had the opportunity of frequent intercourse with his own family circle only a few miles away—the last as it proved, for after this, with the exception of a few transient visits during the lapse of long years, he was never with them again.

The late Dr. W. Lindsay-Alexander, in a paper in the *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, says:

“While at Donibristle he lived with the other workmen in the bothy there, only occasionally visiting his parents at Inverkeithing. One who was a fellow-workman with him at that time, and who still survives, reports that he was wont to while away the evening hours by practising the fiddle, and thereby contributing largely to the entertainment of his companions, who delighted in his performances. He was fond of athletic sports, and in these he excelled. When about sixteen years of age he fell from a boat and narrowly escaped death from drowning, being insensible for some time after he was drawn from the water. This did not, however, deter him from his favourite pastime of bathing, and he soon became an accomplished swimmer. Of his powers in this respect he on one occasion made noble use.”

Mr. William Dickson, of Edinburgh, has furnished the following account of the incident referred to by Dr. Alexander.

“18th March, 1885.—The following narrative I to-day received from the lips of John Roxburgh, who is now in his eighty-fifth year, and whom I found occupying a comfortable cottage on the estate of Colinswell, about a mile from Burntisland, on the high road to Aberdeen :—

“In the summer of the year 1814, I was employed along with Robert Moffat in the gardens at Donibristle, under the head gardener, Mr. Piper. I was then about fourteen, and Moffat about eighteen years of age.

“One morning at the breakfast hour, between nine and ten o'clock, the two of us, and some others of the workmen, were bathing in the Firth of Forth, opposite the “New Harbour” at Donibristle. One of them, John Thomson, could swim a little, but wanted to learn how to “turn” in the water. Swimming out beyond his depth, he tried to do so, but sank. The others thought he was diving; but, seeming to remain too long down, they got alarmed, and feared he was drowning. He again, however, came to the surface. Meantime Robert Moffat, who was a strong swimmer, was out in deep water several hundred yards off, when the others shouted and signalled to him to come to the rescue. Swiftly he came. They showed him where Thomson had disappeared, when Moffat, plunging down, caught him round the body, swam with him ashore, and laid him on the bulwark. When brought ashore, Thomson was unconscious. The others tried to help him, the sea-water running from his mouth; but they had quickly to get on their clothes and go back to work, as it was now near ten o'clock. I stayed beside him till he was able to speak, and then left him.

“Robert Moffat was in this way the means of saving John Thomson's life. If he had not come at once, and been but two minutes later, I believe all would have been over.”

“Roxburgh told me that at this time Moffat was living with seven other men in a ‘bothy’ on Donibristle estate. He himself (then but a mere boy) lived with his father, who was also a workman on Lord Moray's property. Notwithstanding his great age, Roxburgh still

possesses sound health of body, and remarkable acuteness of memory and intelligence. He has for fifty-two years been an elder in the United Presbyterian congregation at Burntisland."

Robert Moffat's engagement at Donibristle having expired, he obtained employment as under-gardener to Mr. Leigh, of High Leigh, in Cheshire, and bid farewell to Scotland.

It was on this occasion that an incident occurred which has happily been recorded in his own words, and is quoted from the Bible Society's "Gleanings for the Young":

"I was scarcely sixteen when, after working in a nursery garden near my parents for about a twelvemonth, I was engaged to fill a responsible situation in Cheshire. The day arrived when I had to bid farewell to my father, mother, brothers and sisters. My mother proposed to accompany me to the boat, which was to convey me across the Firth of Forth. My heart, though glad at the prospect of removing to a better situation, could not help feeling some emotion natural to one of my age. When we came within sight of the spot where we were to part, perhaps never again to meet in this world, she said—

"Now, my Robert, let us stand here for a few minutes, for I wish to ask one favour of you before we part, and I know you will not refuse to do what your mother asks."

"What is it, mother?" I inquired.

"Do promise me first that you will do what I am now going to ask, and I shall tell you."

"No, mother, I cannot till you tell me what your wish is."

"O Robert, can you think for a moment that I shall ask you, my son, to do anything that is not right? Do not I love you?"

"Yes, mother, I know you do; but I do not like to make promises which I may not be able to fulfil."

"I kept my eyes fixed on the ground. I was silent, trying to resist the rising emotion. She sighed deeply. I lifted my eyes and saw the big tears rolling down the cheeks which were wont to press mine. I was conquered, and as soon as I could recover speech, I said—

"O mother! ask what you will and I shall do it."

"I only ask you whether you will read a chapter in the Bible every morning, and another every evening?"

"I interrupted by saying—

"Mother, you know I read my Bible."

"I know you do, but you do not read it regularly, or as a duty you owe to God, its Author." And she added: "Now I shall return home with a happy heart, inasmuch as you have promised to read the Scriptures daily. O 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."

"I parted from my beloved mother, now long gone to that mansion about which she loved to speak. I went on my way, and ere long found myself among strangers. My charge was an important

one for a youth, and though possessing a muscular frame and a mind full of energy, it required all to keep pace with the duty devolved upon me. I lived at a considerable distance from what are called the means of grace, and the Sabbaths were not always at my command. I met with none who appeared to make religion their chief concern. I mingled, when opportunities offered, with the gay and godless in what were considered innocent amusements, where I soon became a favourite ; but I never forgot my promise to my mother."

The following gives a picture of what travelling was for the humbler classes seventy years ago :

"HIGH LEIGH, Dec. 5, 1813.

"DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—I make no doubt but you will be greatly surprised at my not writing you sooner, but I hope the reception of this will satisfy you. I shall begin with giving you an account of our passage. After parting with you on the 5th (of November), I got to Polmont about four o'clock. I slept with Robert Bailie that night."

He seems to have joined a ship the following day at Carron, which was to go by way of the canal to the Clyde; and after many delays reached Greenock on the 18th.

"We left Greenock next morning, very calm. It was about midnight when we got as far as the Cumbrae Isles, blowing a strong breeze right in our teeth. We were obliged to bear away under a heavy sea and dismal dark to Rothsay Bay, in the Island of Bute ; but the wind favouring us, we put about and stood towards the Cumbrae Lighthouse, but under a dreadful sea we were obliged to bear away a second time to Rothsay Bay, where we got in about one o'clock Saturday morning with several sloops and a man-of-war. The rain descended in torrents the whole night till about eight o'clock. One unhappy circumstance took place. Two men of the man-of-war, the *Cygnets*, had got overboard, and attempting to swim on shore, one of them found himself going ; he immediately cried out, which alarmed the ship. A boat was immediately hoisted out, but before they could get nigh him he was no more ; but they laid hold of the other one who was attempting to swim to shore, but the body of the other was not found so far as I know. He was nine years on board. The above enraged the Captain (Russell) ; the boat was sent out early the next morning, the 20th, and pressed John Bow. I happened to be in bed, and kept there as long as they were upon deck. There was no other pressed in the bay. The vessel was stationed at Lough Swilly in Ireland. Every man was sorry for Jock. But to make a long story short, we left there next morning, and arrived in Liverpool Dock on Friday morning the 26th. Mr. Walker asked me if I would attend on deck in Bow's stead, which I did all the voyage ; indeed Thomas Barker was mate. I got my victuals along with Mr. Walker, and he

charged me £1 5s., which was nigh two shillings a day. He said that he would take nothing for my trunk or passage. He was kind enough to me, indeed. I got the fiddle, and I kept ourselves merry during the long voyage, but it was against my will.

"I attended church at Rothsay, and heard a young man, an anti-Burgher. His text was in Matthew—Jesus coming to John to be baptized.

"Every person was for me taking the coach on Sunday morning, but I took my own way of it, and set off on Saturday morning between nine and ten, and arrived at High Leigh about five o'clock at night. I think my travel cost me a sixpence for a pint of ale besides five or six shillings for a coach. The distance is about twenty-six miles."

At High Leigh the Scotch lad found himself in a genial atmosphere. The head gardener, a Mr. Bearpark, took to him, and soon got to leave a great deal in his hands. This tended to make his duties heavier, and to lay more responsibility upon him. The gardens were maintained on a scale and in a style to which he had as yet seen nothing to compare, and he was at work almost day and night, weekdays and Sundays; but, as he took a strong delight in his calling, this was no hardship. Many men were employed, and these seem to have been for the most part careless, and given to amusements for which Robert Moffat had no inclination. He lived in a lodge in a somewhat secluded situation in the grounds, and what time he had was given to quiet study of such books as he could obtain.

Mr. and Mrs. Leigh were very considerate, and gave a good deal of attention to the interests of their numerous servants. The young gardener attracted the kindly notice of Mrs. Leigh, who lent him books and encouraged him to studious pursuits.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.

1815—1816.

NOT long after his arrival at High Leigh he came in contact with what to him was a new development in religion. The Wesleyan Methodists had commenced a good work in that neighbourhood, and by the influence of a pious Methodist and his wife Robert was led to attend some of their meetings. The passionate appeals of the faithful evangelists found a ready response. His condition at this time will be best described by himself.

“I had, like most Scotch youths in those days, the Bible in two small volumes. These I read (remembering my mother’s last words), chiefly in the New Testament, but it was only as a pleasing duty I owed to her. I thus became familiar with the Gospels, notwithstanding my inattention to what I read. At length I became uneasy, and then unhappy. The question would sometimes, even when my hands were at work, dart across my mind, What think ye of Christ? which I dared not to answer. A hard struggle followed. I could have wished to have ceased reading, but the very thought would raise the image of my mother before me. I tried hard to stifle conviction, but I could not help reading much in the Epistles, and especially in the Epistle to the Romans. This I did with an earnestness I tried in vain to subdue. I felt wretched, but still I did not pray, till one night I arose in a state of horror from a terrific dream. I fell on my knees, and felt as if my sins, like a great mountain, were tumbling down upon me, and that there was but a step between me and the place of woe. Then followed the struggle between hope and despair. I tried to reform—not by avoiding grossly immoral conduct, for I had never been guilty of that, but by forsaking foolish and worldly company, vain thoughts and wicked imaginations.

“For many weeks I was miserable. I wished to feel that I was converted, but I could not believe I was. I thought I had the faith required, and that I had repented or turned to the Lord, and could adopt the words, ‘To whom shall I go but to Thee, O Jesus;’ but still

my soul was like a ship in a tempest. At last I made a resolve to become as wicked as I could make myself, and then if converted I should be so sensible of the change that all doubts would vanish. I looked over this awful precipice down which I was about to leap, and trembled at the thought that I might perish in my sins. I turned anon to my Bible, and grasped it, feeling something like a hope that I should not sink with it in my hands. I knew of no one to whom I could unbosom the agony that burned within. I tried to pray fervently, but thought there was a black cloud between me and the throne of God. I tried to hear Jesus saying to my soul, 'Only believe;' but the passages from which I sought comfort only seemed to deepen my wounds.

"Living alone in a lodge in an extensive garden, my little leisure was my own. One evening, while poring over the Epistle to the Romans, I could not help wondering over a number of passages which I had read many times before. They appeared altogether different. I exclaimed with a heart nearly broken, 'Can it be possible that I have never understood what I have been reading?' turning from one passage to another: each sending a renovation of light into my darkened soul. The Book of God, the precious, undying Bible, seemed to be laid open, and I saw at once what God had done for the sinner, and what was required of the sinner to obtain the Divine favour and the assurance of eternal life. I felt that, being justified by faith, I had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He was made unto me wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

"Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be."

With all the energy of which he was capable, Robert Moffat threw himself into the society and work of his new friends, whose ministrations had quickened into life the seed sown in earlier days. Not but what he had to meet crosses. He lost the goodwill of Mr. and Mrs. Leigh, who were grieved that a young man in whom they took more than ordinary interest should have become a Methodist, and should have taken upon himself a name which in those days was to many a term of the severest reproach.

His letters home at this time are full of the intense feeling shown in the foregoing quotations. His father, with true Scottish caution, replies in guarded language. He says:

"We are always happy to hear of good news, especially while they are of the nature you mention, and the Scripture assures us that good news from a far country are as cold water to a thirsty soul; and we are very happy to hear that you seem to have got a sight of the evil nature of sin, and the evil that it often bringeth on the unthinking and heedless part of mankind. Nevertheless I would exhort you not to be high-minded, but to fear; for I read of one who was brought up

into the third heavens, and saw things which were not lawful for him to utter ; nevertheless there was given him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure ; and our Saviour Himself no sooner received the sign of baptism than He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and was tempted of the devil forty days. And tempted to what? Even to distrust the common providence of God. And the Apostle Peter, although he made more pretensions of love to the Saviour than any of the disciples, yet how soon was he tempted of the adversary of souls to deny his great Lord and Master.

“ I have said, ‘ Be not highminded, but fear.’ I would also say, ‘ Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall,’ for the history of all ages confirms to us that one no sooner begins to set his face heavenward than he begins to be persecuted with enemies both within and without ; and it often becomes no easy matter to bear the mocks and even threats of some who set themselves up to oppose all that is good.

“ You seem to be much attached to the Methodists. I verily believe they are a set of men who have done much good. But at the same time, I do not altogether go in with some of their tenets ; and as there are different sects of these preachers, some of which are said not to be very sound in the faith, it would take one to examine well for themselves, and to follow them no further than they follow the Word of God.”

To this the son replies, stoutly defending his friends. There was evidently a severe struggle in his mind between the Calvinistic faith of his fathers in which he had been brought up, and the teachings to which he was now listening. Meanwhile another phase of life was dawning upon him, which we can read in his own words :

“ I had undergone a great change of heart ; and this I believe was produced by the Spirit of God through reading the Bible and the Bible only, for my small stock of books consisted chiefly of works on gardening and botany. Beyond visitors to see the gardens, and the men in daily employ who returned to their homes after the labours of the day, I saw no one. I occupied my leisure in studying the Scriptures, and when opportunities offered I did not fail to try and convince others of the necessity of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. I thought I had only to tell them what Christ had done for them and what was required of them to be saved. I wondered they could not see as I saw, and feel as I felt, after explaining to them the great truths of the everlasting gospel. On the contrary, I was treated by some as one who was somewhat disordered in mind.

“ Having a desire to visit Warrington, a town about six miles from where I lived, to purchase a trifling article, I went thither. It was on a calm, beautiful summer evening. All nature seemed to be at rest,

not a breath of wind to move a leaf. In the clear blue expanse of heaven was to be seen a single cloud passing over the disc of the sun as he hastened toward his going down. I seemed more than usual to feel admiration of the handiworks of God. I was imperceptibly led to a train of thinking of the past : how much of my life I had spent serving the world and not Him who died for me ; that I had really been living to no purpose. I thought of the present : how little I could do. It was more pleasurable to contemplate the future. The prospect of ere long being put in a position of honour and of trust had of course a charm to one who was yet in his teens, besides the hope of having it in my power to do good. Little did I imagine that this bright picture I had been painting of future comfort and usefulness was in the course of an hour to vanish like a dream, and that I should be taught the lesson that it is not in man to direct his steps.

“With thoughts like these I entered the town, and, passing over a bridge, I observed a placard. I stood and read. It was a missionary placard, the first I had seen in my life. It announced that a missionary meeting was to be held, and a Rev. William Roby, of Manchester, would take the chair. I stood some time reading over and over again, although I found that the time the meeting was to be held was past. Passers-by must have wondered at my fixedness. I could look at nothing but the words on the placard, which I can still imagine I see before me. The stories of the Moravian missionaries in Greenland and Labrador which I had heard my mother read when I was a boy, which had been entirely lost to memory, never having been once thought of for many years, came into vivid remembrance as if fresh from her lips. It is impossible for me to describe the tumult which took hold of my mind.

“I hastened to obtain the trifle I wanted in town, and returned to the placard and read it over once more, and now wended my solitary way homeward another man, or rather with another heart. The earthly prospects I had so lately been thinking of with pleasure had entirely vanished, nor could any power of mind recall their influence. My thoughts became entirely occupied with the inquiry how I could serve the missionary cause. No Missionary Society would receive me. I had never been at college or at an academy. I, however, began to devise plans. I had been for a short time a young sailor, and I resolved to go to sea again and get landed on some island or foreign shore, where I might teach poor heathen to know the Saviour.

“Soon afterwards, having heard that a Wesleyan Conference was to be held in Manchester, I proposed to a young man with whom I had become intimate that we should go thither. During our few days' sojourn, hearing first one and then another, I resolved on hearing William Roby. His appearance and discourse, delivered with gravity and solemnity, pleased me much. In the evening the lady of the house where we lodged remarked that he was a great missionary man, and sometimes sent out young men to the heathen. This remark at once fixed my purpose of calling on that great man, but how and when was a very serious matter to one of a naturally retiring habit. I

thought and prayed during the night over the important step I was about to take. There was something like daring in the attempt which I could not overcome. Next morning, when I awoke, my heart beat at the prospect before me. I had told my beloved companion, Hamlet Clarke, what I intended doing, and asked him to go with me. This he decidedly objected to, but he wished me to go, and promised to wait within sight till I should return.

"Though the distance we had to walk was more than a mile it seemed too short for me to get my thoughts in order. Reaching the end of a rather retired street, I proceeded with slow step. On getting to the door I stood a minute or two, and my heart failed, and I turned back towards my friend, but soon took fresh courage, and came back again. The task of knocking at the good man's door seemed very hard. A second time I reached the door, and had scarcely set my foot on the first step when my heart again failed. I feared I was acting presumptuously.

"At last, after walking backward and forward for a few minutes, I returned to the door and knocked. This was no sooner done than I would have given a thousand pounds, if I had possessed them, not to have knocked; and I hoped, oh! how I hoped with all my heart, that Mr. Roby might not be at home, resolving that if so I should never again make such an attempt. A girl opened the door. 'Is Mr. Roby in?' I inquired with a faltering voice. 'Yes,' was the reply, and I was shown into the parlour.

"The dreaded man whom I wished to see soon made his appearance. Of course I had to inform him who I was, and my simple tale was soon told. He listened to all I had to say in answer to some questions with a kindly smile. I had given him an outline of my Christian experience, and my wish to be a helper in the missionary cause. I did not even tell him that it was his name on the missionary placard which had directed my steps to his door. He said he would write to the Directors of the Society, and on hearing from them would communicate their wishes respecting me. I returned to my charge, and after some weeks was requested to visit Manchester, that he might get me placed in a situation which would afford him the opportunity of examining me as to my fitness for missionary work. On my arrival, Mr. Roby took me to several of his friends to obtain, if possible, a situation in a garden, a mercantile house, or a bank; but all failed, there being no opening for any one at the time. Mr. Roby then remarked, 'I have still one friend who employs many men to whom I can apply, provided you have no objection to go into a nursery garden.'

"'Go!' I replied; 'I would go anywhere and do anything for which I may have ability.' Very providentially Mr. Smith of Dunkinfield happened to be in town, and at once agreed that I should proceed to his nursery garden. Thus was I led, by a way that I knew not, for another important end; for had I obtained a situation in Manchester I might not have had my late dear wife to be my companion and partaker in all my hopes and fears for more than half a century in Africa. As it was. Mr. Smith's only daughter possessing a warm

missionary heart, we soon became attached to one another ; but she was not allowed to join me in Africa till nearly three years after I left.

“ Mr. Smith, whose house was a house of call for ministers, and who was always ready to advance the Redeemer’s kingdom at home and abroad, only bethought himself on returning home that the step he had taken might eventually deprive him of his only daughter ; and so, in the providence of God, it turned out. It would be unnecessary to detail the subsequent events during my stay—under the watchful care and instruction of Mr. Roby, which lasted nearly a year—at the nursery garden, from which I could visit him only once or twice a week.”

A letter from Mr. Roby himself bears upon this period :

“ *November 27, 1815.*

“ DEAR SIR,—I have been anxiously waiting for an answer to the letter which I wrote to the Directors of the Missionary Society respecting you, and did not receive it till this morning. It informs me that at present they have so many applications that they cannot receive all who offer their services for missionary work, and are therefore obliged to select those who possess the most promising acquisitions. On this account they are under the necessity of declining your offer at present.”

Mr. Roby was, however, convinced that the young gardener had good metal in him, and, carrying out the measures above described, eventually prevailed upon the Directors to reconsider their decision.

Robert was not for some time able to screw up his courage to tell his parents the nature of the great step he was taking. In a letter to them about this time, he says :

“ You requested to know what I intended doing next season ; and I doubt not but you will be surprised at my informing you that I leave my present situation next Saturday, being the 23rd of December, and I intend stopping a week with my religious friends in this place, and then go, about New Year’s day, to a nursery near Manchester. Some of the circumstances I will mention which have occurred within this short time to me. About the month of July there was a situation offered me, and it seems to be of great extent. I was to be both factor, steward, and gardener, and have under my charge some hundreds of acres of farming, with a number of men and a garden, &c. ; and my description, it seems, was given to the gentleman, and he said there was nothing to hinder me but one thing—and what was that do you think ? It was, if I would give up going to the Methodists I would just suit him ; but my answer was, I thanked them for their good intentions, but I would prefer my God to white and yellow ore. Some time after another situation was offered me, but I did not feel a willingness in my mind to accept of it, not having a desire to settle so

soon. My master was very good. He said that if I found employers he would become responsible for a good character. Some time about a fortnight ago kind Providence opened a door for me to the above-mentioned place. I am not driven there, but I am called to go there—not for the present benefit, but for the future good. The wages are fifteen shillings per week; mine will be only twelve or thirteen, on account that I will only work five days in a week. The reason of this I will leave a future period to determine.”

To this his father replies :

“We are not without our apprehensions that you may not have made a very profitable change. You say that the wages are fifteen shillings per week, but as you are only to work five days you will have but twelve or thirteen shillings a week. But you have left us to conjecture how you are to employ yourself on the sixth day. But if my opinion be rightly founded, I presume that you mean to endeavour to fit yourself for another line of life; but I would have you duly to consider the importance of such an undertaking, and to weigh well what our Saviour says to the builder in the Scriptures, and to first sit down and count the cost, and to see whether you have sufficient to finish or not; and to consider what was said to David, that the Lord said that he did well that he had it in his heart to build an house unto the Lord. And we think that you might both live usefully to your neighbours and profitably to yourself without engaging in a line of that kind; neither do we think that your health would altogether agree with such an undertaking, as I verily believe that you will find a close application to study as hard an undertaking as anything you have hitherto engaged in.

“You mention having had the offer of a good situation, which in my opinion was rather flattering, especially for one of your age. But as you were to be bound up to a certain mode of worship, we think you did well in refusing it.”

It was not till the month of May following that he wrote and made his parents acquainted with the nature of the determination to which he had come; and even then it was only under the persuasion of his good friend and adviser, Mr. Roby: so great was his diffidence, and, we may add, so heavy did he feel the news would be to them. To his mother it was a trial of no ordinary sort. In those days, to go out into the heathen world was like taking an eternal farewell so far as this world was concerned. No swift steamers then crossed the ocean in a few days or a few weeks. A great part of heathendom was an unknown region, into which few had gone and from which still fewer ever returned.

In a letter full of dignified resignation the old man bids his son Godspeed, declaring that whatever may be his own feelings and those of Robert's mother, they dare not oppose his design, lest haply in so doing they should be found fighting against God.

CHAPTER III.

PREPARATIONS AND DEPARTURE FOR AFRICA.

1816.

At last the Directors resolved to accept his services, and he left Dukinfield nursery for the purpose of being close to Mr. Roby in Manchester, to receive such superintendence as was possible in his studies; but as this period was not allowed to extend over more than a few months, whatever gifts may have been bestowed upon Robert Moffat to fit him for his work as a missionary, it certainly could not be said that they came in the form of collegiate opportunities.

The time drew near for his departure, and he paid a hurried visit to Scotland to bid farewell to his parents. He little thought of ever seeing them again, though they were both spared to welcome him on his return twenty-three years afterwards. He never saw his two sisters again. In a letter written from Manchester after his visit, he says :

“ Having left Edinburgh with emotions which it is our lot to share, I arrived here at five o'clock the Sabbath morning following, very much fatigued. My bundle received no injury. I caught a slight cold. I availed myself of three hours' sleep, and with unusual transport I accordingly went to hear our beloved pastor. Having embraced the opportunity of conversing with him, I could not learn the precise time that we were to depart, further than that letters had been received stating that we were to be in readiness, and that it was expected that we were to take partners along with us, and that in so doing it would be approved by the Directors (but more of this hereafter).”

After a description of the missionary anniversary services held in Manchester, which were marked with the enthusiasm of those early days, he goes on to say, in reference to his approaching departure and that of his companions :

“ Mr. Kitchingman and Mr. Pratt both take wives along with them, but from particular reasons I go alone. I made it a matter of prayer to God, and from the clearest dictation of His Providence He bids me go alone ; and He who appoints crosses and disappointments also imparts resignation and grace sufficient unto the day. So I am bold to adopt the language of Eli, and to say : ‘ It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.’ My dear parents, such language may seem strange unto you, but its interpretation is known unto me in a measure, and what we know not now we shall know hereafter. My present feeling with respect to my undertaking, is that I long to be gone ; I long to be engaged in the blessed work of saying to the heathen, ‘ Behold your God !’ Do not think that the future scenes cast me down. No ! behold I go full of hope, transported at the prospect of being counted worthy of undergoing a few transient troubles for His sake, who for our sake became poor, who for our sakes was despised and rejected, was crucified and slain. No, my Redeemer ! let me not sink, let me not faint. Oh ! that when I die, I may die fighting in the armies of the living God !

“ My colleague, Mr. Kitchingman, has earnestly requested me to remember him to you though unknown to him. I have to be grateful to God who hath appointed me such an one. He is endeared to me, and worthy of my affection. I shall be happy to spend my days with him : so what the Lord takes away on the one hand He gives on another.”

This early judgment of Mr. Kitchingman was not belied. He always remained a valued friend, though his lot was to work in another part of South Africa. He died at his post many years afterwards ; one of his sons followed him in the missionary work, and is also gone to his rest ; and others of the family are still entering into their labours.

The “ interpretation ” of one passage in the foregoing letter is to be found in a few lines addressed to the Rev. George Burder by Mr. Roby.

MANCHESTER, *Aug. 31, 1816.*

“ Our festival is concluded, and it has been a festival indeed, at least equal to any that I have enjoyed in London. The sermons were uncommonly excellent, the meeting for business delightful, the missionary communion solemnly affecting ; the collections at the several services amounted to upwards of £500. . . .

“ Poor Moffat’s amiable disposition and eminent devotedness have attracted the affectionate regards of his master’s daughter, a young lady of high piety, of polished manners, and the expectant of a considerable fortune. She possesses as truly a missionary spirit as he, and is eager to accompany him ; but her parents forbid it, and both she and he therefore determine to sacrifice their ardent wishes.”

Moffat writes to his parents from London on the twenty-third of September :

"I left Manchester on Friday the 13th, at four o'clock in the afternoon. It was with no small degree of sorrow that I bid a final adieu to my present friends, who were friends indeed, who manifested their distinguished kindness towards me in an extraordinary manner. The family of Smith, with whom I served at Dukinfield, were truly kind to me, with many others whose names are written in heaven, and who shall be rewarded at the resurrection of the just. It is impossible for me to be grateful enough to God for such a friend as Mr. Roby. Truly his kindness, like that of a father, will not be easily obliterated from my mind. I have no doubt but it will follow us as long as the wheels of life continue to move.

"I visited the Rooms on Friday morning and saw Mr. Burder, secretary. I spent some time in viewing the museum, which contains a great number of curiosities from China, Africa, South Seas, and West Indies. It would be foolish for me to give you a description. Suffice it to say that the sight is truly awful, the appearance of the wild beasts is very terrific, but I am unable to describe the sensations of my mind when gazing on the objects of pagan worship. Alas! how fallen my fellow-creatures, bowing down to forms enough to frighten a Roman soldier, enough to shake the hardest heart. Oh that I had a thousand lives, and a thousand bodies: all of them should be devoted to no other employment but to preach Christ to these degraded, despised, yet beloved mortals. I have not repented in becoming a missionary, and should I die in the march, and never enter the field of battle, all will be well.

"On Saturday night I heard a minister of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, at Spa Fields, and on Sabbath I heard the Rev. Mr. Burder and Dr. Waugh, that worthy Scotchman, like another John Knox. To-day, which is Monday, the Committee of Directors met for examination, but there was very little said to us—from our having been examined at Manchester, I suppose. On my entering the room with the rest, Dr. Waugh, on shaking hands, said, 'Are not you one of Ebbie Brune's lads?' I said that I had heard him frequently and knew him well. I understand that Dr. W. was one of his father's pupils. He speaks of them with great feeling and respect. I was almost afraid of appearing before the Directors to be examined, for they turn one outside in. However, next Monday we are appointed to meet, and be publicly ordained and designated to the important work."

On the evening of the thirtieth of September nine missionaries were set apart. The service was at Surrey Chapel. The names of Leifchild, Winter, Waugh, and John Campbell of Kingsland—household words to a past generation—appear on this occasion in connection with what was naturally a specially interesting service; though few could have formed any adequate forecast of the wide interest that would attach to the names of two who were then buckling on their armour. Four men were destined to the South Seas, of whom John Williams was to be the first martyr of Erromanga. Other five were for South Africa.

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

After many delays—which intending voyagers then took as a matter of course—the party embarked at Gravesend, on the eighteenth of October, in the *Alacrity*, Captain Findlay. The pilot left them in the Downs on the twentieth, bringing one more affectionate letter from Robert to his parents ; the shores of England faded from his view, and he was launched on the enterprise of his life.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY TO NAMAQUALAND.

1817—1818.

ROBERT MOFFAT and his companions reached Cape Town on the thirteenth of January, 1817, having been eighty-six days at sea in their little brig. They were well pleased with their passage and with each other, peace and goodwill having prevailed among them, and the captain having shown them unvarying kindness. They were received in Cape Town by the Rev. George Thom, then or afterwards a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Two of the party were destined for stations within the Colony; Moffat and Kitchingman were to go to Namaqualand, which was beyond the border, and it was necessary for them to have the permission of the Government before they could proceed on their journey. To their great surprise this permission was refused. An interview with His Excellency the Governor followed, of which the following is a record:

“His Excellency stated that it was the intention to prohibit us as well as other missionaries from proceeding beyond the limits of the Colony; that he had been informed that many of the servants and slaves belonging to the farmers within the Colony had fled to Griqua Town as an asylum; and that he understood from a letter that Mr. Anderson exhorted them to go back, but that he considered it not the intention of the Society to drive such characters back by force of arms to their former masters.

“Mr. Taylor replied that it certainly was not the intention of the Society that we should arbitrarily govern by force of arms, but that we should introduce religious civilization.

“His Excellency stated that the collecting of individuals together was likely to prove fatal, they being without the limits of the Colony. He said because the population of the Colony was thin, that when men were called up in case of war they were not to be found; and

that, also, such a body of men without government laws was likely to mutiny, and so to prove fatal to the missionaries and also to the Colony."

It was in vain for the missionaries to plead and to urge such arguments as common sense suggested. It was true that escaped slaves and criminals were continually making their way across the frontier and settling beyond the reach of the Government; but this was going on quite apart from the question as to whether there were or were not missionaries in those regions already; and it did not seem to occur to the men in authority that if Christian teachers chose to exile themselves, and perhaps to incur peril in following their duty by going into those remote districts, their influence would tend to diminish the dangers and inconveniences which were supposed to threaten the Colony.

Under these circumstances the only thing that was left for them to do was to await orders from home, and meanwhile to make the best use they could of their time. Taylor went, for the time, to a missionary institution not far away; the Kitchingmans took up their abode in Tulbagh, and Moffat in Stellenbosch, the latter a village about thirty-six miles from Cape Town. Here he lodged with a Dutch wine farmer named Hamman, who was not only hospitable, but a man of deep piety and earnest missionary spirit.

The object of this arrangement was to give the young missionary an opportunity of learning Dutch, which it did not take him long to do, placed as he was among those who could speak or understand no other language. Much as he must have been discouraged and perplexed by the long delay, it was always a great advantage to him in after life to have had this enforced detention. He was in a position to go to work at once when he did eventually reach Namaqualand, and it was at all times a great advantage to him during his missionary career to be able to speak Dutch. During the period of his stay at Stellenbosch, he accompanied Mr. Thom on an evangelistic tour extending over six weeks, in which they rode a distance of about seven hundred miles, in the district of the Western Province adjacent to the Cape.

To any one who knows the present condition of the country round which they travelled, it would be curious to read how the evangelists found themselves in a desolate region, with primitive homesteads few and far between, where now many a smiling village lies nestled amongst its trees. In these then lonely spots small congregation gladly assembled from many miles around

to listen to the preaching of the gospel, which was to them a rare privilege.

Sometimes the travellers would be belated in the wilds, and would have to make their bivouac on a hillside, and be treated to a serenade more wild than sweet of jackals and hyænas. From these there was no danger: but they were sometimes in fear of visitors of another kind, for the mountainous districts were full of fugitives, mostly runaway slaves, whose hand was against every man.

After a further stay at Stellenbosch, Moffat returned to Cape Town, where he busied himself with picking up everything in the shape of practical knowledge that came within his reach, and found a congenial outlet for his zeal in visiting the military hospital. Many of the soldiers were Scotch, and he had a peculiarly tender feeling towards soldiers. His brother Alexander had gone to India in the ranks some years before, and at this time nothing was known as to what had become of him.

The long detention at length came to an end. The scruples of the Governor were overcome, apparently by the efforts of Mr. Thom, who was possessed of some influence and of much perseverance. Permission was granted to Kitchingman and Moffat to go their way. No time was lost; the necessary preparations were made, waggons were bought, oxen were hired, and on the twenty-second day of September, 1817, Moffat bade farewell to the many warm friends whom he had found in Cape Town and Stellenbosch.

His companions were the Kitchingmans and the Ebners. With the latter he expected not only to travel but to be a fellow-labourer at Afrikaner's kraal, where Ebner had already been for some time resident.

The record of the journey, like many in the olden time, is one of hardship and difficulty. Every day which took the travellers farther from Cape Town brought them into a more desolate region, in which the lonely homesteads became fewer, and approached an almost complete isolation. With a few exceptions the farmers were friendly and wished the travellers well. The chief Afrikaner had earned himself a terrible reputation, and the reports that he was now a changed character were not readily believed by the Boers. Many were the gloomy prognostications. One motherly dame shed tears over the comely lad—for he was little more, being not quite twenty-two years old—who, in her belief, was going into the lion's mouth.

One evening he halted at a farm which showed signs of belonging to a man of wealth and importance, who had many slaves.

The old patriarch, hearing that he was a missionary, gave him a hearty welcome, and proposed that in the evening he should give them a service. No proposal could have been more acceptable, and he sat down to the plain but plentiful meal with a light heart. The sons and daughters came in. Supper ended, a clearance was made, the big Bible and the psalm-books were brought out, and the family was seated.

"But where are the servants?" asked Moffat.

"Servants! what do you mean?"

"I mean the Hottentots, of whom I see so many on your farm."

"Hottentots! Do you mean that, then! Let me go to the mountain and call the baboons, if you want a congregation of that sort. Or stop, I have it: my sons, call the dogs that lie in front of the door—they will do."

The missionary quietly dropped an attempt which threatened a wrathful ending, and commenced the service. The psalm was sung, prayer was offered, and the preacher read the story of the Syrophenician woman, and selected more especially the words: "Truth, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table." He had not spoken many minutes when the voice of the old man was again heard: "Will Mynheer sit down and wait a little; he shall have the Hottentots."

The summons was given, the motley crowd trooped in, many who probably had never been within the door of their master's house before, and many more who never before had heard the voice of a preacher.

When the service was over and the astonished Hottentots had dispersed, the farmer turned to his guest and said, "My friend, you took a hard hammer and you have broken a hard head."

This must not be taken as an instance representing the universal feeling of a class. Even in those days there were God-fearing and earnest-minded Boers who did their best for their slaves; and now, thanks to the labours of many devoted ministers, there is a true and growing missionary spirit in the Dutch population of South Africa.

As the travellers got farther on their way their difficulties increased. They advanced into an almost pathless region, barren and stony hills, intersecting plains of sand, with scanty trickling springs, and occasional but uncertain pools of water, at long intervals. Their oxen grew weaker day by day; the little flock of sheep on which they depended for mutton was dispersed by the hyæna and lost; and they were thankful to reach at last a haven of rest in the missionary station of Ryzondermeid, more

than two months after they had left Cape Town. Here the Kitchingmans were to remain, and Moffat after a time continued his journey to Afrikaner's kraal, where he rejoined Mr. Ebner and his family, on the twenty-sixth of January, 1818

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN NAMAQUALAND.

1818.

ROBERT MOFFAT'S stay in Namaqualand extended to a little over twelve months, and only a part of that time was spent in residence at the station. Before he had been many days on the spot, he saw that it was not a place for permanent settlement and progress. A long journey was soon undertaken to the north, in which he was accompanied by most of the able-bodied men of the tribe and by their chief. The result of their journey was to put an end to any hope of a settlement in that quarter, and the thoughts of Afrikaner were drawn eastward across the Kalahari to the country of the Bechwana, with whom he had enjoyed some friendly intercourse. The missionary, with a select party on horseback, made a journey in that direction, reaching Griqua Town and Lattakoo. On his return to Afrikaner he found that Mr. Ebner, the only other missionary in Namaqualand north of the Orange River, was leaving the country, so that he was left completely alone. In the intervals of his long absences from his station he carried on such missionary work as was possible—conducting a school, and raising a place of worship. Towards the end of the year he saw reason to visit Cape Town in company with the chief, and there he met Dr. Philip and John Campbell, who had come out as a deputation from the Missionary Society.

It will not be necessary to go into much detail about Afrikaner. His history is told by Moffat himself in his "Labours and Scenes." Suffice to say here, that he was a man who had escaped from vassalage in the Cape Colony, and having his own family as a nucleus, with a following of other refugees had crossed the Orange River, and established himself in what is known as Great Namaqualand. Here he carried on for years a system of predatory warfare. His

enemies were twofold—the farmers within the Colony, and the Namaquas, of a race kindred to his own, in whose country he had settled as an unwelcome intruder. He managed to strike terror into them all, and to make himself of so much importance that a large reward was offered for his head by the Government of the Cape Colony.

After many years he came under the influence of the earlier missionaries, more especially of Christian Albrecht, a man of more than ordinary character and apostolic zeal; and on the occasion of John Campbell's first visit to South Africa, negotiations were commenced which ended in his consenting to receive a missionary. A Mr. Ebner was at once sent to take up the work until the promised missionary should arrive from Europe, and he would probably have remained but for a certain want of harmony between him and some of Afrikaner's people; so that as soon as he saw the post filled he took his departure, and the young missionary was left quite alone.

Vredeburg, as it was called, was a collection of huts in a small valley, bounded by bare rocks on either side. A spring rose in the upper part of the valley, which in times of heavy rain—say once in two or three years—swelled into a flood, filled the river bed, and covered the levels on either side, so that the people had for a few days to move their huts nearer to the rocks. There were many large mimosa trees, which gave a pleasant look to the place, and redeemed it from the utter dreariness of the barren plains which stretched around for many miles.

The huts in which the people lived were as movable as tents. They were formed of long tapering wands, planted in a circle, then bent over and tied together so as to form a cage, and on this were fastened rush mats, packed more or less thickly according to the means of the owner, and admitting less or more rain accordingly. As rain fell very seldom, and as in that country to get wet was a mere refreshing novelty, this was not a serious inconvenience. The dust and the heat were the worst plagues. There was one opening large enough to crawl in at, and this sufficed for door and window, and for that matter chimney too, when a fire was lighted within. In a hut of this kind the missionary lived during his sojourn with Afrikaner. His efforts to obtain comfort must have met with but partial success. He lived principally upon milk and dried meat, until latterly he was able to raise a little grain and garden stuff.

For the best part of the year he did not see the face of a fellow countryman, or hear a word in his mother tongue. Happily he was in entire sympathy with the chief and his brothers. Not only

could they enjoy the mutual confidence of fellow Christians, but a strong personal friendship sprang up, and from the first Robert Moffat exerted a charm over Christian Afrikaner, which it was given to him to exert over many others afterwards. Even Titus, the brother who stood out against the gospel, was amenable to his personal influence, and devoted to his interests.

Moffat went to work earnestly, and soon had a flourishing school. Meanwhile a building was being raised for a church on a different scale from that of the beehive huts. But the temporal condition of the people was miserable, and there never could be much progress in civilization or industry with such surroundings. The missionary and the chief were of one mind in the conviction that no lasting settlement was to be thought of in that part of the country. The scanty spring gave water enough for the irrigation of only a small bit of ground, which would not supply food for one-fifth of the few hundreds of people belonging to Afrikaner, and yet it was the only spot available for many miles around. So in June we find them starting with a large following of the able-bodied men to explore the country northward, in search of something better. This journey took nearly two months, and ended in nothing. No better country was to be found in that direction, so far as they went, without entering a region where the hostility of other Namaquas might be looked for; so the idea was abandoned. In those thinly peopled regions, the few Bushmen and scattered Namaquas whom they found were sunk into a brutish degradation which stirred the heart of the young missionary, and instead of repelling rather quickened his zeal.

Space would not suffice for even extracts of his journals, but the following letter will give a view of this part of his life :

" VREDEBURG, Dec. 15, 1818.

" MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—I feel ashamed when I recollect that I have not communicated to you a single syllable since the eighth of April last. But on the other hand, when I call to mind the different scenes through which I have passed since that period, and how my time has been taken up, I think myself almost excusable. In the month of June I commenced a long journey to the northward as far as the Fish River, accompanied by the chief and his principal people; our object was to find a more suitable place to form an institution, but after enduring many hardships we returned after two months, disappointed in the object of our journey. A short time afterwards I came to a conclusion to undertake a journey to Griqua Town to see a place which the Grikwas had offered to Afrikaner. The approach of the warm season induced me to take the journey immediately. I accordingly departed on the second of September, accompanied by four of my people with ten horses. We travelled along the Great River and

crossed it twice. I preached frequently to the tribes of Korannas along the river. We suffered much both from hunger and thirst, having taken nothing with us, depending entirely upon the natives. The last three days previous to our arrival in Griqua Town, one of the men and myself suffered extreme hunger and thirst, nearly three days without victuals and nearly two without water. This was on account of three of my people having unexpectedly stayed behind, and been unable to overtake us; and we not knowing the hindrance, saw it most proper to go forward, being then in the midst of a sand desert without water, and the little flesh was with those who stayed behind. You may well conceive what effect such hardships had upon me in a bodily respect, sleeping behind a bush on the sand, eating nothing but flesh, and that so hard frequently that we must beat it small with stones, and living two or three days on a little milk. But I stood it out far better than my companions, for I had always to encourage both them and myself, or we never would have got there. Through Divine help we all arrived at Griqua Town on the evening of the eleventh. The brethren and sisters received me with joy and affection, and supplied me with everything needful; and I may say with Paul, when I saw them I thanked God and took courage, and when I reflected on the difficulties which I had undergone, I adored the Hand which had preserved me in them, and I more than ever estimated the value of providential blessings; but above all, I was cheered with this one recollection that it is for Jesu's sake and the sake of the heathen. In the midst of these hardships I felt, as I do at this moment, that I desire to suffer anything, even death itself, if but Christ is glorified in the salvation of the poor heathen. During my stay at Griqua Town I preached occasionally, and got proper information relating to the situation alluded to—to which I had some objections, seeing some difficulties in the way in a political point of view.

“I set off on the fifth of October to return home, and after experiencing nearly as great difficulties as before, I reached this place on the fifteenth. My little flock were all out of patience, and were ready to quarrel with me for leaving them. They assured me they would never again suffer me to do so. On my arrival I found a letter from Brother Ebner, informing me of his critical situation, he having been obliged to leave the Warm Bath station on account of the broils which had taken place between the people themselves, which were likely to end in a war. He begged of me to visit him. I immediately set off, and reached him the same day on the north side of the Great River; he was then on the point of crossing, and only waited on me. I did all that I could to dissuade him from the idea of leaving the Namaqua Mission, but all my entreaties were vain, for he seemed determined to leave Namaqualand entirely, and perhaps resign the work and return to Europe. This considerably affected me. After stopping two days I left him: he soon crossed the river, and suffered considerable loss of cattle on account of the strong current.

“About two weeks ago the two parties, viz., that of Bondelzwartz and that of Magerman, came and laid the whole of the case before

me, leaving me to judge betwixt them. After hearing both parties, I showed each how far they had erred from common justice, and how Magerman's people were culpable, which they acknowledged. Both parties were perfectly satisfied with the judgment, and gave each other the hand as a token of peace, promising to return the guns which each party had taken. Ebner is gone, and has left me a solitary missionary with little prospect of having help. But the cause is the Lord's, and how can we be faint or weary in well-doing, while we witness immortal souls dying for lack of knowledge? I have many difficulties to encounter being alone. No one can do anything for me in my household affairs. I must attend to everything, which often confuses me, and, indeed, hinders me in my work, for I could wish to have almost nothing to do but to instruct the heathen, both spiritually and temporally. Daily I do a little in the garden, daily I am doing something for the people in mending guns. I am carpenter, smith, cooper, tailor, shoemaker, miller, baker, and housekeeper—the last is the most burdensome of any. Indeed, none is burdensome but it. An old Namaqua woman milks my cows, makes a fire and washes. All other things I do myself, though I seldom prepare anything till impelled by hunger. I drink plenty of milk, and often eat a piece of dry flesh. Lately I reaped nearly two bolls of wheat from two hatfuls which I sowed. This is of great help to me. I shall soon have plenty of Indian corn, cabbage, melons, and potatoes. Water is scarce. I have sown wheat a second time on trial. I live chiefly now on bread and milk. To-day I churned about three Scotch pints of milk, from which there were two pounds of butter, so you may conceive that the milk is rich. I wish many times my mother saw me. My house is always pretty clean, but oh what a confusion there is always among my linen. I have no patience.

“On the twenty-sixth of November I received letters from the Cape and England, of a very interesting nature. One from Miss Smith of Dukinfield. She informed me that Mr. Roby saw you on his visit to Scotland, and that you were well and that my mother was in good spirits. This was very agreeable news to me indeed, for I often think of you all, and feel anxious to know how it fares with you. In a former letter I mentioned something respecting my hope of being united to Miss S., but her last two letters have been completely effectual in blasting my hopes. She has most reluctantly renounced the idea of ever getting abroad, her father determining never to allow her. Of course I have been greatly cast down of late, but have at the same time been enabled to love and confide in Him who sticketh closer than a brother, and have been more than ever led to see the mutability of every earthly comfort.

“I must now inform you that it is my intention shortly to visit the Cape. I think of commencing my journey in February. I have requested Afrikaner to accompany me. He immediately consented, and is now making preparations. This will be a wonderful event to hear of, Afrikaner accompanying a missionary to Cape Town. It will also be very acceptable to the Governor, as he has often requested him to come that some sort of peace might be established. For particular

reasons he would not go, nor would do now were it not that he esteems and puts great confidence in me. I have much reason to believe that this unexpected event will be the means of doing much good, both in a political and an ecclesiastical point of view. The Government will see the fruits of our labours, and be convinced that we are indeed messengers of peace; but you will hear more afterwards.

"I am also excited to visit the Cape by hearing that my presence will be acceptable when some important discussions will take place relating to our Missions.

"I could have wished to communicate my journal in full; it would interest you in the winter evenings, and I may do this. I long to hear from you. I have now been nearly two years in Africa, and only received one letter from you, not a syllable from William, nor do I hear anything of Alexander. Write me fully, and forget me not in your approaches to the throne of grace. Remember me to all my friends in Edinburgh and elsewhere, and particularly to Richard, Helen, Ann, and James. Tell them all that I often think of them and pray for them, and that it is not likely that I shall see them any more till we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and I hope finally in the presence of the Lamb. I must conclude, desiring to remain your affectionate but unworthy son."

We can form but a faint idea of the feeling with which such letters as this would be received and read in the quiet Scottish home at Inverkeithing. They continued to come in unfailling succession through more than fifty years, perhaps sometimes not oftener than once in the twelvemonth, but never failing to come at last. The home tie was never broken or allowed to die away, indeed it seemed to grow stronger and more tender as the years rolled by.

The reader will understand that the region called Great Namaqualand lies to the north of the Orange River, and along the western coast of the continent. To the eastward of it is the almost rainless and waterless Kalahari desert, and beyond that, still further eastward, the Bechwana country. To any one coming from the southward the first Bechwana tribe encountered is the Batlaping, who were then on the Kuruman river. The missionaries Read and Hamilton were already among these people. Moffat had already seen, and had been favourably impressed with, some Bechwanas who, travelling for purposes of trade, had visited Namaqualand. They in their turn were importunate for him to accompany them to their own country, which was a few miles to the westward of Lattakoo as it was then called. Of course he could not yield to their entreaties. On the occasion of his visit to Griqua Town above related, he went on to visit the missionaries on the Kuruman; and whilst with them came in

contact with the same people, who hailed him as an old friend. He then found that his fame had preceded him, and that he had already gained a most surprising ascendancy over the hearts of these strangers. He little thought even then that among these very people it was the will of God that the great work of his life was to be done.

The letter already cited had a postscript, both long and important, of which the following is a part :

CAPE TOWN, *April 16, 1819.*

“DEAR FATHER,—It was my intention when I wrote this letter to have sent it off immediately, but the overflowing of the Orange River completely cut off all communication. I accordingly kept this and other letters, as there was a probability of my reaching Cape Town before them should they have been sent. Although the Great or Orange River was nearly full, I crossed it safely, though not without being exposed to imminent danger and loss, and after a prosperous journey I reached this place about four days ago. Afrikaner, the chief, is with me, and every one is pleased to see him, and no less astonished to witness the effect of Divine grace manifesting itself in him and others who are with me. On my arrival here I received your letter of the thirty-first of July, 1818, and you may well conceive what my feelings were in recognizing the handwriting of my dear brother Alexander, whom I never expected to behold again in this world, and may not even as it is ; but I cannot describe my joy on hearing that he yet lives, not in a far distant land, but in the bosom of his nearest friends. When I think on this my soul seems winged to your habitation and mingling in your converse.

“The worthy Mr. Harvard, Methodist missionary from Ceylon, on his way to England, goes on board in three hours, and promises to take this with other letters. I also send with him some African curiosities to my dear friend Mr. Roby. I have just received letters from Miss Smith. The scene is changed. I have now abundant reason to believe that God will make her path plain to Africa. This I trust will be soon, for a missionary in this country without a wife is like a boat with one oar. A good missionary's wife can be as useful as her husband in the Lord's vineyard.

“Dr. Philip and Mr. Campbell are preparing for their journey into the interior, and have earnestly begged of me to accompany them as interpreter. I have consented, and we will, I think, proceed in a few weeks. Of late in this corner of hell the dry bones begin to shake, apostolic zeal begins to peep out, Government is favourable to missions and to the cause in this town, and we confidently look forward to a harvest of souls. Dr. Philip has got permission to build a chapel ; such a thing was never known before. Twice every Sabbath Divine service is held at the Orphan Chamber, when Messrs. Philip and Campbell preach. On the Sabbath a prayer-meeting is held in this house, also on the Wednesday evenings, when exhortations are given. The two directors are always present. There are many other meet-

ings in Dutch. Brother Evans preaches in Dutch to-night to slaves, and I have to engage on Sabbath. This you see is the old way and the only way to damp Satan's courage, and eventually gain victory. Pray for us all.

"Remember me to Mr. Brown. Tell him, after all that I have suffered, I am not tired but strengthened, and feel myself more a missionary than I ever was before in my life."

This visit of Afrikaner to the Cape was an event of great importance in more ways than one. In a striking and concrete manner it brought to the view of those who had authority and influence the fact that missionaries, instead of increasing political difficulties, may often help to solve them. Moreover the strikingly gentle and Christian deportment of Afrikaner and his followers, a man who had formerly been known as a public terror, greatly encouraged those who were holding forth the power of the gospel to regenerate the most unpromising characters.

The Governor himself was personally much interested with the visitors from Namaqualand, and when Afrikaner left to return home it was with many good wishes and substantial proofs of esteem. It was a curious coincidence that the hundred pounds sterling which had once been offered for his head as an outlaw, was eventually laid out by the Government in offerings of goodwill to be bestowed upon himself.

Afrikaner took a tearful farewell of his friend, but kept the hope of a speedy meeting in Bechwanaland, whither it had been determined that Moffat should go. The meeting took place, and Afrikaner again returned to Namaqualand, with a view to arrange the removal of his little tribe to the neighbourhood in which his beloved teacher was settling. It was not to be. Before he could carry out his plan, he was called away to eternal rest; his people got divided, and lost purpose and heart for an undertaking which required a measure of discipline under a strong leader.

"At last" (says Moffat in his own history) "our Wesleyan brethren nobly extended their efforts to Namaqualand. Their labours have been crowned with success, and I have watched their onward progress with as much interest as though I had been one of their number. The field being thus ably occupied, it was unnecessary for the London Missionary Society to send others, while the character of the country, with its scanty population, and the cry for missionaries to carry on the work in more important fields, influenced the Directors to leave that section of the missionary world to our Wesleyan brethren."

CHAPTER VI.

THE WIFE OF ROBERT MOFFAT.

1819.

MARY SMITH was born in the year 1795, a few months earlier than Robert Moffat, at New Windsor, which now forms part of Salford. Her father was a Scotchman, originally from Perthshire, who settled in England and married Mary Gray, of York, in the year 1792. Mary was their eldest child and only daughter. She had three brothers, one of whom, William, died at a comparatively early age. Another, John, became the pastor of a church near Manchester, but afterwards followed his sister's example and gave himself to foreign missionary work. He was for some years an ardent and faithful labourer at Madras, and his earthly career was brought to a sudden and mysterious close by the loss with all hands of a ship in which he was voyaging off the coast of Hindostan. The third brother, James, alone survived his sister, and has but recently died in the United States. He has left children and grandchildren who happily have imbibed the missionary spirit, and are entering into the labours of those who have set them an eminent example.

Both James Smith, of Dunkinfield, and his wife, were persons of strong piety, in which they stood upon common ground, though he was a staunch Nonconformist, and she an adherent of the Church of England. Their daughter, from her earliest years, walked in their steps. Her father followed the occupation of a nursery gardener, in which he prospered greatly, and at one time promised to be a wealthy man. By the foolishness of others he afterwards became much reduced in circumstances after his daughter's departure for South Africa. He never lost the respect and friendship or the practical aid and sympathy of those who had known him in more prosperous times, and valued him for his true worth of character.

Mary lived at Dunkinfield all her youth. The old house is still standing, but the extensive nurserygrounds have long ago been built over, and gone past recognition. She went to the Moravian school at Fairfield, and the years she spent there must have been very happy, judging from the way in which she was wont to dwell upon them in talking to her children in after times.

They were not only happy, but they were years full of sacred influence; and at Fairfield was fostered the strong sense of devotion to duty as a servant of the Cross, which helped to carry her through toils and difficulties of no ordinary kind, and made her a helpmeet indeed to her husband. There still lives a lady who remembers with affection her life at Fairfield with Mary Smith. It was the custom for each of the younger children to be placed under the special care of one of the elder girls, who was called her "little mother." Mary was "little mother" to one who afterwards became Mrs. J. S. Buckley, of Ashton, and the circumstance is connected with happy and blessed recollections. The following extract is taken from the Records of Albion Independent Chapel, Ashton-under-Lyne :

"The church had not been long formed when one of its members went out to live and labour among the heathen in South Africa. In 1819, Mary Smith, of the Dunkinfield Nursery, departed from the Kuruman, where she safely arrived, and was married to the Rev. Robert Moffat. Mr. Moffat was an occasional worshipper and communicant with the small company in Refuge Chapel, with which Miss Smith was connected. Her father was an old Independent, and was one of the fourteen who left Providence Chapel. One who saw her relates that when service was occasionally held in a carpenter's shed in Cricket's Lane, she was there, ever active and attentive to all. She often arranged the benches and other furniture of the place in order to reduce the discomfort to a minimum; found the hymn for strangers, and invited people to attend. The missionary spirit which was in her then has rendered her through a long, laborious, and honourable life, the worthy helpmeet of her husband, the well-known apostle of the Bechwanas."

The manner in which she became acquainted with her future husband has already been seen; the rest of her tale will be largely told by her own pen in these pages. The following letter was addressed by her to the parents of Robert Moffat, and will explain itself :

MANCHESTER, Dec. 16, 1818.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Doubtless you will be surprised to be addressed thus by an entire stranger: but though personally unknown, you are dear to me for the sake of your beloved son Robert. If you have received a letter from him lately you will perhaps know in what

relation I stand to him ; but as I think it very probable that your letter may have miscarried, I cannot but feel deeply anxious that you should know of his welfare. I received letters from him about ten days ago, dated April and May, 1818, in the former of which he states that he sent by the same opportunity a letter for you and also one for my father, but as this has never come to hand I fear that yours also may have met with some delay, if it is not entirely lost.

“ It is not only the probability of this circumstance which induces me to write to you, but also a desire to communicate to you that, after two years and a half of the most painful anxiety, I have, through the tender mercy of God, obtained permission of my dear parents to proceed, some time next spring, to join your dear son in his arduous work. This is what I by no means expected a week ago ; but God’s thoughts are not as our thoughts. When He arises, every mountain flows down at His presence. He has the hearts of all men in His hands, and can turn them as the rivers of water. So He has done with regard to my parents. Previous to the arrival of these last letters, my father had persisted in saying that I should never have his consent ; my dear mother has uniformly asserted that it would break her heart (as I have no sister, and she is far advanced in life) : notwithstanding all this they both yesterday calmly resigned me into the hands of the Lord, declaring they durst no longer withhold me.

“ The idea of parting for ever with my beloved family appears almost too much for myself. Sometimes I think I shall never get launched on the ocean before grief weighs me down ; but such are my convictions of duty, that I believe were I to remain here another year, it would then be out of my power to go, for I must sink under the weight of an accusing conscience, when I consider Robert’s peculiarly trying situation and the strong affection which he seems to bear to me. When he last wrote he was exceedingly well, very happy in his work, but quite alone, seldom sees a white face. The people are nearly all Namaquas, are very kind and affectionate to him.

“ He was about to take a journey still further north in search of a better situation. The chief and part of the people were going, and would have him with them. I have had a letter from a gentleman at the Cape saying that he was gone, and was expected to return the latter end of the year. It must be trying to parental feelings (as well as mine) to think of a dear child being alone in a strange land and among savages ; but let us remember that Abraham’s God is his God, that the Divine promise belongs eminently to him and his companions in self-denial : ‘ Lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’

“ He speaks of enjoying much of the Divine presence, and while exhibiting the truths of the gospel to the wild Namaquas, he feels the power of them on his own heart in a remarkable degree. I am sorry my father’s letter is lost, as I understand it was much more descriptive than mine, his thoughts naturally turning to our personal concerns when writing to me.”

At this juncture she was in Manchester, and to this circum-

stance we owe another letter which will show her strong sense of duty, and at the same time her intense affection for the parents between whom and herself there was not only the tie of natural relationship, but the strong bond of a kindred faith :

" December 18, 1818.

" I cannot but be anxious to know how you feel by this time. I hope you have not wished to recall that which you have resigned. No, I trust you are more and more convinced of the propriety of the act. I cannot describe to you the secret pleasure it gave me to see both you and my dear father give up in such a Christian-like manner. I always feared that if you did give me up it would be by a sort of compulsion, but when I viewed you with calmness declare that you saw it your duty and could no longer withhold from the work of the Lord whom He had a right to demand, I could not but exclaim, ' Is not this the finger of God ? ' What but a Divine power could have brought your spirits to what was so contrary thereto ; and I trust you will live to see abundant cause to rejoice that you were ever brought to do it. I dare venture to affirm that you will not be losers by it. You must ever remember, my dear mother, that the Lord never deprives us of our comfort, but He is ever ready to make it up by a greater degree of His own Divine consolations, if we seek these at His hands, and are willing to have the space filled up by Himself ; and surely you would be willing to be deprived of an earthly comfort, to have more of the consolations of the Spirit of God. For my own part, I have found it so much the more to be valued, that sometimes I have thought I could bear to be stripped of every earthly comfort if I might enjoy the Divine presence in a proportionate degree for everything, as I have under troubles of late.

" You will be well aware that the struggle in my own breast is very great ; yes, it is so much so, that I dare not reflect closely upon it. If I could rest, surely I should be tempted to do it on your account. But no, my convictions of duty are so strong, that were I to remain at home I should surely sink under the weight of an accusing conscience.

" When I went home last week it was with the intention of exerting myself to the utmost ; and if I could not prevail, I saw, I felt, that death must soon put an end to the conflict. But the battle was the Lord's. He brought me off more than conqueror by His own almighty arm. And now I think if ever I do land on Afric's shore, my soul will feel more sensibly than ever her obligations to active usefulness. Such a singular display of His care over me as I have had lately, surely calls loudly for active gratitude. And, O mother ! will it not gladden your heart if the Lord permit me to enter into His work ? I say, will it not gladden your heart that the Lord made you the mother of at least one child who was so highly honoured as to be an instrument in His hands, however humble, of doing something towards the conversion of the heathen ? O mother ! were I a mother, I should esteem it the greatest honour which could be conferred on me or my child. I should think it an ample compensation for all the self-denial I was called to exercise.

“ I think I need not fear that you doubt my natural affection, by thus leaving father and mother. No, surely my dear mother knows me better than that ; she is well aware of the pangs that my feeble nature will feel when the last hour arrives : surely her own will not be more violent ; nothing but Divine power can support me in such an hour. Often have I thought that it would be too mighty a struggle for my poor tabernacle to stand out, but I have the promise, ‘ My grace is sufficient for thee ; my strength is made perfect in thy weakness.’ ”

It was several months before a suitable opportunity to the Cape occurred. Passenger ships did not go at regular and frequent intervals as they do now. The following letter was written to her friend Miss Lees, of Manchester. Such unveilings of the heart as appear in this and in the previous letter are almost too sacred for the public eye, but at the distance of more than sixty years it is hoped that they may be an encouragement to some who are going through similar experiences now.

DUNKINFIELD NURSERY, *May 1, 1819.*

“ I sit down to write a few hasty lines to you this morning. I have uniformly made my complaints to you, and I often used to wonder when my complaining days would be over. I often used to think of a maxim of my old friend Mr. Bennett, that ‘ prayers and praises are sure concomitants.’ I thought surely my experience differed from any one else’s, for I groaned year after year for particular blessings, and I seemed as far from having obtained them as when I first began to pray. These reflections had never been so strong before as when I heard your dear pastor preach from the eighth verse of the ninety-ninth psalm. The sermon was so powerfully applied that I wept the whole of the time, as he described the various workings of my mind under that particular, ‘ thou answeredst them,’ and sent me away rejoicing with an assurance that my prayers would yet be answered. Shortly after, you know how that sweet sermon of Dr. Jack’s affected me, ‘ Faithful is he that promised ;’ and very shortly after this you know how wonderfully, I may say miraculously, some of my prayers were answered. This encouraged me to go on, and that passage was as powerfully applied as any ever was to my mind, ‘ Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.’ ”

“ I had still large requests to make ; still some of my most anxious desires appeared to be unnoticed. But I did not believe they were, though I was resigned and willing to wait the Lord’s time. Often when I had contemplated the separation from my family have I groaned in spirit ; often have I shed tears of wormwood and of gall to think that, when I was gone, my dear parents would not have one child to sit down with them at the table of the Lord ; that their eyes could no longer beam with pleasure on one of their offspring whom they had any reason to believe the Lord had made His own. Often had I poured out my soul to God, ‘ Oh ! could I but see the spiritual life of one of my dear brothers, I could go without half the anxiety.’ ”

And oh ! my dear friend, how shall I tell you ? Now I can depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the salvation of God for my dear brother John (so I have good reason to hope) ; yes, my tears, and sighs, and inward breathings are answered. He was last night proposed to the church. He has written several very pleasing letters to Mr. Sutcliffe. Does it not appear, in deed and of a truth, that we are now enjoying the smiles of our God ; does it not appear that He approves of our conduct, and if He takes away one child He gives another ? You know what it is to rejoice over a brother born ; but in proportion to the peculiarity of the case on account of my going, and the length of time we have been looking with deep anxiety to this event, in proportion our joy is greater. I know you will rejoice with me, and as you had long heard of my complaints, you shall hear my thanksgiving."

About the same time she wrote to a friend in Sheffield, Mrs. Greaves :

"With grateful emotions I sit down to acknowledge the receipt of the most bountiful present which you and Mr. Greaves have made me. My parents and I have just now been examining them, and we are very much gratified ; the whole of them appear so well calculated for usefulness, and some of them such beautiful articles. I can answer for Mr. Moffat's gratitude when he views them on a foreign shore, if such a time should come, and I dare venture to say that benevolence so pure will not be forgotten by him at a throne of grace. I feel unable to express to you how much I felt on receiving the parcel, and reading your very kind letter. I could not but admire the love which you and your dear partner manifested to that great cause which the Lord has made peculiarly my own, and which now lies nearer to my heart than any other. I could not but reverence the humility which induced you to say that you regretted not having had the privilege of my company at Sheffield, and shrink into the dust of self-abasement to see how much better an opinion you had formed of me than was my due, and which I was apprehensive, had you had a more intimate acquaintance with me, would have been in some degree altered. As for my qualifications for the noble employment which it appears probable is to devolve upon me, I am daily led to see more and more of my own weakness and insufficiency for such an undertaking ; and were it not for a persuasion that the Lord often makes use of the meanest instruments to bring about important designs, and declares in His Word, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,' I durst in nowise presume to venture. But having (according to my own internal conviction and the opinion of many pious and prudent friends) a clear and loud call to leave my native land and enter into this arduous work, I would humbly follow the leading of His providence, counting it the highest honour which could be conferred upon me in this vain world. Yea, highly favoured indeed of God should I consider myself if I might but be permitted to smooth the rugged path of one of those dear men who have given up all for His

sake, so that through my feeble aid and assistance he may give himself more devotedly to the work.

"Sometimes, indeed, when I contemplate the last painful hour when I must bid adieu to all my dear friends, my family, but above all my dear mother, now far advanced in years, my feeble nature faints, my tears will flow, the enemy of my soul and the destroyer of my peace would then persuade me that it cannot be my duty to go; but these vile insinuations I feel assured proceed from my weak, treacherous heart and the father of lies, who had too long inclined me to listen to these things by the transforming himself into an angel of light to overcome.

"Yes, my dear Mrs. G., through the goodness of God I am not now entirely ignorant of his devices. He knows my weak side, and as he has been foiled in every other attempt (though no praise to me) he often assaults me in this way: a beloved and affectionate mother, bowing under age and infirmity, her sick and dying bed are often pictured on my imagination in the most gloomy colours, and the reflection that she will not have her daughter to cheer by kind attention those gloomy scenes, overwhelms me with sorrow. But I would chase away my tears and sighs, bid every anxious thought begone, cheerfully walk in the thorny path appointed for me, and in humble faith commend her and my dear father into His hands who can and will be more unto them than all they are called to sacrifice. Great condescension has been displayed by my heavenly Father to make my path plain. For two years and a half I have suffered much from perplexity, not knowing what to do, continually harassed with a fear that I had acted sinfully in suffering Mr. M. to go alone, as he declared he could not reconcile his mind to taking another; and from various concurring providences I feel a degree of assurance that I have been out of the path of duty; at the same time the circumstance of my not going to him appears to have been overruled for good by Infinite Wisdom.

"As to my health, about which you appear tenderly solicitous, it is the opinion of a medical man whom I have consulted that the climate will agree with my constitution. The delicate often survive the strong and robust in that country; but this I would leave with Him, who will grant me just as much as is needful. . . .

"Now, my dear Mrs. G., I must draw to a close. I must say farewell. Oh, think of me when on the stormy ocean, when on the burning sands of Africa, and when you think, oh let your heart be lifted up to Him who ruleth all. You have promised me your prayers, and I most earnestly ask them for myself and my dear friend, that we may be found faithful and diligent, and never be weary in the work of the Lord."

It was at last arranged for Mary Smith to sail for the Cape under the care of the Rev. Mr. Beck, a minister of the Dutch Church, and his wife. She bade her mother a life-long farewell, and, accompanied by her father, made the journey to London

by coach. There were the customary delays in the date of sailing, days grew into weeks; her father, too, had to return home, and she found herself, in a manner, alone in the great city, but at the same time among friends in the best sense of the term. Mr. Lewis, the pastor of Islington Chapel, and his wife did their best to cheer the young girl, and their kindness and that of other friends in Islington ever remained a grateful memory.

The many, almost daily, letters of this period are not for a public memoir. In them the whole tenderness of a dutiful childhood and youth culminate, and reveal an anguish of soul and a conflict of faith of which only a rare nature could be capable. The following short note is characteristic :

“LONDON, August 13, 1819.

“MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have sent you a small token of affection. I thought it would be better calculated to communicate pleasure and comfort to your heart than any article of dress. As for having my portrait taken, I cannot now, as my father is leaving, and I should have to pay for it myself; and that you know would not do. Whatever I possess now I must husband well, remembering that I am now supported more peculiarly out of the sacred treasury. Oh! may I ever keep this in mind, and be a faithful steward. O my dear mother! do be happy, as you value my peace of mind, the honour of religion, and my credit in the world. Do not let me be reflected upon for want of affection to the best of mothers. You know it is not want of affection. Oh! do not allow the world to think so. Let us prove to the world that our blessed religion has power to soothe us under every distress.”

It was not till the twenty-fourth of August that she left London, and then only to go to Gosport on her way to Cowes, where the passengers were to embark. At Gosport she was the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Bogue. Nearly a fortnight later she writes her last letter from English ground.

“COWES, ISLE OF WIGHT, September 7, 1819.

“MY DEAR PARENTS,—Having received an order from Captain Scott to go on board to-day, I sit down to address a few lines to you, which will most probably be concluded on board the *British Colony*. My feelings are very solemn at this time, but calm. I anticipate much pleasure in the voyage. We have plenty of good books, work and pleasant company. I begin to like Mr. Beck very much. I hope to derive much advantage from his society. I believe he is a very learned man. Mr. White and family have increased much in kindness to me, and I have not felt so awkward of late as I did at first.

“Having a longing desire to spend another comfortable ordinance Sabbath with friends for whom I felt some peculiar attachment, I proposed to Mr. B. to go to Gosport if the wind did not change. He

readily entered into it, and accompanied me in the packet on Sabbath morning. We spent a happy day, heard the old doctor preach twice, and a student once. I sat down with them and attended a church meeting. The doctor and his lady and daughter all gave us a hearty welcome. We stopped all night and returned yesterday.

"I could not but feel a melancholy pleasure in reflecting both on Sabbath afternoon and last evening, at the missionary prayer-meeting here, that my own dear people and family were engaged in the same way. I could not but hope that I was at both of those seasons remembered by some of them. Oh beg my friends to think of me at those times. For a season I am going to be shut out from these ordinances. Oh pray that the God of ordinances may be with me.

"Now, my dear and beloved parents, I commend you to God, believing that He will preserve you in these troublous times. I sometimes think you will be shortly coming after me. Do not be anxious about me. The Lord is going with me. Do not be long before you write to me at the Cape—conceive how anxious I shall be to hear; and be sure to send good, full letters, or they will only set my teeth on edge. The wind is quite unfavourable, but the captain is tired out, and we are to sail at twelve to-day."

"GOSPORT, *September 15, 1819.*

"MY DEAR MADAM,—After having had your lovely and interesting daughter an inmate of our family, and enjoyed an opportunity of developing her character and beholding her unfeigned and exalted piety and zeal, I cannot but feel deeply for you and Mr. Smith, on being called to part with her to such a distance. Great must have been the trial, the conflict must have been severe; all the parental feelings must have risen up in direct opposition to her plans and wishes. The sacrifice you have made of them is great, but not too great for Him who gave up Himself for you. 'The best child is not too good for God.' He gave her to you, and He has demanded her back again, and He can and will be better to you both than ten such daughters, lovely and excellent as she is. His gracious presence can more than supply hers, and if He withdraws the nether springs He can make the upper springs to overflow and abound. He has highly honoured you in giving you such a daughter, and by calling her to fill such a high post on earth as that of a Christian missionary, the highest she could fill. . . .

"While with us Miss Smith was in excellent health and spirits, looked well and was cheerful, and in a very happy and suitable frame of mind. She sailed last Thursday, and is, we suppose, by this time safely across the Bay of Biscay, as the wind has been favourable.

"Your truly sympathizing friend,

"CHARLOTTE BOGUE."

CHAPTER VII.

ROBERT MOFFAT VISITS THE CAPE.

1819.

IN the year 1816 the Missions in South Africa had fallen into a state of grievous disorder. The number of stations was large, and they were scattered far apart. Some of the men who had been sent out had proved themselves unworthy of their trust, and had not maintained even an ordinary standard of Christian conduct. On the arrival of Robert Moffat and his colleagues they were astounded to find themselves associated in the service of the Society with men who had brought shame on the very name of Christian, and whose reputations were a by-word to the ungodly.

A correspondence with the Directors followed on this and some other subjects. They were slow to open their eyes to the unwelcome truth, and were disposed to regard the representations which had been made to them as the result of prejudice and discontent.

They were the more predisposed to take this view of the case because the missionaries were at the same time pointing out another of their difficulties—the smallness of their stipends. The Directors seemed unable to understand why men who had given up home and friends for the sake of preaching the gospel to the heathen should be so open to ordinary human weakness as to find it irksome, if not difficult, to keep up a position of respectability on twenty-five or thirty pounds a year, which was less than half what any ordinary mechanic could earn at the Cape. Correspondence, as is often the case, did not mend the matter much. The chasm between the Directors and their missionaries grew wider. It was for Robert Moffat a happy circumstance that he was away in Namaqualand, too far off to take an active part in the strife which led to three of the colleagues with whom he sympathized retiring from the service of the Society. Happily, too, when he arrived at

the Cape on his return from Namaqualand he found that the Directors were sending two deputies—John Campbell of Kingsland, and Dr. Philip—to inquire into these matters, and to set things in order. This measure saved the South African Mission. The Directors had made a good choice. Mr. Campbell's work was temporary, but Dr. Philip was to take up his position at the Cape as the Society's agent or superintendent.

It would be difficult to measure the good that has resulted from the work of Dr. Philip. Perhaps a test of the depth and reality of the influence he exerted is to be found in the fact that for many years he was the best-hated man in the Colony—hated, that is, by those who were not the friends of the natives. To the Cape he was in those days, in his championship of justice to the natives, very much what Dr. Colenso was later on in Natal; and he was more fortunate than the latter in never having handicapped himself with excursions into the regions of Biblical criticism. He united a clear and scholarly mind with a will as firm as the granite of his native land, and he fought the battle of the native races at heavy odds. Now that the tide has turned, and that there is a strong Colonial party standing where Dr. Philip once stood all but alone but for a few trusty friends, some men may have forgotten what he did. His record is on high, and can never be forgotten there.

The members of the Deputation set themselves to remedy the evils which had worked so much havoc; and Moffat soon saw that there was no reason for him to do otherwise than to continue his work in connection with the Society, though, as he says in a letter to his parents at this time, "My determination was, whether I continued with or left the Society, to return to the heathen beyond the limits of the Colony."

Men like Philip and Moffat, both devoted to the service of their Master, could not be very far away from each other in personal brotherly feeling. The latter, however, had a stout Nonconformist objection to the principle of a superintendency. He protested against it from the first as "putting Pope into new clothes." It was well that the remoteness of the Bechwana Mission practically isolated it from the range of the doctor's *régime*; and after his retirement from the duties of his office in old age no successor was appointed. The wisdom of this is an open question.

The Deputation was already in Cape Town when Moffat arrived there with Afrikaner. After many conferences with him, it seemed good not only that his services should be transferred to the Bechwana country, but that he should accompany Campbell and Philip on a journey of inspection to the stations in the eastern part of the Colony and in Kafirland. As this journey involved a

probable absence of about twelve months, it was a trial of faith to him. He was expecting the arrival of his bride, and it seemed hard that she should have to land in a strange country and to find none of her own to welcome her.

“On these accounts” (he says) “nothing could have incited me to take this journey but a sense of my duty which I owe to Him in whose service I am engaged. Dr. Philip and Mr. Campbell laid before me the valuable aid my service would render them on their important tour. I consider this a sufficient cause to take up my cross and to follow Jesus. This is my comfort, that the Lord is her refuge, and she will find numerous affectionate friends in the Cape who will receive her with open arms. During my stay in the Cape I enjoyed the longed-for privilege of hearing a few English sermons from Dr. P. and Mr. C. I also preached occasionally in Dutch both to Christians and heathen—or properly, to white and black.”

CHAPTER VIII.

ARRIVAL OF MARY SMITH AT THE CAPE.

1819.

THE Deputation had a prosperous journey, travelling, as everybody did then, in ox waggons, and visiting the line of stations which lay along through the eastern districts as far as Bethelsdorp. Drastic measures were adopted, healthy reforms effected, and the Missions were put upon a new footing. At Bethelsdorp the party found its further progress effectually barred. War with the Kafirs had broken out, and there was no way to visit Kaffraria. This was a providential circumstance for Moffat. Dr. Philip, having no further work to keep him in the eastern province, returned to Cape Town, taking Moffat with him, who had thus the unspeakable happiness of being able in person to welcome his Mary when she first landed on the shores of Africa.

“CAPE TOWN, Dec. 8, 1819.

“MY DEAR PARENTS,—From this far-distant land I sit down this morning to address you, being informed that a vessel is to sail at two o'clock to-day for England. Before I proceed, however, I must warn you not to expect me to write an interesting letter, as the change of scene and circumstances which has burst upon me renders my mind confused and agitated. I will begin by bearing testimony to the goodness of that God who brought me out from my father's house to this land of heathen darkness, to which my eyes and my heart have been so long directed. He has granted us delightful weather all the voyage, and made me with His own presence unspeakably calm and happy ever since I embarked. . . .

“Thus you see my God has delivered me from the perils of the sea, which are truly great, such as no heart can conceive but those who have been there. I have enjoyed excellent health all the way, excepting my headache, which has been very bad for the last two months. I had good spirits all the time. I suppose none was more cheerful than I. Our captain kept us well, but I cannot say we were very agreeable company, there being one continued scene of jangling

but I generally managed to steer pretty clear. We had Divine service every Sabbath day, when the weather would permit, in the cabin, but not on deck. The captain is unfavourable to these things. Mr. Beck paid me every necessary attention. From some of the passengers I received the most respectful attentions. My fellow-passengers pronounced me the fittest person on board to go into the interior—I bore everything so well both mentally and bodily. You will not, my dear parents, suspect me of want of affectionate solicitude about you when I tell you I was so happy. No, surely you know me better; but I did not think it incompatible with that cheerfulness that reigned in my breast sometimes to weep and to mourn when I thought of you and each of my dear brothers (not to mention my numerous friends in England). I do confess that often during the silent hours of darkness, when the angry billows beat against my cabin with tremendous roar, at such moments I turned my thoughts to you and your dear dwelling. Then my imagination would rove till my heart sickened and floods of tears drenched my face. There is something inconceivably cutting in the reflection (to nature) that for many years at least there is an ocean between us, and that personal intercourse has ceased, but even from these piercing reflections I was enabled to derive consolation. It was for the cause of the Redeemer I had forsaken all. This I accounted my highest honour, and it was this consideration that enabled me to take down my harp from the willows and tune it to His praise.

“Having parted from you all, my affection felt weaned from the world; and there being an uncertainty whether on my arrival here my dear friend would be alive, I felt prepared for anything. But oh! my cup of happiness seems almost full; here I have found him all that my heart could desire, except his being almost worn out with anxiety, and his very look makes my heart ache. Our worthy friend Melville met me on board, and conducted me to his house, where a scene took place such as I never wish to experience again. We have received each other from the Lord, and are happy. . . .

“Moffat will conclude this letter, and I will write very soon more particularly; my time is now expired, and I can say no more. But, mother, be happy, and praise God on my account.”

Robert Moffat to Mr. and Mrs. Smith of Dukinfield.

“DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—I can now with more reason than in my former letter address you with the endearing title of parents. It would be in vain for me to call to mind the different scenes through which I have passed, but more particularly what I felt when the sound of your beloved daughter’s arrival had reached me. It was to me nothing less than life from the dead. My prayers answered, the promises which had long been my refuge were now fulfilled. My prayers in that respect are now turned to praise, and surely never in my life has the hand of God been so singularly manifested for good.

“Mary, my own dear Mary, is now far distant from a land endeared to her, being the place which gave her birth, and which still contains

a circle of friends who are entwined round her heart ; but more especially endeared as the residence of you, dearer than all besides. She is now separated from those scenes and from you, but let this comfort you, that, although in a land of strangers, she is under the care of our ever-present God, and united to one who speaks as he feels when he promises to be father, mother, and husband to Mary, and will never forget the sacrifice you have made in committing to his future care your only daughter.

“When I last wrote you, from Swellendam, the affairs of the mission were almost buried in a cloud of gloom, which obliged me to be silent on that subject ; but how do I rejoice to be now able to tell you that those seasons of sadness are in a great measure turned into joy. The gloom is dispersed ; but ah ! shall I tell you that from the general wreck a few, and only a few, have survived the sad catastrophe.

“We were disappointed in our intended journey into the interior from the state of the Kafirs, now in a considerable measure appeased. Nothing but the gospel will make the Kafirs good neighbours. We were no farther than Theopolis, from which place we returned direct to Cape Town. The Deputation having destined me to superintend the mission at Lattakoo, and having empowered me to set to rights the affairs of our missions in that quarter, Mr. Campbell thought seriously of returning to England, having done all that was essential to be done by him in Africa ; but the whole depended on the early arrival of Mary. He is now completely engaged, and I have some reason to think that he will accompany us to Lattakoo, for he is now all on fire about going. The warm season is approaching, but I intend to proceed in a few weeks with or without Mr. Campbell. Dr. Philip will remain for the present to settle other important affairs.”

They were married on the twenty-seventh of December, 1819, in St. George's Church. Dr. Philip took the place of the absent father ; and the Melvilles, ever ready when an act of kindness was to be done, opened their house to the company. Writing to her brother John a few days later, Mary Moffat says :

“There was an expression in my father's letter which rather grieved me : it was that in one sense I was dead to them. Now I think they ought not to consider me so. Surely it ought to afford consolation that I am now united to a devoted servant of God, one who counts not his life dear to himself. They can hear of me, and I trust that they will hear that I am of some little use in the world. Is not this better, to be a succourer of those who are labouring, than to lie down in the grave without having done anything towards the building of the temple ? I trust you will endeavour to remove this impression. Cheer their hearts, and never indulge any melancholy fears respecting me. I can assure you every provision is made for my comfort which is possible, and the Deputation afford Moffat every facility. At the same time, I wish ever to be reasonable in my expectations and cheerfully to take up the cross.

“I find missionaries are greatly despised here, and indeed it is not to be wondered at after the conduct of some, but I think I can say—

‘All hail reproach ! and welcome shame !
If thou remember me.’

Before I bid adieu to home with all its delights, I calculated upon a life of hardships, toil, shame, and reproach, and now my soul can bid it welcome for the sake of Christ.”

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNEY TO LATTAKOO.

1820.

EARLY in the year 1820 the missionary party started from Cape Town. It consisted of John Campbell and the Moffats. When once they had left the fertile vallies and lovely mountain scenery of the Breede and Hex Rivers, they had to traverse a comparatively desolate region for some hundreds of miles. In the middle of this they came to the place on which is now found the village of Beaufort West, about three hundred and fifty miles from Cape Town. Here there was as yet a house or two only. The newly appointed magistrate and the clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church were the principal inhabitants: the latter, a Mr. Taylor, one of Moffat's late colleagues. Passing Beaufort West, they in the course of a day or two crossed what was then the Colonial boundary and advanced into the Bushman country, a dreary waste extending to the southern bank of the Orange River. Here, after seven weeks of ox-waggon travelling, they found themselves about six hundred miles from Cape Town. This journey can now be accomplished by railway in a couple of days. It is impossible to describe the curious sensations which fill the minds of those who have had occasion many times to make this journey in the old style, when, for the first time seated in a comfortable railway carriage, they glide over plains which can scarcely ever be anything but monotonous, and mark hour by hour the spots which used to be the night's bivouac after a long and toilsome day's march; for the line is almost identical with the trade and missionary route of the old days.

The travellers crossed the Orange River without much difficulty, as it was low. This was its normal condition. Although a stream of a thousand miles in length, rising not very far from the shore of the Indian Ocean, and crossing the continent to fall into the

Atlantic, it is for the most part shallow enough to be fordable for the greater part of the year. This did not prevent it in years of exceptional rainfall from being a serious obstacle at times, as will be noticed by the reader who follows this narrative. For months the great channel would show a narrow stream brawling over a small part of the broad stony bed ; but when the river rose, as it did sometimes, suddenly, a muddy flood would fill it up to the very top of the steep banks twenty or thirty feet high, covering even great willow-trees growing on those banks, and sometimes spreading beyond and over the adjacent levels.

Two or three days' north of the river lay Griqua Town, and here the party made a halt for a time. Kuruman—or Lattakoo, as it was first called—was a hundred miles further. The missionaries Hamilton and Read were already there, but had scarcely established their footing.

“BEAUFORT WEST, *Feb. 17, 1820.*

“MY BELOVED PARENTS,—Having by the good providence of God been brought thus far on our journey, been mercifully preserved from all dangers in this wild and barren country, and enjoying good health, I feel it incumbent upon me to write by every opportunity, conscious that soon my opportunities may be very few of sending letters to the Cape. We have experienced much of our Heavenly Father's love while traversing the barren sandy desert. We are all well, and, excepting a little headache, my health is extraordinary. It is true I feel a little feeble and languid in the very heat of the day, but am not sickly as I always was at home in warm weather. I never was more vigorous than I am now in the cool of the day ; and when I consider the manner in which we live, just eating and sleeping when it is convenient, I am truly astonished. It is frequently one or two o'clock when we outspan. I like waggon travelling better than I expected. It is not so fatiguing. I have had none of those hardships which I looked for. Our table is generally well spread, better than we shall look for when settled as poor missionaries ; this is partly owing to Mr. Campbell being with us, and partly owing to Mr. Moffat's being well known in the country, and receiving liberal presents. At a Mr. De Vos's, where we last stopped a few days, at the Hex River, we experienced the most unmerited kindness, though they had never seen one of our party before. I never met with so much hospitality in my life as I have witnessed in Africa, though the Dutch are considered fond of saving. We have met with many of the descendants of the French refugees. They originally took refuge in one of the deep vallies near the Paarl, where, as a people, they still reside ; the name of the place is Frans Hoek ; but, as might be expected, they are now a little scattered. What I have seen of them are remarkably nice people, and retain the savour of the gospel among them.

“I could not but feel a reverential regard when I saw them, on remembering that their forefathers were cruelly persecuted for the gospel's sake.

“ I trust you will have received a letter from Robert, dated the 31st ultimo, at the Hex River. Since that time we have been in a perfect desert called the Karroo, and in the last ten days never saw but one house till last night, about two hours' ride from here. For eight of those days we have been on the banks of the Gamka River. The principal features of the desert through which we have passed are its mountains and rivers. The banks of the river are thick with the long-thorned mimosa, which is certainly very beautiful. In some places I have seen the old tree fallen with age, and from the root a young flourishing large tree, and both attached to each other. There are few other things except succulent plants, and everything in the desert, except the mimosas, has a blue and yellow sickly hue with the salt-petre. We have scarcely seen any grass for a fortnight. Mr. C. remarked that we had need put on our spectacles to look for a blade of it. The water is a little brack, but not much. The roads have been very good indeed—in many parts as fine as any turnpike-road in England. It is a very public road ; we have met with a great number of waggons from Sneeuwberg and other parts of the interior. Amongst others we met poor Pienaar, the son of the man whom Afrikaner murdered. M. told him that he was restored to favour and had been at the Cape, but he said very little. Meeting with so many Boers on the way affords a fine opportunity of distributing tracts, with which they seemed well pleased, for they seldom see a book, except their old, massy, finely-gilt family Bibles, kept more as a piece of furniture than for use. I think I never saw so many fine-looking Bibles in my life as since I came to Africa. They seem to have a particular pride in them.

“ Some persons thought it imprudent of us to travel at this season of the year ; but from all we see and hear, we think it by far the best, notwithstanding the heat, for the rivers we have to cross are at present chiefly without water, except a little stream the same as your river in summer ; but the beds of them in some places are very broad, and we might have to stop a fortnight together on the banks till the water was gone, and then the ground is like a quagmire.

“ We have seen no beasts of prey, though we have been in their dominions. M. saw the footmarks of one about a mile from where we outspanned one day ; and at the farmhouse we saw last week we were informed that sixty lions had been killed in six years in that neighbourhood. At that farm we saw two tame ostriches, which to our great surprise devoured pebble-stones like bread. It is said they will eat iron or any hard substance. I have seen these huge uncomely-looking birds at a distance running on the mountains, and have often walked in their footsteps.

“ Thus you see the promises have been fulfilled in our experience. The sun has not smitten us by day, nor the moon by night, and the beasts of the field have been in league with us. Our God has been our sun and our shield, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. We all enjoy excellent spirits, and all our company is cheerful and pleasant, and everything goes on well.

“ We have got two men and betwixt twenty and thirty oxen from

Bethelsdorp. They are just arrived after a month's journey, but they came very slowly. The oxen are what they left there on the last journey.

"The place where we now are is the newly-formed district where our missionary Taylor has accepted of a church—which, by-the-bye, is only a room in a farmhouse, with two beds in it. I have been in many odd-looking places of worship, but never saw one like that. There are only about six houses in the place, and the Landdrost's is one of them. He is a Scotchman, a Mr. Baird. He visited our tent on our arrival here, and courteously invited us to his house to eat, which we have done now for four days. We go to every meal, and then return to the waggons. He is remarkably friendly, and affords every facility for getting what we want. He supplies us plentifully with delicious fruit from his garden, though we eat it three times a day at his house. He speaks well of Mr. Taylor, and says that a minister is a needful auxiliary to the magistrate here.

"He showed us a plan of the intended town. It is a fine fertile spot, bounded on one side by the Gamka, and on the other by the dry river. He intends to bring the water down the main street, and to have trees planted on both sides. They are going to build a shed for a temporary church until they get the other built. From all that we can see and hear, it appears that Mr. Taylor may have great opportunities of doing good. They have the law and the prophets, but they are as ignorant as the heathen themselves. They are very much scattered. Mr. Taylor is now visiting his flock, which I hear will be a month's journey; they live so very remote. This is a disappointment to our people, as they expected to have got much information from him.

"Mr. Anderson is well spoken of here. The Landdrost is sending him by us a little coffee and sugar as a present. There is a half-yearly fair established here, and the people at Griqua Town bring their stuff to sell, and are highly spoken of. We leave this place to-day for Griqua Town, which is ten days' comfortable journey from here, good roads, plenty of water the most of the way, and a fine moon, which is valuable to African travellers.

"MARY MOFFAT."

Though on their way to Lattakoo, it was by no means certain that they would be allowed to remain there. In a letter to his parents Robert Moffat explains this :

"I think I mentioned in my former letter that we were preparing to go and reside at Lattakoo, expecting to be accompanied by Mr. Campbell. It pleased the Lord, however, at first to allow these our expectations to be baffled, for when we were almost ready to set off the Colonial Government sent a negative to a memorial on the subject. Their political, though very inapplicable views, served them as a sufficient reason to hinder me. I may here remark that the Governor has been for this some time imperious on me to become their missionary, and proceed to Kafirland, and had I consented to this they would have

jumped at me ; but because I would not agree to their proposal for conscience' sake, however encouraging their offers were, they seemed to make a necessity of my accepting it by barring my prospects. This threw us into a little confusion, for Mr. Campbell was determined to go, and that was deemed by others both imprudent and impracticable without I were to go with him ; and to undertake such a long journey in the heat of the season without a hope of remaining, appeared to have its difficulties, considering my situation. We, however (I trust divinely directed), have come to a conclusion that I should accompany Mr. Campbell in the place of Dr. Philip, who should remain at the Cape to set to right other important affairs relating to the missions with the Government. Of course prudence and advice dictated to me the propriety of taking Mrs. Moffat with me on the journey. In many respects it was preferable to her remaining in Cape Town, it being much healthier in the country, and there is after all, I may say, a probability of our remaining at Lattakoo. We accordingly left the Cape about a month ago, and travelled by Stellenbosch, the Paarl, and Tulbagh. We are now near the limits of the Colony opposite to Griqua Town. It has been very warm, the thermometer as high as 96° in the shade ; this and a constant sunshine tans us all like gipsies.

"It is astonishing that you are at this time shivering in the beams of the same sun which drives us to take refuge to the shadow of a rock or bush. We have had a tolerable supply of water, though we have travelled through a country the most desert. I am happy to say that Mary stands the journey amazingly well ; she takes everything as she finds it, and encounters with ease what you would term difficulties. She has several times asserted that she never enjoyed better health than she has done since she came to Africa. Nay, I am sometimes astonished to see her possessed of such good spirits at times when human nature is spent, for we have our hardships.

"Mr. Baird's kindness is astonishing. As we are complete strangers to this part of the country, he has provided us with two guides, who will cross the Bushman country with us. We intend to depart to-day. And what is very wonderful, a few people have arrived from Bethelsdorp whom we sent for previous to our leaving the Cape. Had they been a day later we should have been gone. All things seem to work together for the furtherance of the journey."

CHAPTER X.

SOJOURN AT GRIQUA TOWN.

1820.

THE Moffats had gone thus far in uncertainty about their real position. The Governor had as yet withheld his assent to their settling at Lattakoo. They walked by faith. In a few weeks they continued their journey from Griqua Town with John Campbell. It was intended that Robert Moffat should take the place of James Read, who was to return to one of the Colonial stations. On their arrival at Lattakoo John Campbell went on to the north-east to visit the Bahurutse, a tribe two hundred miles distant, about whom much had been heard in consequence of their friendly relations with the Batlaping. He took with him Read, leaving the Moffats at Lattakoo to make the acquaintance of the people there. This journey to the Bahurutse country was really a surprising feat at the time. Campbell was a man with little physical endowment for playing the part of a pioneer explorer; but he was a simple and heroic soul, who went straight on wherever he saw duty, and left all troublesome questions to be settled by the Master he served.

He returned from the Bahurutse with a determination to press their claims for the early planting of a mission among them, and this object was kept in view until the convulsions of a few years later drove this and much else out of reach. The Bahurutse still exist as a tribe, though in vassalage to the Transvaal Boers, and their spiritual wants are ministered to by worthy men of a German Missionary Society.

When Campbell got back to Kuruman, he and the Moffats made an excursion westward to the scattered villages of the Batlaro, another Bechwana tribe, an offshoot of the Bahurutse. They had found their way down to the neighbourhood of the Batlaping, and were living on the border of the Kalahari desert.

These were the people with whom Moffat had some slight intercourse before he left Namaqualand. Returning from the Batlaro, the unwelcome news reached them from the Cape that the desired permission had not been obtained ; and as Mr. Campbell had now done all that he had to do, and was leaving, there was no alternative but for the Moffats to turn their steps southwards, which they did with heavy hearts. Read's transfer to the Cape Colony was still to be carried out, so that Hamilton, not for the first or the last time, was left alone at Lattakoo. At Griqua Town a fresh message from the Colony met the travellers ; the Government had yielded, and the way was now open to the Moffats to carry out their dearest wish.

"LATTAKOO, SOUTH AFRICA, *April 8, 1820.*

"MY BELOVED FATHER AND MOTHER,—Now that I am here, and when I look back on the day on which I left my father's house in full confidence that my heavenly Father would go with me, I am astonished. I was only seven months 'twixt Dukinfield and Lattakoo, and never met with one disaster. What reason have you or we to adore that God who has heard our prayers, and has gone before me and made all things pleasant and comfortable? Yes, my dear parents, and in addition to all other favours, He has brought me to that place which, of all others in the world, was first fixed upon my heart as a place and a people amongst whom I should love to dwell and lend a helping hand to the work, nearly six years ago, when hearing our friend Mr. Campbell in Manchester. It was then I first dared, with tears in my eyes and an overflowing heart, to breathe the petition—Oh, that I might spend my days at Lattakoo ! This doubtless was noticed by a heart-searching God, and so here am I. I cannot tell you what I felt on approaching the spot, when I took a retrospect of all that had passed to bring me here. I could not but exclaim, Is not this the finger of God? You can hardly conceive how I feel when I sit in the house of God, surrounded with the natives ; though my situation may be despicable and mean indeed in the eyes of the world, I feel an honour conferred upon me which the highest of the kings of the earth could not have done me ; and add to this seeing my dear husband panting for the salvation of the people with unabated ardour, firmly resolving to direct every talent which God has given him to their good and His glory. I am happy, remarkably happy, though the present place of my habitation is a single vestry-room, with a mud wall and a mud floor. It is true our sorrows and cares we must have, and, in a degree, have them now from existing circumstances at the station ; but is it not our happiness to suffer in this cause? It is one of the trials of missionaries to bear such long silences from their friends. Poor Mrs. Helm has not had a letter for five years ! I long to hear from you, to know how you all are, but do not expect till the people return from the fair at Beaufort, which will be the latter end of May. Many Bootsuanas, as well as Griquas, are gone this time. I hope you are perfectly easy about me, and do not consider me dead or

lost. I wrote to you from Beaufort. We arrived at Griqua Town on the 13th of March. I did not find things there quite as good as expectation, but must say great things have been done. The indolence of the people is a formidable obstacle in the way of civilization. There are some, however, who do well, and some of the places belonging to the rich captains assume the appearance of English farms. Decent houses, a waggon before the door, plenty of oxen, poultry, dogs, &c., about, and good cultivated ground, and very respectably clothed; they make good appearance at the church, which is often full, and it is about the size of the old preaching-room at Salford.

“I forgot to say how we got over the Orange River. It was but very low, and all our waggons were over in half an hour. This will appear to you a happy circumstance, when I tell you at the same time last year Mrs. Hamilton was nine weeks waiting on the other side, and one week in the act of getting over with one waggon! Some parts of this time the rain was descending in such torrents that she could not tell whether the waggon was in the river or out of it. It is a majestic stream, and on the banks are woods of the mimosa and a species of willow. There is a greater variety of greens than I have seen since I came to Africa, and much more pleasing to the eye. We travelled along the banks three days before we crossed. We were met with oxen and men from Griqua Town, they having heard of our approach. After spending a week there, we proceeded to this place, four long days' journey. I do not recollect being so fatigued since I left the Cape. We were obliged to make long stages on account of there being no water between. The last outspan place was the source of the Kuruman River. It is a vast rock, which appears to have been terribly convulsed some time or other, forming curious caves, and on every side the most beautiful water that ever I saw (except at Greenfield) gushing out. I went into the principal cave that is accessible, and went nearly knee-deep in water as clear as crystal. The top of the cave is lined with bats, and in some directions we heard waters rushing like a torrent. The sound came along the subterraneous passages. I should have imagined that a mighty river would have flowed from such a spring, but it is very small. The country between Griqua Town and here abounds in fine-looking grass, but not good; in low mountains, but few trees.

“On our entrance to this place I was pleased. I thought the landscape resembled that of England, the cornfields and gardens being very pleasing, and here and there trees scattered; trees are not seen in general in Africa, except on the banks of the rivers. I have not yet seen a wood equal to the one above the Nursery.

“I think there is already timber there superior to any I have seen in the uncultivated parts of Africa. Upon the whole, as a country, I am greatly disappointed. It is my opinion that the new settlers will be deceived if they expect a fat land. Were I choosing a country, either for a comfortable livelihood or pleasure, it should be old England still. The extreme scarcity of water, and in many parts firewood, render people's comfort very precarious. If the periodical rains fail

they sometimes reap less than they sow. In this part everything that is sown must be greatly assisted with water, or it would do no good at all. The cattle are sent to different outposts where there is water. The source of the Kuruman is the principal place, and there they are subject to the depredations of the Bushmen, who are very daring indeed. The cattle are watched by Bootsuanas and some who are half Bushmen through intermarrying, but, notwithstanding this, a large number of the cattle are carried off.

"It is really a pity that no hold can be laid on these men. They do deserve punishment, but that the innocent should perish with the guilty is hard. The Bootsuanas have, since the missionaries came, renounced the practice of going against other people unprovoked. They only plead now that they defend themselves, and to this no one can object; it certainly is a great attainment to bring them to this, as all the nations beyond partly live by robbing each other. This, however, makes them very exacting from us, as they have done it by our advice.

"There are no appearances of real piety among this people but in one woman who is blind; she is in church fellowship. The attendance is irregular. Sometimes the church looks well with numbers of them, and sometimes the benches are nearly empty. They seem to think they do us a favour by coming. The school is miserable. There is no girls' school, and I almost doubt the practicability of it, as the women here do all the men's work, and the men the women's.

"One great impediment here is not having the language. Not one of our friends here can converse surely with the natives. All is done through an interpreter, one of those who has lived at Griqua Town. They are good-tempered people in general, happy and easy, dance and sing a good deal. The strong man armed keeps his house in peace, but we hope ere long to see one stronger than he take possession. They have curious notions about God. They make Him the author of everything evil. If it rain when they don't wish it, they ask why God does so; if the ground is parched, the same.

"MARY MOFFAT."

In a letter to his parents, dated from Griqua Town the eighteenth of September, Robert Moffat writes:

"On the fifth day after our departure from Griqua Town we arrived at Lattakoo, and found all the friends there well. We were soon introduced to Moteebe, the king, who seemed very much pleased at our arrival. We were soon visited by a retinue of chiefs, with people who, of course, were anxious to see the strangers. To Mr. C. and myself the sight was not new, having been amongst them before, but to Mary it was; indeed their manner, appearance, and dress must greatly interest any one, and especially my dear Mary, whose hopes had been so long directed towards that people. After remaining three weeks settling the affairs of the mission, Mr. Campbell set off on a journey nearly north-east. He took Mr. Read with him, deeming it

of importance that I should remain with a view to ingratiate myself into the affections of Moteebe and his people.

"After two months Mr. C. returned, having visited some nations, properly tribes, hitherto unexplored. We remained a week together, when Mr. C., Mr. R., my wife and self, set off on a journey to the westward along the bed of the Kuruman River. We visited many towns of the Bootsuanas, in which Mr. Campbell and myself alternately preached to the benighted inhabitants the word of life. Our journey extended to Lehaise's town, the most westerly of the Bootsuanas, lying on the east side of that great desert which separates Namaqualand from them. The inhabitants here never having been visited by white people before, made our visit the more interesting to them, who of course received us as curiosities, especially Mary, who got plenty to stare at her and her dress. They have often sat nearly the whole of the day gazing upon our movements, and especially our sitting together at table when dining in the tent; or using knives and forks, plates and different dishes, was such a sight they had never seen before or heard of. In one of our interviews with Lehaise, the old chief was asked if he would like to have a missionary with him to inform him and his people of the things of God. This grave, aged, and well-looking man answered very seriously: Yes! if the missionaries could tell him how he could become a young man again. He also added that if missionaries came he was not able to sing.

"Such was the judgment he formed of the missionaries; and oh, how affecting! The subject of his answers was explained, and he seemed to approve of missionaries coming among them.

"Taking a circuitous road on our return, we fell in with some Koranna kraals. They differ materially in manners and dress from the Bootsuanas, through residing very near them. To obtain water for themselves and their cattle they dig down in the beds of periodical rivers to the depth of twenty-five feet. By means of five men standing at a suitable height from each other they hand the water up in a wooden bowl; and this requires to be done daily.

"After an absence of little more than a fortnight we arrived safely at Lattakoo. Shortly after, we had letters from Dr. Philip informing us that permission had not yet been obtained from the Governor for me to remain at Lattakoo. Nothing now remained but to return. We all felt acutely, as our hopes and designs were completely thwarted. We were obliged, however, to submit to the powers that be, and to look to Him who has the hearts of all men in His hand, and to say, 'The Lord reigneth.'

"After suitable preparations, we, including Mr. Read and family, took our departure from Lattakoo—nor could we help being affected on leaving a country where the harvest was great and labourers so few—Mr Hamilton being left alone with a Griqua assistant and a few Hottentots. A remarkable circumstance took place just before we left. Previous to our leaving the Cape I wrote to Christian (Jager) Afrikaner to meet me at Griqua Town or Lattakoo, and bring my cattle and property with him; which he did, and arrived, as above, just when we were preparing to return. I was happy to see them, and to

hear that all went on well in Namaqualand. To his honour I would just add that my books and articles of furniture were in good order. Particular attention had been paid to these, as well as to my cattle and sheep, during my long absence. Such was the conduct of the once plundering Afrikaner, conduct in every respect becoming a Christian. He stated his regret at my being taken from them, and his wish to remove to a situation near my destination, which was to us at that juncture unsettled.

"We returned by another road from Lattakoo, in order to see a fountain which might afterwards become a station for the Bushmen. While we were at the said fountain, some of these unfortunate people, whose interest we were seeking, came during the night and set off with four of our cattle. They were pursued in the morning, but in vain. The pursuers, however, caught one man and a boy, who were more or less engaged in the theft. These were brought to the waggons, and our people had much to do to keep the few Bootsuanas who were with us from plunging their assegais into them—such is the abhorrence which the Bootsuanas have to that despised and forlorn people. But it is also to be observed that the Bootsuanas suffer greatly from their depredations, which so exasperates them that they spare neither man nor woman nor child.

"The prisoners alluded to, especially the eldest, expected nothing but death, but we let him go after giving him a sufficient number of stripes.

"To proceed on our journey. Afrikaner left us when we were half way to Griqua Town, to take a nearer route home. When we were near Griqua Town we received a letter from the Rev. Mr. Faure of Graaff Reinett, informing us that permission was granted for me to proceed to my destination. This was unexpected but pleasing information. The same letters also informed us that he, in company with the Landdrost of Graaff Reinett, was on his way to Griqua Town and Lattakoo.

"We came here and awaited the arrival of Mr. Stockenstrom, the Landdrost, whose object was to investigate the political concerns of this people, which had hitherto been in a state of confusion."

When Mr. Stockenstrom had done his work among the Griquas, he prevailed upon Moffat to go with him on a visit to Lattakoo. It had been decided that for a few months he should remain at Griqua Town to set the affairs of that town in order, before he availed himself of the Government permission to settle at Lattakoo. John Campbell was now to take his departure. To the Moffats it was an affecting occasion. They had been in his company as fellow-travellers many months, and he had singularly endeared himself to them.

Fifty years afterwards Moffat wrote to a son of Robert Philip of Kingsland, John Campbell's successor, who had sent him as a relic the snuff-box of his old friend :

“I must now thank you for the late good old Johnny Campbell's snuff-box. Of course I could not but know it, having travelled so much with him in our dear Africa. I prize it exceedingly, and feel honoured in possessing it, and will care for it being cared for, after getting engraved on it from whence I received it. John Campbell, his name is fragrant. The very sight of the box brought to mind great and little incidents of long bygone years. I have often seen him, when perplexed, take out his snuff-box, take a pinch, and sometimes two if the subject was weighty, and in the tent, or outside of the tent, or on the other side of a thin partition, he might be heard to say, ‘Oh I never was in such a world as this!’ More delightful society and a better fellow-traveller than Mr. Campbell could not be desired. Many, many nights, to avoid the heat of the sun, we travelled together in one waggon for company, and he was wont to interest us (Mrs. M. and self) with anecdotes almost without end, all bearing on what was good, and many of which had reference to the course of Christ's kingdom in our own and in foreign lands.”

CHAPTER XI.

SOJOURN AT GRIQUA TOWN.

1820—22.

THE Moffats were now settled down for a few months at Griqua Town, and the following from Mary Moffat is a simple description of the homely ways which obtained in those secluded regions—indeed it will still hold good of what may still be found in some parts of South Africa :

“I dare say my friends often wonder how we proceed in our domestic concerns. In some of them we are extremely awkward, and in others pretty well. For instance, in this part of the country it is the custom to have the kitchen separate from the house, a thing which few English women can reconcile their minds to ; for when that is the case the kitchen of the missionary is the place of common resort, and if one turns one’s back, perhaps half of the food is gone, and spoons, knife, fork, or whatever lies about, is away. They are generally such places as an English person cannot sit in, because there is no chimney and the place is full of smoke, and it must all go out at the door or not at all. Add to this the wood fire, which requires one person’s constant attendance to keep in and regulate.

“Those who have tolerably good houses have generally what is called a fore-house. It is the place of entrance. The outer door renders it cool and comfortable, which door is in the middle, as in a hall ; and this place is generally the largest in the house. It is the houseplace of the family, where they eat, fold and iron their clothes, prepare victuals for the fire, &c. At each end of this place is a small room, one of them the bed-room, the other the private sitting-room, study, or whatever you may call it. Behind are detached pack-houses, where everything is kept. This is the plan of a good missionary house here, and I approve it, only I would have both kitchen and pack-houses attached to the dwelling-house. If I want a little coffee, sugar, or butter, I like to have it at least a little nearer the house than they have it. Custom seems to have established this awkward system, which is productive of many evils : for instance, it ruins servants, and there is

such a propensity in all the natives of this country to assist each other to food, when they have it in their power, that you cannot keep them from it whilst the kitchen is out of your sight.

“ However, my good man dislikes it as much as I do, and has promised to order matters differently when he builds, which will be on our return to the Kuruman. No servant will like it, as she will not then have an opportunity of displaying her liberality. They seem to account all Europeans stingy. Poor creatures! they are ignorant of the value of most things, and they think we should eat everything up at once as they do, and starve all the rest of the time.

“ The washing is done at the river, in cold water, and instead of rubbing they beat things upon the stones, which wears them fast. When we get settled, I wish very much to wash in the English way. We cannot at present for want of tubs, but Moffat has promised to make me some, as I know he will.

“ With regard to animal food, all missionaries, however small the family, kill a sheep (but the sheep are small in this land) every week in the moderate weather. They must do it on account of the people they have about them—people in the garden, &c., who all eat more than their work is worth, for it will take two or three generations to get indolence out of their nature. The chief part of the sheep's fat is in the tail, which is an enormous size, a burthen for it to carry. The fat of this is of quite an oily nature and very rich; this we melt, and it assists in cookery. In the heat of summer it will not stiffen unless mixed with hard fat and set in a cool place. With the hard fat we make candles, and some people soap; but that is an immense and troublesome business, being three weeks every day on the fire and requiring the most constant attention.

“ As much of the mutton as we can we salt for the summer, for fresh meat will not keep a day here in that season. Sometimes an ox or a cow is killed, and the chief part of it salted. The salt here is used in its natural state, and is both salt and saltpetre. We smoke the meat to keep the moth out of it, otherwise it would be devoured—and is even then sometimes.

“ Most missionaries have a brick oven for their bread. We leaven our bread, always keeping a lump of leaven, and the bread is as sweet as any yeast could make it if we do not let it work too long. We have the wheat all ground down together, and I like it better than sifted for household bread.

“ The cows in this country give very little milk. Seven or eight are no better than one English cow. When I was in England we used to wonder what the ‘thick milk’ was of which Mr. Campbell spoke, and now I can tell you. It is only the natives who make it, but I shall certainly have it too if ever I get abundance of milk, it is so good. They get a goat-skin and scrape the hair quite clean off, so that you could not tell that it had been hairy. Then they turn the outer side in, sew it up into a bag with a narrow neck like a bottle. At the bottom they have a very small peg stuck in, a thick peg at the top which closes the mouth of the sack. Into this sack of goat's-skin they pour their milk as it comes from the cow. Perhaps in three or four

days it is full. It is hung in a pretty warm place. They pull out the small peg at the bottom and let the whey off. The milk is poured out at the top end of the sack, and comes to the table wet, but not swashy. This when served up looks like a dish of light curds. The milk here being very rich it has quite a yellow appearance. It is rather sour, and with a little sugar and new milk it is delightful. I did not fancy it at first, but probably it was on account of its being brought in their dirty vessels. I have now got over that, and eat it with relish. Moteebe frequently brought us a dish of it, which is a great mark of esteem. The Bootsuanas have it much nicer than others, because they let no dirt into the bag.

"I have yet another of our customs to relate. You will perhaps think it curious when I tell you that we smear all our room floors with cow dung once a week at least. At first when I saw Sister Helm do it I thought to myself, 'But I'll do without that dirty trick, or I will try hard.' However, I had not been here long but was glad to have it done, and I had hardly patience to wait till Saturday. It lays the dust better than anything, kills the fleas which would otherwise breed abundantly, and is a fine clear green. You observe it is mixed with water, and laid on as thinly as possible. I now look upon my floor smeared with cow dung with as much complacency as I used to do upon our best rooms when well scoured.

"Writing about this curious article puts me in mind of a custom of the Bootsuanas. If his majesty Moteebe dines with us, before he eats he sends his servant for a handful of this article and rubs his hands with it till every particle of dirt is gone. However curious it may appear to you, I would rather see him eat after this process than before it, as their hands get a share of the nasty fat and red ochre with which they smear themselves.

"M. M.

"GRIQUA TOWN, *Aug. 11, 1820.*"

The close of the year found the Moffats still at Griqua Town. This place was inhabited by a mixed multitude of Griquas, Korannas, Hottentots, and even Bushmen and some Bechwanas. At an early period, about the year 1799, missionaries made an effort to collect the scattered Bushmen in the northern part of the Colony. They were only partially successful, and they extended their plans so as to include others as well as Bushmen. There were many people of mixed blood, descendants of the Dutch farmers, who had taken to a roving and marauding life. The missionaries Anderson and Kramer spent several years of almost incredible hardship, following these people in their wanderings, and at length succeeded in prevailing upon a large body of them to settle down. When once this was accomplished, the new village soon became a rallying point for members of all the broken tribes above mentioned. Mr. Anderson lived to see a large and orderly community making great progress in industrious habits,

and a Christian church formed. Then the Government took a very strange step. An order was sent to Mr. Anderson to furnish twenty Griquas as recruits to the Cape regiment. It might have been supposed that these people would have been left alone. The missionaries had found them mere wanderers in the desert beyond Colonial control, and had gathered them together in a locality far outside the frontier, where they could claim no protection except that of God and their own right hand.

Mr. Anderson had no option but to give the message, and the effect was disastrous. He at once lost the confidence which he had earned by years of patient labour and self-denial. Up to this time he had acted as a medium of correspondence between the Griquas and the Government, and had, moreover, been the adviser and guide of his people in reference not only to spiritual but political matters. They now began to look upon him as an emissary in the interest of the Government, and so utterly did their trust in him fail that in a few years he saw it his duty to give up the charge of the mission of which he was to a large extent the founder, and retire to another station in the Colony. Nor were the effects less disastrous to the people themselves. They began to break up; one party, headed by the most influential chief, removed to another part of the country; a second, though acknowledged as chief, withdrew to a distance of about fifty miles; and Griqua Town was left with a population reduced in numbers and practically without a head.

It was at this juncture that Robert Moffat was requested by Mr. Campbell to assist Mr. Helm in reorganizing the mission on a new footing. The task seems to have been a difficult one. The people were invited by the missionaries to make choice of one of their number as chief. They did so, showing great wisdom in the appointment of the late Andries Waterboer, who for many years ruled the settlement with firmness and discretion, but was succeeded by a son far inferior in character, under whom matters went altogether wrong. The Griqua Mission is now a thing of the past. They as a people have broken up, and are becoming absorbed in larger and stronger communities around them; but this is no reason for considering what was done amongst them in the earlier days as thrown away. For a long time the Griquas served a good purpose on the northern border of the Colony—as we shall have occasion to notice—apart from purely spiritual results, of which the annals of the mission furnish abundantly satisfactory proof.

Of the mere degraded wanderers in the desert whom the first missionaries gathered together, many a humble and faithful

believer in the Lord has entered into rest after a life of consistent godliness.

During his stay at Griqua Town Robert Moffat wrote as follows :

“As it regards the cause of our Lord in this place, I cannot say much to the praise of the Griquas. It is true of late we have been delighted to see a full church. The members are numerous. The last time I administered the Lord's Supper there were upwards of forty who partook ; but alas ! too many of these have stains on their garments, but of such a nature as not to bring them under church discipline. Heretofore this important duty has not been exercised to that extent that Paul would have done had he been here. The result of such neglect is that our church is a mixed heap of which the major part is rubbish. They have a name, and they lead a course of life which exhibits neither a devil nor a saint. Within the last month a number of these dead members have been amputated from the body, and their examples have the very effect which the Scriptures intimate : ‘others fear,’ and dread to commit crimes which they would otherwise have done with impunity. Mr. Helm, who is a wise, prudent, and pious brother, fully coincides with my views, and is very zealous in clearing the church of such fruitless stumps. We rejoice, however, in the faithful few who seem indeed pillars in the temple of our God. These, with others who have entered the regions of immortality, witness that the labours of Mr. Anderson have not been in vain, and that the exertions of British Christians have, through the Divine blessing, been mighty in pulling down the strongholds of Satan.

“This season has been extremely warm, and we have had much thunder. On the 21st of November we had a heavy storm of thunder, lightning, and rain. The lightning struck and set fire to a small round storehouse in which some of our goods lay. It entered the top and ran obliquely down one of the thick poles which supported the roof, shattering it into a thousand pieces. It passed through the wall, melting the very stones in its course.

“Means were soon used, the fire was got under, and no injury whatever sustained. This round house is only about fourteen yards distant from our dwelling-house, and scarcely so far from Mr. Helm's. It was very alarming, and deeply impressed our minds of God's fatherly protection. On the 28th of the same month the lightning struck a tree in one of the missionary gardens at Lattakoo.”

Towards the end of 1820, Mary Moffat was prostrated by a severe illness, and for a long time it seemed unlikely that she would recover. In reference to this her husband writes some weeks afterwards :

“We are assured that though weeping endures for a night, joy will come in the morning, which has also been realized in the experience of thousands since it was written. A very short experience, indeed, convinces us that the brightest scenes and most enlivening prospects

are not without their alloy ; like the interrupted rays of the unchanging sun which cast a shade on our most dazzling enjoyments, and convince us that this is not our rest, and that the Christian life at best is a life of vicissitude. Happy they, whether on beds of languishing or in adversity, who can say, ' Faithful are the wounds of a friend.' To such, affliction is not loss, but gain, for they say from experience that it is good to be afflicted, and joy more exalted and pure takes possession of the mourner's heart. This, my dear parents, has been the experience of myself, but especially of your beloved daughter. She has sowed in tears, but now reaps in joy. Yes, she who a few months ago stood on the brink of eternity, expecting hourly to quit the tottering fabric, delivering with sinking voice her last message, is at this moment sitting in perfect health, with a lovely, healthy daughter on her knee. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and is wonderful in our eyes."

This daughter was named Mary, and was afterwards known as the wife of David Livingstone. She was born on the twelfth of April. Very soon afterwards the quiet little community at Griqua Town was enlivened by an unusual event—the influx of a large party of visitors : Mr. John Melville of Cape Town, with his wife and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Kaye, Wesleyan missionaries. The former had come as a representative of Government, to inquire into political affairs, with a view to his eventually taking up his abode as Resident at Griqua Town.

Mr. Kaye's object was to find a station among the Bechwanas. As the time was now come for the Moffats to commence their work at Lattakoo, it was agreed that their visitors should accompany them, and so the whole party started together, and arrived in safety on the seventeenth of May. Mr. Hamilton was not a little comforted by the advent of his future companions in labour. He had borne trials of no ordinary character, which would have caused many men to give up in despair. Though gentle and unassuming, and by no means disposed or fitted to take a leading part, he was a man whose faithful obedience to his Master and tenacious perseverance nothing could shake or turn aside. From this time he and Moffat stood shoulder to shoulder through a work of more than thirty years, at the close of which he was called away to his rest.

This period marks the commencement of Robert Moffat's permanent connection with the Kuruman Mission. It may be well to explain here that the name of Lattakoo, so long used, was better known in England than in South Africa. When Mr. Campbell paid his first visit he found the Batlaping tribe at a place called Letakong, about thirty-six miles north-east of the present station of Kuruman. When the missionaries he had promised to send

arrived at their destination, the tribe had removed, or was removing, to a spot on the Kuruman River, about ten miles from its source. The name Letakong—or, as it had been transformed by persons unaccustomed to native pronunciation, Lattakoo—had, however, become identified with that particular station, and for a long time continued to be so, until the missionaries moved a little higher up the valley, and Kuruman, which was the name of the river, came into use.

The Kuruman River, so-called, is through the greater part of its course a mere channel, such as is common enough in that waterless region. The stream, which takes its rise as already described in a previous chapter, flows for a mile or more along a somewhat narrow valley. This then widens out, and the water used to spread over a broad, reedy lagoon or marsh, but has been stopped with a dyke, and led in watercourses along the higher ground on either side, and made available for irrigation. Little or none of it passes beyond the limits of the present station. Such is the thirsty nature of the soil, that, especially during the growing season, every drop is required for watering the lands.

A few miles lower down, at the site of the old station, there is a recurrence of springs in the river-bed, and a stream again flows for some distance and eventually disappears. The course of the Kuruman trends away westward, and then southward across the Kalahari Desert. Here and there, at long intervals, wells are sunk in the chalk deposits within the channel; but it is only in an exceptional year that there is any stream, and I am doubtful whether even that fitful stream ever runs continuously as far as the junction of the Kuruman with the Orange River.

The higher part of the Kuruman used to be well fringed with mimosas. These have nearly all disappeared owing to the increasing demand for wood. The picturesque aspect of the original station and its environs, which so pleased Mary Moffat on her arrival, is pretty much a thing of the past.

As soon as we ascend the low banks on either side and leave the river, we find the surrounding country barren in the extreme. For many miles nothing is to be seen but stony hills and sandy plains covered with long grass, which for the greater part of the year is not green, but a light straw-colour. The continuity of the grassy expanse is broken by scattered bushes a few feet high and of a dull grey hue, and dotted here and there with a few dark-green camel-thorn trees. To any one accustomed to the rich foliage and green fields of England, such a prospect must be cheerless in the extreme, especially when, as in those days, the transit from one point to another was a matter of crawling along for days or weeks in an ox-waggon.

The Kuruman station is not far from the border of the desert. Westward towards Namaqualand the country becomes drier and more dreary at every step. Eastward, and particularly north-eastward, there is a steady improvement until, after a journey of two hundred miles, the traveller finds himself in a comparatively picturesque and well-wooded region.

The self-denying labours of the original pioneers had not been attended with any success when the Moffats joined the Lattakoo Mission. The Bechwanas turned a deaf ear to the gospel. The ground which the chief had given them for gardens, and which they with immense labour had made available by leading the water to it, was encroached upon by the women, headed by the chief's wife herself. Rather than make any difficulty, the point was conceded. When the corn ripened, a great part of it was openly taken by the people. Their sheep were stolen out of the fold at night, or driven off when grazing in the day-time; until they were constrained to slaughter the remnant and to put the meat into salt lest they should lose it altogether. No tool or household utensil could be left about for a moment, or it would disappear. The chief, though himself friendly, was a man of weak character, and could not, or would not, give them effective help.

A severe drought had set in. A rainmaker who came from the N.E., when he found all his arts in vain, laid the blame on the white strangers. The people, who were really suffering greatly, were only too ready to take up this idea; and for a time it seemed possible that the missionaries would be driven away.

But the cruellest trial of all was to find their worst foes within their own camp. A number of Hottentots had accompanied the missionaries from the institutions within the Colony. These, though themselves converts, were too new and too weak in the faith to meet the demands which were made upon their constancy, surrounded as they were by a heathen and corrupt people. Their conduct became a source of shame to their leaders, and could not be otherwise than a hindrance to the gospel of which they showed themselves such unworthy exemplars.

Robert Hamilton, the only one of the three originally told off for the Lattakoo Mission who remained, was in a position which hampered his own usefulness, and must have hailed with joy the advent of a colleague who was both able and willing to wield the pruning-knife with a strong and skilful hand. In a few months after Robert Moffat's arrival a course of stern discipline had purged the little community; and though the band that met

around the Lord's table was reduced to a mere fraction, yet it was a lesson to heathen onlookers that must have told its tale.

In February, 1822, Mary Moffat writes to her parents :

"At present Moffat is applying himself with all diligence to the language, as the particular object of his destination here. He finds immense difficulties from the barrenness of the language and imperfect interpreters, but he is naturally too persevering soon to lose courage. This is his sole motive for undertaking a journey at present, in order to become familiar with it by being for a time out of the habit of speaking Dutch with our own people here. I think it will also be of advantage to me in that respect ; having so much to employ my time with at home I have little chance of learning much of it. You beg of us to pay particular attention to the instruction of the rising generation, but alas, we have no opportunities of doing this: the people, instead of desiring that their children should be instructed, are afraid of their becoming 'Dutchmen,' so tenacious are they of their old customs and habits; and if a boy and a girl venture to come they are soon laughed out of it. Perhaps if we gave them each a meal of meat every day, or a few beads, we might have the place crowded — but on no other condition. Oh! how were we affected on reading an account of Madagascar, when we thought of the difference between that people and this; they so desirous and these such despisers of instruction. As to some of these people having correct notions of God and of heaven, death and hell, as has been asserted, you must not believe it; for daily conversations convince us that the wisest of them have most corrupt notions on these subjects. We are astonished at their dreadful stupidity about these things. My beloved parents, we have much need of your sympathy and prayers, and those of all other Christians. Could we but see the smallest fruit we could rejoice amidst the privations and toil which we bear; but as it is, our hands do often hang down."

"Aug. 22, 1822.

"I acknowledge the receipt of brother Alexander's letter of the 16th of February, 1821. It rejoiced us exceedingly to hear that all was well with you. It is always a great treat to us to receive one of his letters. We have not a more interesting correspondent. My own father and he are much alike in their letters. We hope he will keep his resolution of writing once every four months. You can form no idea of the delicious repast which a well-filled letter affords to our minds, especially when we hear that all is going well. We are entirely at the mercy of our friends for what we know of what is going on in the world. We seem here to be in its suburbs, and when a long time elapses without fresh intelligence our hearts sicken and languish.

"We have no prosperity in the work, not the least sign of good being done. The Bootsuanas seem more careless than ever, and seldom enter the church. Their indifference seems to increase, and instead of rejoicing we have continually to mourn over them. Our

consolation is derived from the promises of the immutable Jehovah. We walk by faith and not by sight. How mysterious are His works, and His ways past finding out. In almost every other part of the world to which the gospel is sent, some of the people receive it gladly, but here the blessing is withheld. Five years have rolled on since the missionaries came, and not one soul converted, nor does any one seem to lend an ear. All treat with ridicule and contempt the truths which are delivered. . . .

“I must now endeavour to remove some mistakes under which you seem to labour respecting African travelling. You appeared to think that the journey from Griqua Town to this place was a very formidable one. It is true, considering the weak state in which I was at the time you allude to, it was a little exertion, and at times I felt it; but we are so accustomed to travelling that in general we think that journey a mere trifle. Since that time I have been twice to Griqua Town with Robert. We think it essential to health to take a trip now and then, and it is a rule of mine that when my husband goes with the waggon for more than two days I go with him, unless circumstances render it very improper. If he goes alone he does not take care of himself, and will not be at the trouble to make himself comfortable; and I think he had enough of that sort of life in Namaqualand. But you can form no idea how comfortable our waggons are. They are very light vehicles, and in them we carry all necessary comforts. If there are children, they play on the bed or lie asleep. The length of our day stages is about eight or twelve hours on an average, riding about three and a half miles an hour; we are chiefly guided by the water, riding from one fountain to another, that our oxen may be refreshed as well as ourselves. Sometimes the water is too distant and we make two stages of it, but we always take with us a keg of water in case of an accident in the wilderness. When we span out (or unyoke), a fire is immediately made, the kettle set on, and coffee or tea made. I would here notice that that missionary must be very regardless of his wife's comfort who does not see to that being done without her troubling herself. For my own part I never think of coming out of the waggon till there is a good fire, for it is comfortless work indeed turning out in a cold night in the wilderness with a child or children before there is a fire.

“If it is a short journey we generally make bread enough to serve us before we leave home, and if a long one we stop when needful to provide such necessaries. Having thus refreshed ourselves, we have worship with our people round the fire, or in the tent which we sometimes pitch, and retire to rest in our waggons. In these we have as comfortable beds as at home, only a little strait, especially when the family increases. The Hottentots roll themselves in a kaross, with another skin under them, and lie round a good fire quite happy. There are also dangers attending our journeys. In many places a sharp look-out must be kept lest the Bushmen seize our oxen while grazing; in other places the lion is on his prowl for the same object. In every place the wolf pays us a visit. He

seldom touches the oxen, but seizes the sheep if he can. Though I wish to convince you that we do not lead such a gypsy sort of life as brother Sandy seems to suspect, I shall by no means attempt to prove that it is a remarkably pleasant life, for we are always heartily tired by the time the journey is done. It is at the same time a lazy and a busy life—all bustle when we stop, and unfavourable to sewing and reading when we are moving; but custom and necessity reconcile us to it.

“At the present time the scarcity of food in this country is terrible. The cattle are dying from want in every direction, and the inhabitants feed on the flesh of the animals which are starved to death. Of our small stock three calves and four cows have died, and from the remainder we have not one drop of milk. The poor people have scarcely any milk, no corn nor anything else. How they live we know not. Truly this is a wretched land!

“If you have not heard what I am going to communicate you will doubtless be much affected. Afrikaner is no more an inhabitant of this lower world, but has passed through the swellings of Jordan and entered the abode of endless bliss. Younker, his son, has lately written to Robert to apprise him of it. You may readily conceive of the feelings it excited in our breasts, especially that of Robert, who was once so nearly connected with him. He feels as one who has lost a near relation, and cannot but wish that he had been there to have witnessed his happy spirit take its flight.”

At the close of the year 1822 Robert Moffat writes to his brother:

“I shall now give some particulars of our present situation. The most important is the cause of Christ. Alas! we still hang our harp on the willows, and mourn over the destiny of thousands hastening with heedless but impetuous strides to the regions of woe. They turn a deaf ear to the voice of love, and treat with scorn the glorious doctrines of redemption. This often causes our hearts to languish, while our eyes fail with looking upward.

“It is, however, pleasing to reflect that affairs in general wear a more hopeful aspect than when we came here. Several instances have proved the people determined to relinquish the barbarous system of commandoes for stealing cattle. They have also dispensed with a rainmaker this season. We rejoice in this, because his services and presence must ever form a strong barrier to the spread of the gospel.

“We prayed and hoped that a good season would thoroughly convince them that the power of giving rain belonged only unto God, but He whose footsteps are in the sea has been pleased to order it otherwise. The season has been so dry as to destroy their corn, except a little which happened to be sown on ground a little marshy. Nothing, however, has been said as to the cause of the drought.

“We continue on friendly terms with them, though we have also much to suffer, especially from thieves, who pester us on all sides.

“Ann and Dicky, the two Bushmen children whom I consider part of the family, are doing well. Ann is very useful, and forms a good nurse for the little Mary.”

Some months before this Robert Moffat, on one of his journeys, had come unexpectedly upon a party of Bushmen. They were digging a grave for one of their number, a woman, who had died leaving two children. Finding that it was the intention of the party to bury not only the body of the woman, but the two children also, the missionary begged for them; and as the only object was to get rid of them, his petition was readily granted. He brought them home, and for some years they were part of his household.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MANTATEE INVASION.

1823, 1824.

THE year 1823 opened quietly enough, though it was to be a period of considerable anxiety and excitement. The Batlaping continued indifferent to the gospel, and unbelieving of anything beyond the things of time and of sense; but the hostile spirit had passed away, and the gentle perseverance of the missionaries in bearing evil and in doing good had borne fruit.

At the end of March a second daughter was born, who was named Ann, after her father's mother.

There was at this time among the Batlaping at Lattakoo a young man, a refugee. His father, Makaba, was chief of another Bechwana tribe, about two hundred miles to the N.N.E., and the son had fled from his father's anger. He came in contact with the missionaries, and although his testimony about Makaba was not of a friendly character, it had the effect of exciting in the mind of Robert Moffat a deep interest in the Bangwaketsi and their chief, who had shown somewhat more of warlike prowess than their neighbours, and had made themselves dreaded far and wide.

For some months rumours had been spreading, however, which had put Makaba and his Bangwaketsi in the shade. It was reported that a strange people, fierce and many, were slowly but steadily advancing from the eastward, eating up all the tribes with which they came in contact. To those who have known the country since, it must seem strange that events had been taking place for months, and even for years, within the space of a few hundred miles, the knowledge of which had spread but a very little way. But in those days each tribe occupied its own locality, often separated from its neighbours by a tract of uninhabited country. Occasional messengers might be sent from one chief to

another, now and then some enterprising person would make a journey for purposes of trade ; but as often as not some act of hostility had caused a break in communications, and it might well be that for months together tribes which were only two or three days' journey from each other remained in ignorance of each other's affairs, no one being bold enough to cross the intervening solitudes which in the meantime were left to the game and to the lions. That branch of the Bechwana race which extended from the junction of the Vaal and Orange rivers up along the western side of the former stream, into what is now known as the Transvaal, was subdivided into numerous tribes which still recognized more or less kinship to each other ; but eastward there lay another branch of the same race, now known generally as Basuto or Bapedi. Beyond these, and still related—all being members of the great Kafir family—but more distant in kin as in locality, were the Zulus and other coast tribes inhabiting the well-watered and fruitful slopes of the Kwathlamba range, on the coast-line of South-eastern Africa.

Early in the century rose the tyrant Chaka, who extended his rule over all the tribes adjacent to his own, and commenced a career of conquest. He attacked one tribe after another, blotting them out, unless they saved themselves by timely and absolute submission or by flight. More than one emigration took place from this cause, but the fugitives kept as much as possible to the mountain country, and directed their course parallel with the coast. At last one of Chaka's lieutenants, himself the son of a chief whose power had been broken by Chaka, gave offence to his master, and sought safety in flight. This was Umziligazi, or, as the Bechwanas called him, Mosilikatse. He, with his followers, climbed the Kwathlamba range, and once upon the high uplands which now form part of the Transvaal, he found himself like a wolf among a flock of sheep. Of the Bapedi and Basuto tribes none could resist him except Moshesh, who, on his mountain fortress of Thaba Bosigo, successfully defied the invaders. Meanwhile the Bapedi and the Bechwana tribes were thrown into confusion by the onslaughts of the terrible Matebele. Some tribes were utterly destroyed, others bowed the knee and accepted the position of vassals, and others again fled.

It was these fugitives, tribes and broken remnants of tribes, huddled into great hordes, abandoning lands and driving what they could of their cattle with them, who came pouring on like a flood and threatening to overwhelm the western Bechwanas, who, if driven back, would have had no option but to perish in the foodless and waterless wastes of the Kalahari. For months the

reports which came were vague and contradictory, but they gradually became less shadowy, and it was evident that the danger was coming nearer.

So little was definitely known, however, that Robert Moffat determined to carry out his project of visiting Makaba, whose town was about two hundred miles to the north-east. Leaving his wife at Kuruman, he directed his course through Old Lattakoo—or Letakong—and Nokaneng, at both of which places there were sections of a tribe closely connected with the Batlaping. As he advanced it became more and more certain that the dreaded enemy, known under the general name of Mantatees, was not far away. It was resolved to continue the journey as much for the purpose of gaining information about these Mantatees as for anything else. For some days the travellers went on through the wilderness, seeing much game and getting quite accustomed to the neighbourhood of lions—seeing as many of these, according to the journal, as nine in one day.

At last, however, at a place called Mosite, they received definite information that the Mantatees were in actual possession of the Barolong towns, a few hours to the eastward, and that they were on their way to Lattakoo. This of course hurried them back home, not knowing whether they might not find the enemy there before them. No time was lost. A public meeting was called by the chief Moteebe, who with his people heartily acknowledged that but for Moffat's pertinacity in starting for the north-east on a journey which they had tried to hinder him from taking, they would not have had this timely warning; and the missionary was asked for his advice in the critical position in which they were placed.

He judged—and the event proved him right—that the Batlaping would be no match for the invaders. He advised them to seek the aid of the Griquas, who, though few, had guns and horses; and he himself hastened to Griqua Town and received from Waterboer the promise that as soon as he could muster his men he would come. By the time that the Griquas reached the station the Mantatees had occupied Letakong, thirty-six miles away. It was thought best that Moffat should accompany the little force of not a hundred men. It was hoped that a white man might be able to open negotiations with the Mantatees, and that at all events his presence as a missionary might tend to mitigate the horrors of war carried on by people like the Griquas, only imperfectly civilized. Mr. Melville, the Government Commissioner resident at Griqua Town, was his companion.

They rode to the Matlwareing River, about half-way. The chief

Waterboer, with the two Europeans and about a dozen men, went on, and spent the night in a clump of thorn-trees a few miles from Letakong. They proceeded next morning, and about ten o'clock came within sight of the dreaded Mantatees. One detachment held the town, of which the inhabitants had fled. Another lay on the hills to the left of it, presenting the appearance of a great black patch as contrasted with the light straw colour of the grass-covered slopes.

The horsemen drew near, and as they did so they could perceive a deal of hurrying to and fro, and that the cattle were driven in and enclosed by the men. It was the first time that these people had seen a man on horseback, and at first they naturally supposed that horse and man were one animal. This was learned from some of the prisoners afterwards. In a ravine leading down to the river the scouting party found a young woman who belonged to the Mantatees. From her they learnt nothing, except the fact that their language was only another dialect of Sechwana. She was sent back to her people with a message of peace, but nothing came of this. A little farther on the party found an old man with a lad lying under the shadow of a rock, the younger in the last stage of starvation, and the elder not very much better. They dismounted in full sight of the enemy, and stood talking for some time with the wretches whom they had found, and they gave the old man some meat, which he ravenously devoured. Not finding any way of getting speech with the Mantatees, who would now and again make a furious rush towards them, hurling clubs and spears, they moved back to a height at some distance and saddled off, taking their horses to a pool of dirty water. Here they found several dead Mantatees, one body lying partly in the pool from which they had to drink.

They sent back for the main force to come on, and spent the night in this dangerous bivouac. Next morning their men came up, followed at a distance by the Batlaping force. They again advanced, and exhausted every resource to get at the enemy by way of coming to an understanding, but at last the latter became more and more fierce in their rushes, compelling the party to retire.

At last Waterboer raised his gun and levelled one of their boldest warriors. It might have been thought that this experience so new and startling would have had some effect, but it had none whatever. The firing now commenced, very slowly and deliberately, a single shot at a time; and not a shot failed to tell, for the Griquas had to be careful, as all the ammunition they had amounted to about a dozen rounds per man.

Every now and then there was a cessation of the firing to give a chance of negotiation, but it was to no purpose. The Batlaping now came up, and began playing upon them with poisoned arrows, but a rush of a few Mantatees in their direction sent them all scampering. After about three hours the Griquas charged their positions, and they gave way, and eventually started in full flight in the direction from which they had come. The detachment occupying the town, which had taken no part in the engagement, set fire to the houses and also started in retreat.

Then ensued a scene of the wildest confusion. The houses burnt like straw ; an immense volume of smoke rolled across the track of the fugitives and mixed with the dust of retreating thousands—for they were many thousands in number ; the country was covered with bands of people fleeing or pursuing. True to their cowardly tactics, the Batlaping began to vent their warlike ardour on the wounded, and on the women and children who could not keep up in the flight. This was the most difficult and dangerous part of the day for Moffat and Melville. They could not stand by and see this going on without interference. They galloped hither and thither rescuing women and children from the human wolves who were deliberately slaying them for the love of killing, or to despoil their bodies of such brass rings and beads as they had upon them. As soon as the women began to discover who were their protectors, they would rush frantically to them, baring their breasts and crying, "I am a woman! I am a woman!"

The wounded men were especially dangerous, and would not be taken alive, stabbing as they lay on the ground. Robert Moffat has been heard to tell of one especial deliverance on this day—though, alas, it was bought at a dear price. He had got hemmed in between a rocky height and a body of the enemy. There was only a narrow passage through which he could escape at full gallop. Right in the middle of this passage there rose up before him a man who had been shot, but had collected his strength, and, weapon in hand, was awaiting him. It was almost impossible for him to escape. Just at this moment one of the Griquas, at a long distance, took in the situation at a glance—raised his gun, and fired. The ball whizzed so close past Moffat that he shuddered ; but it was a true aim, and his outlet of escape was clear.

This battle decided the fate of the mission and a good deal more. The invaders retreated, never to return. Their descendants are to be found, some of them in Basutoland and others in the Transvaal. Had they not been checked by the little body of

horsemen with guns, who proved, though few, such terrible enemies, they would have swept away the Batlaping and probably have poured into the Colony—greatly extending the area of disturbance, and would have been repelled with a loss of life terrible to think of, as compared with the five hundred or more who fell at Letakong.

Robert Moffat, with the able assistance of Melville and afterwards of Hamilton, collected the women and children who remained behind in the flight. These poor creatures had many of them been reduced to dire straits. At one place a horse had died of snake bite, and had of course swollen up, but they fell upon it like wolves, and would not desist till every particle of it had disappeared. They had not only to care for these people, but on their return to the station, as soon as the Griquas had gone home the country was full of rumours of the advance of other bodies of Mantatees from a different quarter. So serious did matters become that the missionaries eventually saw it their duty to abandon the station for a time and to retire to Griqua Town. They carried away what they could of their property, and buried the rest, and started with heavy hearts. Robert Moffat, having seen his wife and children safely bestowed, returned to Lattakoo, and remained a while alone.

These events proved of great and lasting importance to the mission. The Batlaping saw that the missionaries, by their advice and energy, had been the means of saving them from their enemies. Their position was now established, and though for a while there was a lack of interest in their message, they themselves had gained a personal ascendancy which they never again lost.

At the beginning of September Mary Moffat writes to her parents from Griqua Town :

“ My dear Robert left me on the 6th ultimo, having a severe cold upon him, but so anxious to be at the post of duty I could not prevail upon him to remain here till he was better. It was by no means congenial to our wishes to separate, but our oxen are already too much hurried to take our goods back again to Kuruman before we go to the Cape ; and on account of the confusion we have been in for some months I shall have time little enough to prepare for the journey to get off at the appointed time, which we are anxious to do that we may be back in the month of March, that being the best time for the river.

“ Robert is gone to make another effort at the language before we go. He writes me that all our buried things are taken up in excellent order, but the garden is completely destroyed by the oxen. Some of the Bechwanas made attempts at robbing the houses, but Moteebe had acted honourably ; and I assure you it is no little thing that

would arouse Moteebe to so much exertion. Were these people idolaters, I should be afraid of them deifying Robert now—they are so convinced of the interest he takes in their welfare, from what has lately transpired. They say it would have been easy for us to decamp, with all belonging to us ; but are surprised at the promptitude and activity which Robert used in warning the Griquas of the approaching danger, and thereby preserving them from enduring those horrors which have come upon all their neighbours. Last year we had the pleasure of informing you of the downfall of rainmaking superstition, and now another obstacle is broken through ; indeed they now seem to fear denying Robert anything.

“He writes that he has broached the subject of removing the station, and thinks he will succeed. If we get to that place it will soon pay the expense, and save the Society many thousands of dollars, and will also be a sort of magazine for provisions for infant stations in the interior. We cannot but think that a new era is dawning on the history of this unhappy, wretched country, and that the late awful events will be overruled for the spread of the glorious gospel.

“We are persuaded that the surrounding tribes will desire to have teachers after seeing the advantage that Moteebe’s people have derived from their connection with them.

“Spies have been sent out from this place to ascertain the truth of the report respecting the other marauding tribes which were said to be approaching from up the river ; but it proves to be a mere fabrication. The spies saw the miserable wretches with whom they had fought at Lattakoo. They appeared afraid, and made signs to that effect. The spies went amongst them and talked with them. They said all their chief warriors were killed, and they desired to return from whence they came. Brother Hodgson (Wesleyan) arrived here on the 29th ult., all well, having been in great danger from both men and beasts of prey, lions abounding exceedingly on their road. He found Mr. Broadbent in a pitiful situation. The enemy having gone in that direction, Sebonelo and all his people had fled, leaving Mr. B. alone. Even his own servants went, except one Bechwana man. Providentially, however, Mr. H. arrived when they had been one day in that situation. Mr. B.’s waggon had come here with Mr. H. for supplies, so that he could not fly, being himself in too weak a state to walk and Mrs. B. having two little ones such as ours.

“It appears that the vanquished are fled in three directions : one party over the river (Vaal), which was seen by the spies, and the other two keep the river beyond Sebonelo’s place. His people find them scattered in straggling parties, and kill them wherever they get them. They appear to be dying of hunger, and Mr. Hodgson witnessed the most horrid spectacles. Where they stopped one night the unhappy people had encamped the night before, and had left behind them two women and a man, who were feeding on the body of a dead companion ; they were stamping the bones to suck out the marrow ! I know you will shudder when I tell you that they did it without the least emotion. They pointed to the mangled limbs, and told Mr. Hodgson the name of the man. Whether they are cannibals from

choice we are at a loss to know ; but I am not disposed to think they are, as many Bechwanas do die of hunger when they might get a share with the wolf of their poor dead companions. At Nokaneng, Robert writes, there are many women left behind, and some wounded men. He had proposed a plan to Andries, the chief of this place, for their rescue and preservation ; but I fear it will not be attended to, but think R. will go himself and devise some plan. This is such a hungry country that it is difficult to procure victuals for them. There is no doubt whatever but that they subsist on the dead bodies of such as die amongst them. Oh the dark barbarity of this wretched Africa ! When, oh when will the Sun of righteousness arise and disperse the heathenish gloom ! O Lord, hasten, and make no tarrying !”

CHAPTER XIII.

WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS.

1824.

AT the beginning of 1824 we find the Moffats in Cape Town. They had gone thither for the threefold object of seeking medical advice, of obtaining supplies, and of conferring personally with Dr. Philip about the removal of the station to Kuruman—its present site.

They had with them Peclo the son of Mothibi, a young man who gave good promise, and the heir-apparent of the Batlaping chieftainship; and Teysho, one of the headmen of the tribe. It was an unusual and striking proof of confidence, and spoke well for the influence the missionaries had gained over the native mind.

On the very day that the party reached Cape Town, after more than two months' journey from Lattakoo, a ship cast anchor in the bay bringing three new men intended for the Bechwanā Mission. The coincidence was pleasing, but it was a disappointment that, after all, only one of the three, Mr. Hughes, was allowed at that time to continue his journey. Mr. Edwards was detained in order that his skill as a builder might be made available at some of the Colonial stations, and he did not reach Kuruman till some years later; and Mr. Robson's health never allowed him to venture into the interior. He eventually took charge of a station within the Colony, where he did good work for many years.

The Moffats got back to their station in the month of May, and found Mr. Hamilton pursuing his lonely labours with the quiet patience so characteristic of him. As the final arrangements for the removal of the station were not yet complete, it was thought best that Robert Moffat should meanwhile make his long-promised journey to visit Makaba, the chief of the Bang-

waketsi. He left on the first of July, and was accompanied by a large party of Griquas, who were going to the more remote part of the country to hunt elephants. Rumours still continued to come of the movements of the Mantatees; but so difficult was it in those times to obtain authentic information of what was going on in the country about other tribes, that nothing could be certainly made out about the truth of these rumours.

The journey to Makaba was unusually interesting and eventful. It has been so fully described by Robert Moffat himself in his "Labours and Scenes," that it can be lightly passed over here.

Suffice to say that the party—happily as it turned out afterwards—was a strong one, with eleven waggons and a number of horses, and well-armed men, they having turned out for hunting purposes. They took a westerly route along the edge of the Kalahari Desert, but were eventually obliged by want of water to deviate and to call at Pitsana, where a great concourse had gathered, consisting of the different sections of the Barolong tribe who had been driven the previous year from the country along the Vaal River by the Mantatees in the course of the same invasion which had threatened Kuruman.

From Pitsana they went on to Kwakwe, the residence of Makaba and his people. Here they were royally entertained, and started on their return journey, the greater part of the Griquas accompanying the missionary, contrary to their previous plan of remaining to hunt. Their leader could give no explanation of this except that they had changed their minds; but whatever was the cause of their doing so, the result was an exceedingly important one. They had not left Makaba many hours when they were met by messengers from Tauane, the chief of the Barolong, calling them to come and help him as he was on the point of being attacked by the Mantatees. They went on to Pitsana, and found that this was actually the case. The presence of scarcely twenty men armed with guns was the means of repelling an attack which must otherwise have resulted in the utter destruction of the great Barolong town and the flight of its inhabitants into the Kalahari Desert, where thousands who escaped the spears of the ruthless Makari must have perished of thirst and hunger. As it was the Barolong gave way and took to flight, and it was only the effect of a few shots from the Griqua horsemen, who stood their ground, which turned the tide.

Robert Moffat got back home to find that his wife had been in a position of most intense anxiety. Not only had she heard of the Makari invasion on the north-east, which she knew was in the track of his journey, but dangers were threatening from an oppo-

site quarter. A horde of evil characters, runaways of mixed blood from the Cape Colony, with Korannas, Bushmen, and Namaquas, had established themselves in the mountains to the westward of Griqua Town, and had been joined by renegade Griquas who resented the rule and discipline of Waterboer and the other Griqua chiefs. These people were carrying on a series of marauding excursions, and had attacked the Batlaros, a tribe to the south-west of Kuruman, destroying some of their villages and carrying off their cattle. They were atrociously cruel; they were mounted, and armed with guns, and consequently no Bechwanas could stand against them. They were contemplating a visit to the Kuruman. Nothing but strong faith and a sense of duty kept Mary Moffat at her post in this crisis. On one occasion so great was the alarm that she was aroused at midnight by the chief. Mr. Hamilton, with the men attached to the mission, was at the site of the new station about eight miles away. All that she could do was to write and send a note to him, and to put a few things together so as to be ready to flee with her two babes and two little Bushmen children if it became absolutely necessary.

In her solitude Mary Moffat had written and sent off at hazard the following letter on the twenty-eighth of July :

“ It is with a faint, faint hope that you will ever see this, that I take up my pen, it being so very improbable that you will meet with the Barolong who take it; but the possibility of such a thing compels me not to neglect the opportunity, anxious as I am to convey to your affectionate heart tidings of our welfare. Our covenant God has graciously protected us and all about us ever since you left; and I have strong confidence that He has also been with you. But oh, my dear, I find it requires the exercise of some fortitude to be calm and serene under such a separation, in such circumstances and at such a time in a land of barbarians. In vain has my heart fluttered when I have seen a strange face, hoping he would pull out from under his kaross a letter, no post yet having arrived from you, and I begin to think that I must not have that exquisite pleasure till the living epistle burst in upon me himself. You know I dreaded your departure exceedingly. I had many fears about your health from that ugly cough. I had also fears on account of the tumultuous state of the land. I expected also to suffer a good deal myself from low spirits in my great solitude, but in this I was mistaken, having been remarkably composed and very seldom in a melancholy mood. When I feel it coming on I make great efforts to dispel it, and have been successful. I feel very thankful for the support I have had, and derive encouragement from it that all is well with you, and that your journey is under the smiles of our Heavenly Father. I have also great liberty at the throne of grace, for you and the cause of Christ.

“ Our dear little Mary and Ann are well. Mr. Hamilton is also

well. He took away most of his goods yesterday and many trees, but will come as usual on Saturday till you return. Mr. Hughes has not yet come, nor do we hear anything from them. About ten days after your departure two hastily written notes from Mr. Helm to Mr. Hamilton arrived, bearing different dates, the last of them the 6th inst., saying that an immense body of Mantatees was rapidly approaching Griqua Town, that the Koranna Mission was destroyed, that Mr. Edwards had been to call a commando, that Edwards and Melville were gone out with the Griquas and had been three days away. Borumelo is since come from Campbell, and says that they were not yet returned, but had sent for a fresh supply of ammunition, and had also sent to Mr. Stockenstrom for help. The Mantatees were not the same people who fought at Old Lattakoo. You will easily conceive how I felt with regard to you, but was enabled in the confidence of faith to commend you to our covenant God. The idea of any of them on their return falling in with your single waggon is truly shocking.

“Since you left, Jacob Cloete, with a number of armed Korannas on horses, besides a number of Bushmen, has been making terrible ravages at a town beyond Lehaise’s, has taken a great number of cattle, killed eight chiefs, besides others, and women and children. By all accounts he has acted most barbarously; the people here were much alarmed, as he threatened to come here to get powder. Of course I had some fears, but am happy to say he has gone back to his place. . . .

“I know you will excuse the brevity of this letter when you reflect on the uncertainty of getting it. I will promise the man a few beads if he brings it to you, as well as tobacco.”

On Robert Moffat’s return things had settled down a little, but only for a time. The marauders began to repeat their operations. The Batlaros appealed to their neighbours the Batlaping for help. The latter sent out a party, but, heathen-like, instead of joining hands with their own kindred in repelling the common enemy, they took the opportunity to carry off a large quantity of cattle belonging to the Batlaros. From this time things went from bad to worse. The missionaries had moved to the new station, but they had scarcely done so when the Batlaping whom they had left at the lower place were attacked, not only by the marauders, but by the Batlaros, who might have been their friends but for their own folly.

So general was the confusion, that a second time did the missionaries find it necessary to take refuge at Griqua Town, where we find them at the end of the year.

In July, during her husband’s absence in the interior, Mary Moffat had written :

“I feel my solitude very much, Mr. Hamilton having removed to the new station to build himself a house, and has the men with him.

They come home, however, on Saturday evenings and stop Sabbaths over ; but, trying as it is, I feel a satisfaction in sacrificing my dear husband's company when I reflect that it is for the cause of Christ, and I feel persuaded that these journeys into the interior are of enormous importance to the kingdom of our Lord, as they prepare the way for the spread of the gospel. Poor Mr. Hamilton is heavily afflicted. Whilst he was away at Griqua Town last October, his whole premises were burnt to ashes. The Bechwanas were, however, active in endeavouring to save his property, and succeeded pretty well, but it may be easily conceived that his loss was considerable."

After detailing the alarming rumours from the north-east, she goes on to say :

"Since we came home the Bushmen took at one time fifty head of cattle from the post of one of our chiefs, but we do not hear that they are projecting a commando against them. We now hear that the Batlaros to the westward of us are visited by a company of depre-dators, joined by some rebel Griquas, and they have taken the poor people's cattle. I cannot vouch for the truth of this report ; but a man was here yesterday who said he heard the firing of the guns. Thus you see we are surrounded on every hand. It requires some little fortitude to live at rest in such a tumultuous land, amidst barbarians, but we trust that 'He who hath delivered will deliver.'

"How truly descriptive of the natives of this country is the prophecy, 'His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand shall be against him.' And if we will allow ourselves to reflect on the train of miseries which such a mode of life brings with it, how conclusively may we argue against that vain philosophy which declaims against the efforts of missionaries in such a country by saying that the natives live a quiet, harmless, and peaceable life, attending to their flocks and herds, and know nothing of the miseries of refined society. Oh how futile are such reasonings ! When I allow myself to conceive of the feelings of the natives of this wretched country in their most elevated state, I shudder. Methinks the condition of the very beasts is enviable in comparison of theirs. They know that they must die, and the dread idea of annihilation strikes them through like a barbed arrow. To talk of death makes them almost frantic.

"The hundreds who perish annually from hunger in this state of society is another argument against such reasonings, and a convincing proof that even feelings of common philanthropy would induce many to exert themselves even for the temporal good of these sons of humanity. Horror and devastation reign over the whole land, darkness covers it, and gross darkness the people. The longer we live in it the more convinced we are of the necessity of missionaries being here, being fully persuaded that it is only the gospel of peace which can raise the degenerate sons of Adam. How transcendentally blessed will those missionaries be who live to see the thick gloom which covers them dispelled by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. I scarcely expect to witness it myself, but feel confident that the time will come, because

the promises of Jehovah are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. It is not conferring with flesh and blood to live amongst these people. In the natives of South Africa there is nothing naturally engaging ; their extreme selfishness, filthiness, obstinate stupidity, and want of sensibility, have a tendency to disgust, and sometimes cause the mind to shrink from the idea of spending the whole life amongst them, far from every tender and endearing circle. But when we recollect that the Saviour of men has said, 'Deny thyself, take up thy cross and follow me,' we blush for harbouring such a feeling. He left the heaven of heavens, the bosom of His Father, to carry through a life of unparalleled suffering, ignominy, and scorn on this base and sinful earth. Oh how imperfectly do we follow Him ! Pray for us that we may have grace ever to keep His example in view.

"At present there is no appearance of a work of grace among the Bechwanas. As may be expected, they are very friendly, and consider themselves privileged. They are by no means unanimous about going with us, but we believe many will go, at least next year, as we advise them not to go till the water ditch is made.

"Peclo was received with loud and joyful acclamations, and Teyshe and he have made the people wonder with their accounts. We are confident their visit to the Cape will have a good effect."

CHAPTER XIV.

FAMILY BEREAVEMENTS.

1825.

EARLY in 1825 the immediate danger seemed to have passed, and the Moffats, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, rejoined Mr. Hamilton, who had remained throughout at his lonely post. The western banditti had for the time retired. Though the noise of war had ceased in their own neighbourhood, yet elsewhere a spirit of madness seemed to have seized on all the interior tribes. Wasting and destruction were the order of the day eastward and northward. Tribes of the same character, and in similar circumstances to those who had been called Mantatees, roved about, carrying terror and devastation through wide regions. Even the hitherto invincible Makaba had been overcome and slain, and his Bangwaketsi were scattered far and wide; but there was at all events a lull in the neighbourhood of Kuruman.

Once more the missionaries took heart, and commenced laying out the new station. They raised three temporary dwellings, each consisting of a wooden framework filled up with reeds cut from the adjacent valley, and plastered within and without; and they meanwhile laid the foundations of more permanent dwellings.

But their troubles were not yet over. The young chief Peclo died suddenly, and his death scattered to the winds many bright hopes which the missionaries had entertained of what might have been done by his means. Again a cloud came up from the west in the shape of a band of marauders. They were a part of those who had come before, but greatly reduced in numbers. Few as they were, however, their boldness and their possession of guns and horses made them irresistible. The Batlaping at the old station gave way before them, losing nearly all their cattle. The roving band drew near to the Kuruman itself, but the missionaries had determined this time to hold their ground; and the marauders

retired, and again they were left in peace to carry on their labours. Unhappily the Batlaping could not be prevailed upon to return to their deserted town. They drifted away eastward, and eventually settled down on the Hart or Kolong River, where the bulk of the tribe has remained until now; the greater part of what remains now being under Mankoroane, a nephew of Mothibi.

The missionaries found themselves surrounded by a much reduced population, though probably more amenable to their influence, as those who remained did so for the most part from confidence inspired by their presence. Meanwhile the Moffats themselves were called to mourn over the death of a little boy, who only lived five days. In the month of October the mother of Mary Moffat passed away, after some years of declining health. She had done her work at home, and had the blessing and comfort of having a daughter like-minded in the missionary field, and of being present a few months before her death at the ordination of her son, and his induction into the charge of a church at Hulme, which he afterwards gave up in order to go to Madras as a missionary.

She died early in October. In April of the following year her daughter received the news, so slow were the means of communication then. She writes as follows to her father :

“The account of my dear mother's heavy bodily affliction distresses us much, but to hear at the same time of the consolations of the gospel being so abundantly supplied causes the voice of joy and praise to be heard in our tabernacle ; and though the event of her death will be inexpressibly painful to us, the bitterness of the stroke will be in no small degree mitigated by having heard of the brightness of her evidences and her comfortable experience of the efficacy of the blood of Christ.”

She writes again in June :

“It is with mingled feelings of sorrow and gratitude that I retire from the bustle of my domestic cares to write to you once more : sorrow that you are now alone, and that the endearing name of mother is no longer united with that of father, and gratitude that I have still yourself to address, and trust that the great Disposer of all events will continue to spare your life for a few years longer ; but these repeated strokes teach us not to set our hearts too much on any earthly object.

“My dear Moffat and myself were for thirty years exempted from such bereaving dispensations ; the commencement was at length made with the beloved offspring of our own bodies : and what is very remarkable, Robert's elder brother Alexander died within ten days of my ever-beloved mother—we received the accounts of both their deaths by the same post, and you will judge of our feelings on the

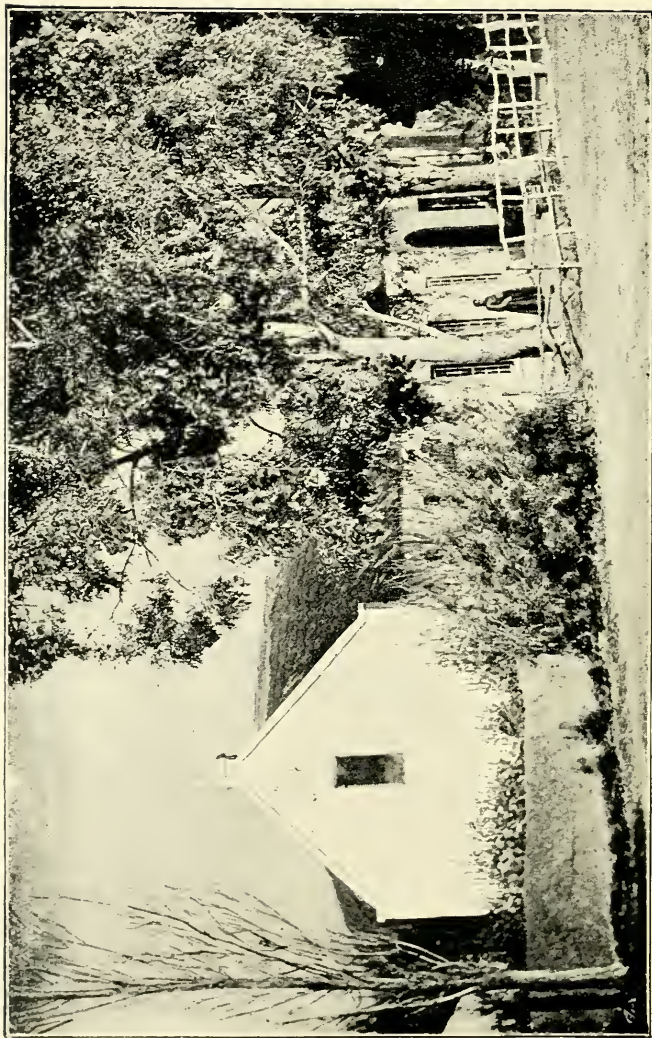
occasion. For my own part, with regard to my dear mother, I was long before I could in any degree feel reconciled to her approaching dissolution, though for more than two years I have opened every letter with a palpitating heart, expecting the painful intelligence that would at once blast the feeble hope which was sometimes cherished of again beholding her in the flesh. I never felt anything like resignation till I heard how repeatedly and heavily she was afflicted, and how happily she was prepared for the last remove. I felt that it was cruelly selfish to wish her to live : when I say selfish you must not suppose that I did not consider you, my dear father, for my heart does testify that this was the last struggle in my feelings, a consideration of your desolate condition, when she should be called to leave you in this vale of tears, knowing how uncommonly happily you have lived together, and sensible that the widowed life would be comparatively dreary.

“May the God of all grace grant you consolations equal to the loss you have sustained, and enable you to pursue your earthly course with Christian cheerfulness.”

Moffat's brother Alexander, mentioned above, was a man, to judge from his letters, of great talent, but his life was marred by a want of purpose and of the devotion which inspired his missionary brother. He had been a soldier in the East India Company's service, but had come home invalided, to die.

It had been hoped that Mr. and Mrs. Hughes would be a permanent addition to the band at Kuruman ; but the health of the former suffered so much from the excessive heat that he had to seek change, and after a time he became attached to the Griqua Mission, in which he remained till the close of his life in 1870.

About this time Robert Moffat commenced his first regular efforts towards laying the foundation of a Sechwana literature. A spelling-book was prepared, and sent to the Cape to be printed.



COMMON STYLE OF SOUTH AFRICAN FARMHOUSE

CHAPTER XV.

PROGRESS ON THE NEW STATION.

1826.

IN the year 1826 things settled down, and some steady progress was made in the work of laying-out the station. The Hottentots who had come from Bethelsdorp to assist in public manual labour were, however, so disgusted with the country, the continual war alarms, and the scarcity of supplies—for war had brought famine in its train—that they returned to the Colony; and as the Bechwanas knew little about work, the missionaries, with their assistant Mr. Millen, had to depend mainly upon themselves. Though their days were thus spent in hard labour, they yet managed to give attention to the language, and to religious services—which were held as usual, but with little result as yet. Such of the Batlaping as had not moved away to the eastward had settled down about the Kuruman valley; and did not oppose, though they made no response to, the efforts which were directed to impress upon them the gospel message.

In April Mary Moffat writes :

“By an especial providence a very young child was committed to my care. One Sabbath morning while preparing for church, some of our children brought in a report that a child was heard crying among the stones on the side of the hill about a quarter of a mile from the house. We immediately set off to the spot. Moffat and Mr. Millen arrived there before me, and heard its cries but could see nothing. At length they discovered the poor babe literally buried alive and covered with stones. At this moment I arrived, and, as you will easily conceive, was dreadfully shocked. The inhuman mother had pulled out stones to make a hole sufficient for its little body, and then put it in and laid upon it one huge stone, the corner of which rested on its little nose and made a severe wound. Its limbs were sadly bruised with kicking about, and its eyes all bleared with the cold. I took it up and brought it home, fed and washed it and dressed its wounds, to the great

astonishment of the natives. They viewed it with indifference ; said the mother was a rascal, but wondered much that we should love so poor an object. It was only about five weeks old, but very small, like one new born. It appeared that the monstrous mother, assisted by her own mother, had committed it to its cold tomb about four o'clock the day before, where it remained the whole night till nine o'clock in the morning when we found it. It was amazing that it still lived, as it had rained hard and there was not an inch of covering about it ; and still more that the wolf had not got it, as a wolf will tear a dead body out of the grave if not well secured. The mother was an object of charity, and had been in the habit of getting food from us. Only the day before I gave her a piece of beef for a small bundle of firewood merely out of pity, and to her mother the very day on which the crime was committed. She had reported that her child was dead, but when she heard that we had made the discovery both she and her mother fled to another part of the country. Thus you see I have an addition to my cares ; and as I knew no one to whom I could entrust it as wet nurse, I began and carried on with the spoon till I was no longer able to do it on account of my late trial, when I engaged a good-natured Hottentot, the wife of one of the men, to take it for a time, for which I pay her liberally, the food and clothing coming regularly from myself. It is coming on very well, and is considered a very pretty child. The remarkable way in which it has been brought into our family led us at once to adopt it as our own, and we have accordingly offered it in baptism a month ago, and named her Sarah Roby. You may tell Mrs. Roby that it was our intention, had our last dear babe been a girl and lived, to have given her name ; and as we may never have another, we have given it to this child of Providence. I assure you I have strong inducements (independent of the common feeling of humanity) to pay the strictest attention to the welfare of a little infant whose life has been so singularly spared. I feel habitually as if I had a command from God Himself to nurse the child for Him. And may I be enabled to do it as to glorify His holy name."

The following quotation from a letter written by Mr. Melville to a friend in England deals with a subject of some importance, so far as it has been made a means of casting a slur upon the disinterestedness of missionaries. Mr. Melville had spent several years at Griqua Town as Government Commissioner, and was in a good position to speak with authority about matters of this kind.

"As some calumnious reports have been circulated respecting the elephant's teeth sent to Cape Town by Moffat, I think it necessary to state the facts which gave rise to them, that you may be enabled to counteract any such reports which may reach the ears of the Directors. The truth is this. Moffat sent a few elephants' teeth with two waggons that went last year to Cape Town. The waggons were, however, chiefly laden with ivory belonging to several persons. Five

hundred and eighty pounds, I well know, belonged to a runaway slave who sent the ivory to purchase his freedom ; one of the Griquas I know purchased a new waggon for 606 dollars, being the proceeds of what he took to town in the same waggon ; and several other individuals also sent ivory by the same conveyance. As Moffat had to manage the business of the sale of the ivory of the slave through his agent, and having sent a small quantity of his own, some person either ignorantly or maliciously spread a report that he had sent two thousand pounds of ivory to town. I don't think there is a missionary in the country more disinterested than Moffat ; and from my knowledge of the circumstances, nothing but necessity induced him to send a little ivory to town to pay his debts."

This is a matter which has been much spoken about in South Africa, and wherever there are people disposed to cast a stone at the missionary enterprise. In the early days missionaries were expected to prove their devotion by leaving home and friends and going to live among repulsive barbarians on stipends utterly unequal to their needs. The sums which were then paid to missionaries were such that the contemplation of them now raises a smile. It was no laughing matter, however, for them.

When, therefore, a missionary could, by rendering a service, by dint of his medical knowledge or mechanical skill, he could not be blamed for being willing to accept in return some kind of a thank-offering. This might be a sheep, which would supply his family with meat for a few days, or it might be a tusk of ivory or a kaross. But for assistance of this kind, it is doubtful whether the pittance on which these men were expected to hold their ground, and to fight a heartbreaking battle in a heathen country, would have kept them alive. Some men succumbed to the additional trial to which their constancy was exposed, and there are instances on record of missionaries who became eventually traders or farmers, to the detriment or utter forsaking of their spiritual work.

These, however, were the exceptions. Most men added to their many missionary cares and labours the duty of eking out a livelihood for themselves and their families, and did so without their love and zeal waxing cold. That their efficiency was decreased by this additional weight on their hands there is no room to doubt, but they did what they could, and what was necessary, with no thought of laying by for their children or even for their own old age ;—though, as all the world knows, there is no more conspicuous example of the meanness and want of right feeling which may be displayed by a board or committee, even when composed of kind-hearted and Christian men individually, than that which we see in the dealings of missionary boards with super-

annuated missionaries or their widows. The Editor can speak with the more freedom about this matter, because his father met with an exceptional lot and is entirely out of the case. With reference to the working stipends of missionaries, in most cases these matters are better understood than they used to be, and the effort is now made to put matters on a right footing, and so to sustain men that they may have nothing to think of but the work they have to do : but as to aged missionaries and their widows, the Church has still its duty to learn.

Mary Moffat writes to her father in September, 1826 :

“As regards the present, I must add that I never enjoyed an equal share of health in similar circumstances. It appears that I am really improving, and could I regain my strength should be as well as in my native land ; but the Lord knows best what is good for me. Through His blessing Robert has enjoyed excellent health, but has been terribly harassed with hard manual labour. Our Bethelsdorp Hottentots having left us, it falls heavily on Hamilton and Moffat, especially as our house has been building. It is, however, within a few days of being finished, when he intends leaving the public work entirely—the smith's excepted, because nobody else can do it—and applying closely to study. Mr. Millen, not being able to go on for want of labourers with the masonry, has made a journey to the Molopo and bartered for ivory, with which he is gone to Algoa Bay, and will return immediately to finish his work. We have at present only one effective man, a Hottentot, all the rest being Bechwanas, with whom it may easily be conceived it is difficult to get on. One of our Hottentots was, three months ago, severely wounded by a buffalo, and it remains doubtful if he will ever recover so as to be able to work.

“You may form some idea of what missionaries have to put their hands to when I tell you that Robert was a fortnight every day up to the middle in water cutting thatch for the house. We promise ourselves the pleasure of writing to all the friends to whom we are indebted when we get settled in our new house, which is a very comfortable one, and will be a treasure to the Society in this barbarous land. The design is to build another good house and a chapel, when I think every one will be heartily tired of building ; but they will be permanent, and not require rebuilding every few years like our reed houses, as well as more conducive to the health of Europeans.

“As to the Bechwanas, I am sorry to say that they are much as usual, equally careless about spiritual things, and evidently as much attached to their old superstitions. They have built large villages along the valley, and are very busy cultivating their ground ; but a temptation has lately fallen in their way which was too powerful for them to resist ; a rainmaker from a distant country to the south-east, has made his appearance and offered his services, which they have accepted ; and he is now exerting himself to the utmost. We have had two showers since he came, and this has of course strengthened their faith. He says our houses will be washed away before the sea-

son is past. They keep him away from us as much as possible, evidently ashamed of having turned again to this folly. We sometimes think he is a Mantatee spy, as he very much resembles those people.

“Mr. Wright, whom you know, has at length arrived at Griqua Town, and is actively engaged. He appears to be making a stir among the people, and especially in the school. It is now three months since he came, and we trust the interest excited will continue and increase. We ardently long to hear of good doing somewhere in South Africa, for wherever we turn our attention in this miserable country we hear of no spiritual work.”

The Mr. Millen thus mentioned was not in the regular service of the Society, but had been engaged as a good mason for a certain time, and for special work.

When the year 1827 opened it appeared as though the mission had really entered on a peaceful and steady course. The first permanent dwelling-house had been finished and occupied—a substantial stone building, instead of the wooden frame filled in with wattle and daub with which the missionaries had hitherto been contented. The water had been led out, and smiling gardens gladdened the slopes of the valley. Hamilton and Hughes took in hand what remained of public manual labour, which it was arranged that Moffat should lay aside at least for a time, and devote himself to the literature of the Sechwana language.

Rumours of war still came from the interior at intervals, but from a great distance. The marauding vagabonds along the Orange River seemed also to have ceased from further movements in the direction of Bechwanaland. The time had come for Moffat to carry out a plan he had long kept in view. Hitherto, although living among Bechwanas, he had been so much in contact with Dutch-speaking people on the station, that it was not easy to gather up the language, which as yet was nowhere to be found in a written form. He determined, if only for a short time, to go right away, so as to be perfectly alone with Bechwanas, taking with him no one who spoke Dutch or English.

In the month of January a son was born. He was called Robert after his grandfather. As soon after this event as it was fit for him to leave, Moffat started on his journey. He directed his course to the Barolong tribe, who were at this time scattered in several spots along the margin of the Kalahari Desert, to which they had been driven by the Mantatee invasion, and from which they had not yet seen their way clear to return to the part of the country more suitable for settled residence. They were living in a state of utter degradation and wretchedness, in mere temporary booths rather than huts, in a dry and thirsty land, depending

mainly upon the milk of what cattle they had saved, and the meat of such game as they could kill.

He took up his quarters at the encampment of Bogacho, one of the chiefs of the Barolong, and spent the greater part of two months there, visiting also some of the other places. Day by day his waggon was surrounded by the idlers of the camp, whose noisy clatter would continue without intermission for hours. Their conversation was such as no civilized person could take any pleasure in; their habits were dirty, as might well be imagined when it is remembered that the water was four miles from the village, and that what was brought, carried by the women, would be used only for drinking and cooking. The intense dryness of the country, the high winds, carrying clouds of fine sand and dust, the imperfect shelter of a waggon, with not a vestige of a tree available for shade, and the swarms of hungry flies from the heaps of rubbish around, formed a sum total which imagination would fail to grasp, except that of one who has seen the like.

The headmen were, in their way, hospitable enough. A good supply of milk was always given, and this with the flesh of the rhinoceros, the camelopard, and the quagga, or zebra, all of which were plentiful in the neighbourhood, supplied sufficient if not very delicate food. But the soul of the missionary craved other sustenance. If he could have found one patient or attentive listener to the message which lay like a burden upon his heart, it would have sufficed. This was not to be. The hearts of these people, even after their manifold chastisements, were utterly brutish, and his message fell upon deaf ears.

The chief object of his journey he fully gained. He had already so far a knowledge of the Sechwana language that a few weeks of the life he led in this desert, physical and moral, were sufficient to place him at one bound in a position to do without interpreters, and to speak freely to the people in their own tongue. He set off to return home with this satisfaction, and on his arrival astonished Mothibi and his councillors by preaching to them a sermon in such Sechwana, that the only growling criticism the chief could find to make was that it smacked too much of the Serolong dialect. He found all well in his now beautiful home; but his chief joy was that he could settle down with some feeling of ability to the work of translation.

The time for this had not yet come. He had not been long home before trouble again began by the movements of the banditti from the westward. The hands of these miscreants were strengthened by dissensions among the Griquas themselves, some of whom had joined the enemy. An attack was made upon

Griqua Town itself, and repelled, but Waterboer with his people were unable to follow up the advantage in consequence of the capture of most of their horses, and the exhaustion of their ammunition. The marauders having failed at Griqua Town, now turned their attention to Kuruman; and so threatening did the aspect of affairs become that the missionaries there, in response to the urgent representations of their friends at Griqua Town, felt it their duty to retire for a time to that station, not for the first time an ark of refuge to them.

Some time passed with no further movement on the part of the banditti, and the Kuruman missionaries returned home. But the loss of time was great, and there was also the inevitable loss of property; though, upon the whole, they found their houses and what they had left behind in good order—a proof of the influence they were gaining over the minds of the Bechwanas, whom they found on their first arrival a set of inveterate thieves. Robert Moffat writes as follows:

“LATTAKOO, *Feb.* 18, 1828.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—We wrote to Mr Roby and to John about two months ago, but as Mr. Hamilton will leave this to-morrow for Algoa Bay, and there being little probability of another opportunity for some months, I cannot let the present slip without writing a few hasty lines. If the above communications have come to hand, you will be apprised of our temporary removal to Griqua Town and subsequent return to this station. Since then we have been thrown into much perplexity from a circumstance which led us to fear that the worst of events was yet to happen to this our afflicted Mission. Nearly a month ago a strong party of the mountaineers, headed by the Blooms, sons of the famous robber of that name, came unexpectedly on the Batlaro cattle outposts, a little way below this station, where they made an easy prey of all within their reach. They came no further; but we were soon informed on good authority that it was the intention of the Blooms to return from the Orange River with the sole purpose of rooting out this Mission, which all along has been an eyesore to such marauding expeditions. In consequence of this well-authenticated report, many of the natives in our immediate vicinity sent off all their families and cattle to a distance. After mature deliberation and prayer for Divine assistance, we resolved to remain on the station, and to abide the consequences. From a sense of duty we acquainted Andries Waterboer with what had transpired, and he soon informed us that his adverse circumstances precluded every possibility of his rendering any assistance. This was what we wished and expected, as it was more congenial to our sentiments to remain unconnected with either party; for if Andries had, agreeable to his first intention, sent a small party to defend the station, we should have become more than ever the butt of indignation to the enemy.

“In this state of suspense we continued near three weeks, when it pleased our Heavenly Father to disperse in some degree the gloom

which rested on our prospects. Jan Karse, a respectable Griqua, brother-in-law to the Blooms, hearing of our situation, came with his family to the station, not to defend by the force of arms, but to endeavour to convince his relations by soft argument of the error of their ways, and influence them to abandon their murderous courses. Nothing could be more agreeable to our wishes than the motives of Jan Karse, and through the Divine blessing they may have the most salutary effects. It is also likely that he will remain some time on the station, being anxious that his children and domestics should enjoy the advantages of the school.

“Affairs are wearing a more pleasing aspect. Mothibi and his people are still wandering in the Bushman country, and will not likely return till public affairs become more settled. Although things are so unpropitious, we are, blessed be God, far from being discouraged. The Lord has hitherto preserved us, and done great things for us, and He continues able to deliver.

“There are also some things calculated to cheer and encourage, and we have no doubt but ultimate success will crown our labours. At a small distance are two Batlaro villages, and on the station there are at least fifty families. All these from time to time have the gospel of salvation preached in their own language; and though we as yet see no immediate fruit of the Spirit, yet it is a consolation to know that their knowledge in Divine things is increasing, and there are several who have begun to pray.

“By Mr. Miles the long-looked-for books arrived, and about two weeks after he left I commenced the school in the Sechwana language. Notwithstanding the unpleasant circumstances of the station, the number attending exceeded our expectations. There are already four Bechwanas who can read in their own language the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and I trust to be able very soon to put six or eight more into that class. I have also begun an evening school, which promises well. The attendance, chiefly adult, has risen to forty, while that of the day school is about fifty. We have also begun to sing hymns composed in the language, which has a very enlivening effect. The scholars are at present exclusively from the families who live on the station, and these consist chiefly of strangers. There are here Batlaping, Batlaro, Barolong, Bashuto, Bakuena, Bakalahari, and Matebele. At present they are chiefly poor, but industrious, and, with the assistance of fruitful gardens, are better off than the more affluent natives whose dependence is entirely on their flocks. We have found them very serviceable in carrying on building, they being always ready to work, for which they are duly rewarded. We are entirely dependent on them for such assistance.

“Attending school twice in the day, with the different services in the church and other cares connected with the welfare of the station, will for some time keep me very busy, and prevent me devoting all that time to study which I could wish. It is my object now to get something translated to put into the hands of those who learn to read.”

CHAPTER XVI.

LAST ATTACKS OF THE MARAUDERS.

1828.

THE hopeful prospect was soon, however, to be again clouded over. In the month of April the unfortunate Bechwanas from the surrounding country began to take refuge at the station on account of another band of marauders that came up from the Orange River and scoured the country. These were the people of whom Jan Karse had heard, and he behaved very well indeed in carrying out his good resolutions. Hearing that they were encamped upon the Matlwaring River, about eighteen miles away, he rode out and entreated them to return, and not to add to the long list of their evil deeds. He found among them his brother-in-law, and gained him over.

The rest made as though they were persuaded, and actually started; but instead of going the way they had come, as they had promised to do, they suddenly appeared on the station, and threw themselves into some breastworks which had been raised for purposes of defence. There they remained several days, maintaining a sullen silence about their intentions, but making so far a show of friendliness that they went freely about among the people on the station. At last Bloom gave warning that evil was intended, and that all must be upon their guard.

Karse went up to their camp the next day, and tried to bring them to a better mind. His wife went with him. The interview was long, but ended fruitlessly, and he was warned to get him gone. His wife was tall and portly; he was quite the contrary. She took in the situation at a glance, and as the pair came down the slope she made him walk in front of her, having a shrewd suspicion that otherwise he would be shot. A few minutes later, Bloom, taking his gun, also left the camp, and finally broke with

his associates. He was just turning the corner of the mission-house when a shot was fired, and a bullet ploughed the ground at his feet.

Happily at this juncture a timely reinforcement appeared in the person of Arend and his party. Mention has already been made of this man. He was an escaped slave from the Colony, who had paid his own ransom with ivory, and had settled in the vicinity of the station. He was a bold and resolute man, and a good shot, and he and his men were well armed. His appearance put heart into the somewhat timid Bechwanas. Sharp firing commenced, Arend and a few resolute men made a rush, the robbers deserted their entrenchments and scattered in wild flight across the plain; six fell and five more were captured, and the rest betook themselves to the western hills. Thus ended another critical episode in the history of the mission.

This was only one of several parties of marauding banditti who for some years kept the border country in a state of misery. Their haunts were along the Orange River; and they were in communication with certain lawless Boers on the northern outskirts of the Colony who carried on an illicit trade in guns and ammunition. By means of these, though their numbers were small, the Bechwanas were quite at their mercy, armed as they were with assegais and knobsticks only. Though they swept away thousands of cattle and ravaged many villages, so little did their wickedness profit them that they grew the longer the poorer. After the attack on Kuruman had been repelled, and had shaken their prestige, another blow fell upon them by the action of the Colonial Government in cutting off the supply of ammunition, and before long these wretched men began to wander all over the country in the last stage of destitution.

The missionaries now began to take heart again, and work was resumed; but their troubles were not yet over. On the ninth of August the alarm was again raised. The fugitive Batlaros came pouring in with their flocks and herds, and the Kuruman was once more a camp of refuge. Few slept that night. Next morning, by Moffat's directions, the low heights at the back of the station were crowded with men, to give the appearance of a large defending force, though probably not a dozen guns could have been mustered. The enemy was seen approaching. The cavalcade was even more formidable than had been expected. It was a comparatively strange party, which had come from Namaqualand, far west down along the Orange River. As they came on, they scoured the surrounding plain in search of plunder, but found only a few sheep and cows, all other stock having

been crowded on to the station, and filling up every available space in and around the half-built church and other houses.

The would-be assailants drew up at some distance, dismayed at the signs of an apparently formidable defence. After some delay they sent forward two messengers with a flag of truce. It would not do to let these people come within the precincts of the station and see its weakness, so Moffat started to meet them half-way. He learned from them that a renegade Christian Griqua was one of the leaders of the party, and wished to see him. He came, but as he drew near the presence of the missionary was too much for him, and his courage was fast melting away. He was only too glad to disclaim any authority or responsibility for what had already been done, and tried to lay all blame on the shoulders of another, a Namaqua chief of the name of Paul.

Just at this juncture a waggon came in sight on the road from the southward. It proved to be that of Archbell, a Wesleyan missionary from Platberg. As it had to pass near the place where the bandits had encamped, and a movement was evidently taking place to intercept it, Moffat said to the cowering Griqua, "Now is your time to show that you are sincere; bring that waggon safely past." He was only too glad of an excuse to end a meeting that was growing every moment too embarrassing for him, and ran off to curb the violence of the party and to escort the waggon. This gave time for further negotiation, and at last Paul himself slowly and reluctantly drew near, with his hat drawn down over his eyes, for he could not look into the face of a man who in former days had slept in his village, and had faithfully preached to him and to his family the word of life.

He pleaded that Moffat personally need fear nothing from him, but tried to justify his desire for vengeance upon the Batlaping. It took long and patient persuasion to bring him round, but when he did turn the victory was complete. He abruptly called one of his men. "Bring back those sheep and cows we took this morning." It was done. "I am going," he said. "There are the things of your people. Will Mynheer not shake hands with me for once?" "Of course I will; but let me see your face." "That I will not indeed: I do not want to die yet. I can see your face through my hat." And away he went, glad to turn without having met those terrible eyes which roused an accusing conscience within.

So complete was the revulsion of feeling, that the leaders of the party appealed to the missionary to promise that they should not be attacked in their camp that night. They were supplied

with food, and by the dawn of next day had vanished like the shadow of a dream. The larger part returned to Namaqualand, and others turned off and went to seek plunder on their own account further northwards, but came to a miserable end. One of the few scattered survivors made his appearance naked and starving, under cover of night, at Moffat's door a few weeks afterwards, and found the succour which was denied to none. From this time the land had peace until fifty years afterwards, when an English force invaded the Bechwana country—an invasion about which the less said the better.

CHAPTER XVII.

DAYLIGHT AT LAST.

1829.

FROM the commencement of the Bechwana Mission by Hamilton and Read in 1816, for a period of more than ten years, not a ray of light shot across the gloom to cheer the hearts of the missionaries. A dull and stolid indifference reigned; the Batlaping would talk of any ordinary subject, and were willing to avail themselves of the presence of the white people in their country for any temporal advantage that might be within their reach, but the moment a word was said about divine things their ears seemed to become deaf at once, and they would walk away determined to have nothing to do with that foolishness.

To people like the missionaries, whose whole heart was in their work, who believed that all said in the New Testament about the solemn eventualities of another world was literally true and no mere figure of speech, who looked at the heathen around them and felt that they were verily perishing, it was sore trial of faith to go on year after year with their message burning in their hearts.

The darkness was long and gloomy beyond compare, but there was no wavering of faith. There were times, indeed, when the brethren Hamilton and Moffat were cast down and disposed to cry with the prophet, "Who hath believed our report?" and to ask, "Is this the right path?" but there was one member of the mission, weak in body but strong in faith, who never faltered. She would but fall back on the promises of the unchangeable God, and say, "We may not live to see it, but the awakening will come as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow." On one occasion a letter was received from her friend Mrs. Greaves of Sheffield, asking if there was anything of use which could be sent. The answer of Mary Moffat was, "Send us a communion service; we shall want it some day." At that time there was no glimmer of the dawn,

and in the course of the two or three years which it took with their slow communications to get that request of faith fulfilled there was time for an even thicker darkness to overspread the sky, and the sorest cross of all was a rumour which came that doubts were beginning to be felt at home about the use of going on with the Bechwana Mission : but they held on.

In the year 1827 there began to be a sort of change, almost like that change in the sky even before the dawn which is familiar to watchers in the night. The bulk of the Batlaping tribe, utterly weary and impoverished by the incessant forays of the western banditti, had drifted away eastward and settled along the course of the Vaal and the Kolong rivers ; but their place at Kuruman had been in a measure supplied by a mixed community of refugees from the interior tribes, and the Batlaro still clung to their old location to the north-west of the station on the confines of the Kalahari Desert. Many of the refugees were drawn to the station by feelings which gave them a disposition open to missionary influence, so that it began to be seen that there was a better attendance and a more settled attention to the preaching and teaching of the missionaries.

At length, in 1829, a marvellous awakening began. It came, as such things do come, without any human or visible existing cause. There was a wave of tumultuous and simultaneous enthusiasm. The two brethren who witnessed it were sober-minded and hard-headed Scotchmen, by disposition not willing to lend themselves to any movement which might seem to have the taint of mere sensationalism. They had been schooled to adversity, and they could but dread some new device of the devil to obstruct their path ; but it was not long before they were forced to admit that there was something that could not be gainsaid. In a few months the whole aspect of the station had changed. The meeting-house was crowded before the service had begun. Heathen songs and dancing had ceased, and everywhere were to be heard instead the songs of Zion and the outpouring of impassioned prayers. The missionaries were beset even in their own houses by those who were seeking fuller instruction in things which had become to them all at once of paramount importance. The moral condition of the community rapidly improved, and the dirt and indecency of heathen costume were exchanged for cleanliness and European habits of clothing, as far as the supply could be met by the visits of occasional traders.

Great as was the change, the missionaries did not dismiss their northern caution. It was only after careful examination that from the many who pressed forward they selected some six in the first

instance to receive the rite of baptism. Few can enter into the feelings which must have animated the hearts of the missionary band when they first sat down with that little company at the table of the Lord. On the day preceding this memorable occasion in the history of the Bechwana Mission a box arrived which had been long on the road from England. It contained the communion vessels for which Mary Moffat had asked nearly three years before.

The zeal of the new converts showed itself in practical forms. There were, of course, in the first instance features of the movement which needed to be carefully watched. The Bechwanas pride themselves in the suppression of all outward emotion. Those who know them can often see that under a calm demeanour there is raging a volcano of excitement. But if their feelings do gain the upper hand they are shown by uncontrollable outbursts, and in ways almost painful to witness. Thus it was that at times the little meeting-house at Kuruman was filled with a storm of sobs and cries which made it almost impossible to proceed with the service. But as time went on these manifestations moderated, and the converts settled down to steady work. Three of the men came forward and offered to take upon themselves the work of building a brick school-house, which should at the same time serve as a temporary place of worship until the great stone church, of which the foundations had even then been laid, should be finished. All that they asked was that the carpenter's work, for which they were not qualified, might be done for them. They would provide all the material and would build and roof. They were as good as their word, and a school-house was raised without a sixpence of direct expense to the Society.

The station at this time enjoyed much prosperity in temporal matters. The leading out of the water for irrigation made the people more independent of the precarious rainfall; they were well supplied, while in the country around their heathen neighbours, impoverished by war and drought, were living a life of semi-starvation. The year was one of the brightest in the annals of the station. It was the full bloom of the spring time, which has been succeeded by those alternations of frost and sunshine common to all missions. Moffat was now more at liberty to carry out his long desired purpose of translating. He put into Sechwana the Gospel of Luke and a selection of other scriptures; and of these he used to read from his manuscript in public worship or as occasion offered.

Mary Moffat writes to her father on the nineteenth of October, 1829:

“If you have received our former letters your heart would be overjoyed at the glad tidings from this station, and the later communications were calculated rather to increase than to diminish that joy. To hear of the steady and growing piety of some of these sable children of Adam, together with the increase of Divine knowledge in the minds of others, must be reviving to the hearts of all who love the cause, but especially to such as are so nearly connected with this mission as yourself. Our gracious God has been very condescending to spare the lives of His unworthy servants to witness some fruits of missionary labour—a felicity we frequently despaired of enjoying while in this lower world, where crosses and disappointments seemed to form so large a proportion in our cup. We now often wish you could be with us, to witness for yourself what we see. As I think you would see Mr. Roby’s letter, and probably the Directors would publish Moffat’s, it is not necessary for me to repeat what was then written. Suffice it to say that the converts are going on well, and though the general commotion in the minds of the people has in a great measure subsided, we have solid reason to believe that there are many persons who are the subjects of an abiding conviction of their condition as sinners before God, and are in the constant and diligent use of the means of grace; which we doubt not will be effectual through the Spirit in leading them to the Saviour of sinners. We do ardently hope and pray that what has taken place may be but the few drops before the plenteous shower. The Spirit of God has commenced His operations, and surely He will go on. Oh for a more general spirit of prayer and supplication! I hear from my friend Miss Lees, that the very time of the awakening here, was the season of extraordinary prayer among the churches at home. What a coincidence! and what an encouragement to persevere in that important part of Christian duty.

“But it is time for me to acknowledge the receipt of the two boxes you sent. They came to hand in July. I will not attempt to describe my feelings on the sight of the portraits of my dear mother and yourself. They are such striking likenesses as powerfully to affect our hearts, and to the present moment when inadvertently I cast my eyes on either, my heart bounds within me. The first day we hung them up we had a church-meeting in our hall. Brother Hamilton sat on one side of the fire in an arm-chair, and Robert on the other, and the portraits hanging above seemed to form a part of the company. I fancied my mother might be spiritually present. Five Bechwana converts, with Rachel the wife of Arend, were received on the occasion. The scene was highly interesting, and to us the interest was heightened by this little circumstance. I could not but breathe when looking at your own, ‘Oh that those lips had language, and that those ears could hear!’”

The turn events had taken in the Bechwana Mission was followed by another event which led in the end to a wide extension of the sphere to which Moffat and his coadjutors looked with hope for the prosecution of their work. For months, and indeed for years, vague rumours had been coming, handed on from one tribe

to another, about a strong and warlike people to the eastward, who spoke another language and were strangers to the Bechwanas. Of his first visits to these people and their chief, Moffat has fully told the tale in his own missionary volume ; but in view of the important part they played ever after in his life and interest, a summary account of these visits is now repeated, being much abridged parts of his journal in his own words :

“ This records the first contact of missionaries with the Matebele tribe under the chief Mosilikatse—or Umziligazi, as he would be called in Zululand, whence he came, himself a fugitive from the tyranny of Chaka. He headed another wave of emigration which rolled westwards, and threw into terror and confusion the comparatively unwarlike Basuto and Bechwana tribes, who inhabited what is now the Transvaal.

“ In the year 1829 two traders went into the interior to shoot elephants and to barter. Hearing from the Bahurutse that a tribe rich in cattle lay far eastward, they went on, and were well received by Mosilikatse the king, who, however, allowed them to approach his town on horseback only. Before this the Matebele—or Mantotoana, as they were then called—had come in contact with the Bahurutse, and had learned through them of the existence of the white people, especially those at Kuruman, with whom they were best acquainted. Mosilikatse, in quest of more extensive and particular knowledge of the white men, was led to send two of his head men, charging them to inquire specially about the manners and teachings of those at the Kuruman.

“ On their arrival here with three attendants, everything astonished and interested them, and they themselves were the objects of still greater astonishment to our people, who stared as though regarding another order of beings. They were shown every attention, and they in turn were full of gratitude. The order of worship and the singing arrested their attention, while the water-courses, gardens, houses, and blacksmith's forge kept their minds in constant exercise. Difficulties arose about their safe return to their own country. A report was spread that the tribes through which they had to pass intended to murder them as spies, and they were naturally in some alarm. In view of the warlike disposition and mighty power of the Matebele, who had already destroyed so many great tribes and deluged the Bakwena country with blood, I could not help fearing the dire results if anything should happen to these peaceful messengers. After careful thought, and having sought counsel from above, I resolved, with the cordial approval of brother Hamilton, to escort them to the Bahurutse, after which they could go on without fear to their own country.

“ I hired a waggon for their conveyance, and left this place on the 9th of November. We travelled quickly, and reached the Bahurutse at Mosega a little south of Kurrechane in ten days. We had been traversing immense and monotonous plains, the only objects of

interest upon which were occasional troops of game, including giraffes and rhinoceros. We passed without visiting the Barolong villages at Kunwana.

“At Sitlagole, a sand river about one hundred and sixty miles from Kuruman, we had just halted, and our oxen had gone little further than a gun-shot in front of the waggons, when two lions appeared, one of which rushed down upon the cattle, sprang upon one of them, and with one bite at the back of the neck laid him dead. All hands hastened with guns and spears to dispute possession of the carcase with the king of the desert, and he hastened away, making no attempt to regain his booty.

“Reaching Mosega we were received with much pleasure by Mokatle, the chief of the Bahurutse. We were detained for three days by torrents of rain, during which I embraced every opportunity of making him and his people acquainted with Divine things. Many still remembered Mr. Campbell. Mokatle had long wished to visit his new neighbour, but had not dared to venture himself within the grasp of one who had ravaged the country.

“Having fulfilled my engagement in conveying my charge safely to the Bahurutse, I resolved to return; but of this they would not hear. They entreated me to accompany them to their master, who, they declared, would be ready to kill them for allowing me to go back after coming so far. I at last consented, and Mokatle, seeing that if he accompanied me he would now have some chance of returning alive, started with us. The country now became beautiful; hills and valleys, with groves of a richer foliage than I had seen before, and numerous running streams of excellent water, all flowing towards the Indian Ocean.

“The whole country appeared to have once contained a dense population, but was now, since the invasion of the Mantatees and the terror of the Matebele, become the habitation of wild beasts and venomous reptiles; where lions roamed at large as if conscious that there was none to oppose, and emboldened by having become accustomed to gorge on human flesh owing to the destructive warfare which had raged for some years. We were mercifully preserved, though our slumbers were often interrupted by the hideous serenade.

“Five days after leaving the Bahurutse, we came to the first outpost of the Matebele. The country through which we now passed was along a range of hills running nearly east and south-east, while the country to the north and east became more level and beautifully studded with small chains of mountains and conical hills, along the bases of which lay the ruins of innumerable towns, some of amazing extent. Many an hour I walked pensively among these scenes of desolation, casting my thoughts back to the time when these now desolate habitations teemed with life and revelry, and when the hills and dales echoed with heathen joy. Nothing now remains but dilapidated walls and heaps of stones and rubbish, which form a covert for the game and for the lion. Occasionally a town may be met with where the principal folds are now occupied by the cattle of the savage victors. From having Matebele with me, I found it difficult

to obtain local information from the scattered and now degraded aborigines we occasionally met, who trembled before them, and dared not to give a satisfactory answer in the presence of the men now their masters, who ruled them with a rod of iron.

“ In this neighbourhood we were detained again three days by the rain, which fell in torrents until the valleys resounded with the roar of rivers and waterfalls. Every sort of vegetation was exceedingly luxuriant, and immense quantities of native corn grew wild among the ruins of the towns. We at last went on, but with difficulty, on account of the nature of the ground. The plains were saturated, and the black peaty clay so adhesive that each wheel became clogged with a solid mass, almost too tough to be cleared away. We had to make towards the rising ground, where the soil was more sandy and free. This was accomplished at the cost of so much labour and time that we halted at sunset after a short but most oppressive stage.

“ Next day we continued our course over a picturesque country, and crossed many fine rivulets. Towards evening we came to the Oori River, a pretty large stream, in which sport the hippopotamus and the crocodile. At this place the river passes through a range of high hills, and flowing N.N.E. is joined by other streams, after which it is called the Lempopo. We crossed the hills by a pass, and halted on the banks of the Oori where it enters the range, crossing next day, and halting at a town where we were to await orders as to our future course. Next day we went on, and at length came within sight of the king's abode.

“ Having preceded the waggons on horseback, we entered the large public cattle-fold, where were ranged in a semicircle about eight hundred warriors in full dress. About three hundred more sat concealed in ambush, perhaps for precaution or to try our courage. We proceeded to the centre of the fold, when they beckoned us to dismount. We had scarcely reached the ground when those who were secreted at the entrance rushed in, shouting and leaping with the most fantastic gestures, so that our horses, unaccustomed to such fun, tried to break away from us.

“ A profound silence followed for some ten minutes ; then all commenced a war-song, stamping their feet in time with the music. No one approached, though every eye was fixed upon us. Then all was silent, and Mosilikatse marched out from behind the lines with an interpreter, and with attendants following bearing meat, beer, and other food. He gave us a hearty salutation and seemed overjoyed. By this time the waggons were drawing near, and as he had never seen such things before he desired to see them walk, as he called it. We left the fold, the warriors maintaining their positions in perfect silence. As the waggons drew near he seemed awestruck, moving backward and dragging me along with him. When they had halted, and the oxen were unyoked, he approached with caution, grasping me with one hand and holding the other on his mouth. He spoke little at first, but examined all minutely, especially the wheels, and when told of how many parts each wheel was composed his surprise seemed to reach its climax. He then returned to the fold, where he was received by his warriors with immense bursts of applause.

"I stayed eight days, during which I had many interviews with the chief and received many tokens of his friendship. I was struck with the way in which he testified his gratitude. Laying his hand on my shoulder he said, 'My heart is all white as milk; I am still wondering at the love of a stranger who never saw me. You have fed me, you have protected me, you have carried me in your arms. I live to-day by you, a stranger.'

"I replied that I was not aware of having rendered him such service. Pointing to the chiefs who had visited the Kuruman he instantly rejoined, 'These are my great servants whom I love; they are my eyes and ears, and what you did to them you did to me.'

"I took an early opportunity of telling him of my object as a missionary among the Bechwanas, and that I had not come to hunt or to trade. I wished to return at once, having gained the object of my journey. I told him I was a teacher from God, the Creator of all things and Governor among the nations, and in visiting him I had also in view the time when his people also might receive messengers from God to tell them of another and a better world beyond the grave.

"I had long conversations with him on these subjects. I took the opportunity of pointing out to him the horrors of war, and directed his attention to the depopulated country once swarming with inhabitants, who had lived in comparative peace and plenty. I told him how I had met with only a few wretched individuals, the remnant of all the multitudes that must have been either destroyed or scattered. I told him that though his cattle-posts were numerous they were lost in the immense and solitary region which was as a land that mourned, while innumerable bones that strewed the plains seemed to call to heaven for vengeance. He tried to lay the blame on Mantatees and others who had preceded him: but time would fail to tell of all the subjects on which we talked.

"I felt glad when the day came that I could return home. Short as my stay was, the varied instances of despotism and horrid cruelty made me feel as if I sojourned in the tents of Kedar. Everything I saw or heard filled me with melancholy. I had never before come in contact with such savage or degraded minds. Truly the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. Let such as philosophize on the happiness enjoyed by man in his savage state, visit such scenes and hear the ten thousand sighs and groans which echo in these gloomy shades, and shudder at the innocent blood shed through the length and breadth of heathen lands—and then, if they can, tell the world that such are happy.

"Mosilikatse showed much anxiety to prolong my stay. My engagements at home made it impossible to delay. He often made me promise to visit him at some future time and to stay a year. I assured him I should not cease to remember him, and to pray for him and his people that God might send them teachers. As the time drew near for my departure his attachment seemed to increase, so much that some of his people thought I had given him some kind of medicine which made him love me. He accompanied me a short distance from the town, when he took my hand and addressing me by name, said:

'Ramary, your visit to me seems like a dream ; my heart will follow you. Go in peace to Kuruman, and when you come again bring Mamary with you. Tell the white king I wish to live in friendship. He must not allow the Batlaro and the Korannas to come and annoy me as they have done. Let the road to the Kuruman for ever remain open.' As the waggons moved off, he and his men sat down on the grass and chanted some dirge ; and I walked away musing on all the things I had seen, and on the deplorable condition of the heathen world.

"His attention and kindness have been unbounded. He appointed Umbate to accompany me for several days ; and said that at a certain place on the road I should find a couple of horns. This proved to be some cattle which were delivered to me as a present from him at one of the outposts.

"After a quick journey I reached Kuruman in safety, having been absent two months."

CHAPTER XVIII.

VISIT TO THE CAPE.

1830—1832.

IN June of the year 1830, a long-projected journey to the coast was carried out with a twofold purpose—to put the two elder children to school, and to get printed such parts of the New Testament as had been translated. On their way the Moffats had the pleasure of meeting, at Philippolis, the French missionaries Lemue and Rolland, and also Mr. and Mrs. Bailie of their own Society. The Bailies were intended for the Kuruman, and it was arranged that the whole party should take up their abode at Kuruman to await the return of the Moffats from the coast.

Whilst the mother was arranging for the children at Salein, the Wesleyan school near Grahamstown, the father started on a journey to visit the stations in Kaffraria; and then finding that some time must pass before a vessel would be leaving Algoa Bay, and there being no possibility of getting anything printed in the Eastern province, he took his manuscript in his pocket and started on horseback, for a ride of about four hundred miles, to Cape Town. By hiring relays from the farmers on the road he made the journey in nine days, leaving his wife to follow by sea.

At Bethelsdorp the Moffats found Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, who were originally destined to the Bechwana Mission, but had been detained among the Colonial stations. It was arranged that Edwards should also go to Cape Town, and assist Moffat in carrying the Sechwana books through the press.

In Cape Town new difficulties arose. No printing-office could undertake the work, small as it was: both type and compositors were scarce. In this strait, by the exertions of Colonel Bird, Secretary to Government, the Government printing-office and material were placed at the disposal of the missionaries; but as no one could be spared to carry on the printing, Moffat and

Edwards had to set to work themselves, with such guidance as the one man in charge was able to give them. He was very willing, and gave his assistance so well that they were soon able not only to turn out the books they were printing in fair style, but to regard themselves as finished apprentices. All these things were ordered for the best. At this very juncture a printing-press came into the possession of the mission, and as soon as this could be transported to the Kuruman there were qualified hands ready to work it.

The intense exertions of this period, his forced journey to Cape Town, the labours of the press and the application of proof reading, with a crowd of bustling engagements, were too much even for Moffat's strength and constitution. He was prostrated by a bilious fever, and when the time came for him to return to Algoa Bay, on his way back to his station he was so ill that he had to be carried on board the ship on a mattress.

Mary Moffat to Miss Lees of Manchester.

"BETHELSDORP, Sept. 15, 1830.

"I brought with me from home two of your letters unanswered, and, to make the debt the heavier, received one on the way at Philipopolis containing the affecting intelligence of the death of our esteemed father and friend, Roby. We cannot but feel it very sensibly, though we were so far removed from the privilege of his society, but with you and his bereaved widow and church we can sincerely sympathize. Verily a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel, but our consolation is that he has finished a glorious course, and has entered into the joy of his Lord; and good and great as he was, the Lord of the harvest can supply his place to the Church. I trust in this you have attained a greater measure of resignation than when you last wrote. I know the tenderness of your heart, and can in some measure conceive of your feelings. Give my most affectionate regards to Mrs. Roby, and assure her that could I have expressed it she would not have found me wanting, but ready to contribute my mite of sympathy to her. The assurance that her loss is the infinite gain of her dear departed must suppress every repining feeling, and lead her only to look forward to that period when she also will mingle with the sacred throng. O my friend! this is a dying world. Almost every packet of letters brings us the intelligence of some whom we have once known and loved having ended their pilgrimage here below. We shall lose all desire to see our native land, for all our friends are dying away. I recollect nearly seven years ago, when we saw Dr. Morrison on his way to England, our congratulating him on the prospect of meeting with his friends at home. He invariably appeared dejected, and said: 'I have no friends to see; all who love me are dead, and I feel alone in the world.' We then wondered at such remarks, but, believe me, we now begin to be conscious of a similar feeling; two or three more dead about Manchester, and what will it be to us? . . .

“Taking it for granted that my father will have called upon you, as I sent a message to you when I wrote from Cradock, I have not mentioned our leaving home, which took place on the 15th of June. We met the French missionaries Lemue and Rolland three weeks after at Philippolis; arrived at Grahamstown on the first ultimo, and at this place on the 1st instant. The distance is not more than a week from Grahamstown to Bethelsdorp, but Moffat, wishing to visit the stations in Kafirland, set out on horseback, and left me to proceed with the children to Theopolis, to get the two elder, Mary and Ann, in readiness for school. We accordingly left them a fortnight ago at Salem, the Wesleyan establishment, with considerable satisfaction: the strict attention paid to the religious instruction of the children compensates for the want of some advantages; the cheapness of the school and its comparative contiguity to our own part of the country are also inducements to have them there, as keeping them at home is beyond all doubt highly improper. Hence you will perceive that we are entering on a new sort of trials. We purpose calling to see them as we return, after which it is probable Moffat will be many years before he sees them again. It is likely, however, that I may come in the course of two or three years, as we have not friends to fulfil the duties of a mother to them. How happy are we, my dear friend, to have a covenant God to go to in all these straits and difficulties. Nature has its struggle, but we are not to confer with flesh and blood.

“Being disappointed in our expectation of meeting with a vessel at Algoa Bay, ready to sail for the Cape, Moffat, to save time, has proceeded on horseback with his manuscripts; as he expects to be detained a length of time correcting for the press, I am to follow with the two children, Robert and Helen, by sea. I expect to sail in about a fortnight. Moffat has been gone nearly a week. I have said nothing about our station, and shall decline saying much till we see it again. Suffice it to say that we left it in a hopeful and prosperous condition.”

On his way to Cape Town, Moffat had visited his old friends the Andersons, formerly of Griqua Town, then settled at Pacaltsdorp, one of the Society's stations within the Colony, from which the following was written:

“August 17, 1830, Sabbath night.”

“MY DEAR MARY,—Through the goodness of God I reached this place at nine o'clock last night, which was more than I expected after being detained more than half a day at Kromme River waiting on horses. This circumstance obliged me to ride a seven hours' stage during the night, and thirteen hours on Saturday, to be here before Sunday. I was treated with the greatest kindness and attention by the Boers wherever I called, even though I told them all I was a 'Zendeling.' Stephanus Ferreira, a notorious enemy to missionaries, whom I the most dreaded, was the most kind and did the most to enable me to proceed without loss of time. Had I acquainted the Field Cornets with letters, as is the custom, I could have procured

fresh horses every four or five hours ; but not having used this precaution my arrival in the Cape will be very uncertain. From George to the Cape is twenty-five hours' ride on horseback—further than from Uitenhage to George—so that I may scarcely reach the Cape on Saturday. But if health be continued and horses at hand I may reach a day sooner. The Lord willing, I leave this to-morrow morning at three o'clock.

“Mr. and Mrs. Anderson received me with great kindness. They scarcely knew me when I first entered the house. They were greatly disappointed when they heard that you were not following. Many have been their inquiries respecting the Griquas and Bechwanas, and they do rejoice in what is doing among them. ‘Had I youth on my side,’ says Mr. A., laying his hand on his pate, ‘I would spend it among the Bechwanas.’ He is much aged, and the sound of the grinders being low, his speech is not so clear as formerly. This evening he ran to hide his tears when I was describing the pleasing change which has lately taken place at Griqua Town. Mrs. A. takes the liveliest interest in the welfare of our missions in that quarter.”

Mary Moffat continues the narrative :

“LATTAKOO or LITAKO, *Sept. 15, 1831.*

“MY EVER DEAR FATHER,—I am quite overcome when I think that I have three of your letters by me unanswered, but trust to your considerateness to make allowance for our apparent neglect ; for surely since we came to the country we have never experienced such a bustling life as during the last year and a half. When on the Sneeuwbergen, I wrote a hasty scrawl to Miss Lees, from which you would hear part of our history since I wrote to you, I think in November, from Cape Town. It was then my intention to write often to my friends, but the press of business and Robert's subsequent illness prevented me. When we embarked at the Cape I felt quite worn out, and the tedious voyage and necessary attention to Robert produced fatigue from which I did not speedily recover. At the same time there was so much to do with the landing of our goods and getting them off from Bethelsdorp that Robert did not write at all to England, he being still weak and easily fatigued. The Lord has been merciful and gracious, and, notwithstanding our unfaithfulness to Him, has loaded us with lovingkindness and tender mercies. During our stay in the Colony my own health greatly improved, and, as you would hear, on the 25th of March I was again made the joyful mother of a fine daughter whom we have baptized Elizabeth, after my worthy friend, Miss Lees.

“My dear Robert's health is now completely established, and he is able to pursue his usual avocations with his accustomed vigour. We left our dear Mary and Ann much improved, and in good health and spirits, after having been absent from them a half-year. At Grahams-town we met with almost all of the Scottish Brethren from Kafirland, as well as those of our own Society. They were come to the missionary meeting there, and we had our babe baptized among them

by Mr. Brownlee, in the house of our missionary Monro, where most of us were lodged. From there we went to Graaff Reinett by way of Somerset, both which places are blessed with ministers from Scotland, holy men of God; Mr. Morgan, of Somerset, lately received a wife from his own land, an excellent woman. Murray, of Graaff Reinett, is a renowned friend of missions. His house is open to all missionaries. We stayed there a fortnight, making further arrangements for the conveyance of our baggage, and arrived all well about the end of June at the Kuruman. Here we found things going on well; but one of the members had, alas! turned to his idols, his young wife, whom he had put away, having proved a snare to him, and we are sorry to say we do not perceive in him the penitence which is desirable.

“The French missionaries had both been very ill, but were recovered. Mr. Lemue, however, continues sickly. Mr. Hamilton has judiciously given up his house and garden to the Edwardses, and they and the Bailies share it at present. As we were anxious that Mr. Hamilton should be as comfortably circumstanced as possible, and we knew he would rather live with us than with the new-comers, it is so settled that he boards with us. We have also the mason, so that my family is now large, and may apologize in some measure for my long silence; since we came home I have had no leisure.

“The printing press is set up, and has been at work printing lessons for the school. It has been a formidable work to bring it and to set it going; but the advantages of it will be inestimable to the mission. They are, however, short of suitable type for lessons, though they brought all which was to be found in Cape Town, Bethelsdorp, and Griqua Town. Mr. Edwards will be found admirably fitted to supply Mr. Hamilton's place, in many things where his strength now fails. Since we came home he has been chiefly engaged making appliances for the printing office, and later at the printing itself. The building of our new church is now to be resumed. Five or six waggons are tomorrow to leave the place for wood for the same. While we were in the Colony Robert solicited subscriptions for it, and raised about a hundred pounds sterling. Nearly twenty pounds came from Government House, besides what was given by other officials. It is intended to be built free of expense to the Society. Millen, the mason, gives his work, and only requires his board. The old church is now being enlarged by Arend, being much too small even for the school.

“You will naturally be inquiring what are the French missionaries going to do? Mr. Rolland, after his recovery, went to the Bahurutse and looked out a place, and promised to go immediately; but Mr. Lemue's health being so bad, his going at present is out of the question. Mr. Rolland has been busily employed making a plough and mending his waggon, and is ready to go. He has also got a mason, a Scotsman, a Mr. Hume, to go with him. He came here on trading business. A painful circumstance has, however, taken place in the country which may cause them some trouble, and renders it extremely doubtful whether they ought to go at present. You have heard of Mosilikatse, the Zulu chief whom Robert visited two years ago. He

is a desperate tyrant, and subjugates all the tribes about him. He is consequently very rich, and his cattle have proved a bait to those who ought to have known better. A large hunting party of more than three hundred men left Griqualand four or five months ago, headed by Berend, chief at Butswap. Many of the Philippolis Griquas were also of the number, and some English traders to whom these Griquas were indebted. When they came by the outposts of the Zulu monarch, instead of hunting elephants, they fell upon his cattle, took three posts, and killed many of his young soldiers, who generally reside at such places. This, of course, was not to be suffered with impunity, and the enraged savages pursued and surprised them while asleep. The battle was horrible. Many were slain on both sides, and but few Griquas have come out. They suppose many of their number are still wandering in the interior, but we apprehend their wanderings have for ever ceased. When the traders who were with them found that their object was a commando, they left them and made the best of their way back to Butswap. From what I have written you will judge how delicate is the position of our dear French brethren. The Barolong joined Berend in his iniquitous project, but the Bahurutse would not. Mr. Millen, Arend, and many from our station were at the same time in the interior, and, of course, made for home. They were met by numbers of Mosilikatse's people after the battle, and though completely in their power, they received no harm, on it being found that they were from the Kuruman. We have since heard that two messengers were on their way hither from the Zulus, and have been murdered by the Barolong."

Mary Moffat again writes :

"LITAKO (LATTAKOO), *Feb. 23, 1832.*

"MY DEAR FATHER,— . . . If Miss Lees received mine of the 2nd ultimo you will anticipate what I am going to add. Our beloved and interesting child Betsy is no longer an inhabitant of this lower world. Her freed spirit took its happy flight on the night of the 4th of January. As parents we do feel, and it is necessary we should feel, for He does nothing in vain who has afflicted us. . . .

"I scarcely know where to begin, having forgotten the contents of my last. I have some impression that I informed you of Mr. Rolland's departure to settle at the Bahurutse. He was, however, obliged to return, not being able to get his attendants to accompany him on account of the enraged Mosilikatse, who had been so villainously treated by old Berend. For some time, however, all has been quiet. Mr. Lemue's health seems to be established. Mr. Rolland has had the smallpox. Mr. Pelissier has joined them, and they again left us on the 15th in good spirits. They have met with many discouragements, but we hope and trust they will now succeed. Moffat has sent with them a messenger to Mosilikatse to explain the matter of Berend to the poor, ignorant savage. Robert would have gone himself, but could not be spared at present from the place. The printing and the building of the new church require much attention

“Robert and I have necessarily had a good deal to do for the French mission, but it is all one cause, and we could sympathize with them ; having enough to damp their zeal, they require Christian sympathy and kindness. I feel attached to them as my own brothers, and have greatly enjoyed their company.”

The raid of Berend and his Griquas which had ended so disastrously to themselves left behind it consequences which at length proved the ruin of the infant mission of the Paris Society in the Bahurutse country. Mosilikatse was himself a new-comer from the far east, then an unknown region. He knew but little of what lay to the southward of him. It was difficult for him to discriminate between Griquas and white men, or to understand how the former coming from the country of the white men could do what they had done to him without being called to account by the Government of the white people which he had been taught to regard as wise and just. He had learned to place unbounded confidence in his friend Moffat, and had formed an exaggerated notion of his power and importance among his own people. It was hard to make these things clear to him. It was natural that when the three French missionaries entered the country of the Bahurutse, which had become tributary to him, he should a little hesitate. He professed himself satisfied with the explanations given by a messenger whom Moffat had sent with them, and wished one of them to repair to his own headquarters. Pelissier accordingly did so, but found himself under a sort of restraint from returning to his companions. This naturally alarmed the missionaries, new as they were to the country, and not yet ripe in the experience that the only way to get on with people such as these were was to treat them with perfect confidence. The missionaries would probably have come right, but their native attendants took the alarm and were determined to go back with or without them.

The motive of Pelissier's detention was probably two-fold. He would be useful as a hostage if it should prove that Mosilikatse's fears were well founded about the missionaries being privy to some further raid upon him from the southward ; and, moreover, a large number of guns had fallen into his hands by his victory over the Griquas, and he wanted some one to put them in order and to teach his people to use them.

It was difficult for him to see why the missionaries should object to supply him with ammunition, of which indeed they had but little for their own use, even had they been willing to serve his purpose in this way. It soon became evident to them that their position would be untenable, and when at length Pelissier was

allowed to return to them they at once grasped the opportunity and left the Bahurutse country and started for Kuruman. They were met by Moffat himself, who was on his way to see whether he could not smoothe matters for them. It was not to be, however, and this first mission, in some measure directed to the Matebele themselves, was a failure. In the providence of God what was their loss was the great gain of another South African people, the Basuto, under Moshesh, to whom the French gave their attention. Their mission in Basutoland has been most prosperous and satisfactory in spite of great trials caused mainly by wars between the natives and the Colonists.

Towards the end of the year 1832 Dr. Philip visited Kuruman, and it was arranged that Rolland and his companions, who saw no immediate prospect of re-opening their work with the Bahurutse, should commence a station at Motito, about thirty-six miles to the north-east of Kuruman, until time should open a way for further undertakings. The appeal of Moshesh afforded that opening. Motito long remained the only station of the Paris Society in Bechwanaland, and it was after many years handed over to the care of the missionaries at Kuruman.

CHAPTER XIX.

MARY MOFFAT TRAVELS TO THE COLONY.

1833—1834.

EARLY in 1833 Mary Moffat started for the Colony. It was more than two years since she had seen the daughters who were at school. Her heart was naturally drawn to them. They had of course friends, but not of their own kindred. Even for the sake of visiting them she did not feel that it would be right of her to take her husband away from his work. She brought her mind to undertake the journey alone. It involved an absence of five months. Her escort through the wilderness for a good part of that time was to consist of Bechwanas who a few years before were mere barbarians, not to say savages.

It was an additional comfort to her to be able to do good service to the mission by her journey. She brought up from the coast a large quantity of printing material which otherwise would have probably been many months finding its way from Port Elizabeth to Kuruman.

Mary Moffat to Mrs. Roby of Manchester.

“LITAKO, Oct. 1, 1833.

“You would hear that I had visited the Colony to see our dear children. It was of course no pleasing task to take such a journey alone, but it appeared to us that we were bound in duty to separate for that time. It was necessary to know how the children were getting on and to attend to their wants ; and it could not be Moffat’s duty to leave the station again so soon, and therefore we determined to part. I was more than five months absent, having arrived on the 7th of last month, nearly a month later than was my intention, having taken with me a waggon expressly to bring type and printing paper for the Society, and having to await the arrival of the same. We have, however, satisfaction in the step, Moffat’s presence having been exceedingly requisite on the station, and much has been accomplished both in the spiritual work and in the temporal, and all has been well.

“The maids also, whom I left to manage domestic matters, have far exceeded my expectations, so that he had very little to trouble him in that respect, and I see that my labour in instructing them in these matters is not lost. Every member of the mission family enjoyed uninterrupted health the whole time. My journey was exceedingly prosperous, nothing worthy the name of an accident having taken place, though the waggons had extraordinary weight upon them. My travelling company of servants consisted of five Bechwana men and one Hottentot as drivers, leaders, and loose cattle-drivers, and a girl to nurse my baby. In one of these men, Paul, one of the first converts, I had great comfort. Not having my husband with me I had occasion to put the more confidence in him, and truly it was not misplaced. He has proved himself faithful, did everything in his power to make me comfortable, and managed the rest of them admirably. I assure you that I had continual joy in him as a brother in our Lord Jesus Christ. Ever since his conversion, nearly five years ago, we have esteemed him highly, but now justly more than ever. I know, my dear Mrs. Roby, you will bless God for His goodness to us in this transaction of our lives. I am a poor weak creature, mentally and bodily, but He has graciously supported me through the whole of it. I found it particularly pleasant to be constantly feeling my dependence on Him, having no earthly protector near me, and in numerous instances had occasion to admire His providential care over us. He was indeed to me better than all my fears, for I am too ready to suspect that the rod of correction is about to be used. By this you may guess what a wayward child I am.

“I left the three elder children at school. The two girls have I think made as much progress as could be expected in the time. We have been desirous of making Mary acquainted with the Infant School system before her return home; but she is still rather too young to leave school, unless she could have been placed with a person who would have attended to her education, such as Miss Tyndall—but the dear woman has been obliged to retire from labour on account of bad health. Should she recover her strength the good people at Grahamstown are anxious to secure her future labours for their children, and this would be the very thing for us. Should there be no probability of accomplishing this object, we shall most likely soon get Mary home by some opportunity.

“And now, my dear Mrs. Roby, I must conclude. Will you forgive all my neglect of you? I know you will. Surely I need not say how happy I shall be to hear from you at any time; and whilst you live do not forget to pray for us. I trust the church at Grosvenor Street will never lose the missionary zeal which has so long characterized it, and into which our late beloved friend so warmly entered. I suppose you do not often see my poor old father. I fear his health is declining, but he appears to be happy and resigned; but my anxieties about him can only cease with his life.”

“LITAKO, *March 20, 1834.*”

“Do, my dear father, write as often as you can, and forgive us that we are not more attentive to you. Robert is in a perpetual bustle;

the printing is a wonderful addition to the work here, and the extreme anxiety of his mind to give everything as correctly as possible causes him incessant mental labour. Whatever he is doing or however engaged we are sure to find that his mind is occupied with some knotty passage of Scripture about which commentators and critics cannot agree. Besides this, the care of the whole station spiritual and temporal is upon him. Mr. Hamilton is an excellent and laborious man, and his labours on the place are invaluable, but he has not an ability for managing the affairs of a mission, neither have the Directors ever thought proper to invest him with that office. Mr. Edwards is a laborious and active schoolmaster, and the rest of his time is filled up with work in connection with the press. If my dear Robert had not had an iron constitution he must long ago have sunk under his manifold labours, so that I really feel delicate about pressing him even to write a letter. . . .

"I have the happiness to inform you that our dear Rolland has married Miss Tyndall, and we expect them daily, when Moffat and all who can be spared from this place are to set off for the Bahurutse for roof timber for the chapel, as they could not get away last winter. Mosilikatse has full possession of that country, and gives no rest till Moffat goes to see him. We have at present a messenger of his in the house who came out with Hume, two months ago. Mr. Millen was out about two months before that, having got into a district of country where a stinging fly abounds, lost all his oxen, and actually left his waggon in care of another trader in the same predicament, and came hither on foot, a distance of four or five hundred miles from the north-east. He mustered oxen, took another waggon, and set off again in a fortnight to fetch his property and add more to it. With him, also, we had two messengers from Mosilikatse, and with him they returned. He professes the most unbounded confidence in Moffat, and we hope it will be useful in the establishment of a mission there."

Robert Moffat to his brother Richard.

" July 28, 1834.

"Much of my time has been taken up in acquiring the language under innumerable trying circumstances, and now that I am able to translate I view every moment as doubly precious. I am trying to redeem much precious time which has been lost. I see nothing in the world worth looking after if it has not a direct reference to the glory and extension of the Redeemer's kingdom; and were we always able to have a lively view of the myriads who are descending to the horrible pit, our zeal would be proportionate. Much depends on us who have received the ministry of reconciliation, assured that God our Saviour willeth the salvation of all.

"A short time ago we mustered a number of men and waggons, and Mr. Hamilton and I set off to the Bahurutse country to bring timber for the roof of our new church, leaving Mr. Edwards on the station. We had just reached within little more than two days of Mosilikatse's residence, near which the timber stood, when a messenger overtook us with the information that Jan Bloom with a command

was gone to attack Mosilikatse. This obliged us to return, for had we proceeded we should in all probability have been placed in a most distressing dilemma, as the scene of conflict was within sight of the spot where we should have encamped. As we could have neither conscientiously helped the one nor fought against the other, the event would likely have been fatal to some if not to all of us.

“Mosilikatse’s messenger, who had been with me for some months, I sent forward from the place at which we returned. Jan Bloom, it is said, shot a great number of the younger soldiery, but he and his party, who were all on horseback, were entirely defeated, and narrowly escaped with a handful of cattle, losing some men and horses. It is said he will go again next month. If so I fear it will be never to return. Mr. Millen passed us by another road coming out, and died in the desert beyond old Lattakoo. He seems to have died of a bilious fever. Two of his men died before him on the road. We were much affected to hear of it. He had almost become like one of our family. He has done much for this station. Mosilikatse sent with him two messengers to me, who are still here. He may yet be exasperated to do dreadful things on this side. None of the Bechwana tribes in this part of the country have ever yet done him any injury, and he professes friendship on that account, but the professed friendship of a savage monarch is little to be trusted.”

Mary Moffat to her Father.

August 20, 1834.

“I forget whether I told you that Mr. Millen, our mason, was away in the interior, seeking ivory. We were daily expecting him, and indeed he was not far from us, but never arrived here! His waggons and those of this place passed each other in the desert, about a half-day’s journey apart. Had they been upon the same road they would just have seen him to close his eyes in death, but this privilege was denied to poor Millen. He had none but Bechwana attendants, and they, worn out with fatigue with travelling night and day to bring him home, had slept while he breathed his last. They afterwards did their best to bring him to Motito for burial, but it was impossible, and they reluctantly committed his remains to the dust in the desert. The grave is on a plain, but in a clump of bushes—rather a pretty spot. It is remarkable that all those who came out on foot are dead, and we suppose the effects were latent for some months. To the north of the Zulu country a bilious fever attacked several of his people, and he feelingly laments in his journal that he has no medicine to give them. Before they reached Mosilikatse’s one of them died. The day they left Mosilikatse’s he himself sickened; two days after another man died, and three or four days after, he himself. He said nothing in his illness, but one day told his people to drive on without regard to oxen or anything else, as he thought more of their number would die.

“There is great obscurity on his eternal state. He possessed much knowledge on religious subjects; he loved the cause and people of God, but never decided. He was the child of pious parents, who died when he was very young, and his reverence for sacred things

was great. His Bible was found in his bed, and his driver testifies that he read much in it. He was much respected, and every heart was melancholy, not only Europeans, but natives. I think you know that he finished the walls of our church last winter—the last labour of his hands, for which he charged nothing but his board.

“We have for some months been expecting the expedition for Central Africa, which is not yet arrived; nor have we had any news whatever from the Colony for two months.”

CHAPTER XX.

A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION.

1835.

EARLY in 1835 an expedition reached Kuruman. At the head of it was Dr. Andrew Smith. He was accompanied by several English assistants and by an officer and a few men of the 98th Regiment, making up a somewhat imposing party, and a caravan of seven waggons. The object was scientific, being promoted by the members of an association at the Cape with a little assistance from Government.

Dr. Smith found the Moffats in great trouble. The summer had been unusually hot, and this circumstance, combined with exhaustion from overwork, had prostrated the missionary with a severe attack of bilious fever: from which he had scarcely recovered when his wife was brought very near the gates of death. After the birth of a son on the tenth of March she seemed to be better, but soon relapsed into a state of such debility that for many days there seemed no hope. It was a special subject of thankfulness that at such a time there should have been on the spot a medical man of Dr. Andrew Smith's skill; and that, too, exercised with such tender care and assiduity as might have been looked for in a dear brother rather than in a comparative stranger. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship, for the Moffats could never forget the man who had come to them like an angel out of heaven in their time of trouble.

The members of the expedition were for some months engaged in the country round Kuruman; but as the doctor's main object was to get farther into the interior, he prevailed upon Moffat to accompany him as far as Mosilikatse's headquarters. He left about the tenth of May: His main object was of course to aid the expedition, but he had other important matters in view. The new church, the stone walls of which had long been raised to their full

height, could not be roofed with such timber as was to be obtained about Kuruman. From what he had seen on his former visit to Mosilikatse he was convinced that what was required was to be obtained in the dominions of that chief. There was also a prospect of the American missionaries seeking a place in which to work, and he felt that he might be the means of preparing the way for them in Mosilikatse's country. All these considerations overcame his reluctance to leave his work at Kuruman and his wife scarcely recovered. The following extracts formed only a small part of a copious journal giving a minute account of each day's proceedings. The first quotation is dated from Motito, the station of the French missionaries, near to which Mahura, the brother of Mothibi, had settled with a part of the Batlaping tribe, which had formerly lived on the Kuruman river until broken up by wars :

“ MOTITO, *August 13, 1835.*

“ MY DEAR MARY,—Though it is now late I must write a few lines, lest I be too busy to write to-morrow morning. Yesterday afternoon I wrote to you by two men, Batlaro returning to the Kuruman on horseback. I shall now give you a brief account of what has transpired since. After a very short night's rest, I left this at an early hour to visit Mahura, who lives as far again as Letakong is from Motito. As the object of the visit was of some importance, I had many cogitations on my way thither. He received me well, and I soon stated one of the objects of my visit, namely, to obtain Mosilikatse's oxen. He gave the reasons why he had not brought them, the chief of which was that he had been falsely charged with having stolen them from Mosilikatse. He said this continued to annoy him beyond anything. I pointed out the propriety as well as the necessity of his returning the cattle, both for his own sake and for that of the country. I had scarcely finished my argument when he instantly ordered a man to proceed to the outpost, and to have the oxen forthcoming at Motito by this evening or to-morrow morning. This was one point gained.

“ The next thing was that I was sorry and surprised at the misunderstanding between him and Dr. Smith, and that he had not visited him since his return to Motito. He said in reply to this, that when the doctor was last at Motito he promised on his return from the Kuruman to visit him and see the hills, and examine the different stones. That, instead of fulfilling his promise, he only heard that he would not come because he was very angry with him. I admitted that if the doctor promised he ought to have sent a reason for not coming, and added that the doctor was certainly much grieved with his threatening to hinder the party and the interpreter from proceeding on the journey. He said he would like well if the doctor would point out any one who had heard him say such things. I said something more on the propriety of his having a good understanding with the doctor. I then asked him to accompany me to Motito. He said he

would yield to my request, and immediately sent off for his horses, stating that if they did not come in time he would follow. This was a second point gained.

“Of success in the third object of my visit I despaired, namely, his intended attack on the Batlaro. However, the subject was introduced, and I stated to him all that I had heard on the subject. He replied that all was true. That his full determination was to punish the Batlaro for their insolence. He had a long string of complaints, to which I remarked that if these things were true he certainly had cause to be offended, but no reason to go to war. I said the Bechwanas were a nation of liars, and that any beggar would bring him such reports merely to get a bone to pick: that if he went to war on these grounds I should ever view him as a fool, and incapable of government. I proposed to him what he ought to do, namely to call the chiefs of the Batlaro to account or visit them, hold a *pitso*, and hear the sentiments of the principal men. I said a great deal to him on the horrors of war. I told him to throw a burning coal into the grass and tell me when the burning would end: that attacking the Batlaro was like attacking the Kuruman station, which had been the means of saving himself and the country. After I had done speaking—for I had spoken long and earnestly on the subject—he paused for some time. He said he was glad he had heard me on that subject, and he would endeavour to do what I had recommended. This was the third point aimed at. You cannot think how grateful I felt. After partaking of thick milk I left, and arrived here about three o’clock.”

“MAOTO A TSÈPE, *May 17, 1835.*—Nothing of any interest occurred on the road. Nothing to be seen but an extensive plain covered with long grass, and a few camel-thorn trees and bushes. I ordered my waggon forward in the long train at a distance from the gentlemen, in order that I might be alone and get a nap, but I could not get a wink of sleep. However, I had the more time to read. The evening was pleasant, and the whole camp seemed as cheerful as a hive of bees in midsummer. I spent most of the evening in the tent with the doctor and the young gents, and also Mr. Kift, who is more cheerful company than I had supposed.

“I proposed to the doctor that he, or rather Mr. Bell the chaplain, should read a short sermon in English for the few who did not understand Dutch and Sechwana. He objected, stating that most of them knew a little Dutch. We had the Dutch in the forenoon and the Sechwana in the afternoon, and as all attended I had good congregations—and who knows but that the seed sown may yet grow. May the Lord grant His blessing. This evening I found that the English do not understand a Dutch sermon, at least but a very few sentences; and therefore, the Lord willing, I shall next Sabbath have a service for them also.

“I continue to admire Dr. Smith more than ever. He sets an excellent example to his men and is not only willing but anxious for their instruction in the things of God. All the English, if I except Dr. Smith and one or two more, swear, and some do it to no ordinary

degree, but they are all cunning enough to take care that I never hear them. I am glad, however, to be informed this evening by Messrs. Hume and Scoon, that they have just written out an agreement that for every oath the swearer pays a fine of half a stick of tobacco. Tennant is to be the treasurer. I am quite rejoiced to hear this, and pray that the plan may succeed; and it is very likely, as all have put their names to it and tobacco is precious.

"The sentry walks for two hours, and six are appointed for each night. Dicky had the first watch to-night, from eight to ten, and the second watch has just commenced. Every ten minutes or a quarter of an hour the sentry shouts that all is well. I hope it will be the same song till we return.

"Now I must return to last night, and tell you that when I was sitting by a roaring fire, taking my last puff for the day, I jumped for joy to hear them calling out 'Matlolanyane.' I soon got hold of the packet of letters, and instantly read yours, with a heart full of gratitude to God for His continued favour toward you. I handed it to the doctor, who I am sure read it with almost equal pleasure."

"*MARITSANE, Sabbath, May 24th.*—Have had a quiet and peaceable Sabbath. The forenoon service was in Dutch. After dinner I read to the English a service on the importance of Divine knowledge. In the evening I addressed the Bechwana. It may be that what was said about eternal things may prove like bread cast upon the waters. Many have left the land of light on which the Sun of Righteousness shone with almost meridian splendour, and have found a Saviour in a land of pagan darkness where but a few glimmering rays were darting on the gloom. The day has been very serene, but the night is cold.

"I think I mentioned in my last that the English swearers had unanimously agreed to pay a half-stick of tobacco for every oath. It was on a Sabbath, and when the characters are considered one will forgive such a contract on such a day. Next day's produce was seventeen and a half sticks, equal to thirty-five oaths. The most notorious lost only one and a half stick. The number of fines decreased so rapidly that the treasurer is out of employ, except keeping what he has got. I comfort them by saying that they will have all the fewer oaths to account for in the day of judgment."

"*MOLOPO, Friday, May 29th.*—We have been here all day. Have been employed most of the time translating. The wind being cold I had frequent interruptions. No messengers have yet arrived from Mosilikatse. In the afternoon the doctor seemed a little anxious, and of course conjectures followed. Towards evening the waggons were removed from the form of a crescent to that of a waggon fortification, with all the oxen on one side enclosed with a fence. When the plan was proposed I gave my plain unvarnished refusal. Hume and Scoon were also much opposed, particularly on account of the oxen, which were comparatively exposed to the lion, as the fence would prove a mere shadow if they were once frightened by him. The excuse the doctor made to Monaheng was that he feared for the men's lives, and

he stated at the same time to me that he was bound down to take every precaution for the safety of his people. Of course we submitted, but not cheerfully.

"As soon as it became dark the lions began to drive the dogs back to the fence, and had nearly frightened the oxen out of their enclosure. Port fires and blue lights were burned, and a party went out with guns enough to blow him to pieces; but 'Tau' knew how to take care of himself, and of course eluded the short-lived moonshine. The oxen are still very restless. The bell is constantly ringing, and I fear the night's serenading will not be a conducive to sleep.

"*Saturday, May 30th.*—Most of those who had cares slept very little and uncomfortably, anxious about the oxen. However, through the goodness and mercy of our God, no evil was suffered to befall us. The forepart of the day was excessively cold, with flying clouds and a strong wind from the S.E. Monaheng told me early that as the doctor was afraid of proceeding he should go forward. I replied, 'Good, and I shall go with you.' I accordingly stated the circumstance to the doctor. He objected to my going. I then said, 'Some one else must go;' and in ten minutes Andries, Baba, and Boy, with Monaheng, the latter in regimental coat, started off on horseback. They had scarcely gone halfway before they met five Matebele coming post-haste to meet us. The horsemen returned, and the rest followed and came here in the afternoon. The Induna is an old acquaintance of mine, and seemed not a little pleased to get hold of my fist again. We learned the following particulars. Mosilikatse was living beyond the Marikwa River, and many of the people had been carried off by a sickness hitherto unknown to them."

"MOSEGA, *June 2.*—We arrived here early in the evening. The variety of country, the first part undulating, with a bold range of hills or mountains before us adorned with wood, especially the glens, the valleys showing signs of an abundant harvest, rendered the short stage very delightful compared to the country through which we had been passing before, and especially with so many fine streams running rapidly along the fertile vales. I walked the latter part of the stage, and when we came to the first village the doctor joined me. We passed four considerable villages. As you may conceive, twelve waggons excited considerable interest; but I am sure you would have laughed as heartily as we did to see how much they were astonished at my long beard. Many a ram-race was taken to obtain a front view. I am sure no wild beast in Exeter Exchange could have excited more wonder.

"After halting, the doctor proposed to make a kraal for the oxen. This I did not approve of, as there was a comparatively empty kraal capable of holding two thousand cattle quite contiguous, and the Matebele would most cheerfully give them lodging for a few nights; that for my own part I should send my oxen thither, and that Mr. Hume I believed would do the same. After a good deal of persuasion, he at length agreed.

"The doctor's waggons are again placed in the form of a square,

the entrance of his own facing the centre, into which I could not go without climbing over the wheels or going under the waggon. A little before sunset the doctor again called me aside, and said that sending the oxen to the kraal referred to was placing ourselves too much in the power of the natives, and that he was not inclined to risk it. I argued that it was in the power of the natives to take our oxen almost all the hours of the day, it being impossible for them to find grass within sight of the waggons, and that giving over our cattle to their care and placing almost unbounded confidence in their friendship would of itself disarm them of any evil intentions; but I did not believe that they had any such intentions. No one had seen the slightest mark of it. I never once contemplated danger from that quarter, or I should not have come myself or have recommended others. With many more remarks of a similar kind, the doctor was persuaded to let his oxen go with mine. He has a greater charge than any one of us, and is of course under a greater responsibility. He is indefatigable in research, and will do great things and throw light on those parts of the country over which he travels; but all men do not see alike."

"*June 5th.*—Kalepe having returned this morning, told us it was Mosilikatse's wish that we should go to his present residence beyond the Marikwa River. This message was perfectly agreeable to our wishes, and set all in motion; but we halted at the mouth of the kloof, about three hours and a half from Mosega, fearing to go farther into the thicket on account of lions. Fine grass and abundance of water, the Mainelwe River carrying off all the drainage of the half a dozen streams which take their rise to the west, of which Mamuri and Marimane are the most distant. There are also sea-cows in the river a little farther down."

"*Monday, June 8th.*—In the evening Kalepe told me that he was going forward early to-morrow morning, and I must follow. Monaheng again came into the tent, and said it was the wish of Mosilikatse that I should precede the waggons on horseback. I objected, preferring to ride in my waggon. We conferred some time, and then I told him I should likely go, and that he must be ready to accompany me. I told the doctor what had passed. He, as I expected, opposed my leaving the waggons. I stated that my chief reason for acceding to Mosilikatse's wish was to show him that I was entirely what I was before—that is, void of fear. Should I not go, he might think I could not trust him now as I once did, and of course our friendship would be broken, and the whole party would as a consequence suffer more or less. To suspect danger appeared to me like a childish mania, and to act towards such a tyrant according to the doctor's system would certainly create suspicion.

"I also argued that if Mosilikatse seriously intended to do us harm, he would have numerous opportunities when he could destroy the whole party. A soldier, of course, will not admit this, however clear it may be to others. As I had engaged to take the party to Mosili-

katse with a promise of his attention and friendship, the inference was clear that I must be allowed to take my own way in obtaining the same. I left the doctor silenced, but not convinced; for after I left the tent he resumed the subject with Scoon, but he said he wished with all his heart for me to go forward. Mr. Hume was of the same mind.

“TOLANE RIVER, *Tuesday, 9th.*—The Indunas, Kalepe, &c. left for Mosilikatse before sunrise. I, with Monaheng, Andries, and Younker, left on horseback just when the waggons were starting, and reached this place in about three hours.

“Mosilikatse was bathing in the river, but he soon marched up with a kind of bodyguard singing. The moment he entered the kraal he stretched out his hand, hastened up to me and seized me by mine. He did not speak, but gazed on me for a time as if I had dropped from the clouds.

“At length he repeated my name two or three times, and said, ‘Now my eyes see you, my heart is white as milk.’ This he repeated again and again, laying hold of my hand and stroking my beard. He called me to the side of the kraal, where we sat down, and the warriors began their songs. He seemed as if he could not help laying his hand first on one of my shoulders and then on the other, and sometimes taking a lock of my beard in his hand. During the intervals in the singing I conversed with him about the objects of my journey, and about those who had accompanied me.

“We sat together till the waggons came, when I went to point out a place for the encampment. I returned with the doctor and four others to introduce them to the chief.”

In the course of a few days it was arranged that Dr. Smith, with the major part of the expedition, should go on to the north-east and return. The traders, Messrs. Hume and Scoon, also left on a hunting expedition to the northward; so that Robert Moffat was left comparatively alone at headquarters. It would be impossible to give anything more than a mere index of the copious journal which it was his solace to write during the two months thus spent, for the benefit of the wife who was watching for news at Kuruman. The extracts which have already been given bear largely upon one point. The principle upon which his whole life among natives was based was that of implicit mutual confidence. It was the secret of much of his success. It was of course a little difficult to inspire the leader of an expedition which had a strong military ingredient with a similar confidence. In time, however, the good doctor threw off his strategical shell, and became as contented and as safe among the Matebele as could be desired, and got rid of the strange and unaccountable delusion which possesses the minds of so many otherwise rational white

men—that their black neighbours are, as a matter of course, ever on the watch for an opportunity to cut their throats.

The expedition was accorded full liberty to come and to go in any part of the wide extent of country then under the rule of Mosilikatse ; and it speaks well for its conduct and discipline that, during the long stay of this party of between twenty and thirty white men of very different grades in life, not a single serious misunderstanding or act of injury seems to have occurred.

By the removal of Dr. Smith to the scene of his researches in what is now the Transvaal, near Rustenburg and Pretoria, Moffat was left free to attend to other objects which he had in view in visiting the chief of the Matebele. First and foremost was it his work to try, as on his former visit, to instil into the dark mind of the savage despot at least some gleams of religious truth—a work of great difficulty in the case of one who lived as he did, the object of almost idolatrous adoration on the part of all who came near him. Little could be done in this way, but a path was opened and made easy for the advent of the American missionaries who it was hoped would come.

Another object was to find in the country timber such as would be suitable for the roof of the Kuruman church. In this Moffat was entirely successful, and that roof still stands a monument of the united work of Hamilton, Moffat, and Edwards—an achievement, in those days and with such means as they possessed, of no ordinary character.

An endeavour was also made to procure from Mosilikatse the return of two Griqua children who had been captured on the outskirts of his country from a hunting party. He had been much harassed by the depredations of Griqua and Koranna marauders, and he could not be prevailed upon to give up the captives until he should have some guarantee that he should in future be exempted from such attacks ; and on the same ground he refused to return two waggons belonging to an English gentleman of the name of Bain, who had, unfortunately for himself, been mistaken for one of these marauders.

“KURUMAN, *June 25th.*

“MY DEAR ROBERT,—Another day is far advanced, and we hear nothing of you. Shampan arrived this morning, and knows nothing. Once more I begin to feel that ‘hope deferred maketh the heart sick.’ The brethren advise me to wait till Monday, and then to send to you.

“You will doubtless be anxious to hear something about the Americans, but we cannot tell you much, and shall send you all the correspondence respecting them. Late in the last month Moses and his wife were on a visit, and brought us intelligence of their being at

Griqua Town, and a letter from Mr. Lindley, which I showed to our brethren and we were all of opinion that they could not do better than to send one of their number to visit the Matebele while you were there; and a letter was immediately despatched giving them such advice, and offering them oxen to take them on. They did not, however, fall in with the plan, as you will see from their reply, and of course we could do no more.

“As far as we can gather from all sources, it is their intention to stop here some time in order to become familiar with the language.

“I must now give some account of this place and neighbourhood. All is well as far as I know outwardly, but there has been a necessity for church discipline. The congregations are exceedingly large ever since you went, and the brethren never so much encouraged with appearances among the Batlaro. The numbers who attend are great, and there is considerable emotion among them such as was never before observed. We have also good news from Mothibi's place. Our people on their late visit found them in a good frame of mind. They appear to be in earnest about coming to the Kuruman. Mothibi wishes you to send him a waggon to help him to come. Our people held service with them on the Sabbath, and many were much affected.

“Mahatlane had much conversation with them, and appears to have made very sensible remarks to them; and he represents them as quite broken in spirit, and as regarding themselves as dogs before those who have embraced the gospel. Mothibi says he now sees that he has had great privileges and has despised them, that the gospel is now going past them to the interior tribes, and that he is living in deep darkness. So you will see our hopes are reviving about the Batlaping.

“My dear Robert, thus far I wrote on Thursday evening, fondly hoping to hear something of you before this, but still all is darkness, and this is Sabbath evening. Some Bahurutse from Taung arrived yesterday, and tell a story which must be old. They say that a youth of theirs made his escape from the Matebele, and tells that the waggons had all arrived at the Molopo, and that you had sent messengers forward to apprise Mosilikatse of your approach; that when he heard this he had packed up and fled further, apprehending danger. This is all we can hear, except one other report which said you had left the waggons at Mosega, and were gone on alone.

“I have now come to the conclusion to send Melomo and another with the little news we have, that you may be no longer kept in suspense, whatever we are. I continue to hope for the best, though I feel very impatient to hear in what circumstances you have been placed. I am aware that your situation is a critical one, and one of considerable responsibility, and therefore I was the more anxious that one of the Americans should have gone to you. I have felt much for you and sympathized with you, and trust that the Mighty Counsellor has been with you to direct as well as to protect you and those who are with you.

“For my own part I do not experience less support on this occasion than on former ones, believing that He who has hitherto been so

gracious to us will yet be so, notwithstanding our unfaithfulness to Him. I again assert that I never trusted God in vain, but have often suffered loss by my distrust and unbelief. I do, however, feel it necessary to prepare my heart for further trials, as I have always done under our separations, anticipating at times the most painful occurrences, and have frequently found that such anticipations are a means of deepening a sense of the Divine goodness when we were again permitted to meet.

“I have this day considered the Ninety-first Psalm, and have read Scott and Clarke on it, and am much comforted by it.”

In the course of the month of August Moffat returned to Kuruman, to be followed shortly after by the expedition. All the available waggons and oxen which could be mustered on the station started under the care of Hamilton and Edwards, to obtain the timber of the existence of which Moffat had satisfied himself. It was a great undertaking. The woodcutters had to travel to a distance of two hundred and fifty miles; but they were not men to be deterred by difficulties, and they enjoyed a great advantage in the cordial approval of the chief, and in such assistance as his people were capable of giving.

CHAPTER XXI.

MOFFAT ITINERATES, AND HIS WIFE GOES TO THE COAST.

1836.

MOFFAT had not long been home when he and his wife were again called to separate for a time. Her health, which a few months before had been severely tried, had not been re-established, and it was the advice of Dr. Andrew Smith that she should pay a visit to the coast. This was also needed on account of the children who were at school. Rather than take her husband away from his post she determined again to go without him, he accompanying her as far as the Vaal River, about a hundred miles distant. Mr. Hume, the trader, being on his way to Grahamstown, she was able to avail herself of his escort, which, as it proved afterwards, was of great service to her.

Having seen his wife over the Vaal River, Moffat started on his return to Kuruman on horseback, but made a *détour* to visit the old chief of the Batlaping, Mothibi, who had settled down at a spot about forty miles higher up the river with a portion of the tribe. The people seem at this time to have been much reduced in circumstances, with scarcely food to eat on account of their extreme poverty, not having recovered from the long period of war during which they had deserted the Kuruman. This, however, would not account for their want of hospitality. The Batlaping had always a character for meanness among Bechwana tribes, for the Bechwana generally give what they have without grudging to strangers. Where there was work to be done for his Master it made no difference to Robert Moffat whether he was well cared for or not, as the following letter will show :

“ KURUMAN, *Thursday, Dec. 2, 1835.*

“ MY DEAR MARY,—It is with gratitude that I sit down to record to you the goodness of our Heavenly Father in bringing me back to

this place in health and safety. I arrived here about ten o'clock last night with Mosheu. We looked like half-drowned beings, having been exposed to the vehemence of a thunderstorm which lasted from Bok Fontein to near this place. The night was awfully grand, and the rain was heavy on us for more than two hours. Though I suffered a few hardships in my journey I am nevertheless happy indeed that I went, and as a few of the particulars may prove interesting I shall begin where I left you. I did not part with you in that comparatively easy frame of mind in which I left you for the former journey. Poor Jimmy and Johnny were entirely unconscious of the pain we felt. On reaching the opposite bank of the river I felt somewhat relieved. I galloped nearly all the way to Campbell, so that I reached Mr. B.'s house with good daylight. Many a look I gave to your waggons, at least to the dust they occasioned, which I still saw when I had arrived opposite Abram's house. I felt that evening no inclination to think or speak.

"Next day, the 27th, through the kindness of Cornelius, I proceeded with three horses and a guide to Mothibi. The day was hot and the journey long, upwards of forty miles. I reached the place a little before sunset. I had no sooner alighted in the public yard than the people flocked to see me, as if I had dropped from the clouds. Mahuto seemed greatly delighted. (Mothibi was absent at Taung with Mahura.) Though she has suffered and is not strong, she has still the same appearance she had when you last saw her; indeed her countenance seemed to me more intelligent and interesting, and especially her conversation. Many were her inquiries about you and the children. Thus it continued till moonlight, when she brought a little thick milk. She then with many others begged me to tell them about God and their souls. 'We are great sinners, we are ignorant,' were the words which fell from the lips of many alternately. Mahuto ordered the congregation to assemble. I addressed them from 'How shall ye escape, &c.' All were attentive; every eye seemed to continue fixed on me. The night was a little cloudy, and the pale moonlight falling on my swarthy audience, which was all silence, rendered the scene impressive and solemn. I think I continued speaking for nearly an hour. After they had dispersed, several spoke to me about their souls. It was with difficulty I could reach the loloapa, about twenty yards distant, where I was to sleep. One robust young fellow interrupted me, and repeated with clearness passages he had heard read in the Gospel of Luke, which had been blessed in turning his attention to the concerns of his soul. 'Believe me,' he said, grasping my hand, 'I prayed earnestly to God this very morning that He might send some one to teach my soul; and God has heard my prayer.' On entering the loloapa I laid me down on a mat, as you may conceive much tired. Mahuto sat a long time, and talked freely on a variety of subjects, and assured me that if she had her will in the government of the people they would soon be back at the Kuruman. I told her you would weep tears of joy to see what I had seen. I fell asleep at a late hour on a hard and stony bed—which to me, however, was as if it were a mattress.

"Long before sunrise I was awoke by Mahuto inquiring when I should teach. She wished me to begin then and there. I begged for time to think a little. I then had an earnest and attentive congregation of three or four hundred. I felt great liberty and great delight in dispensing the word of eternal life. I often thought how your soul would be rejoiced to have looked on these countenances, on which you have so often seen the vacant stare or scornful sneer, turned into the most devout attention to the great truths of Christianity. I reasoned long with them, and after the service I felt the cravings of an empty stomach, but found on inquiry there was no food. The outposts were at a distance from which milk was expected. I then went down to the Vaal River from the top of a high stony hill on which the town stands, I think about four miles distant. I filled my stomach with water, washed, and by the time I had crossed the sandy plain and reached the summit of the hill I was as thirsty as ever. On my return I was assailed by many of the youths to teach them to read, and repeat hymns. Thus I continued till noon, when I was again called upon to preach. The people collected in the largest Bechwana house I ever saw. Many sat outside. I preached till I was nearly exhausted, and made very solemn appeals to the consciences of the aged, they being the only opposers to the people removing to a missionary station. Many applications were made for a missionary, but of this I could not hold out the shadow of a hope; yea, I assured them that the thing was impossible in their present situation. Finding that I could not obtain any food, I resolved in the evening to leave and visit Simeno's Town, about eighteen miles lower down on the river. They begged and entreated me to remain, but I could not both for myself and horses, for I never saw one blade of grass.

"I reached Simeno's about sunset. Many were the salutations. Instant application was made for me to preach. I said, 'I am killed with hunger.' Simeno replied that he was wont to have always something to give, but he was ashamed to say that at present he had nothing. Motlanka now looking very old, rose and brought me a goat's shoulder-blade with a morsel of flesh. I shared it with my guide. The people were instantly assembled, more numerous than at Mothibi's; and although I could not from the darkness see my audience distinctly, I could perceive that they listened to me for at least an hour with the greatest attention. The night was dark and stormy. Simeno and others talked with me a long time about having a missionary. I gave the same reply as at Mothibi's. I laid me down wearied and hungry, amidst dust and dirt and vermin, and slept soundly. Next morning application was made for me to preach again, but this I refused on the score of want of food. I was asked to stop, and an ox was killed, of which I was promised a steak; but having thirty or more miles to ride to Campbell, and the horses having nothing to eat, I took leave, and reached Campbell in the afternoon, right glad to eat a hearty meal, for I had fasted nearly two days.

"Next day I started for Daniel's Kail, about fifty miles. At the pan one horse gave up, for the day had been terribly hot. I left the

man with the horse to come on slowly, while I went on if possible to reach the place before the frightful storm which was approaching from the north should intercept me. My horse also gave in, which obliged me to walk. When within five miles of the place, on a plain without a single bush, the lightning struck close to me, and the rain and hail instantly fell in torrents. The knocked-up horse turned his tail to the storm, and I had no alternative but to imitate him, and I sat me down in the middle of the road with my head on my knees. In five minutes I was drenched to the skin, and from a state of perspiration and excessive thirst I was, as it were, instantly launched into an ice-cold bath; but still my thirst continued. I at length proceeded, it still raining till I reached Mosheu's house—a wretched temporary place, as you know, but to me it was a palace. Having no other clothes, and there being many other persons in the house, I had no alternative but to throw off my jacket and waistcoat, and try and dry myself with the rest on by the fire. A cup of tea did me good, and I lay down with my underclothes like a dish-clout. I awoke fresh in the morning. The weather was still unsettled, and I did not leave before ten or eleven o'clock—to finish the last fifty-five miles. We reached Konung, when a heavy thunderstorm came on, which detained us nearly three hours; but the worst was in the evening approaching home, as stated in the beginning of the letter. I am, however, happy to say that, through the mercy of our God, I feel none the worse, which to myself seems wonderful, considering the transitions through which I have gone. I am quite well, not even a cold. Though the house seemed a little doleful, it was delightful to get under a roof and get on dry clothes. Had I the journey to undertake again, I should do it with double cheerfulness.

“By the time I got some tea and had told my tale to Brother Hamilton, who was right glad to see me, it was late. Mr. Edwards also came over to greet. Stiff and tired I laid me down on my lonely bed, but from the tea or the association of ideas I could not sleep.”

“December 23rd.

“Two days have been taken up preparing another sheet of the selection for the press; and to-day it has been printed off, so that I again take up my pen half-tired and sleepy, for I was in the office by 5 a.m. I must first tell you that your letter from the salt-pan came to hand, and it was not only one drop of comfort but a thousand, for I really felt anxious to hear something about you and our dear children. You cannot think how much the particulars of your letter rejoiced my heart. Your welfare, and your meeting with our trusty friend the doctor, made me weep tears of gratitude to the Father of all our mercies. Blessed be His name! But now I have another anxiety. You said the Orange River was full; and David Bergover has just been here, and he says that you, the expedition, Hume and the Boers, are still on this side of the river. Though I make allowance for David's tales, I cannot help fearing that it may be in some measure the case, which must prove very trying to you. ‘I wish I could fly’ often fell from my lips. I will hope the best, and continue to believe that the Lord will keep you and bless you. . . .

“Our American brethren and sisters grow in our esteem, and I think they will be devoted missionaries. None of the sisters are strong or likely to become so. Messrs. Lindley and Venables have resolved to leave this for Mosega some time next month, in order to get the house put in order. They will likely be absent for at least three months. Dr. Wilson remains here with the ladies. The brethren are now making preparations. They will also print a few lessons in the Setebele language from the words they have collected. Frederick and Baba have engaged to go with them, and others are willing to go. They are all in good spirits. They are often at this side of the village, and of course we see each other many times in a day. We feel happy in aiding them in every way we can. Their undertaking is an arduous one, and they need our sympathy and prayers. They have a glorious Leader and an almighty King. Trials they will have, but the cause will prevail.

“As far as I am able to judge, the work of the Lord is still progressing here. A great work is yet to be done. What has been accomplished is only like a handful of corn. May it shake as Lebanon! I am beginning to think, since I visited Mothibi's, that we want in zeal. The work of conversion, or endeavours to convert sinners, is not so much the primary object of our souls as it ought to be. If I speak for myself I must say that I do not feel that sympathy for the awful condition of my fellow-men which their state ought to excite in every Christian bosom. When I look at the Man of Sorrows, His toilsome days and midnight prayers, and the burning zeal of the first ministers of the gospel, I feel as if I had not the same mind or spirit. There was no abatement of their zeal till they had finished their course with joy.”

Mary Moffat to her Father.

“PORT ELIZABETH, *April 14, 1836.*

“My last was written to you in October, after the arrival of my dear Robert from his journey to Mosilikatse. The expedition arrived in November, having been obliged to return, after getting just within the tropics, from failure of oxen. They got no further than some of our travellers have done before; but I expect Dr. Smith will be able to interest the scientific world. I see from the papers that people at the Cape are enthusiastic about it, not only with regard to the objects of science, but the relations of the native tribes with the Colony. We left the Kuruman on the 19th of November; Robert accompanied us to the Vaal River, over which we walked dry shod, and, finding it so low, we never dreamed of getting the Orange River in flood; but so it was, and I was compelled to lie on the banks of that mighty stream for one round month. I was in company with a Mr. Hume, with whom I had travelled before, preferring to go with him rather than with the expedition. Mr. Hume rendered me every possible assistance, but my health being in such a delicate state I could not but suffer much from the extreme heat and exposed situation, and was severely tried, often hesitating whether to return. Frequently were we tantalized with the prospect of being able to ride through ‘to-morrow,’

but as sure as to-morrow came the river rose again, till all hope was gone, and we came at last to the conclusion to cross on a raft, some Boers higher up having commenced so doing. We joined a party of them, and got over very well. There were eighteen waggons altogether, and with hard labour we got everything over that frightful river in less than three days without a single accident. How much have we to be thankful for! and it was gratifying to find that for all I had endured I was no worse, but rather better. Perhaps being obliged to take it easily was in my favour, for it was impossible to be active through the day for want of shade, and by the time the sun was down my strength was all gone, so that I could not walk, except to the water's edge and back.

"The raft was a much better conveyance than I had supposed. It was made of four or five willow trees tied together with bark of the river thorn, and again two or three trees tied across underneath. To this they fastened a strong rope of bullock's hide on either side, and then able-bodied men drew it at their pleasure back and forwards from one bank to the other. They chose a narrow place between rocks which were convenient for landing. It was eighty yards across; but where we had lain so long, hoping to ride through, it was five hundred yards across. Each waggon was brought over piecemeal in two trips, and the contents afterwards. It was a time of great anxiety to me, the river being tremendously deep, but the Lord my God graciously heard and answered my prayers, and exceeded all my expectations. We recommenced our journey on the 4th of January, and arrived in Grahamstown the latter end of the month; but finding myself extremely weak, it was judged proper for me to get to the sea coast as soon as possible. I got my children from Salem, and went down in company with Mr. and Mrs. Monro to a place called the Kowie, on the borders of Kafirland. I was obliged to return before I had been there three weeks, but found my strength much recruited.

"My oxen have suffered so much that I could not get away from Grahamstown again till the beginning of the last month, and even then I was obliged to leave one waggon, which necessitates my returning that way. And now I am detained here for want of a suitable conveyance for the children to the Cape, all the vessels which have left hitherto being destitute of female passengers who could take charge of them. I am, however, congratulated by all my friends here for the necessity that is laid upon me to stop, as my health is daily improving."

Mary Moffat had come to the resolution to send the three elder children to school at the Cape. It was, as things went in those days, a great venture, but her faith was also great.

"PORT ELIZABETH, *May 2, 1836.*

"MY DEAR ROBERT,—No doubt you are perfectly amazed to see the date of this, but be assured it has not been my fault that I am not now at least at Cradock; but for your consolation I now inform you that if my Heavenly Father does not again see fit to cross my plans,

I hope to be at the Kuruman about the end of June, but not one day sooner ; it is impossible. I wrote to you just four weeks ago, since which my patience has had a severe trial in detention against my will. Three weeks ago I took a passage for the children, when they were to sail in a few days, and only last Friday was the final day. The Monday before I was getting terribly impatient, but suddenly got a check. Mary was taken very ill on Monday evening ; her symptoms were so violent that she was twice bled, and had to take much medicine. You may in some degree conceive of my anxiety expecting every hour to be called on board. During the whole of Tuesday I was harassed with messages that the ship was to sail. On Wednesday I was kept in the same state of agitation, besides grief on Mary's account, want of sleep, and excessive fatigue. The captain having assured me the day before that I should have timely warning I tried to keep myself easy, though some of my friends urged me to be off ; but knowing the anxiety of the passengers, I viewed it all as report, foolishly trusting to the captain's promise, which he forgot. All the passengers were on board, when good old Mr. Kemp came and assured me that the vessel was to sail before morning. The moon had now risen. It was just time to put the little ones to bed. Mary was altogether unfit to go, and I had no alternative but to pack up and get the others away without her. Mrs. Atkinson and Mrs. Chalmers, who were here, agreed to stop with Mary, and Mrs. Robson and I went on board accompanied by the good old gentleman. I make no attempt to describe my feelings. The very evening, fine, still, clear, and a full moon beaming on the water : it was enough to produce a sentimental feeling, but I had little time for this. Deep perplexity and consideration of the mystery of this providence absorbed much of my thoughts. I left the two dear children in comfortable circumstances and in good company, among them Mr. Thomson, of Grahamstown, who assured me of paying them every attention as the father of a family. When we left the vessel they were speaking of drawing up the anchor, and just as the evening gun went off the captain passed us in the last boat.

"Two or three times in the night I arose to try if I could see the *Briton*, but the light was not sufficient. In the morning, however, I saw a vessel had made out and was opposite Cape Receife, and supposed it was she. About ten o'clock, however, Mr. Robson came, out of breath, to tell me the *Briton* was still in the bay, and the wind contrary. This was good news to me, as there was still a chance of getting Mary away should she be detained another night. Thursday evening I went down to Mr. Kemp and begged of him to order a boat to be in readiness to-morrow morning should there be any signs of the *Briton* sailing. As Mary continued to recover, I now began to hope ; and, after committing the matter to the Father of mercies, laid me down quite composed, concluding that if the vessel were away before daylight it was for some gracious reason, and if not, I should certainly get her on board. As soon as day dawned I went to the window to see, but all was still. I lay down again, but was soon roused, hearing that Mr. Chick wanted me. He told me the vessel would soon be off. I sent for Mrs. Robson, and we soon got Mary up

and a chair prepared for her. She walked part of the way, and was carried through the sand. The ship was now under weigh, and we followed her about four or five miles. Mary bore it well. My mind was greatly relieved by finding Ann and Robert perfectly happy. The ship was out of sight early in the afternoon. It is now stormy, and I think much of Cape Lagulhas, but am enabled to hope in that mercy which has always attended us."

Mary Moffat to her Father.

"KURUMAN, July 18, 1836.

"I wrote to you some time in April at Port Elizabeth while waiting for the sailing of the vessel which was to convey our children to the Cape. On the 8th of May I, with my three little ones, left that place for Grahamstown, where we arrived on the 13th. I remained there until the following post day to have the satisfaction of hearing of the children, which, through the kindness of our Heavenly Father, I did. They had rather a dangerous passage of eleven days, but were well and in good spirits. On the evening of the same day I left Grahams-town for home, and had a pretty comfortable journey, having been favoured with very fine weather for the season, never having suffered from the cold. Having before I left Port Elizabeth written to my dear Robert to tell him about what time I expected to be at the Orange River, he providentially received the letter, and left home on horseback to meet me there. I arrived at the last farmhouse close to the river on the 15th of June about two o'clock in the afternoon, and about five he arrived! This circumstance was rather surprising, as such an occurrence is very rare in this country where travellers meet with such a variety of incidents to cross their plans. I had been particularly anxious that I might meet him there, though I considered there were many probabilities against me, and could not but consider it a special providence towards us. The formidable river was again to be crossed, though then fordable with waggons; but the water was pretty high, having never run off entirely since I was floated over. I had had to buy sheep and cows from the farmers, and all these would have been an increase to my cares in crossing, which I did not need; therefore Robert's arrival was most seasonable to me in every light of the subject. And thus to meet again in circumstances of health and comfort was certainly enough to overwhelm us with gratitude to our gracious Benefactor; and we came on our way rejoicing in that goodness which so graciously led us and protected us in our separation.

"We found all well here. Two of the American brethren with their wives had gone to their station at Mosega, the spot where the French brethren commenced, and where Mosilikatse now lives—at least occasionally. Mr. Lindley left to follow them on the 14th, so that we consider that mission now fairly commenced. Mr. Lemue is prospering at Motito. Patience and perseverance are two essential qualities in a missionary in this country, without which no one will succeed.

"We are now experiencing some heavy trials. Some of our church members have grievously departed from the path of rectitude, and this produces in our mind great jealousy over others who are making

a profession, and makes us slow about encouraging them, lest they also should wound the cause. There are many candidates of long standing, but in general they do not give the satisfaction they ought. Their natural apathy is a great barrier to their improvement. The school is not flourishing as it was, and we can scarcely account for it, except that some few families have left the place on account of the discipline which it has been necessary to exercise.

“The translating and printing are going on. The Scripture lessons which were in hand are finished, a volume of 443 pages. The Assembly’s Catechism is also in print and in use; readers are increasing in every direction. A man was here last week to fetch away his daughter to go and teach the people at Mothibi’s to read. She is a clever girl, and has lived all her life on the station, and we doubt not will instruct them well.”

CHAPTER XXII.

DISTURBANCES IN THE INTERIOR.

1837.

THE next three years were a period of tranquil prosperity in the Kuruman Mission, the only cloud upon which was the declining health of Mary Moffat, who had never recovered thoroughly from the shock of a severe illness in 1835.

The knowledge and conviction of the truth were steadily growing upon the station itself. Year by year the community of professing believers grew larger, and as they advanced in spiritual life their outward demeanour and manner of life improved also. The population was small; some were drawn to the station by their desire for instruction, whilst others clung to their heathenism and shrank from the light in which it lay bare at the Kuruman, and they withdrew to a distance where they could follow their old practices with less disturbance of conscience.

The three missionaries worked together with a will. Upon Moffat fell the largest share of duty—from his more complete mastery of the Sechwana language, and his personal ascendancy over men. He had been called especially to the great work of translating the Scriptures, but his colleague, Roger Edwards, took a large share of the printing and the whole of the school work; and Robert Hamilton, though well stricken in years, and never able to acquire the Sechwana language, quietly went about his daily labour in the mechanical department of the mission, supplementing in Dutch, by the aid of a native interpreter, the preaching of his colleagues when necessary.

The great church was still in progress. It stands to-day a monument of the patient labours of these three men whose only European assistants were Hume and Millen, the latter of whom had died before the completion of the work. The Bechwanas, however willing, could give but little help except their unskilled

labour; and it is a matter of surprise to those who have seen it how this, for many years the largest building to the north of the Orange River, could have been put up with such scanty means as were then available.

Meanwhile the printing office was constantly at work. The increase of those who were eager to learn caused a continual and growing demand for books from the outlying districts. It will be remembered that the Batlaping tribe, to which the missionaries were originally sent, continually harassed by the western marauders, had moved to the south-east, and, breaking up into sections, had scattered along the Kolong or Hart River, a tributary of the Vaal. In the same neighbourhood had settled some of the Barolong and Bahurutse from the interior; and there was also a tribe of Korannas, under their chief Mosheu, whose headquarters were at a place called Mamusa, now in the Transvaal near the border of the modern Stellaland. It was long hoped that the Batlaping might be led to return to the Kuruman. They had found, however, that their new country was far superior to the old in its fitness for cattle, and the return has never taken place.

The Directors had not yet seen their way to sending a missionary to them, so that their old teachers, still at Kuruman, felt a call to visit them from time to time, and with considerable encouragement. Then, again, the Batlaro tribe to the westward was showing a greater desire for instruction, and thus new demands were made upon their time and strength. So that what with the work on the station, and that throughout the district, even with such assistance as could be given by the converts, every energy was taxed; but it was with the joyful feeling that every effort was telling in the right direction.

Meanwhile, in the year 1837, the aspect of affairs in the interior underwent an ominous change. The emigration of the Dutch farmers, disaffected to British rule, had commenced. One party of these had come into collision with the warriors of Mosilikatse. The Boers had intruded on what he considered his domain, and had refused to retire. The Boers defended themselves successfully in an entrenchment of their waggons, repulsing the Matebele with great slaughter, but losing all their oxen. They were extricated from their dangerous predicament by their friends further south, and shortly afterwards they planned an invasion for the double purpose of plunder and vengeance, which was so well carried out that Mosilikatse was taken by surprise, and a great booty in cattle swept away.

Unhappily the attack of the Boers was directed upon the very spot where lay the newly-formed American missionary station.

This was destroyed. The missionaries were in a pitiable condition. They had been prostrated by fever for some time, and they were led to fear that on the departure of the Boers the infuriated Matebele would return and wreak their passion upon them ; for it would have been difficult to convince them that they had not in some way been acting as the spies of the enemy. Under these impressions they accompanied the Boers, thus deepening an impression of this kind which not unnaturally did find place in the minds of the Matebele. It was a fatal blow to that mission, and a difficulty in the way of all future endeavours.

Mosilikatse, seeing that with the continual incursions of Dingaan, the Zulu king, from the eastward, and with this new danger threatening him from the south, there was little hope of holding his ground where he was, gathered his warriors and his herds of cattle and started to the far north-east. He disappeared into what was the vast unknown region south of the Zambezi so completely that for some years nothing was known of him except by vague rumour, and his actual existence came to be a matter of doubt.

Mary Moffat to her Father in 1838.

“ I must now leave this half-page for the relation of a most painful event, one of the most painful in the annals of this unhappy country. The Zulu Mission on our side is broken up, and the Americans have left the country to go to Port Natal, and to join their brethren who are with Dingaan (the successor of Chaka) on the coast. You have probably heard that some thousands of disaffected Boers have emigrated to Natal and the interior. We have anticipated the direst events from them, and these have commenced. They have approached the territory of Mosilikatse, his people have attacked them, they (the Boers) have since fallen upon him, killed many men, and taken six thousand head of cattle ; and with them the missionaries have fled. This is all we know at present, but we expect an explanation every hour, as some of our people were with them, and are on their way home.

“ More than six weeks ago the brethren here had everything ready, with six waggons to fetch timber from thence, but were prevented from starting by the rains, when the report of this event reached us. We could not at once give credit to it, but it was agreed to defer the journey for a time.

“ Yesterday a letter arrived from a Wesleyan brother stationed east of Philippolis, stating that the Americans were there, and going to Natal ! The interior is now effectually closed, and if Government wink at the proceedings of these Boers they will annihilate the aborigines, as we hear they intend seating themselves in the Bahurutse country, and they themselves will doubtless become formidable to the Colony.”

April 5th.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—Robert was to have filled up this blank, but has more to do than he can accomplish before the people leave. We have just heard from Dr. Wilson by our two men, but his letter is short and not explanatory. The brethren and sisters have been heavily afflicted. In the latter end of August a fever commenced among them, which carried off dear Mrs. Wilson. All took it in succession except the Doctor, who writes that he had done nothing for four months but attend to the sick and to his own motherless babe.

“In this state the Boers came upon them quite unexpectedly one morning early. The Zulus were entirely off their guard, knowing nothing till the bullets were flying about them in every direction. The Boers brutally commenced hostilities at the mission station, and one ball fell at the foot of the bed on which Mr. Venables lay sick. The outhouse in which their servants slept was literally shot to pieces. Two of our poor people who were with them, one of them a lad we brought up, have disappeared, and it is not known whether they were killed or fled. One of those who has come back narrowly escaped several times. What induced the missionaries to go with the Boers we do not yet know, but are inclined to think, from what the men tell us, that they submitted to whatever the Boers wished. These pillaged the house before their eyes, and when the missionaries left, the Boers were still in the house, packing up all that their horses could carry. Thus the poor brethren have been in great perils, but these enemies were not suffered to take their lives. This, it appears, some of them wished to do.”

Robert Moffat to his Father-in-law later.

“We heard nothing more from our brethren till a short time ago ; another few lines came from Dr. Wilson at Grahamstown. We are truly sorry to see the Matebele Mission once more abandoned, and the interior covered with a dark cloud, with the prospect of any other attempt tenfold more hopeless than ever. The means also by which this painful event has been brought about must have a baneful influence on the minds of the interior natives, and will lead them, and especially the Matebele, to think anything but well of the Government of the white people. From the testimony of our two young men, who, as it proved, escaped in the attack, and were some weeks among the Matebele, and kindly treated by them, it is evident that Mosilikatse deeply regretted the departure of the missionaries.

“They are by this time in Natal, but if all be true that we read they will have their troubles there, from the tyranny of Dingaan, who seems to be looking with a jealous eye on his white neighbours, who have located themselves on the coast. We wonder and wonder again to witness the apathy of the Government in allowing so many hundreds of its subjects to pass the boundaries of the Colony, and by force of superior arms to mark their course among the native tribes with blood. If they are not interrupted the success of our interior missions will soon be at an end. These Boers are from various parts of the Colony, are discontented with the British Government, and

have been for the last two years emigrating to what they think a better country. We are glad that none come in this direction.

"The evils now coming on the Matebele are only what I expected. Mosilikatse has ruled with an iron sceptre, and his warriors have, full often unprovoked, shed the blood of thousands, and thousands more have been driven from affluence to the most abject poverty. I have more than once told him that if he did not change his government and prohibit deliberate destruction of human life, the innocent blood which deluged his country would soon call down vengeance from heaven. It is to us blind creatures, in the awful mysteries of Providence, painful to see professing Christians becoming the sword of Jehovah.

"Whether he will stand or fall in the present crisis is doubtful, as Dingaana is assailing him from the south-east. Past events in this country make us thankful for the blessings of peace here. The number of inhabitants is constantly increasing. We have abundance of work, and much more than we can attend to. This, of course, makes translation and printing go on slowly. The brethren, Hamilton and Edwards, are now daily employed in preparing the roof of our new place of worship."

Mary Moffat to her Father.

"KURUMAN, March 5, 1838.

"We should now bring the girls home, but do not know when we shall be able to go, as it will be difficult for Robert to leave the place. He intended to finish the translation of the New Testament, that it might be printed in Cape Town, it being too great a task to accomplish here, unless we had a printer. The field of labour is now greatly extending, and the Directors seem reluctant to afford us aid. You will thus readily perceive that my dear husband's labours are manifold, by far too much so. If we do not soon get assistance he will have to lay aside translation altogether, which would be much to be regretted, as his whole soul is in it; and any one who has witnessed the change amongst the Bechwana tribes since they got some portions of Holy Writ must feel anxious that they should have more. Were he relieved entirely from the printing he could be much better employed, nor could his health be likely to suffer as it now does. He is a very bad sleeper, and, when overdone with mental exercise, sometimes passes whole nights, with the exception of an hour or two, in restless tossings."

About thirty-six miles to the north-east of Kuruman lay Motito, the station occupied by the French missionaries on their retirement from the Matebele country. Mr. and Mrs. Lemue now represented the Paris Society there, their colleagues having accepted the great opportunities which had opened to them in Basutoland. An affectionate intercourse was kept up between Kuruman and Motito, and none who knew the Lemues could wonder at this. The following gives a peep of Moffat keeping bachelor house, with his two younger children, in the absence of their mother, at

Motito, whither she had been summoned on account of the severe illness of Mrs. Lemue :

" April, 1838, Sabbath Evening.

"The bell has just been rung, and I am alone with Jim and Jack, the one on my right hand, and the other on my left, talking and questioning with no little volubility, so that my attention is divided, for I do not like to command silence. As soon as the messenger left on Friday I went to the printing office and made arrangements so that Brother Edwards could go on. Friday night was one of sleep, you may believe ; though I awoke early and was at the type before I could see *a* from *b*. With hard tugging we managed to get a proof sheet. Brother Hamilton left for the Batlaros at noon, so that I was alone in the evening, but not in solitude, for who could be in the company of Jim and Jack ? Jim let me see that he could put his foot into either end of his shoes. I took the hint and repaired them. I had scarcely finished this work when he perched himself at the end of the table and stood in the attitude of a Grecian orator, and questioned me about the resurrection from the dead. The conversation, or rather the contention, lasted for more than half an hour, while Jack stood with his hands crossed behind his back wondering and sometimes repeating Jim's inquiries.

"Never in my life was I so delighted with the questions of a child. 'Will these hairs,' laying his hand on his brow, 'also come out of the dust on that day?' 'Could the naughty children who have died come back and hear preaching they would not be naughty again.' 'How can that which has decayed become alive again?' 'I know mamma says that God is a very, very great God ; will He make the dead come out of their graves?' I gave a few simple hints about the coming of Christ. When I asked where he had heard of Christ coming in flames of fire, he said, 'Do not you teach the people that He will come in that way?' Enough of this subject. People are coming for medicine, and I must get the lads to bed. They have put twenty or more questions while I have been writing."

The Jim mentioned here was at this time between five and six years old, and before another year had fulfilled its course he went to the dimly-known world about which his child-mind was already so busy.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VISIT TO ENGLAND.

1838-1841.

TOWARD the end of 1838 the Moffats started for Cape Town. If no other reason had called for the journey it was necessary for health; but apart from this, the translation of the New Testament was now complete, and the printing was too heavy a task to be accomplished on the station. It proved that Cape Town was no better off in this respect. No office there was in a position to undertake book printing on the scale required, and it became plain that the work would have to be done in England.

A passage was accordingly taken. The ship was on her way from China. She was not of the best, being small, and carrying troops; but there was little or no choice, and the voyagers had to embark under circumstances calling for the exercise of great faith and patience. A severe epidemic of measles was raging at the Cape, of which the Moffat family and their native attendants had come in for a heavy share; and there was also much sickness on board the ship. There was no alternative but to embark at the time fixed. Friends at the Cape behaved with their usual kindness, and especially Mr. Mathew, of Claremont, who smoothed over many difficulties and made matters easier for the almost bewildered missionary and his wife in a way they could never forget to the last hour of their lives.

They had not yet left Table Bay when a daughter was born. In a few hours the ship put to sea, but severe weather set in, with contrary winds, and in the midst of the general distress it became apparent to the mother that her beloved Jamie was sinking. He had never thoroughly overcome the measles, and dysentery had followed. Three days after the birth of his sister he passed away at the age of six years. His mother, finding all around her

prostrate with sea-sickness, had him brought and laid beside her in the cot from which she could not rise. Amidst the storm he lay upon her arm peacefully talking of the angels who should bear to the heavenly land the spirits of children, and with the words, "Oh, that will be joyful, when we meet to part no more," on his lips, he fell asleep in Jesus.

For a while the life of another of the children trembled in the balance, but his time was not yet come, and in two or three weeks all were recovered. The voyage was tedious. It was not until the sixth of June, nearly three months from the date of sailing, that the ship cast anchor off Cowes, to await, in the leisurely fashion of the time, further orders from London. Mary Moffat was glad to set foot on land with the children, and she was welcomed and entertained by the same friends from whose house she had embarked twenty years before. Her husband was in no hurry to land, and remained on board to attend to the baggage and write letters.

The clergyman of the parish was the first Christian brother to welcome Robert Moffat to his native land. He went on board in the dark, hearing that there was a missionary, and stayed an hour or two, filling with great joy and comfort the heart of the shy and diffident man who shrank from landing on what had come to be like a strange country to him. The ship was ordered to London, and in a few days with furled sails she was being towed up the Thames by a steam tug, a new and strange sensation to the South African family, even to Moffat himself, for when he left, in 1818, steam navigation was in its babyhood.

His reception in London was a surprise for which he was scarcely prepared. He found himself at once plunged into a whirlpool of public meetings even before he could get his luggage through the custom-house, that bugbear of unfortunate travellers so dear to the official mind. It was with the utmost difficulty that he could get liberty to visit his own friends. Twenty years had made a great difference in the home of Mary Moffat's youth. The mother had gone to her rest. Of three brothers, one had died a few months before in Manchester, another was in the United States, and the third, John, was a missionary in Madras. The father was getting old, and had been obliged by infirmity and by adverse circumstances to give up the nursery at Dukinfield, and to retire to a cottage at Flixton.

Great changes had also come over the circle at Inverkeithing. A brother and two sisters had passed away. The parents were, however, still comparatively hale and hearty when they welcomed back the son from whom they had parted with but little expecta-

tion of ever seeing him again ; whose career they had watched with growing satisfaction, and who, they were willing to admit, had not disappointed their hopes.

It was also the privilege of Robert and Mary Moffat to meet again many faithful friends who had shown unwavering constancy. Of these there was Elizabeth Lees, of Manchester, who, with her sister Mary, wife of Stephen Sheldon, never faltered or failed to keep up a friendship commenced in the days of girlhood. The churches assembling in Grosvenor Street, Manchester, and in Albion Chapel at Ashton-under-Lyne, still contained many who had known Mary Smith, and throughout the long absence a constant and faithful correspondence had been kept up. Letters from Lattakoo—or, as it is now more correctly called, Kuruman—came to be treated as circular epistles. Copies were made and sent round, and the station received many proofs of the heartfelt liberality which spoke in practical language, and made many things possible which otherwise would have been left undone. Another faithful friend—one of that goodly company of whom none are now living—was Mrs. Greaves, of Sheffield. For many long years she and others likeminded had failed not to encourage their missionary brother and sister with sympathetic prayers and kindly deeds. Miss Lees lived to see her friend on her return, but was already nearing the confines of the other world, and died a few months after.

Moffat was not allowed to linger long among his own people. The popular demand for his services as a missionary deputation could not be withstood. At that time there was an enthusiasm for foreign missions such as has scarcely been seen since. The missionary heart of England had been stirred to its depths by the recent visits of many good and earnest workers in various parts of the world ; especially by John Williams, the impression made by whose visit was soon to be deepened in so tragical a manner by his martyrdom at Erromanga. The Malagasy refugees were also in England, the objects of widespread interest. It was thus ordered that Moffat's visit was well timed. The public mind was keenly alive to impression, and it was given to him to take an instant hold, the effects of which cannot be estimated. He was hurried from town to town with scant opportunity for a moment's rest. The country was not then covered with a network of railways. Much of the travelling had to be done by coach, and the mere travelling called for more than ordinary strength and endurance. There was in all this, of course, a sense of pleasurable excitement and a glow of sympathy and interest which made labour and fatigue of no account ; but Moffat's heart was all the

time longing to be at the work which had brought him home, the printing of the Sechwana New Testament.

When he landed, his hope had been to get this work speedily accomplished, and then to slip away again to South Africa before the winter; but it was not until the end of October that he was able even to make a beginning, and to get settled in London with his family. To carry his own translation of the New Testament through the press meant not merely a correction of proof sheets, but further revision of the text, for he was never satisfied with his work. He was far more conscious than any one else could be of his deficiencies. When he went out as a missionary he knew nothing of the original languages. It was only by painfully laborious comparison of many authorities, and by collation of the Dutch with the English version, that he could satisfy himself of having grasped the meaning of the original; and having so grasped it, there was still the task of putting it into Sechwana. From the officials and the committee of the Bible Society he had always the kindest sympathy and co-operation. Loyal and devoted as he ever was to his own Society, the tie of affection to the kindred institution was even stronger and deeper.

Whilst carrying through the printing of the New Testament, it was suggested that the Psalms would be a valuable addition. A few of these had already been translated. With his usual energy the work was at once taken in hand, and when the New Testament appeared, the Book of Psalms was printed and bound up along with it.

By a happy coincidence, Moffat's brother-in-law, who had gone out as a missionary to Madras a few years after his sister left for South Africa, arrived in England. He did not know when he sailed from India that the Moffats were also on their way. The most he had looked for was possibly to see something of them at the Cape, which was then the port of call. Between him and his sister there was a strong bond of affection. He had been led to become a follower of Christ, and to give himself to missionary work, by her example and influence. They again met with no ordinary joy in the blessing which had been accorded to each in their Master's work in different parts of the world.

The winter was spent in London, as far as possible in the work referred to already. This was much interrupted by the incessant and imperious demands of many supporters of missionary enterprise. At last respite was gained in a fashion not altogether to be desired. The exposure to cold air returning home late at night, after speaking at densely-packed meetings, brought on so severe an illness as to bring the doctors upon the scene. All public speak-

ing was for the time absolutely forbidden, and Moffat was glad to utilize the leisure thus gained. He had taken up his abode with his family at Walworth, where they attended the ministry of George Clayton. On the first Sunday as they entered the chapel they were unknown. The appearance of the somewhat foreign-looking family with a native servant attracted the kindly interest of many, but especially of the Misses Eisdell, who were ready for every good work, and who felt a pity for these evident strangers. The tall sunburnt man, in anything but clerical garb, was supposed to be the captain of a ship! Inquiries were made, and George Clayton and his people were delighted to find amongst them unawares the man whose fame had already reached their ears. This was the commencement of a lifelong friendship with the Eisdells, whose tender and loving ministrations never ceased till they were called away from a career of hallowed usefulness which is fragrant in the remembrance of hundreds who had the privilege of being their pupils.

It was arranged that Moffat should preach a sermon in connection with the anniversary services of the Society in May, 1840. To get him, or rather his throat, into order for the strain of public speaking, he was sent down to Brighton, and taken in hand by the Rev. J. N. Goult. With him and with his family there sprang up another of those devoted friendships with which the lives of Robert and Mary Moffat were singularly enriched and brightened. It was given to them not only to make, but to keep friends even unto death.

The anniversary meetings were an overflowing success. The Tabernacle in Moorfields was crowded by a congregation so absorbed that they listened to the close of a discourse which took more than two hours in its delivery. At Exeter Hall the throng was so great, that after making his speech in the larger room Moffat had to go and give it again in the smaller one, which was crammed with a second audience.

In the month of August a daughter had been added to the family band. She was born in the cottage of her grandfather at Flixton, and was named Jane Gardiner, after her father's aunt.

The New Testament was ready, but the pressure of public engagements had retarded the translation of the Psalms; and as there was no likelihood of the requisite leisure being obtained before the end of the year, all hope of a speedy return to Africa was gone. Two men had, however, been detailed to reinforce the Bechwana Mission, William Ross and David Livingstone. The former, though not so well known to the world as his distinguished

companion, was a faithful and laborious missionary, who died at the post of duty after twenty-three years' service in Bechwanaland.

Mary Moffat to Robert Hamilton.

"SHEFFIELD, November 25, 1840.

"MY DEAR BROTHER HAMILTON,—It was my intention to write letters long and many by our dear brethren and sister now going out to join you, but I have found it impracticable. This grieves me the more as I know that my dear Robert will be still less able to spare time to do it. Since my baby was born he has never been with us except for a few hours at a time, and since the 8th of October I have not seen him, as he is in Scotland interesting his countrymen with African details, which are everywhere devoured with avidity. We congratulate you and brother and sister Edwards on an accession to your numbers, and we think very highly of them. Of Mr. Ross we have seen the most, and the more we saw of him the better we liked him. Mr. Moffat will soon write on the subject, and enable you to judge of what will be best for them to turn their attention to.

"I am sure you will greatly enjoy the company of the two missionaries, both being Scotchmen and plain in their manners. I do hope they will all be a blessing to the country. They must of course look to our garden for their present supplies. Anything about the premises they can make use of. You must not from this infer that we are not to return. No! if Moffat lives we shall return, but it cannot be immediately. The Psalms have to be finished, the Selection reprinted, and perhaps the hymns too, and besides all this the public is determined to have a book. You will smile, and so do I, for I have felt opposed to it till very lately, but I see it is of no use to refuse. It must be so. I fear this will detain us very long. Our present plan is to leave this time next year, but I doubt very much; it will require another winter. Mr. Moffat says not, but I fear, for he will again be sent to different parts of the country where he has not yet been. I long to get home. I fear I shall forget what I knew of the language. I long to see the spot again where we have so long toiled and suffered, to see our beloved companions in the toil and suffering, and to behold our swarthy brethren and sisters again; and I long for my own home, for though loaded with the kindness of friends, and welcome everywhere, still home is homely!

"We have, however, much that is painful to anticipate: the parting with some of our children, and my aged father, whose circumstances are such as require the exercise of strong faith to believe that he will always be comfortably provided for should he live long—he has entered his seventy-eighth year. Moffat's parents have also to be left, our dear brethren according to the flesh to be parted with, and many kind Christian friends. In fact, long as our visit to England is, it is a state of constant excitement, bustle, and anxiety. We are seldom together as a family. I should have accompanied Mr. Moffat in many of his journeys, but the Lord has given me other work to do. I have two lovely little girls whom you have never seen, and they are sweet

little ties. I enjoy good health : one reason may be I am exposed to no hardships ; everywhere well taken care of as a hothouse plant, so that I am not exposed to the inclemency of the seasons.

“ Thus far the Lord has been gracious to us, and I trust He will continue so. My husband is terribly worked, but keeps well thus far in the season. How his head stands it I know not. Our dear children are doing well according to their capacity. I have done what I could to persuade Livingstone to marry, but he seems to decline it.”

Ross was married, but Livingstone at this time had other views on the subject, and held them in spite of the motherly advice of Mary Moffat. She had never forgotten what her own Robert had gone through as a forlorn bachelor in Namaqualand, and her kind heart was sore to see any one with such a prospect before him. But the Disposer of events had ordered it otherwise. The two missionaries sailed for the Cape in the course of the year 1840, and it was a great joy to Moffat to be able to send with them an instalment of good things, consisting of five hundred copies of the complete New Testament in the Sechwana language. A few months later he had the still greater joy of sending out five times that number of Testaments, with which were bound up the Psalms. These he had translated in the intervals of the distraction and excitement of public work, to which he was called in almost every town in the kingdom. Scarcely were the Psalms out of his hands when he undertook a revision of the Scripture Lessons, a selection from the Old and New Testaments, suited to the circumstances of the Bechwana churches. By the liberal aid of members of the Society of Friends an edition of six thousand of these was carried through the press. Nothing but herculean strength and indomitable will could have enabled him to go through with these manifold labours. Towards the end of the year 1841, he managed to seclude himself for a time from public engagements, and to devote himself to the preparation of his book, the well-known “*Labours and Scenes in South Africa.*” The work was published in the spring of 1842, and was a great success. Scarcely had the last proof sheets left his hands, when he was called upon to meet the imperious demands of the churches. He never could say no to any call to what seemed to him like an opportunity of serving the missionary cause ; and for some months he was almost swept away with a torrent of engagements, which scarcely gave him a moment’s breathing time day or night. It was a time of great anxiety to his faithful partner, who, naturally anxious in disposition, viewed with fear, almost with resentment, the demands that were made on her husband’s powers both of mind and body. Writing to his parents in May, 1842, she says :

“We have great reason to be thankful for the completion of the book, for many a time have I trembled lest he should become poorly before it was finished, and have to lay it aside and disappoint the public. He has found it an arduous task. I always dreaded it, and often wished he would not do it, but had I known how formidable a work it would be I should have felt more opposed to it. I can assure you his head is thoroughly tired, and he ought to have at least a fortnight's relaxation; but this was out of the question. He has had some engagements, for the middle and latter end of this month, standing over for six months, and these he could not break; and not being able to finish so soon as he had hoped, he has consequently been sadly hurried. He was some days in Buckinghamshire last week; and yesterday morning, after sitting up till two o'clock to correct, he had to depart at seven for Cambridgeshire, there to labour very hard indeed, as the printed bills testify. I am anxious to hear how he gets on, for he was quite unfit; he said he was so fatigued that his head felt empty. If all be well I expect him here to-morrow evening, when, if possible, I hope we shall go down to Brighton for two days at least; as, by what I consider a merciful providence, some mistake has occurred, so as to leave next Sabbath vacant—although Mr. Arundel is at his wit's end to answer the numerous demands for his services. A day or two there at his leisure, enjoying the fine air and the good society of Mr. Goulty's family, will do him great good.”

Although living a life of almost insupportable distraction, racked with constant care about her husband, looking forward to her parting with dear friends and with some of her children, Mary Moffat still found time to indulge in those friendships which so brightened and widened her life, and gave flow to her far-reaching sympathies. The following letter was addressed to the wife of Mr. Jacob Unwin, of London—then, as may be gathered, a great sufferer, but soon to enter into rest. She and her husband had greatly endeared themselves by their kindly interest in the children—an interest which was continued by him, and led to important consequences to more than one member of the family:

“AT MY FATHER'S HOUSE, NEAR MANCHESTER,

“Nov. 26, 1842

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Though I can hardly persuade myself that you are still an inhabitant of this lower world, I cannot resist the strong inclination I have to address you; and though I seem to stand on holy ground while thus attempting to address one who is on the confines of the heavenly world and calmly closing her eyes on terrestrial things, having to-day (for the first time for many weeks) a little leisure, my thoughts will rest upon you, and impel me to make an effort to express to you the sympathy we have had with you and your beloved husband in the extremely afflicting circumstances in which you have been placed for some time past. Our friends at Walworth

having kindly communicated with me from time to time, although we have been under perpetual excitement and fatigue, our minds have hovered over the trying scene, and when we could do no more, we have breathed a prayer for you and yours.

“Oh, my friends, you are indeed enduring chastening, and doubt not it is as seeing Him who is invisible. He has before caused you to pass through the fire without being burned, and will also be with you when you pass through the floods, that they do not overflow you. Your graces of faith and patience are now severely proved; but when He has tried you, you shall come forth as gold, and shall shine for ever and ever to the glory of His name.

“It is with reluctance that I introduce to your notice my own affairs at a time when you must have almost ceased to think of friends so distant as we; but it would be cold of me while I am troubling you with these lines not to notice your labour of love towards our dear boy and ourselves, the kind and maternal interest you took in his being comfortably fixed, to fit himself for the arduous work in which he is anxious to be engaged, and your personal endeavours to further the object we have in view. All these have made an impression on our minds never to be erased, and we desire to express our gratitude for all that you accomplished and for all that you intended—for it was evident to me that it was your intention to be as a mother to him when his own was far removed, In this I had the fullest confidence, and must therefore consider that we also are losers by your removal from this world. Our prayer is that your own dear children may experience the Divine favour and love all their lives long, and at last unite with yourself and their beloved father in singing the praises of that dear Saviour who shed His blood for them. Oh! my dear friend, I feel very solemn while thus taking my farewell. These I am taking every day, till they become a common sound. I have within the last few weeks bid farewell to many aged persons who are very dear to me, and on Monday must do so to my honoured father, now sitting beside me. He is in his eightieth year, but his mind is as vigorous as ever. I think he will bear separation well, though with all the feeling I could desire.

“Adieu, then, my esteemed friend. Methinks I see you in the dark valley; but His rod and staff comforts you, and though heart and flesh fail, He will be with you. Methinks I see you panting to be gone, cheerfully surrendering all the loved ones about your dying bed, till that day when you shall again meet them in that world where there is no more such agonizing pain as you have been called to endure. The ways of God are oftentimes inscrutable, but what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MOFFATS RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA.

1842, 1843.

IN November, 1842, commenced a series of valedictory services, which in their extent, and in the deep feeling shared by those who attended them, gave a striking proof of the manner in which Moffat had been privileged to rouse in the hearts of many thousands in England and Scotland not only a strong personal regard for himself, but a deeper missionary interest and purpose. A few citations from a little book published at the time by the late Dr. John Campbell, of London, will serve to illustrate this :

“On the evening of Thursday, November 3, 1842, a meeting was held in the Waterloo Rooms, Edinburgh, for the purpose of presenting a copy of the ‘Encyclopædia Britannica’ to the Rev. R. Moffat, as an expression of affectionate regard from some of his friends of different Christian denominations in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood. The large room was filled in every part, and the platform was occupied by ministers and friends of almost every Evangelical body. The Rev. W. Lindsay Alexander, M.A., occupied the chair.”

Addresses were delivered by the Rev. Henry Grey, by the chairman, and by the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Broughton Place Church. The chairman, in presenting the volumes, gave a brief but happy address. He too, with many others who took a part in that meeting, has gone to join Moffat amid the glories of the heavenly state. The following are a few of his words :

“Your visit to us we never can forget. Our little children are already, in their infantine chronology, beginning to date from the time ‘when Mr. Moffat spoke to them ;’ and believe me, to many of us of riper years the time when you spoke to us will be as a sunny spot on the dusty and troubled road along which we have to journey. We feel ourselves your debtors. We have reaped a real

and a pure pleasure from the pictures you have given us of missionary life—your romantic adventures, your hairbreadth escapes, your bold exertions, your surprising successes. You have opened before us a new page of human society and character, and have confirmed our attachment to the missionary cause by showing that there is no tribe too degraded for the gospel to elevate, no heart too polluted for Christianity to purify. Your debtors we are, and it is but an imperfect expression of our sense of obligation which we convey to you by this present. Nor are our feelings of affection unmixed with an emotion of sadness, as we reflect that after a short space we shall in all human probability behold your face no more in the flesh. But we would not detain you if we might.”

From Edinburgh he passed on to Newcastle, where his friend John Collingwood Bruce, with other gentlemen, were waiting to present him with a set of scientific instruments, which were to be used in introducing to the minds of the natives of South Africa some little insight into wonders still greater than those with which civilization had made them in a measure familiar.

In Manchester was held a series of meetings which left an impression never to be forgotten by those who took a part in them. The interest was much increased by the circumstance that Joseph Gill and William Ashton were going out as missionaries with Moffat—the latter, as it proved, to be closely associated with him for many years, and now the only one of that generation still remaining in the Bechwana field.

Two or three similar services were held in London. On the twenty-third of January, Moffat and his company took their leave of the Directors. Among the many who attended on that occasion, the following names remind us forcibly of the ceaseless course of time. The chairman was T. M. Coombs. Other directors were Thomas Lewis, James Rowland, John Foulger, Thomas Binney, John Morison, Thomas Piper, John Yockney, Alexander Fletcher, H. F. Burder, Joshua Wilson, John Burnet, Henry Townley, Ebenezer Henderson, with the secretaries Arundel and Tidman.

A week after, the missionary party embarked at London Bridge, with a great concourse of friends, on board a steamer which was to carry them to the ship at Gravesend. There all the partings of some weeks past culminated in a final farewell, one more tearful service was held on the deck of the steamer, the Moffats and their companions bid adieu to friends and kindred, and the missionary party had set its face towards Africa.

Though the embarkation of the passengers took place at Cravesend on the thirtieth of January, the ship was still wind-

bound in the Downs on the fourth of the following month, by which time something like a hundred sail had assembled at the same anchorage. That morning the wind changed round to the north, and in a heavy snowstorm all got under weigh and stood down the Channel. The crowd of outward-bound ships spread away each on her own course, the white cliffs receded from view, and next day the company on board the *Fortitude* found themselves alone on the wide, rolling sea.

The voyage was much what might have been expected, though with a larger share than usual of bad weather; but the ship was stout and well manned. The captain was an old and Godfearing man, from whom the missionaries enjoyed every facility for the observance of the Lord's day and for public services, as was befitting so large a proportion of missionary passengers. All were safely landed in Cape Town on the tenth of April, the passage being considered an average one.

As there was an opportunity by steamer to Port Elizabeth, it was deemed best that Ashton and Inglis with their wives should go, and await the advance of the rest at Bethelsdorp, a village a few miles from Port Elizabeth. It was not till the twenty-fourth of May that the Moffats were able to follow them; embarking in a little coasting schooner for Algoa Bay, where they arrived after a tempestuous passage of ten days. Little could Mary Moffat have imagined that only a week before this, her beloved brother John Smith—whom she had the joy of meeting in England, and who had returned to his work at Madras—had found a watery grave, a vessel in which he was making a short voyage along the coast having foundered in the Bay of Bengal on the twentieth or twenty-first of May. Nothing was ever known of the exact circumstances. He had gone to Vizagapatam to attend a missionary ordination, and had started on his return journey to Madras by land, but was taken ill and constrained to return. In his anxiety to get back to his work he took a passage in a small vessel, not very seaworthy at any time, and too deeply loaded. The day after she had sailed, a storm of unusual violence swept the coast. Many ships were lost, while others were dismasted or driven far out of their course; but of the *Favourite* not a vestige was ever found, or a ray of light thrown upon her fate or on that of her passenger.

He was ready to go. He was a man of ardent and exalted piety, beloved of many for his work's sake. His widow—who still lives—then in England for the recovery of her health, was many months before she could bring herself to accept the truth, so tragical in the uncertainty which surrounded it.

The Moffats now rejoined their companions at Bethelsdorp, but hindrances, so familiar to travellers in Africa, taxed even their well-trained patience. All the heavy baggage of the large missionary party, with an immense amount of public property, including a supply of Sechwana books, had been shipped in a slow-sailing vessel, whose appearance was looked for in vain for months. Seeing no chance of a forward movement for some time, Robert Moffat found vent for his restless energy in a journey on horseback to Kaffraria. He attended a meeting of ministers and missionaries on the way at Grahamstown, and then visited all the eastern stations of the London Missionary Society. He was glad to meet his old and valued friend John Brownlee, in whose company he had first sailed for Africa, and with whom he had kept up a steady intercourse by correspondence. It is much to be regretted that, owing to the destruction of Brownlee's papers in successive Kafir wars, none of Moffat's letters to him are obtainable. They were men of strong sympathy with each other, and Brownlee was amongst the natives of Kafirland very much what Moffat was in the interior of South Africa.

The following notice is from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Dugmore, and appeared in the "Cape Monthly Magazine" for September, 1876:

"The venerable John Brownlee has gone to his rest; but it will be long ere he is forgotten in King William's Town, where nearly the whole of his long missionary life was spent. I have his figure before me, almost gigantic in height, but losing an inch or two in his latter years as age bowed his herculean frame, with breadth of chest and shoulders proportionate, and an arm and hand the sinewy power of which it would be dangerous for most men to test if occasion had ever called it forth. Grave in deportment, as became a Scotch minister, yet hiding under his gravity a vast amount of blended information and intelligence. With the one drawback of his indistinct utterance, it was a treat to converse with him. When past personal travel, he showed himself abreast of the times on almost all subjects—political, literary, scientific, religious. Some branches of science, such as theology and botany, he had studied *con amore*. On great social questions he seemed quite at home. But his favourite theme was the relation of the world's progress to Christianity. On this I had the pleasure of hearing him dilate, with an amount of information and a degree of animation that surprised and delighted me, only a few weeks before the fatal stroke of paralysis which was the beginning of the end of his long and honourable career. I felt as though I had lost a father when I heard he was gone."

When at last the long-looked-for ship was heard of, it was from Table Bay, where she had put in to discharge some cargo and to

receive some more for the coast ports : and when in a calm and leisurely manner the *Agrippina* glided into Algoa Bay and cast anchor, that was by no means the end of the trial of patience. Except in perfectly fine weather, a heavy surf rolled in on the beach of what was an almost open roadstead. Days sometimes elapsed when no landing was effected, and Moffat's heart sank within him at the loss of precious time ; most of all when one night in a gale four ships parted their anchor and came ashore, and were utterly wrecked with some considerable loss of life. He paced the beach that night, his soul harrowed by scenes of death and destruction, longing for the day, to see whether the *Agrippina* still held to her moorings : and he was thankful to find that, if slow, she was at least sure.

At last the start was made, and the old familiar scene presented itself : the long train of ox waggons, winding over hill and down dale, sticking fast in muddy fords, and making fifteen or twenty miles a day. The labour had been immense of getting everything away, but it was going home and going back to a well-loved work. At Graaff Reinett the missionary band was welcomed and cheered on its way by the venerable and apostolic Murrays, husband and wife likeminded, who have always given a warm and practical support to missionary undertakings, and have been the means of establishing the missionary spirit in their own church in South Africa.

Moffat and his companions crossed the Orange River on a pont or floating bridge, the first of its kind that had regularly plied ; though, as will be remembered, Mary Moffat had some years earlier been floated across the same river, and probably at the same spot, on an extemporized raft. It would then have been considered a wild and fantastic dream if a vision could have been presented of the splendid iron bridge which now spans the river, and is in actual railway communication not only with Port Elizabeth, but with Cape Town. Men can now travel in ease and comfort in fewer hours, what it would then have taken days of toilsome journeying to accomplish.

Another large stream, the Vaal River, had to be crossed, but this proved to be fordable. As the travellers drew near to it, they were delighted to meet David Livingstone. He had ridden from Kuruman, a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, to bid them welcome, and to tell them of the ample preparations that had been made for hastening them upon their way. From this point onwards they were met day by day by joyous friends, always bringing fresh teams of oxen. Their brother missionaries and the natives showed the like ardour and emulation, until, as

the party drew near to Kuruman, it seemed like a royal progress. As the last stage was reached, it was felt by all that they could not stop. The long cavalcade hurried on, until between two and three o'clock, just before the dawn, on the tenth of December, the Moffats found themselves once more in their own much-desired home, the scene of so many blessed labours in past years, and still to be the scene of many more in the years to come. Crowds were there to meet them even at that hour, and next day, and for many days after, people were coming from long distances round to look once more on the faces of those whom they were beginning to fear they should never see again. It was a wonderful change, which some at least could understand, and it showed that the work of the Lord had struck its roots deep into the heart of the people.

Writing to the Directors in February, 1844, Moffat says :

“I assure you it is with emotions of a very peculiar description that I take the pen for the first time to address you on the return of myself and family to the scene of our labours, after an absence of more than five years. I cannot help reviewing the past, and the multitude of events which have transpired since the day we bade farewell to the brethren and the church here, and the unforeseen providence which guided our steps into an unthought-of course, conducting us through scenes the mind had never contemplated, introducing us to the society and communion of the excellent of the earth in our own native isle, preserving our health amidst many labours, and crowning us with lovingkindness and tender mercies, bringing us back again to the people of our charge, from whom we received a universal and joyous welcome.

“I am again seated where I was wont to sit when writing to the Directors in bygone years, and where I spent so many days and months with the most intense anxiety in the translation of the Word of Divine Truth into the Sechwana language. The well-known sound of the church-going bell in the Kuruman vale again salutes the ear. The substantial chapel and the mission-houses, and the tall Babylonian willows waving in the breeze, the swallows skimming aloft, having returned from the warm tropics, the buzz of a hundred infant-school children at this moment pouring out for a minute's play, some chanting over again what they have just been singing, others romping and running about on the greensward—are sights and sounds pleasant and melodious to eye and ear. . . .

“When we reached Philippolis we were kindly received by Mrs. Wright and Mr. Thompson. We had not proceeded much farther when we were met by Mr. Livingstone on horseback. Mr. Edwards had accompanied him half way, but not being able to procure a horse had returned. Such a visitant as Mr. Livingstone in the wide wilderness was to us a most refreshing circumstance. Few can conceive of the hallowed feeling his presence produced, direct from the

station and people to whom all our fondest affections were bending. We were looking forward hourly with longing expectation of some one to tell us how it fared with the mission, to which Mrs. Moffat and myself felt more tenderly attached than ever. The deeply interesting conversations we had on the affairs of the Bechwana Mission cheered us on our journey through the desert. To our great joy, on reaching the banks of the Vaal River we found it fordable. Here we spent a delightful Sabbath, opportunities having been afforded to address a goodly number of Bechwanas from a neighbouring village. A seasonable supply of oxen, sent by Mr. Bartlett and Captain Kok, of Campbell, enabled us to get all safely and expeditiously through the river. On the 11th of December we were met by many of our people from the station and an abundant supply of fresh oxen, and on the 13th we were once more seated in our own dwelling at the Kuruman.

“Our souls were overwhelmed with all the changing scenes through which we had passed. We had been the recipients of innumerable favours and mercies poured out on us from the Divine hand. Thus laden with benefits, all unworthy as we were, still one thing lacked. It was once more to be with the people who had been for many long years the objects of our most anxious solicitude, again to gaze on their well-known faces, and to mingle with them once more in their solemn feasts, and to tell them again the tale of Divine love. This also has been abundantly realized.

“For many successive weeks the station continued to be a scene of bustle from the influx of strangers and believers from the different out-stations, so that we felt somewhat as we had done among the exciting scenes we had witnessed in England. Among our visitors were every branch of the Batlaping ruling family, and several subordinate chiefs. Mothibi came, stooping with age, with his wife, on whose brow the shades of life's evening were spreading. Mothibi had visited us prior to our departure for England, and had again been to Kuruman in our absence, when he was baptized; but for a period of sixteen years Mahuto, his wife, had never been. After the death of Peelo, her first-born, and the promising heir of the chieftainship, her mind, in accordance with the habits of the natives, revolted at the idea of living in a place where the object of her fondest hopes had been suddenly consigned to a premature grave. This, with a succession of afflictions and losses caused by the devastating inroads of the western marauders, had inscribed ‘Marah’ on everything connected with the Kuruman River. It was therefore to us a deeply affecting scene to witness this aged couple alight from their waggon, and with their sons and daughters enter our house and testify, with a kind of ecstasy of feeling, their thanks to God for having brought us back, and permitted us to see each other in the flesh.

“My venerated and valued brother Hamilton, though far from being what he once was in physical strength, which has greatly diminished since we left in 1838, is, with delight renewed by our return, devoting with unabated fervour his remaining energies to the blessed cause in which he has been so long and so successfully engaged. Mr. Ashton has taken the charge of the day school, and Mary, our eldest daughter, that of the infant school.”

The mission being now largely reinforced, it was arranged that the Rosses should go to Taung, about a hundred miles due east of Kuruman, where Mahura, a brother of Mothibi, had settled with a part of the tribe. Edwards and Livingstone were to commence work among the Bakhatla, another Bechwana tribe two hundred miles to the north-east. Inglis was to go to the same neighbourhood, and Ashton was to remain at Kuruman.

Edwards and Livingstone settled down in the valley of Mabotsa. A large native town stretched along under a range of hills; but, with the exception of such land as had been cleared for cultivation, the primeval forest filled the neighbouring glens, and these were the haunts of lions, which had hitherto had it all their own way, from the absence of guns among the natives. The missionaries found themselves exposed to nightly attacks, which worried and harassed their cattle, and deprived them of rest. One day, after an unusually bold and destructive attack on an outpost, a hunt was called. Livingstone joined the party, and, as is well known from his own graphic story, got left in the lurch, and found himself literally in the jaws of the furious beast, and was only rescued with a broken and mangled arm by the devotion of his servant Mebalwe, who himself got severely bitten.

Whilst recovering his strength, and waiting for the healing of his arm, Livingstone visited the Kuruman. Recent events seem to have altered his views on matrimony: at all events he won the heart of Mary, the eldest daughter of the house, and in due time they were married. This circumstance drew closer the tie which already held him to Moffat. They were men of congenial spirit, and through many long years they kept an unshaken friendship far closer than the ordinary fellow-feeling of brother missionaries. Livingstone returned to Mabotsa, but only to make preparations for removal to Chonwane, to take up his abode with Sechele, chief of the Bakwena. The Edwardses were absent in the Colony, and whilst Livingstone went to build a house at Chonwane his wife would find herself lonely. In view of this her sister Ann went to cheer her solitude. This involved a journey for about two hundred miles through a wild country, with two or three native attendants only. Danger from man there was none. Even heathen Bechwanas were so far amenable to the Christian influences which had been permeating the country that any member of the Mission families, or indeed any European, would have been as safe as he would have been in London, if not safer; but the country swarmed with lions. The young girl, with her maid and a couple of native waggon-boys, made the journey to Mabotsa in peace. After a few months the Livingstones were all

ready for removal to Chonwane, and as they left for the north their sister started for the south. Towards the close of the second day's journey it was discovered that something belonging to the native servants had been dropped. One of the men, with a companion, took the only serviceable gun in the waggon and started back to look for it. The approach of sunset warned the driver, the only man left with the waggon, to halt ; which he did on the open plain near a few bushes. The oxen had been unyoked, and were grazing close to the waggon ; a fire had been lighted and the kettle put on, and the tired travellers were sitting in the peaceful twilight. A sudden rush was heard, the oxen galloped past the waggon and right away, except one, which fell, with a lion on his back, not fifty yards from where Miss Moffat was sitting. It did not take her long, with her maid, to jump into the waggon, where the man also took refuge. Darkness closed in, and for hours the lion could be heard tearing and crunching to his heart's content, whilst the weaponless wights in the waggon had to sit and listen, and wonder what had become of the other oxen, and of the men who were out, without even the shelter they enjoyed. After what seemed to them a good many hours, the lion finished his meal, gave a contented sort of roar, and went away. As daylight drew on it became plain that he was either back again, or that another had taken his place ; but as the sun rose he left, not liking to be so near the waggon in broad daylight. The question now was, What is to be done ? The nearest water was ten miles farther on, whilst that they had left the previous morning was quite twenty miles away, at a Bechwana village. There was nothing for it but to walk back again. They did so, the females expecting that out of every bush would dash another of their dreaded enemies. They met the two men coming on. They, too, had been beset by a lion, and had spent the night in a tree. They reached the place in safety—hungry, thirsty, and footsore ; were kindly received and entertained by the natives, and continued their journey next day to Mabotsa, where they found the remainder of their oxen. The waggon was brought back again, and a fresh start made for the Kuruman.

CHAPTER XXV.

MARY MOFFAT VISITS CHONWANE.

1844-1847.

FOR some years after the return from England the work went on with but little interruption. The station had become the centre of a large area of activity. Besides Edwards, Inglis, and Livingstone northwards, and Ross at Taung, Helmore was at Lekatlong, in the neighbourhood of what are now the Diamond Fields. To all these Kuruman was the mother station, from which were drawn supplies of books and of many other useful things. The venerable Hamilton, who had seen the commencement of the Bechwana Mission in 1816, was still able to render some aid, where all were workers. The Moffats and Ashtons were fully employed, both husbands and wives. Moffat's chief work was translation, and in this Ashton was able to render him much critical assistance, besides relieving him almost entirely of the duties of the printing office. But these represented only a small part of the labours, manual and mental, which filled up the day's work. The missionaries were surrounded by a people just struggling into light out of darkness, dimly grasping the value of civilization, but needing much help and guidance. The native converts were willing enough to assist, but had themselves to be taught how to do so. There were the usual disappointments to which all missionaries at home and abroad are accustomed. Again and again was the stone brought with labour near the top of the hill, only to roll down again to the bottom; and the toil had to be begun over again. When encouragement came it was thankfully received; but in their prosperous times the Moffats never forgot what years of effort and suffering had first been necessary.

Besides direct mission work there was much to be done of a subsidiary character. Dwelling-houses had to be enlarged and

new schoolrooms built. The natives were now advanced enough to give good help, but the chief workmen were still the missionaries themselves. There was no allowance for the payment of artizans, and they must put their own hands to the work. What necessary cost was involved in the new schoolrooms was met by the opening of a kind of amateur shop by the missionaries' wives, in which was sold a quantity of clothing which had been given for the purposes of the mission by working associations in England. No doubt this supplied another shaft to those who were always ready to say that missionaries were only traders in disguise. There was no disguise about it—the trade was there, but its object was no private gain, but to make the resources placed in the hands of the missionaries go as far as possible towards the furtherance of the gospel.

In the year 1845 Robert Moffat had a merciful deliverance from what might have been a great calamity. He had just set up a new corn-mill, and whilst seeing to its being properly started unwarily stretched his arm over two cog-wheels. In a moment the shirt-sleeve, and with it the arm, was drawn in. Happily the mill was stopped in time, but an immense gaping wound, six inches in length, with torn edges, was the result; and for many weeks the strong man was laid aside. It pleased God to give such a recovery as might at one time have seemed well-nigh impossible.

The public services were, of course, in the Sechwana language. Once a week the missionary families met for an English devotional meeting. It was also a sort of custom that as the sun went down there should be a short truce from work every evening. A certain eminence at the back of the station became, by common consent, the meeting-place. There the missionary fathers of the hamlet would be found, each sitting on his accustomed stone. Before them lay the broad valley, once a reedy morass, now reclaimed and partitioned out into garden lands: its margin fringed with long water-courses, overhung with grey willows and the dark-green syringa. On the low ground bordering the valley stood the church, with its attendant mission-houses and schools, and on the heights were perched the native villages, for the most part composed of round, conical huts, not unlike corn-stacks at a distance, with some more ambitious attempts at house-building in the shape of semi-European cottages. Eastward stretched a grassy plain, bounded by the horizon and westward a similar plain, across which, about five miles distant, was a range of low hills. Down to the right, in a bushy dell, was the little burying-ground, marked by a few trees.

It was a peaceful half-hour during which to watch the sunset. The light-blue smoke would be rising on the still air, the cattle just come in settling down in their various kraals; the Bechwana boys would be taking an evening canter on the backs of their young oxen, and the older men, as they looked upon the tranquil scene, would often recall the former years when the Kuruman valley was the gloomy and dreaded haunt of the wild Bushmen, with their poisoned arrows, and when the whole land was full of war and rapine.

In 1846 Mary Moffat started on a visit to the Livingstones at Chonwane. It added another to the list of her long and adventurous journeys alone, but her mother-heart was anxious about the daughter now enduring sickness and hardship in a new mission. She would not take away her husband from his work, so she availed herself of the escort of an accompanying native hunting party, and started with her three younger children.

Mary Moffat to her Husband.

“MARETSANE, Sept. 3, 1846.

“We have kept plodding on since eight o'clock on Monday morning, averaging seven or eight hours a day; the stages agreeing pretty well with your memorandum—of which I am glad, as I do not feel so utterly strange on the road. Tell Ann I did not sleep well last night, and my thoughts fixed on her as a theme of meditation. I could not but contemplate her alone in this desert, and I thought till I was melancholy, and then again till my heart was filled with joy and thankfulness that she was brought safely amongst us. I am very glad of Boey's company, although it is, like many other good things in this world, attended with its evils. I should indeed have felt very solitary with my lone waggon, with ignorant people, but he is so completely at home in this field that one feels quite easy. We do not stop at nights by the waters, but come to them at midday, and then leave about three or four o'clock. We cannot but be constantly on the outlook for lions, as we come on their spoor every day, and the people sometimes hear their roar. Just before overspanning to-day Boey, being on horseback looking for water, met with a majestic one, which stood still and looked at him. He tried to frighten him, but he stood his ground, when Boey thought it was time to send a ball into him, which broke his leg, by which he is disabled from paying us a visit. We have very much to be thankful for, never even having had a fright. Till to-day we have always had water at the places where it is usual. Here we have had to dig for it. The country is indeed very dry. Game is tolerably plentiful. We got beautiful water yesterday in the sandy bed of the Sitlagole River. I regretted not having your book with me, to refresh my memory as to past events in these localities with the Barolong and Mantatees, not excepting your own doings. I had no idea that Sitlagole had ever had such a river.”

"CHONWANE, *Sept.* 15, 1846.

"Through the goodness of our heavenly Father we arrived here on the 10th, and found all well. Having written some days before from the Maretsane, I had not had leisure to write again, Sunday having been a most disagreeable day, spent at a place called Raphutse, a good stage from Mabotsa. At the Maretsane it was so dry that our oxen could not drink. We could have got water by digging at some considerable distance from the outspan place, but there being so many indications of the district being greatly infested with lions, our party having wounded two, I strongly advised them to rather face thirst than an encounter nocturnally with these formidable animals. In this I was warmly seconded by Martinus, and so we spanned in an hour before sunset, and rode about two hours. Here we were allowed to rest quietly, though they were heard in every direction at a distance.

"We did not come on your old route to the Maretsane, but farther west, which made our stage only five hours to Lotlakane, where we got water, though at some distance from the road; and again started about four o'clock, and arrived at Molopo about dusk, and found the river flowing, which surprised the people, on account of the prevailing drought. We had everywhere seen abundance of game, and Boey and his friends got plenty of flesh. The children also were much pleased with the variety of animals they were privileged to see; and Boey was very obliging in bringing them before us whenever it was practicable. I had just gone to bed when a troop of buffaloes came to the river to drink. One of them was quickly despatched, and this was an additional treat for the children next morning to see his huge head.

"I was perfectly enraptured on entering the first valley (Maanwane) of the Bakhatla: and it being necessary for me to get out of the waggon on account of the rugged path, I could examine the shrubs to my great delight. It seemed altogether another region of the world. We passed through it about sunset, and were anxiously straining our eyes to get a sight of the station, when I found we had still to go through a small and romantic kloof, forming a passage between the two valleys, and we had to cross the stream two or three times. In one of these fords Boey's waggon stuck fast, and all efforts to extricate it were vain. They struggled hard till darkness put an end to the attempt for the time, and Boey sent me word that we were now so near that I must drive on and leave them. This I refused to do. He had behaved politely to me all the way; besides the conviction that our people ought to do their best to help our fellow-travellers, who had broken their disselboom.

"I had had a long walk up and down the hill, and was greatly excited by everything about me, and felt terribly nervous and weak, and was glad to lay down my head to rest in that beautiful kloof. Had I not been so tired I would have sat till midnight, that the moon might shed additional beauty on the scenery.

"As soon as the moon rose the men returned to their work at Boey's waggon, unloading and pulling it out, and mending the boom. We

had a good breakfast, a fine eland steak shot the day before, and rode into Mabotsa about ten o'clock."

After a day spent with the Edwardses at Mabotsa, she accomplished the remaining thirty miles to Chonwane, the station of Livingstone; where her presence, as much as the supplies she had brought with her, soon wrought a change and recruited the health and spirits which had run low. It was a great delight to her to see the first steps in the planting of Christianity among a heathen tribe, and reminded her of the early days of the Kuruman. She never forgot these, and ever regarded it as a sacred duty to strengthen the hands of those who passed on to the interior.

Early in 1847 a general meeting of those engaged in the Bechwana Mission was held at Lekatlong. On his way back to his station, Moffat visited some of the Batlaping villages along the Kolong River. The advance which had taken place of late years was striking. A severe contest was going on between heathenism and Christianity. A little company of believers had, however, been gathered in each place, and were ministered to by native teachers, who had spent a few months in training at Kuruman. These people were feeling the pressure of the surrounding heathenism, and were proposing, in many instances, to remove to Kuruman. From this step they were dissuaded by the missionary, who pointed out to them the value of their presence and testimony to the gospel in the midst of a heathen community. The test of their sincerity has no doubt been severe, and has led to many relapses; but greater reliance can be placed on those who remain firm in the midst of some of the more heathen villages in isolated situations, than on those who, under the wing of the missionaries at headquarters, have every inducement to maintain their profession.

Whilst Robert Moffat was thus engaged, death had entered his Scottish home; his father having passed away after only a few days' illness. He had been for fifty years an officer of the Government in the customs, and had just retired on pension. His son Richard, who had never left his parents, and continued to reside with his mother until her death, writes thus:

"I do think that he had been rather falling off for some time past, though he always looked so fresh in the face, and his spirits were so buoyant in the presence of friends. I saw that in doing some little things in the garden he was more easily fatigued than formerly, though I attributed it entirely to the weakness of one at his age—upwards of

seventy-nine, mother's age exceeding his by some ten months. She is eighty, past 7th of March.

"Our father enjoyed his pension one month only, so that he has not been a burden on the country. We will miss him much. He was always looking out and putting things to rights, and being a man of peace was a cementer of differences when any arose; and it grieved him to see those who ought to dwell together in unity, snarling and disagreeing with one another."

"KURUMAN, *Sept. 11, 1847.*

"MY DEAR AND WIDOWED MOTHER,—It is with feelings of the deepest sympathy I thus address you. By a letter just come to hand from Helen I learn this melancholy intelligence. How deeply you must feel the sudden stroke in thus being severed, after a union of nearly sixty years, from him who was the husband of your youth. Had it been the announcement of your own departure I should have felt less, for you seemed to be like one sipping at Jordan's stream for several bygone years; and you have lived to see my beloved father laid in the silent grave, gone before you to the abodes of the redeemed. Though I cannot restrain my tears, I will not, I cannot complain. How gracious has our heavenly Father been to us, your children, in sparing you to us so long, and in circumstances, too, which have called on us loudly to give thanks to Him who appoints the bounds of our habitation. Mother, dear mother, your many prayers have been heard. Well do I remember the time when prayer was called for. Wherever I am I never forget how much I owe to your prayers. The first dawn of reflection respecting my soul commenced with hearing you pray. Oh may He who has been your refuge continue to be your shield and stay; may He wipe away the falling tear and heal the wound that His hand has made! It is a Father's hand. I frequently remember the last words of your now sainted father, 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend.' There are many links which hold us down to earth. One is snapped, and we know not how soon another and another.

"I still thank my indulgent God that I was, with my family, permitted to see you once more after twenty-three years' absence. This was a great favour. I never during that long period expressed a wish that it should be so, for I was the bond-servant of the perishing heathen for Christ's sake, but He whom we served in the gospel of His Son brought it about in His own good time."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MARY MOFFAT JOURNEYS TO THE CAPE.

1847-1849.

IN 1847 the question of education for the younger children again came to the front. The parents had made up their minds that action could no longer be delayed, and that the children must go, at least, as far as the Cape. The father could not leave his work, so the mother had to go alone. She started on the second of August with the three children, a son and two daughters. Her attendants were four Bechwana men and a maid. An elder daughter remained at home to keep house for her father and for the now aged Hamilton. Robert Moffat accompanied the travellers a day's journey on their way, and then bid them a long farewell. Two of the children he did not see again for eleven years.

The journey to Cape Town, extending over a period of two months, had still to be made in the slow ox-waggon; but to the mother the time seemed all too short. She felt that it was the last she would ever have with her young children about her. Her loving heart never got hardened to these partings one of the severest crosses incident to the missionary calling. The children, too, were not so young that they could not feel the shadow of the impending change. During those few weeks of lonely wilderness life, the members of the little group were all in all to each other. There was a pathetic tenderness in the interest which the mother took in the wild flowers and curious pebbles which the children gathered on the hill-sides and in the stony river-beds; and the gentle and homely counsels and warnings then given are not forgotten even now, nearly forty years after.

The journey was made without accident or hindrance. In the homesteads of the farmers and in the villages along the route all was goodwill. Railways, express coaches, and hotels are no

doubt a great improvement ; but the old-fashioned hospitality of those days is a pleasant thing to remember, for all that. The Cape was reached at last, and Mary Moffat took up her abode at Claremont, and found her trusty friend Mr. Mathew an invaluable assistance in the many cares and anxieties of her position.

She was confronted at the outset with a great disappointment and perplexity. Her elder son Robert, who had been left in England for his education, and who his parents had hoped would go through a course of study at Glasgow, preparatory to coming out as a missionary, had broken down in health, and been driven to return in all haste to the Cape. His coming out under these circumstances led to his employment under Government in the Survey Department. He always remained a firm and true friend of the natives, and was subsequently of great service to the Bechwana Mission in a commercial capacity ; but anything short of his entire consecration to direct missionary work failed to satisfy his parents, with their intense devotedness to a cause to which it was their desire to feel that they had given not only themselves, but their children as well.

The anxieties involved in his affairs, and in a partial change of plan with regard to the younger children, were very great. Mary Moffat had to act upon her own responsibility. Postal communication went as far as Colesberg, and no farther. The remaining two hundred and fifty miles was bridged by casual opportunities, and the attention of agents, more or less prompt, at certain points on the route. Consultation with the father at Kuruman was almost out of the question. A letter, to which a special answer was required, was despatched, with the request to an agent at Colesberg that it might be forwarded with all haste. It took three months in transit, which was rather longer than usual.

A favourable opportunity presenting itself, she put her two little girls on board a ship, under the care of a minister and his wife returning home from the Cape. The boy was placed at school in Cape Town for a time. In the month of March, 1848, she had her waggon packed, and with her native servants addressed herself to her long and solitary journey back to the Kuruman.

Mary Moffat to her Father.

"ON THE WAY TO THE KURUMAN IN THE KARROO,

" *March 17, 1848.*

" MY DEAR OLD FATHER,—If your thread of life is lengthened till you receive this, I am sure you will forgive me the great crime of which I have been guilty—that of having been five months in Cape Town and never writing to you. Believe me, honoured parent, you

were not forgotten ; but the desire of writing to you fully and circumstantially caused me to delay thus shamefully. The fact was, from the day of my arrival I was the subject of perplexity and anxiety. Having been led to expect our dear boy about the end of October, I waited till he should arrive. Besides which I had come for the express object of sending John to England, but was immediately deterred from doing so until I should again hear from his father, as there appeared to me some temerity in so doing after his brother's health had failed, who was always robust.

“ Before I left home, my husband and Livingstone had been pressing on my attention very closely the propriety of sending the two little girls. My heart rebelled for some time, and I felt the thing impossible ; but again, on considering that there was a school for them at comparatively small expense, that owing to my constantly declining strength they could not have a suitable education at home, and then the journey I was about to take on John's account would involve an expense which could not be incurred again for many years to come, I began to consider the matter in all its bearings. I saw that should I be called to leave them, my death-bed would be embittered by the consideration that they might have been placed in circumstances more favourable to a proper training for usefulness in the Church and in the world, but for the victory my feelings had got over my judgment. I felt that in being thus weak I should be unjust to them, and thus yielded the point. When Robert and I parted, it was with this understanding distinctly, that if I met with favourable protection for them for the voyage they should go : if not, I was to bring them back again. This was to be the finger of God pointing the way, and in the meantime the matter was to be spread before the Lord continually, with all due submission to what appeared to be His will. . . .

“ Just at the time that a decision on my part was imperative, the Rev. J. Crombie Brown resolved on going home, and very kindly offered to take charge of my children. This was more than I looked for—people so kind, so pious, and having children of their own about the same age. How could I doubt ! Though my heart was heaving with anguish, I joyfully and thankfully acceded forthwith, and set about preparation in good earnest. This was about the end of January. On the 10th of February they embarked, and after stopping the night on board, I tore myself from my darlings to return to my desolate lodgings to contemplate my solitary journey, and to go to my husband and home childless. O my dear father, when I caused your breast to heave convulsively till the sobs checked your utterance in Britannia Row, Islington, in August, 1819, it was but the commencement of a series of such separations to the present time ; or, I should rather have said on the 6th of August, at Dukinfield Nursery, when I last hung on the neck of my own dear mother. What scenes have we not passed through since that memorable day ! But have we, my dear father, ever had cause to regret these sacrifices which have been made for the cause of God ? No ! He has richly fulfilled His promises to us, and even where His steps have been involved in mystery so that we cannot trace Him, we have the assurance that ‘ all

things work together for good to those who love God, and are the called according to His purpose.'

"But to return to my narrative. Having such a charming opportunity, I regretted losing it for John, in case his father should blame me. I was just on the point of sending him, too, but could not see my way clear, and was therefore in the depths of perplexity when good Mr. Steedman, who once before delivered us out of a dilemma, came in and said, 'Do not send him till you hear from his father: and then, should he wish it, he shall go with us about the end of March.' I was thus relieved in my extremity only three days before the embarkation, and three days after got a letter fully sanctioning his remaining in Cape Town. Though I feel excessively—for my nerves have got a great shock—my judgment still approves what has been done after five weeks have passed. We have mothers in Israel in England, but not fathers, in this day of rapid movements in mind and matter. Every man has too much to attend to to have leisure to exercise a fatherly control over other people's children. With the ladies it is different, there being so many single who have mixed with their benevolence so large a share of maternity. I have confidence that our beloved friends the Eisdells will not lose sight of my lambkins. They have most generously and nobly taken upon themselves much care and anxiety, and labour too, for the elder ones, and I have dared again to presume on their kindness, for it is the element in which they live. . . .

"The latest news from the station was good: all well in the beginning of January. Ann earning a splendid reputation as housekeeper and infant-school mistress combined. The prophecies of Isaiah have been printed since I left, and the 'Pilgrim' was on the way to be finished. This is some consolation to me that though I had to pass through so much alone, something so important has been done, which could not have been done had my husband come himself. I have never had the powers of mind and body more taxed as a mother than during the last two years. The Livingstones came out last year, half withered away with fatigue and privation. I laboured hard to fetch up their strength and sent Mary back with her children like roses. But the trouble I spent over them was at the expense of my own little ones, who during those months had very little of my attention. This I endeavoured to make up to them on my journey to the Cape. While I have been there they have been the all-engrossing subject; nor have I dared to indulge in reading or writing lest I should forget what related to them. If I am now allowed to return to the station, I hope to serve the mission and my husband with renewed vigour for a while.

"In his last letter he tells me one had come to hand from you, and gives me the contents. It is a cause of thankfulness to us both to see you so composed and collected, and so thankful for the mercies you enjoy. Your experience reminds me of a sweet verse of the late Charles Wesley composed when very old. I cannot repeat it, but it begins, 'In age and feebleness extreme.' It is to be found in Roby's Selection, and mine having disappeared, I have not read it for many years. I am sure it would be sweet to you. Give my warmest love to

the dear Sheldons. May our Lord and Master richly reward them for all their kindness to you. They have indeed strengthened my hands and comforted my heart in their attentions to you, for I esteem it one of my chief mercies that you are so comfortable in your latter end. . . .

"I must now close, my dear father, which always makes me sad from the conviction that I may never have opportunity to address you again. But, my dear father, we shall soon meet for all that ; and

' There on a green and flowery mount
Our weary souls shall sit,
And with transporting joy recount
The labours of our feet.'

"I have written this on my first leisure hours in the desert, while much fatigued. Adieu, dear and venerable parent.—Your ever affectionate daughter."

" SOUTH BANK OF THE ORANGE RIVER,

" April 21, 1848.

"MY DEAR ROBERT,—Through the tender mercies of God, here am I, to the great joy of my heart ; for though such a formidable barrier as this swollen river lies between me and my beloved home, I now feel that I only want this luxury, to know that all is well, to make me quite happy. It appears that patience must be tried on this journey ; but as I cannot blame myself for having lingered one single night when we might have gone on, I can now be satisfied to wait the Lord's time. He has led me and guided me all through, and when I am tempted to think some awful trial may await me at my journey's end, I think of the argument used by Manoah's wife with her husband, and thus my fears are allayed. The 10th of January is my last date from you, so that I am really in the dark as to what may have transpired, for here I can hear nothing. I did indulge a hope that you might have got some of my letters, and that I might meet you somewhere hereabouts. I cannot recollect whether your meeting at Griqua Town is in the first week in May or after the first Sabbath, but I have resolved to write and beg of Mr. Solomon to get this conveyed to you as quickly as possible, as it may influence your movements.

We arrived here last night in a heavy thunderstorm, after having spanned out at midday because we could get no further, the waggon have stuck fast in a sand-bank, and there, with the front to the wind, I was some hours in showers of sand. To-day has been dark and looming, and again this afternoon a heavy storm. Indeed, I think I have not seen such a sky since I was on the line—so tropical. It is evidently the breaking of the season, and I cannot guess whether it will affect the river or not, for the clouds and rain are everywhere about. This moment we have had a heavy hailstorm from the west, but I must resume, having the prospect of a man swimming over to-morrow, and cannot let it slip. I have only one candle left, and if I use it to-night must do without afterwards. On Monday I did hope to have taken my cup of coffee with the Solomons this evening, or at

latest to-morrow. The people say that the water will require a fortnight to run off, but I cannot believe it. They say also that it is at least four stages to where the boat is, below the junction. I would rather not use the boat if it can be avoided. . . .

"I should think you will have heard by this time that I left the Cape on the 6th of March, arrived at Beaufort West on the 1st of April, have had to sing of mercy unmingled, though we have had an ample share of what is disagreeable on an Africian journey: a broken axle, heavy thunderstorms, and much rain from the other side of the Gamka to this moment, and consequently oxen with sore feet and sore necks; quagmires in abundance: sometimes we were stuck in them for three or four hours; one night we slept in one. But out of all our troubles the Lord has delivered us, and the voice of joy and praise ought to be heard amongst us. You will guess the people have had their miseries, but the tent has been a great comfort to them. . . .

"My dear Robert, I feel for you that I come alone, but the retrospect of the way in which we had been led is highly satisfactory to me. I cannot wish it undone. I trust our darlings are about this time reaching the land of their fathers, and have confidence that they will be blessed."

A few days later Mary Moffat writes to one of her children:

"On the 20th of April we saw the noble stream, to our heart's dismay, for we had now the gloomy prospect of long detention on the southern side. We arrived at the English ford and had rain and cold for four successive days. The Vortuins came over and sent my letter to papa to the care of Mr. Solomon, and he sent me back a budget which had been waiting my arrival, all from Kuruman. These cheered me in my solitude, and Mr. S. kindly advised me to go on to Read's ford, where he would meet me with swimmers, and, if practicable, get me over. We accordingly went thither, but alas! the water was too high, and there was no alternative but to go still higher up to the junction, and get Mr. Hughes to take us over with his boat, or wait papa's arrival—to the latter I was strongly inclined. On Saturday night late we arrived, not at the proper place, but not far from it, and when dressing in the morning the maid told me papa was on the other side! You may be sure I lost no time in letting him know where I was, and on Tuesday evening we had the happiness of saluting across the beautiful expanse of water at the junction. The boat had not arrived, and papa, having a severe cold, dared not to swim, so that after ascertaining that all was well, we retired to our respective waggons for the night. In the morning we had another salute, and then papa and Mr. Hughes set off to meet and hasten the boat, which came about noon, when we had soon a joyful and sorrowful meeting: joy, because of all the goodness and mercy of God to the whole family during our separation, and sorrow, or rather tender regret, for the absence of the three younger children. Yes, it was trying for papa to see me alone, with not one little prattler. But these feelings were quickly swallowed up in thankfulness and praise.

“Early next morning they commenced operations. Edward Hughes was chief boatman, and all was through before sunset, and then the rain commenced, so that we had hard work to get everything under cover. We came here to Griqua Town in two days, and are awaiting the meeting of Committee, after which we hope to reach our beloved home on the 19th.”

For two or three years after Mary Moffat's return from the Cape, little took place out of the ordinary routine. Moffat's chief energies were concentrated on the work of translation. During his wife's absence the prophecies of Isaiah were not only translated, but put through the press. Bunyan's "Pilgrim" was now also published in Sechwana, and additional parts of the Old Testament were being taken in hand. As the unwearied translator remarks in one of his letters, each portion of the Scriptures as it came out seemed immediately to call for some additional portion to help in its explanation. Meanwhile Ashton, besides translating "Line upon Line," assisted his colleague in revision and carried on the press-work; the two missionaries dividing between them the ordinary duties of the station, with its home church, and as the centre of a large district of out-stations. The venerable Hamilton, the father of the mission, was fast declining in strength, and could do little more than walk about, leaning on his patriarchal staff; but what little he could do was done with the old love which had kept him constant through cloud and sunshine, storm and calm, for more than thirty years.

Whilst at Kuruman all was peaceful and in a measure prosperous, clouds were gathering to the eastward, destined eventually to throw a dark shadow over the whole Bechwana Mission. The Dutch emigration from the Cape Colony, to which reference has already been made, had been steadily going on for some years. The Government had not thought fit to interfere with a movement which was a temporary solution of troublesome problems within the Colony itself. To those in power, who had no permanent stake or interest in the country, and to whom it was a sufficient object to get quietly through their own term of office, it was an advantage rather than otherwise to be rid of a few thousands of disaffected spirits, who might or might not have tangible grievances, but whom it seemed impossible to satisfy. What matter if these men pouring over the Colonial boundaries encroached upon the lands and rights of many native tribes? So it came to pass that as years went on the emigrant Boers had spread themselves over the whole of what is now the Orange Free State, and also a considerable part of Natal and the Transvaal. The course of the emigration was influenced by the character of the country, and took for the most

part a north-easterly direction. Kuruman, lying as it does well away westward, on the borders of the Kalahari desert, and in a comparatively dry country, though in itself an attractive spot, has thus escaped absorption even to this day.

Before the superior organization and the firearms of the white intruders the Bechwanas had to choose between exile or vassalage. It is an old and oft-told tale, and is only referred to because these events have had an important bearing on the progress and efficiency of the Bechwana Mission. They resulted in that enterprise, so far as the London Society is concerned, being hemmed in and confined to the tribes which skirt the desert, whose country was not sufficiently attractive to the Boers so long as the fertile regions to the north-east had not been fully taken into possession. In later years the German and Swiss missionaries have taken up the work in what is now the Transvaal, and are bravely coping with difficulties incident to a state of society in which their people are not regarded as being entitled to human or civil rights.

Livingstone had settled with the Bakwena of Sechele, about two hundred and fifty miles from Kuruman. They also lay on the very margin of the desert, but eastward from them the country was well wooded, well watered, and thickly populated; for the Bechwana tribes had returned to their old places after the departure northward of Mosilikatse and his Matebele. Livingstone regarded his station at Kolobeng simply as a basis of operations, and he was, by repeated visits to the eastern tribes, preparing the way for a large extension of missionary work in that direction. He had met with much encouragement, and a promising field for enterprise was opening among a people who seemed well disposed to the gospel, and whose language was already used in Moffat's translation of the Scriptures. Into all these projects the Moffats had entered with the greatest ardour, and they viewed with increasing alarm the tide of Boer emigration setting in from the Cape Colony.

In 1848 complications arose which led to a trial of strength between the forces of the Government and the emigrants beyond the Colonial border. Sir Harry Smith, then Governor at the Cape, concentrated his small force at Colesberg, suddenly crossed the Orange River, and in a short and sharp engagement put the Boers to flight. They never rallied, but scattered to their homesteads, and Sir Harry annexed the country, now the Orange Free State, but at that time the Orange River Sovereignty. Many of the Boers settled down quietly under British rule, but the more irreconcilable spirits crossed the Vaal and joined those who had already carved out for themselves a country in the territory of the Bechwana and Bapedi tribes. It soon became apparent to the

London missionaries that all hope of carrying on their work in that region was over ; and it became doubtful whether they would be allowed to retain even their existing stations. It was inconvenient to the Boers that there should be so near men who were able to give testimony to the civilized world of what was going on in those remote regions ; men who could be neither cajoled nor intimidated into silence. It is probable also that many Boers did actually believe in the charge they were so fond of bringing against missionaries, that they supplied the natives with ammunition, and incited them to armed resistance. Like many other falsehoods, it lived long enough to do its evil work before it died of its own absurdity.

Under these circumstances Livingstone, looking for an outlet for the expansion of the Bechwana Mission, turned his eyes northwards, and thus came about that series of explorations which absorbed the remainder of his life. Mary Moffat writes to one of her children in January, 1849 :

“ When I wrote to Mr. Mathew I told him that our fears about the Boers in the interior were given to the wind, that they were quite tamed, acknowledged the superior power of the English, and were all at once become very civil and quiet with the natives. This was our latest news, and so easy was Mr. Livingstone, that he was going to send Paulo to near Magalies Berg to Mokhatla forthwith. But, alas ! it appears they were only pausing to consider what they would do. Yesterday a letter came from Joseph Arend, who is on his way to Kolobeng or further if practicable. He found the people at Sitlagole all in commotion about the Boers, who, they say, are forcibly taking possession of all the fountains and fine lands of the Bahurutse and Bakhatla. Mosega and Poë are in their possession. The report runs that they first met opposition with stroking of the hand ; but now they have recourse to their guns, so that the natives are in despair. It is said that the Bakhatla country was all in an uproar. Now, though we always deduct from native reports till we hear from a missionary, this intelligence has made us very unhappy. We have many fears for our missions, and more for the poor natives. We can scarcely hope that all this is false, but shall be glad to find it so. If it be true we shall soon hear, and shall let you know by the first opportunity.”

Moffat's elder son, Robert, had been appointed, after the battle of Boomplaats and the annexation of the Orange River Sovereignty, as one of the officials in the new territory. The first years of his manhood and of his active service were spent among the Boers, with whom he thus became well acquainted. He was by no means ready to condemn them indiscriminately. Indeed, missionaries were disposed to think that he leaned too much to

their favour. In the light of the following quotation from a letter to his father this would hardly appear to have been the case. The opinions here expressed remained unchanged after a good many years' experience.

“*January, 1849.*”

“Since I last wrote you matters have been going on as usual. I have, for my part, been inspecting some hundred and ten farms in this district—not surveying, but pointing out beacons and settling disputes where such arise. I must say that I have had a very trying time of it. Among the farmers I have been treated with respect and kindness, so that I have no need to complain. But the Boer pride, obstinacy, and ignorant disaffection are enough to eat up the spirit of any one in the smallest degree devoted to their welfare. With all my arguments as to the new state of matters in this vast Colony, with all my appeals that they trek no more, with all my promises as an Afrikaner myself among them to bring their wants and feelings publicly before the governor and council of the land, they remain incredulous, fomenting fresh ingratitude and, it may be, new determinations. To my mind they are the most peculiar men under heaven. My mind has been so absorbed with the nature of their proceedings, measures for the amelioration of their condition, and dread of the far future, not only as it concerns them and their deluded families, but the fate of the unhappy thousands of aborigines, that I feel dejected. I have been collecting my thoughts, but I find the subject too great; for where will this trekking end? It will appear to you natural that I should be so excited on these subjects. It has been my lot to be placed alone, as an English official, in the extreme district, twice the size of any of the others, and, what is more, bordering on the very sphere of rebellion. Here is a tract of at least fifteen thousand square miles, watered on one side by some two hundred and fifty miles of the Vaal River and its tributaries—the Valsch, the Rhenoster, the Eland, and Liebenberg’s Vley. I am now presenting a report to headquarters, with a chart of the district, that there is still room for some seven hundred new farms of three thousand morgen each. This will appear almost incredible, but I am prepared to prove it. Out of three hundred cultivated farms, one hundred and fifty proprietors have trekked. Thus it may be said that there is room here for eight hundred and fifty additional Boer families, which is somewhat less than the total number beyond the Vaal. Is it not a lamentable fact, my father, that with such eligible lands in the immediate neighbourhood of the Colony so many should be prevailed on, by an ignorant pride and obstinacy, to trek into the wild jungle? Where is the great desideratum? Who is at fault? The Boers are not altogether so intractable. They have a measure of religious knowledge culled from the Bible and their itinerating predikants, but they have been degenerating for the last ten years, and if Government should not be more decisive, this land will yet have to deal with a white semi-barbarous herd, who, with a still prouder obstinacy, will resist all coercive measures.”

Mary Moffat to one of her children.

"March 2, 1849.

"Now I have some sad news to tell you, The Boers in the interior have written to the Committee of our missions here insisting on Mr. Livingstone's being immediately removed to the Colony, and that for ever! They add, if the Committee does not comply with this demand, they will carry it into force themselves. Their chief reason for requiring this to be done is, that though he knew that they had issued laws that no coloured person should possess a gun or a horse, he had failed to give them information of Sechele's having made large purchases in this way. The Boers' letter contains many palpable untruths. The brethren here have written to let them know that the subject will be brought before the Committee at its next meeting. The Bakwena seem inclined to fight for it. They say they must die at all events, for they know they must do so or give up their arms which they have struggled hard to procure, and which are now essential to their subsistence, for it is impossible for them to get game by the spear in a country overrun by well-armed Boers with abundance of powder. A famine is expected this year, as the drought has been excessive, and the crop of native grain has entirely failed. It is the fourth year of scarcity, but exceeds all the rest. Therefore they are right in saying they must die at any rate if deprived of their firearms. It is quite plain that this ill-will against the Sechele arises from the conviction that he is a superior man, who by his attainments threatens to leave them in the rear, and this is intolerable in a black man, a Kafir. Sechele is marked out for destruction, the first convert to Christianity in those regions, the firstfruits of the Bakwena Mission. We feel very disconsolate on account of present appearances, for without a direct interposition of Providence the mission will be broken up."

When Livingstone, in despair of being allowed to work eastward from Kolobeng, turned his thoughts to the north, the prospect was not attractive. The Kalahari Desert seemed to bar the way. Beyond the Bakwena lay the Bamangwato, in an isolated position. They could only be reached by crossing an almost waterless country for a hundred and twenty miles, and beyond them it was known that the country was if anything drier still. For some years, however, faint rumours had grown more distinct that there was a large lake far to the north. In 1849 Livingstone started, in company with two gentlemen who had visited the country for hunting purposes—Murray and Oswell. They were successful in reaching Lake Ngami, or, more correctly, Nghabe, found there another large tribe of Bechwanas, an offshoot of the Bamangwato, known as the Botauana, and discovered that north of the Kalahari desert was a land of rivers and of many and diverse populations.

From that time Livingstone was lost to the Bechwana Mission. He returned to Kolobeng, but it was with the determination to

revisit the lake in the following year. His travelling companions had been of the greatest assistance to him, and Oswell in particular, who was so in sympathy with him that he returned to the Cape only to make preparations for a more extended journey.

Meanwhile Moffat had occasion to pay a visit to the Bakwena country. The Boers were busy with disputes among themselves, and the western Bechwanas were for a time left in peace. Moffat's journey was for the purpose of accompanying a deputation from home which had come out to look into South African matters. The tour was an extended one. On their return from the interior the travellers visited Bloemfontein, the seat of government in the new territory. An endeavour was made to represent to the authorities the grave state of affairs in the interior, but to little purpose. An era of irresolution had commenced, and the outcome of it was that the Boers took courage, and found that they could act with impunity.

Mary Moffat to Mrs. Sheldon, of Manchester.

“ July 23, 1850.

“ The interior missions are in a sad state. The rebel Boers are thorns in their sides. The natives are grievously oppressed, deprived of the lands of their fathers, and driven hither and thither to the desert regions. Missionaries are forbidden to go eastward, and edicts are issued by the Boers to the different native chiefs commanding them ‘to prevent all English travellers and traders from penetrating beyond them, while they, if they refuse, will be accounted the enemies of the Boers.’

“ Mr. Frédox, a French missionary, started in March to go north-east to visit an interesting people in that quarter who have three times sent messengers to my husband seeking friendship. Mr. F. thought, as he was not an Englishman, he would meet with no opposition, but he has come home thoroughly convinced that it is not Englishmen, but the friends of the aborigines, who are to be expelled the country. He was allowed to travel among the Boers a fortnight, and was after all surrounded on a Sabbath morning by a host of Boers on foot and thirteen horsemen, all armed, demanding to know from whence he was, whither going, and what to do? On telling them his object he was strictly ordered to go no further, but to return to the place from whence he came. He got leave to stop for the day, till he should have written orders from Pretorius. These he received next morning, and then turned homeward with a sorrowful heart.

“ You will thus see to what trials and discouragements the missionaries are exposed. It may truly be said, ‘They labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought.’ The natives are confounded. They have always been led to believe that the English nation is

not only powerful, but benevolent and generous, and that they should now drive away their rebels to destroy them is a puzzle. It is calculated to produce a degree of scepticism as regards missionaries, especially as it has been judged proper and prudent for the latter, as men seeking the welfare of all mankind, to be conciliatory towards the Boers, hoping thus to prevent hostility. This is difficult for the poor barbarians to understand. Their minds are distracted ; nor do they pay attention to the instructions imparted. If some measures are not speedily adopted by our Government it seems likely that every mission in those regions will soon be broken up. We have not had darker prospects for twenty years than we have now. Mr. Livingstone seems inclined to go to the lake ; but if things continue as they are he will have to penetrate from the west coast."

CHAPTER XXVII.

DARK CLOUDS WITH A SILVER LINING.

1850.

LIVINGSTONE did not fail to carry out his project of again visiting the lake, and of extending his explorations to a considerable distance beyond. He had the company of his friend Mr. Oswell, who had endeared himself to the Livingstones and the Moffats. He was one of those whose influence was on the right side, calculated to give the natives a high esteem for the English character. On this expedition Livingstone had with him his wife and family, and the chief, Sechele, also accompanied him, not without the idea of moving eventually with his tribe to some of the regions newly opened up, so as to avoid the collision with the Boers which all felt was inevitable. The idea was never carried out. It would have been attended with insuperable difficulties.

On their return to Kolobeng the travellers were in a somewhat reduced condition, particularly Mary Livingstone and the children. Hearing this, her mother, ever on the alert, set off once more alone to carry succour and supplies, and as soon as convenient prevailed upon the Livingstones to return with her to the Kuruman and to recruit their exhausted strength. It was one of her greatest pleasures, and continued to be to the end, to feel that Kuruman was serving the purpose not only of a prosperous missionary station in itself, but of a basis of operations for those who were at work further into the interior. Many are those who have found its value in this respect.

In a letter to his friend, Dr. Bruce, of Newcastle, on the twentieth of March, 1851, Moffat says :

“We are getting on here as fast as we can in what we firmly believe is the work of God. We are instant in season and out of season in our public duties and in the work of translation, but the progress is slow,

very slow. Could I obtain a competent amanuensis it would greatly facilitate my progress in translation. The printing goes on at snails' pace, from the want of a sufficient quantity of type, and the want also of compositors on whom we can depend. One is taught, and perhaps he leaves to live with friends at a distance; another does not like the confinement; and as printing is only one section of the round of pressing duties which devolve on the missionary, it must frequently wait his time. Lately a new edition of Isaiah, Proverbs, and Preacher was turned off, but will not be bound up till the smaller Prophets are also printed. We have commenced the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy are ready. Numbers will be comparatively light work. Translation I feel to be hard work, and I have my fears that my head will not stand till the whole is completed; but it is comforting to know that God will carry on His work as well without as with me.

"The Livingstones were some months with us, and have returned improved in health. It is probable that he will visit the lake, or rather Sebetoane, the ensuing winter, accompanied by Mr. Oswell.

"Although a war with the Kafirs has been raging in the Colony for nearly three months, it is only within these few days that we have received papers giving us an account. Opportunities between the nearest post office at Colesberg, two hundred and fifty miles away, and this are sometimes few and far between, and it is not improbable that you hear now that a line of steamers has been established sooner than we do here of the war and of the real state of the frontier. There can be no doubt but in the end it will go wofully with the Kafirs and the Hottentots, who have rebelled."

Mary Moffat to her Father.

"June 7, 1851.

"For some time past my conscience has been burdened for not writing to you or to Mrs. Sheldon, but I have deferred so long that now you must be first by all means. When I think of your extreme age, and how frequently you have of late been unwell, I am ashamed to seem to neglect you so; but you would readily excuse me if you knew how difficult it is for me to get a quiet hour, and my head has long been so weak that when disturbed my ideas leave me. I miss Ann very much in this respect, as she used to take charge of my little affairs entirely when I wished a day for writing. In this country, if the mistress of a house abstracts herself from domestic affairs, all hands seem to hold up—they seem as if they could not go on without propelling. It is just so with the men outside, which Robert feels very annoying; for though we have not the same work as in former years, having now only our buildings to keep in repair, yet we must farm and garden to keep our household in food, for now we cannot be snug as people can in England, where everything can be purchased. How gladly would we retire to some little cot with one servant, but it seems that we must drudge on to the end of life with such work.

"Robert is now more closely engaged at translation than at any

former period, and he would fain let everything of a secular kind alone, and purchase for our wants ; but this is so precarious in this dry country that it seems a pity not to use our fine garden, besides which it is certainly conducive to his health, however irksome he may feel it at the time, and chiefly on this account I persuade him to go on cultivating the ground. He has for some time past—I think nearly a year—been troubled with a peculiar affection of the head, which I do not like. It is a constant roaring noise like the falling of a cataract, then like buzzing or boiling up of waters ; it never ceases night and day, though he does not feel it when entirely absorbed in study, but the moment he gives up there it is again. When preaching it is also absent. He loses much sleep from it. He has wanted to bleed himself, but I have discouraged it, for there is no appearance of fullness about him ; he is very abstemious, and takes sparingly of nourishment. A cup of coffee too much will increase it.

“You may wonder that, after our long residence here, the people are not more clever. But you may remember our station was composed of people of all tribes, and since missionaries have gone into the interior some of our people of the best abilities have gone back to their own countries, where the other missions reap the advantage, so that we are ever teaching fresh ones. And there is really not that advancement in civilization which we did expect. They are content with such small attainments. Now the length of my apology will surprise you, but I hope it will give you information of our present circumstances.

“The Lord’s goodness to yourself, my venerated parent, is very great ; how far He has exceeded faith’s largest demands ! I have not forgotten the conflict which rent my bosom on your account when we were in England, when I could not see how your wants were to be supplied. At that time I heard George Clayton preach from the words, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’ The train of his ideas was exactly suited to the state of my mind, and thenceforth I endeavoured to believe that my God would supply all your need. Unbelief has often tried to drive me out of this stronghold. I have feared that the barrel of meal would waste, the cruse of oil would fail ; but, blessed be God ! He continues His mercy—yea, and will do to the end. In all your sickness and infirmities you have lacked no good thing.

“You will hear of the awful state of the Colony from the Kafir war. We are quite confounded by the Hottentot rebellion. This is a public calamity indeed, and will be a tremendous blow to the missionary cause. All societies will feel it for a long time, but especially our own. No doubt all these things will be thoroughly investigated, and all sides of the question considered ; but it is difficult for us to see how it is possible to exculpate them from heavy blame, such as fills the mouths of blasphemers. They are now pouring out their rage and spite against missionaries, and even the press teems with taunts and reproaches. The defection of the Kat River Hottentots has depressed our spirits no little ; besides that, the missions south-east of us, French and Wesleyan, are all in trouble.

“There is much to discourage, yet we feel we must not despair I was a few days ago greatly animated by a retrospect which seemed to force itself upon me at our last missionary prayer-meeting. The first verses sung were of a hymn, a pretty good translation of ‘O’er the gloomy hills of darkness.’ My thoughts were involuntarily led back to the time when I first heard that hymn sung, and to the same tune too, and all my feelings on that occasion seemed to be revived. This was at Queen Street Chapel, Chester, when you, my dear father, went to Park Gate, and so kindly took me to be present at the first missionary meeting held in our part of the country, a season which I never shall forget : it was a Bethel to my soul. The sermon of the venerable Dr. Waugh, or rather the impression it produced then, was revived. ‘In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul,’ was his text. What an odd subject, thought I, for a missionary sermon, but he soon convinced me that he could not have found a better in the whole Bible.

“The image of the venerable man is still in my mind’s eye. He was full of pathos, and solemn as eternity ; he seemed to me on the borders of the heavenly world while describing the comforts and consolations, the blooming hopes of immortality, possessed by every real Christian. But the effect produced was by the contrast he then drew—and such a contrast ! How did he set before us the condition of the heathen world which knew not God, sunk in the filth of vice and gross superstition, without hope and without God in the world.

“My mind was powerfully affected. I was very young, and had not the slightest prospect of joining the missionary band, but felt that the cause was worth a thousand lives. Now, my dear father, after more than thirty years in the service, I had begun to despond a little, but on that evening, when I came to remember how we found the whole of this country north of the Orange River, and see the change wrought, I felt ashamed of my gloom. We found these people just what Dr. Waugh described them to be. Now we can say that we believe many souls have passed into glory. There are native teachers in different parts of the country, imparting a knowledge of reading and of the first principles of the gospel. There are, on the different stations, thousands who can read the oracles of truth, and, as you know, large portions of that sacred Word are in their hands. All these, and other thoughts of the same kind, passed rapidly through my mind after the singing of those verses by Christian Bechwanas, and I came home stronger in my hopes and expectations for the kingdom of Christ in poor Africa than I had been for some months.

“What, thought I, if these results had been set before my mind, on hearing Dr. Waugh, as the fruit of the labours of but a few missionaries, should I have hesitated for a moment about joining such a band in my feeble capacity as a female? or would my parents have refused to surrender me? No, it could not be ; and now should we all rather feel honoured in having had any share in the matter.

“Livingstone is again away to the lake, intending to seek a field

there, or rather beyond it. He seems determined to get out of the reach of the Boers. We have been affected on hearing of the death of so many of the servants of Christ at home, just when they seemed to us so much needed. What wonderful things you have lived to see! We feel intense anxiety for the newspapers just now, from the state of our own beloved country and also the state of the Colony. We expect a batch in a few days by Hume's waggons, the letters having come beforehand.

"I find that Helen sent a portrait of yourself by a Mr. Galton, who was to have come here but changed his route, endeavouring to reach the lake from the west coast. The portrait he sent to Colesberg; there it got into careless hands, and has lain some months at Griqua Town. I hope soon to get it, however. Mr. Galton and party left the Cape, I think, in November, and we hear nothing of them since they arrived at Angra Pequena. . . .

"Now, my dear father, I must draw to a close, and cannot but feel solemn when I do so, always thinking this may be the last letter I shall write to you. You will not doubt our constantly praying for you, as also for Moffat's mother. She is now in her eighty-fourth year, and you are both constantly borne on our hearts at the throne of grace. We believe that He who has led you, and fed you, and guided you for so many years, will be with you when heart and flesh fail. His rod and His staff shall comfort you! Should you go before us, we shall soon follow you if we have grace to endure to the end, and this hope takes away the pang of separation. I have long been disposed to congratulate all good people on their emancipation from the body of death."

A few words will not be out of place here about the rebellion of the Kat River Hottentots referred to in the foregoing letter. It was truly, as Mary Moffat says, a most tremendous blow to the missionary cause in South Africa. For many years it remained a terrible missile in the hands of those who wanted one. Nor is it possible to say that the Hottentots were anything but ungrateful and infatuated rebels against a government which, upon the whole, had meant well and done well by them. But there was another side of the question, as was conclusively shown by the late Sir Andries Stockenstrom, who, in his place as a Colonial legislator, made a full exposure of the manner in which these Hottentots had been dealt with and subjected to treatment which did not justify their rebellion, but accounted for and in a measure excused it.

It was the old story—which, unfortunately, in South Africa is ever new. Loyalty to Government, especially on the part of natives, is a dangerous and unprofitable virtue; and whilst rebellion too often has been pampered and has received all that it sought, the loyal have been left to suffer for their devotion.

It can hardly be expected that even Christianized Hottentots should be found more faithful to an alien government than its own people. Their constancy was overtaxed, and it gave way; but it is a fair question whether these misguided rebels were more to blame than those whose injustice made them such.

Mary Moffat to one of her Children.

“ Oct. 23, 1851.

“ We have received all your letters per steamer up to that of May, which arrived early in August, while those of March and April came only on the 5th of September. Our letters and papers come with strange irregularity; nor can we discover where the fault lies, as sometimes, even when people are at Colesberg on the arrival of the post, we get, perhaps, a letter or two of a late date, while all the English papers are at least a month older. Our latest papers now are of the 7th of June, and these came with Mr. Ashton, who was there himself when the post arrived. Mr. Bruce’s letter of May gave us the first account of the opening of the Great Exhibition. You will have heard from your sisters of the death of our venerable friend and brother, Mr. Hamilton. We had the Frédoeux here about two months, which was a relief, as we did not feel so much the blank in our circle. Truly we do now feel lonely, and should be glad indeed to have some of you here, but this is not likely for a permanency. The whole country has been very dry; our fine grassy street was one mass of loose dust, so that I was fatigued by walking to Mr. Ashton’s; but we have at last had some showers, and everything looks splendid. The great willow tree is majestic; the syringas have been one sheet of bloom and the perfume delicious; and now the orange trees are sending forth their still more grateful scent. The pomegranate hedge, with its numerous scarlet flowers, exceeds everything; the grass is again growing, and all nature looks gay at the Kuruman. Many parts of the valley are covered with corn, and others soon will be with maize and native grain, which have just been sown. I regret to say your willow is dead; it did not like its new position. A syringa tree has taken its place. The cypress you procured for me is a splendid tree; it shall represent you, or rather the time of your departure. It stands between the fig-trees and the house where the printing-rollers are kept.

“ But, alas! we seem to want something to make us enjoy these beauties. Not one of you, our dear children, to flit about among them. Once you were here, but now all looks so sad without you; and dear old Mr. Hamilton, too, gone. Well, the time is short, and if we never again see you here we must hope to meet one family in heaven.”

Robert Moffat to Dr. Bruce, of Newcastle.

“ Oct. 30, 1851.

“ Yours of May the 12th and April the 12th I have lying before me, and, to my shame, unanswered. Mrs. Moffat has from time to time

jogged my memory, but you cannot conceive what a threefold cord it requires to drag me from the work of translation. 'Next time' has been my reply; and next time and time again passes, and what may be deemed the little exertion of writing a letter is left undone. But I am getting more nervous in the work. I feel to grudge the appropriation of any mental exertion apart from translation, for it seems impossible to redeem time at a work of that kind, and suitable aids are not to be had here for love or money. Add to this that I feel my head, usually so strong, the worse for wear, and it is giving unmistakable evidence that its best days are gone by. This, of course, makes me most anxious that the remaining time and strength be devoted to a work a sense of the importance of which increases with my years, and which I hope most ardently to see one day finished. To you I need not describe the extreme difficulty there is in translating that wonderful book, the book of God, into a language the capabilities of which have not yet been fully tested. While on the subject, let me tell you that at present (to-day) I am at the fourteenth verse of the twenty-first chapter of Numbers, where I came to a dead halt yesterday, and spent more than half the day on the fourteenth and following verses, examining lexicons, versions, and commentators. You may guess the time it takes when I tell you that before I write down the shortest sentence I have to look to several translations of the Bible to see how each has it rendered. The Dutch is a valuable translation in coming nearest to the original. Sometimes the pen glides, and then again I am bewildered, and that frequently with passages which to a plain Bible reader would appear to be language in its simplest form; but this, of course, arises from the character of the Sechwana. . . .

"I have perhaps said more on this subject than is necessary, but it is one that lies near my heart. We are thankful for thus having work which, in the end, we trust will redound to the Divine glory in the conversion of souls. We cannot expect to see a redeemed, or rather a reformed, world. The Bible must be read in every language from shore to shore. We have this comfort, that we are preparing material for future aggression on Satan's kingdom in this benighted continent. I say comforted, for our present prospects are at best very gloomy. War has comparatively destroyed missionary labour in Kafirland, and its baneful influence has extended through every Colonial station. The demon, as is usual, has cast his baleful shadow on other tribes, so that, with the exception of a few isolated spots, the public mind is in one ferment from Walwich Bay on the west to Delagoa or Natal on the east. As you may have learned, there has been a rumpus of a rather sanguinary character in the sovereignty between native tribes and the British power at Bloemfontein, in which the latter will likely be compelled to come to an agreement of peace on easier terms than are generally offered at the point of the bayonet, but minus that little bit of a thing misnamed honour. Then there are the native tribes looking at each other, as the Bechwanas say, with cat's eyes.

"The prospects of our missions among the Bahurutse, Bakhatla, and Bakwena, are melancholy. According to human observation

scarcely anything has been achieved, and to all appearance a dark and gathering cloud will soon burst over them, and frustrate any effort to save the natives in either soul or body. They are prostrate before the overwhelming power of the insurgent Boers. These would be speedily expelled were the natives unanimous, but they are the very reverse. An unusual blindness prevents their looking at the future. Present existence is all they think of. An independent spirit is a very rare thing among them. For nearly two generations they have been scattered and peeled. Sechele is an exception to the general spirit, and, if all be true we hear, the Boers are meditating his reduction, and perhaps destruction.

"Livingstone and Oswell were in Sebetoane's country by last accounts, north-east of the Ngami lake. Think only what a journey for a wife and children. We shall wonder and be very thankful if they all come back safe. How mysterious are the dealings of our heavenly Father, how immutable His government. It humbles us, for it shows us how blind we are as to the agency He employs for the accomplishment of what will be for His own glory; for we know that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Well! it is ours to labour and to pray, and His to bless."

Robert Moffat to Dr. Tidman.

"Nov. 22, 1852.

"I have to acknowledge yours of the 14th of July. I feel deeply sensible of the kindness of the Directors in their expressions of sympathy with me under my present circumstances, and their generous offer to supply whatever want might arise in the carrying into effect what they recommend for my recovery and future usefulness. Although of their kind and fraternal regard I have never had cause to doubt, I am nevertheless gratified with the assurance they have given me of their entire willingness to become responsible for any necessary expenses which a journey to and a sojourn at the coast might involve. What could I desire more, as this relieves my mind entirely on a point on which I should have felt considerable embarrassment. For this information please present my heartfelt thanks to the Directors, whose confidence in me I trust, through Divine grace, will never cause a shadow of regret.

"While, however, I might be influenced by the advice of those who are better able to judge of my health than myself to remove to the coast for a short season, my present circumstances are such as to render the thing almost impracticable. Nay, I conceive it would be highly improper unless the exigency were much greater than I think it is. I shall endeavour briefly to state my reasons, the cogency of which will be cheerfully corroborated by my brethren Livingstone and Ashton, however much they could desire, and do desire, my restoration to perfect health and prolonged service in the Bechwana Mission. The state of the country is such as it has not been since I entered the field. The violent opposition of the tribes to the introduction of the gospel during the early years of the mission, the threatened destruction by the hordes of Mantatees, and the successful

and devastating inroads made by the mixed freebooters, Korannas, Griquas, and Bushmen, appear now in our eyes as mere gusts compared to the storm which threatens to sweep away all the labours of missionaries and philanthropists to save the aborigines from annihilation. This is a time when all the wisdom, caution, and firmness that can be called into action are required. We need all the heads we have, even were they sevenfold better than they are, with fervent, persevering prayer that the Divine Spirit would lift up a standard against the approaching enemy.

“The mission among the Bakwena, commenced by Livingstone, and latterly under the care of a native teacher, is a scene of solitude, brooding over ashes and dead men’s bones; while Sechele and his followers, who escaped the balls of the Boers, are in the fastnesses of a neighbouring mountain, suffering from want, their supplies having been taken or destroyed by the enemy. The Bakhatla of Mabotsa have been attacked, many slain, and the survivors scattered in the desert wilds. The Bahurutse of Mathebe, the third missionary station, are prostrate, because on the side of their oppressors there is power. Our two native teachers among the Bangwaketsi, as well as the one with the Bakwena, have had to retire with much loss of property. The Barolong on the Lotlakane, among whom Mr. Ludorf, a Wesleyan missionary, was living, have fled to the westward, and Mr. L. is on his way southward, seeing no possibility of continuing his labours.

“The Boers can give no reason whatever for all this, except it be that all the aborigines must become their vassals; and they conceive that they have a special right to engage in wars and to dispossess chiefs of the lands of their forefathers, on account of the late treaty between them and the British Government, in which their independence north of the Vaal River is acknowledged and proclaimed. Every act of rapine and bloodshed is carried on with the excuse that the country is theirs by authority of the Queen of England. This strange note jars horribly on the ears of the natives. Their estimation of the English was once very high. Such is the present state of the country beyond us, and how near the enemy may approach, or how soon this quarter may be visited with the dire calamities which have befallen others, is hidden from our eyes. We look to Him that is higher than the highest.

“The state of things as above described renders it next to impossible for me to leave at the present time. Again, in addition to the charge of Sechele’s children whom he sent to my care for their education eight months ago, he also sent hither, after the attack of the Boers, his wife and little ones, with a considerable retinue for safety. These are all on my premises, and are to a considerable extent dependent on me for supplies. Such entire confidence in us we reciprocate with pleasure from a persuasion that it will hereafter turn to the furtherance of the gospel. We feel as if we could not on any account abandon our charge. Again, there is the work of translation, which appears to me paramount to everything else. My buzzing head does not, I think, retard progress, though it may render

the work more laborious. The closer I stick to the work the less inconvenience I feel. Were I to leave my mind to take its own swing it would think of nothing else, and would break down altogether, As it is I have scarcely time to think of anything but what must be thought of earnestly and perseveringly ; and in doing so I find the most relief. I am going to resume attention to the suggestions of Mr. E. Pye Smith. To him I feel extremely thankful, and also to the Rev. Mr. Ellis, for the pains they have taken.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MOFFAT'S THIRD JOURNEY TO MOSILIKATSE.

1853.

As may be seen from foregoing extracts, missionaries in Bechwanaland were going through a period during which their faith was heavily taxed. With the exception of the neighbouring station of Motito, where Frédoux represented the Paris Society, Kuruman had again become the northernmost outpost of missions on the road to the interior. Ludorf had retired in despair, his Barolong under Montswe having fled to the desert. Edwards and Inglis had been deported by the Boers, and warned never again to enter Bechwanaland. Livingstone had penetrated the enormous and unknown region on the Upper Zambezi, and was practically lost to Bechwanaland, and indeed to South Africa.

But Moffat and Ashton went on with their work at Kuruman. With the former the desire to complete the translation of the whole Scriptures into the Sechwana language had become almost a devouring passion, now that he saw the people capable not only of learning to read, but of reading with intelligence what was printed. Hamilton had been gathered to his rest. Ross and Helmore were on the Vaal River with the Batlaping. Moffat stood alone of the old pioneers. His three coadjutors were of a later generation. But his ardour was not diminished, though he sorrowfully confessed that he was beginning to feel older. Little did he think then that he was to survive two of these comparatively youthful comrades by more than twenty years, as well as his son-in-law, Frédoux, of Motito, and his own son Robert, who at this time was striving as a Government official to serve and benefit the natives.

Towards the end of 1853 the tidings reached Mary Moffat that her beloved father had ended his pilgrimage of ninety years.

Born in 1763 at Dunkeld, the son of a Highland farmer, he grew up deeply imbued with the Covenanter spirit, every mountain and glen reminding him of his persecuted forefathers. After attaining the age of manhood he set his face southward, and eventually settled in Lancashire, having married, in spite of his anti-episcopal leanings, Mary Gray, a lady of that communion, a woman of strong piety. He himself came under the influence of Roby, of Manchester, and became a decided Christian and an ardent promoter of the cause of missions. It was a severe trial to his attachment to that cause to be called upon to part with his only daughter; but after a struggle he and his wife gave her up. Her mother did not live long enough to see how highly honoured her daughter was to become; but he was privileged for more than thirty years to watch her labours, and to thank God that he had been able to consecrate her to this work. Between father and daughter during the whole of that period there subsisted a most tender affection, which neither time nor distance seemed to cool. In his early days a prosperous man, he was latterly impoverished by the fault of others; but by the kindness of some of the most faithful friends who ever graced that name he was never allowed to want; and though bereft of all his children, he was attended to the last hour of his life by one who had served his departed wife, and had promised her never to leave him. For twenty years she discharged her trust, until the day when she stood at his grave with a little company of those who, for his own and for his daughter's sake, had tenderly watched over him in his declining years, and amply made up for the absence of his own kindred, who were represented by two of his grandchildren only.

It was becoming apparent that intense application to the work of translating the Old Testament was telling upon Moffat's health in a manner that could not be misunderstood. He had again and again received a cordial invitation from the Directors of the Society to intermit his work and to pay a visit to the coast, or even to England; but his eyes were turned towards the interior. Northwards there was no European representative of the Church. Two or three native teachers were all that remained, and their footing was precarious, to remind men of the late missions among the Bahurtse, Bakhatla, and Bakwena, which had been swept away by the Boers. Moffat could not but think with sadness of the doors lately so wide open now closed to the gospel. Again, the question was beginning to arise, What had become of Livingstone, who so long before had started for Linyanti, and of whom nothing was known at Kuruman but that he had in a sense burnt his boats by sending back the native servants who had accom-

panied him from the south, and was thus perfectly alone among the tribes on the Zambezi?

In addition to all this messages had been coming of late years from Mosilikatse, chief of the Matebele, to his old friend Moshete, or Ramary. It will be remembered that some fifteen years before Mosilikatse had emigrated northwards, and had drifted out of ken. The advancing explorers of later years ascertained that he had settled in the country on the southern watershed of the Zambezi River, and roving bands of Matebele had been met on the outskirts of the country. The predatory disposition of the tribe had made it impossible for them to have any immediate neighbours; and the Matebele were thus secluded from the world by a zone of uninhabited country roamed over by game and beasts of prey. Not long after his departure to this remote region the Boers, emboldened by what seemed to them a sign of fear, had thought by a rapid and well-organized expedition to make a raid into the new country which Mosilikatse had chosen for his retreat. At first it seemed as though they would be successful, but in a few hours the alarm was sounded far and wide, and the invaders, or rather their advance party on horseback, found it necessary to abandon what spoil in cattle they had obtained, and the expedition returned with the conviction that, for the present at least, the Matebele were best left alone; and for years after even their whereabouts became a matter of uncertainty.

In the month of May, 1854, Moffat again bid farewell for a season to his faithful partner. It was a great relief to her anxieties that he was provided with very suitable and pleasant company. Two young men—one the late James Chapman, and the other Samuel Edwards, son of Edwards the missionary, long Moffat's coadjutor at Kuruman—were to accompany him for purposes of trade. He was not as strong as he had been in times past; the journey was to a comparatively unknown country seven or eight hundred miles away, and might be extended even further, and he would in all probability, as proved actually the case, not see the face of a single white person from his departure to his return, except of those who went with him. Their company proved most acceptable and helpful to him, and they in turn obtained access for trade to a country from which they must otherwise of necessity have been excluded.

It was necessary for them to keep a westerly route in order to avoid as far as possible interception by the Boers, who had declared that no Englishman, whether trader or missionary, should travel into the interior without their permission, which in this case would certainly not have been given. The route lay within

the confines of the Kalahari Desert, and involved dragging for days through heavy sand and with great scarcity of water. At Kanye the travellers found the various sections of the Bangwaketsi tribe, who had for years been scattered, again reunited on the spot where long before Moffat had visited the chief Makaba. This circumstance is a remarkable instance of a feature characteristic of the Bechwanas. The Bangwaketsi, themselves at one time a dominant and warlike tribe under Makaba, were scattered in the great battle in which he fell, encompassed by a host of invaders from the east. Scarcely had his people recovered from this crushing blow when they were again driven into exile by the onslaught of the Matebele, and scattered in parties, hundreds of miles apart, mostly as refugees with other tribes. Yet in the course of time they were to be found gathered together, a compact people, under the grandson of Makaba, on the same spot. A similar history might be given of nearly all other Bechwanas.

Above the frowning precipices of Lithubaruba Moffat found Sechele and his people. They had retired to this mountain fastness after the attack of the Boers at Kolobeng. Sechele was in a position of more than ordinary difficulty. His teacher, Livingstone, had been taken from him, and he was alone, or almost alone, among his people as a Christian. After the attack of the Boers he had made the journey all the way to Cape Town to lay the case before the Queen's representative, confident in the justice of his cause. He had been coldly received, and had been led to believe that the English, whom he had always hitherto regarded as the faithful friends of the black man, were in sympathy rather with his oppressors. Had it not been for the steady and consistent friendship of those at the Cape who were missionary at heart, he would have found himself a destitute stranger in a strange land. In after years he was never tired of telling of the kindness of these, particularly the Rev. William Thompson, whose judicious advice and aid were of untold value to him. He came back to his own people to find his influence as a chief impaired. He was discredited as the friend of the white people, at whose hands the Bechwana tribes were suffering these things. He had already severely tried the patience of the great heathen majority of his people by his adoption of Christianity and his violation of the unwritten law of custom, which was a sort of religion to them in the absence of any other. It was wonderful that he clung tenaciously to the faith into which he had been baptized by Livingstone. It was not wonderful that, while trying to be at once chief and teacher, he swerved from the high standard required in converts,

and that there was too much diplomacy and paltering with heathenism.

Moffat's heart was grieved by much that he saw and heard ; he forbade the chief to continue his ministrations from the pulpit, and arranged for a native teacher to take up his abode in the Bakwena town until the way appeared more clearly. He then went on his way across a hundred and twenty miles of desert country to Shoshong, the residence of Sekhomi, chief of the Bamangwato tribe. From Shoshong he had to cross a wilderness without road or chart. Sekhomi for his own reasons was unwilling to let the way be opened to Matebeleland, but confined himself to withholding guides and warning the few scattered Bushmen and Bakalahari on in front against giving aid. Consequently the travellers had to betake themselves to the use of the compass, directing their course over an unknown country in a general north-easterly direction.

For eighteen days they groped their way through a region new to them all, but in spite of Sekhomi's prohibition they received some guidance from the scattered children of the wilderness, of whom they met with a few even in this desolate land, until they had crossed the Shashe, a broad river-bed filled with white crystalline sand, after crossing which they had to trust to their own ingenuity. The following extracts from Moffat's journal will give some idea of their travelling :

"July 8th, Saturday.—Our guides returned, and we proceeded in the direction they had pointed out, but they professed not to know the country beyond. We had not gone far before we found ourselves embayed in hills, with a river on the left, the banks of which would not allow us to pass. After some twisting and turning and running to the tops of hills to look out, we got on till we were again obliged to turn down to the river or to retrace our steps and strike out in another direction. The bed of sand was about twenty yards across, plenty of water in pools and hollows, but the passage down the bank was bad. After crossing the river we found the other side with our course northward good. We halted at noon to allow the oxen to drink, as they had had no water since yesterday morning, and we were uncertain about the future. We afterwards continued our course, but finding it lead us too far to the left we struck into an opening in the hills through which we passed with difficulty, cutting down trees and rolling stones out of the way, but the waggons had to rattle over boulders hid in the long grass through which we have sometimes to wade as if through water. After struggling on till near sunset we halted within reach of the river, surrounded by hills near and distant, but no signs of human abode or of any living thing except a solitary bird. In one or two places we saw where human beings must have bivouacked long ago,

but with the exception of an occasional jackal or hyæna howl all is silence and solitude.

“July 9th, Sabbath.—This morning the wind as usual strong from the east, with a thick, gloomy sky, as if it would be a pour of rain. It continued cloudy most of the day. About an hour before sunset the under clouds cleared away, and the upper layer collected away eastward, over which a bright moon rose to cheer us, for her presence is most welcome to travellers in a land like this. We had our services as usual. We could see nothing human in the hills and vales around. It is ten days since we saw an abode or hut. It is comforting to feel assured that we have been remembered to-day by God’s praying people at the Kuruman.

“July 10th.—After examining our course and the rocky descent to the river Enkwezi, and the rather suspicious-looking hills beyond, we resolved not to run the very great risk of getting our waggons broken. While getting all things ready one of the men was sent ahead to examine a northerly course through some hills of coarse sandstone. He returned with a favourable report, and we started northward, with a good deal of winding to avoid trees and large blocks of stone which ever and anon lay in our path. After travelling some miles, and having again turned into another opening in the hills in a north-easterly direction, footpaths were seen, and soon after voices were heard in a defile. Sam and another proceeded on horseback to the spot, and came upon some Bamangwato, who appeared at first sadly afraid, but were induced to come to the waggons. We gave them some flesh of a gnu we had shot, and got two of them to direct us to a large village of the same people, where there was one of Mosilikatse’s Indunas and some cattle. With grateful hearts we saw that all was right, and that much sooner than we had expected.”

In spite of their anxiety to proceed it was several days before the travellers reached headquarters. The Induna in charge of the outpost was sadly exercised in his mind. The long-looked-for friend of Mosilikatse had indeed come, but the Induna was afraid of a mistake, and in one respect Moffat was greatly changed—the long black beard was gone. However, messengers were despatched to announce his arrival, and an answer came that the party was to proceed, which they did for several days.

“July 22nd, Saturday.—Last night, after we were all fast asleep, men arrived from Mosilikatse with an ox to be slaughtered, and an injunction to hasten forward, as his heart longed exceedingly to see me. We set off again early next morning. We passed several towns from which the people rushed out to us, walking alongside of the waggons for miles, staring at me as though they would look their very eyes out. In the forenoon we drew near the royal residence. One after another with shield and spear came running to say that the chief was waiting. Sam and I walked on before the waggons, taking little notice of the fuss around us. We of course expected some such dis-

play as I had aforesaid seen. We entered an immense large fold, and following a headman were led to the opposite side, where sat some fifty or sixty warriors. The town seemed to be new, or half finished. There was nothing like the order or cleanliness I had seen before. We stood for some minutes at a door or opening in the fence leading to some premises behind. In the meantime Mosilikatse had been moved from his house to this doorway. On turning round, there he sat—how changed! The vigorous, active, and nimble chief of the Matebele, now aged, sitting on a skin, lame in the feet, unable to walk or even to stand. I entered, he grasped my hand, gave one earnest look, and drew his mantle over his face. It would have been an awful sight for his people to see the hero of a hundred fights wipe from his eyes the falling tears. He spoke not, except to pronounce my name, Moshete, again and again. He looked at me again, his hand still holding mine, and he again covered his face. My heart yearned with compassion for his soul. Drawing a little nearer to the outside so as to be within sight of Mokumbate, his venerable counsellor, he poured out his joy to him.

“Meanwhile Sam had come up, but he, like me, had anticipated a very different scene, neither of us having heard a word of Mosilikatse’s indisposition. We sat some time with him, while he would expatiate on my unchanged friendship, on which he said he had always relied.”

The chief was almost helpless with dropsy. It was a happy beginning to his renewed intercourse with his old friend that the means adopted for his restoration were wonderfully blessed, and in a short time he was walking about again with something of his old vigour. Moffat remained nearly three months. He found the Matebele in much the same condition in which they were when he had seen them last, more than fifteen years before, on the Marikwa River. His short visits and the transient efforts of various missionaries to gain an influence had left little impression of a religious kind on the minds of the people. The greater part of those who were in the prime of life on the occasion of his earlier visits had passed away in heathen darkness. The rank and file of the nation were now the young men and women who had grown up in captivity, belonging to the Bechwana, Makalaka, and Mashuna tribes, upon whom the ruthless Matebele had fallen in their migrations. There were two captives of a different sort, a Griqua boy and girl, whose release Moffat had vainly sought before. These were of course grown up. William was a man of some influence, and in command of a considerable number of warriors. He still remembered a little Dutch, the language of his childhood, and speedily became more ready in the use of it, and a great assistance in interpreting and in giving information such as could be obtained from no one else in the country. His cousin, Troi, still retained some faint recollections of her father,

and cherished a desire to see her friends again. The tyrant, in deference to the entreaties of Moffat, allowed her to return in his train, and she was restored to her family like one brought back from the dead after a captivity of nearly twenty years.

With much greater difficulty Moffat accomplished one of the principal objects of his journey : to ascertain something about the circumstances in which Livingstone might be placed, and to forward to him letters and supplies. For some time he was wholly occupied in putting the old chief through a course of medical treatment. The success which attended his efforts in this direction gave him a great advantage ; but even with this gained, it was hard to persuade Mosilikatse to take any steps which would send to open up communication northwards. The motto of the Matebele and their chief was—isolation. At last, wearied out by Moffat's importunities, a small party was sent off to the Zambezi to come within touch of the Makololo, and to make inquiries as to what had become of the Doctor. But this was not enough to meet Moffat's views, and at last he obtained consent to himself starting for the north-west. To his surprise Mosilikatse determined to accompany him, and accordingly for many days this strange sort of royal progress continued. It was slow and not very favourable to the object Moffat had in view, but it gave an opportunity of much more constant and closer intercourse between the chief and the missionary, and broke down the objection of the former to the preaching of the gospel to himself and his people.

After travelling several days and reaching the farthest outposts of the Matebele, in the direction of the Victoria Falls, it was found that there were insuperable obstacles to further progress with waggons. The country was waterless, and there were belts of jungle infested with the tsetse—the fly so destructive to cattle. What might have been done by Moffat himself, had he been alone, was out of the question for him, encumbered as he was with Mosilikatse and his retinue of aged counsellors, wives, and some hundreds of men, with cattle for slaughter. Probably this was all clear enough to the crafty old chief's own mind. He could not bear the thought of Moshete going on to people beyond him. This is a feeling to be commonly observed in these native chiefs, and is one of the obstacles which bar the way of most travellers in the interior.

Having got so far, and when it became plain that there was nothing for it but to turn back, Moffat was determined to carry out at least a part of his wish, and at last the chief was persuaded to send on a party of men to whom the supplies for Livingstone were committed. These supplies had been made up into bundles

for carrying on men's shoulders. It afterwards proved that these men faithfully discharged their trust. As privileged persons, carrying the packages of a missionary, they crossed the border country in safety, and descended into the valley of the Zambezi, where there were none but their sworn enemies, the Makololo, and at last presented themselves on the south bank of the river at a spot where they could shout across to an island in the river and announce their errand. Small as their party was, they could get no one to approach them, for treachery was still suspected. They laid their packages on the bank, delivered their message across the stream, and departed hungry and tired and footsore. The Makololo, finding them really gone, took the bundles they had brought, placed them on an island, and built a roof over them, and there they were when Livingstone returned some months afterwards from his journey to St. Paul de Loanda on the west coast, thankful, indeed, for the letters and supplies which reached him by this strange kind of parcels delivery.

As the time drew near for departure, Moffat lost no opportunity of speaking to the chief and his people on matters of eternal importance. Many were the warnings and exhortations addressed to those to whom such words were strange. The result can never be known till the day when all things shall be made manifest ; but as the missionary prepared to bid farewell, it was with a heart oppressed with an awful weight in the sight of such abject, grovelling degradation mingled with nobler and affecting traits of character. The long return journey of seven hundred miles was accomplished without notable event. Moffat parted with his genial and valuable fellow-traveller, Mr. Edwards, at the Bamangwato, and reached home in safety

CHAPTER XXIX.

MARY MOFFAT AGAIN JOURNEYS TO THE COAST.

1854-1856.

It was home, but home without its chief attraction. Moffat found himself quite alone at Kuruman. The Ashtons were away, and his own wife had gone to the Colony to meet one of her daughters returning from school in England. She had been obliged to continue her journey much further than she had originally contemplated, had met with unusual hindrance and difficulty, and had not been able to return in time to meet her husband and to welcome him from his long and interesting expedition.

“PORT ELIZABETH, *October 9, 1854.*”

“I now begin to fear that I shall not be at home to receive you, which grieves me much. Hitherto I have written nothing to you, from a conviction that I should be in time, but it may be otherwise. Livingstone's destiny being so involved in obscurity, you may turn back before you reach the Zambezi. The extract I now enclose with this to Frédoux was taken from last week's papers, and gave me great joy to see that he was alive in April last, and that this information, having come through the Portuguese, there was no fear of their doing him any harm. Should you arrive at Motito before this letter, you will have had some items of news, though I have not been able to write much to any one; for what with the fatigue of travelling, unpleasant weather, and having everything to think of, it has been impossible. It is a great tax on my strength to have to talk so much; to tell over and over again all about you and your journey as well as my own, with all the whys and wherefores. With a few more intelligent I have to expatiate on the probable results of your journey, and Livingstone's reasons for adopting the course he has done. All this fatigues me exceedingly; both head and chest suffer.

“You will see from letters sent to the Frédoux that I came here to meet Betsy, and have, blessed be God, met her in perfect health and safety. . . .

“She is now full of ardent aspirations after meeting you, but we are

detained—waiting for her luggage. This is the twelfth day since they landed, and only this morning is a little of it come, and now there is such a swell that the boats cannot work. I was to leave to-day, *vid* Bethelsdorp, to see the Kitchingmans, and am getting oxen from them to take me back to Wilmot's, where I left Robert's, because they were sore-footed and could not come on. This was occasioned by heavy rains when I was among the hills.

"I feel unhappy at the thought of not being at home as soon as you, and all is so dark about you ; your last date which has come to hand is July 13th. Well! patience must have its perfect work. We commenced this sort of suffering at Dukinfield Nursery, and it looks as if we should continue much in such feelings to the end of our lives. The last six months have been very trying in this respect—all things dark and obscure ; my mind has been like a bow at the full stretch—you and Livingstone at one end, Mary and Betsy at the other. I felt sometimes as if the string was too tight, but was wonderfully sustained. I felt more hopeful than is my habit, much encouragement in prayer ; you know I am not very imaginative, at least where you come, but have generally pictured you and poor Livingstone both surrounded by the angels of God (Psalm xxxiv. 7) in your encampments. My heart has been especially drawn out for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom as a result of the journeys of you both. God can of the stones raise up seed unto Abraham, and if you are only able to leave the impression on some minds that they are immortal beings and accountable creatures, you will have been instrumental of doing a great work.

"You will have heard that your worthy and beloved mother has done with all sorrow and pain, and got to her rest. Now, my dear Robert, you will think my mind poorly prepared for trial, taking as I do the most cheerful view of things. Well, I have the promise, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be.' Be assured I shall lose no time on the road."

In his solitude on his arrival at Kuruman the tidings reached him that his mother had passed away at the age of eighty-four. The event was naturally not unexpected. She had been a good mother to him, and he could not forget it. It was a great comfort to him that, though it had not been his privilege to watch over her declining years, she had been well cared for by his brother Richard, who had never left her since his father's death, and was with her till the last. She died as she had lived, a godly and consistent woman, whose faith found a sure resting-place in the eternal realities.

Mary Moffat to Miss Braithwaite.

"KURUMAN, June 8, 1855.

"It certainly becomes me to spare a little time to acknowledge all your kindness and that of the dear Kendal friends, but I am too ready

to frame excuses for myself, and have been doing so lately, promising to write after the arrival of the box which you sent off last July. This came to Algoa Bay in the same vessel as our daughter Bessie, whom I had gone thither to meet ; but as there is no jetty at that port, and the surf sometimes runs very high for weeks together, we had to leave before it was landed, just leaving orders that it and some other luggage should be sent by carriers to Colesberg. Since then, the Vaal River having been impassable for months, there has been little communication between the Colony and this. The box, however, came to hand about a month ago, having been floated over on a raft, and caught a little water about four or five inches deep ; happily, however, the least valuable things were at the bottom. . . .

“I must not pass by the little notes accompanying the various parcels. Truly they do our hearts good, and strengthen our hands in the work in which we are engaged, seeing how many hearts are sympathising with us, and sending up their fervent petitions for a blessing on that work, and sighing for the redemption of the people among whom we live. We sometimes fear that poor degraded Africa is forgotten among the many objects which engross the public mind, but such communications as we have had from you and the Kendal friends show us our mistake and revive our hopes. . . .

“A little before this time last year circumstances seemed to indicate that my husband ought to seek relaxation in a journey, and the reiterated entreaties of that savage king Mosilikatse that he would once more visit him seemed to us both like a call in Providence to direct his steps thither in preference to visiting the civilized world, as then he would have numerous opportunities of scattering the precious seed among the various tribes through which he would have to pass, besides the possible good which might result from his visit to the Matebele. Again, as we could hear nothing of Livingstone, and were assured that his supplies must be exhausted, it would afford an opportunity of ascertaining where he was, and at the same time of forwarding to Linyanti such things as he required. Just when the matter hung in doubtful scale two very respectable young traders arrived in the hope that Mr. Moffat would go, that they might thus have an introduction through him to the Matebele. As regards my own opinion, I no longer doubted of the propriety of his going, as my only objection had been to his going alone, for fear of the fever so prevalent in the tropics ; and his own inclination being decidedly in favour of the measure, it was soon decided, and he left this in May.

“Feeling that I too required a change of air, it was decided before he left that I should go as far as Colesberg as soon as I heard from him from the Backwena. Waiting for this I did not leave till the 15th of July, which was providential, for had I got away sooner, I should have returned before the (to me) important intelligence reached me that, though Mrs. Livingstone was not coming, my younger daughter Bessie was. Just when all was ready for my journey home I heard this, and at once started for Port Elizabeth, where we arrived within three days of each other. Now, fearing that my husband might come home to an empty house, I made my journey as rapidly as swollen

rivers would allow me. We were detained three weeks at the Orange River and one month at the Vaal, and thus after all my haste he was at home first, and had to come and help us over the river. Then, indeed, we had a season of great joy as a family, on having reached the northern bank of that mighty stream. Our dear child had been brought in safety over the stormy ocean after nearly seven years' absence. My dear husband had travelled seven hundred miles north-east of this, through savage beasts and savage men, and had been brought back again in perfect safety and improved health, after being permitted to make known the word of eternal life to perishing thousands who had never heard before of a Saviour or of a Supreme Being at all. My journey too had been attended with difficulties and dangers, out of all of which the Lord had delivered us. Added to these mercies during our stay at the river, a paper came to hand announcing the arrival of our poor Livingstone at Loanda just when I had been indulging fears. You will be able to conceive of our feelings at such a season, what abundant cause of thankfulness we had, yea, and still have, for we seem to wonder more and more on the retrospect.

"As my husband had sent home copious extracts from his journal, the most interesting parts of which will likely be published by the Directors, it would be superfluous for me to give anything here except to remark that after so much providential leading and guidance in both our journeys, we think there is much to indicate the Divine approbation, and we fondly hope the results will be such as shall eventually redound to the glory of God. There is something very remarkable in the uncommonly strong attachment of the poor savage Mosilikatse to my husband—an attachment which has lasted for twenty-three years—and we cannot help thinking that this circumstance is to be overruled for some great object."

Robert Moffat to Dr. Bruce, of Newcastle.

"June 9, 1855.

"It is long since I wrote to you, it being now more than a twelve-month since I left for my interior journey, which occupied seven months. . . .

"I have resumed the translation of the second volume of the Old Testament—a work at which I never tire, and only regret that I have so many interruptions. I have just laid the MS. aside with the resolution to write to you by an unexpected opportunity to the Colony. We heard through John some time since that you had visited Rome. How much I should like to sit in Percy Street and hear you talk for a couple of hours about what you saw in that strange city! In reading about it, there are so many things which arise in the mind, about which one would like to ask questions. According to some students of prophecy it is one day to be destroyed or swallowed up by a fiery deluge. If so, one must feel thankful that you have got out of it again. What an awful conflagration has been witnessed in your town! A stray number of the *Illustrated News* came, with drawings of the terrible scenes which, though on paper, appeared quite frightful enough

How uncertain are all human prospects, and how ignorant we are as to where danger really exists ! . . .

“ You have my hearty thanks for your ‘ Roman Wall,’ which came safe at last, after having been long on the road. How it rivets one’s thoughts to the interesting incidents of the past ! How nobly the Romans acted in their warlike expeditions, if such may be called noble. They carried their civilization, their arts, and their devotion to their gods with them ; they left marks of improvement wherever they planted their eagles. You must have had much labour, but the completeness of the work must yield no little satisfaction. . . .

“ I found all the tribes in the interior at peace ; at least there was no active warfare. That the Transvaal Boers and the aborigines will live in peace, is what we have long since ceased to expect ; nor will the former ever rest till they have driven the latter beyond their reach, or reduced them to abject vassalage. The condition of these is still more hopeless, since the abandonment of the sovereignty, since which the inhabitants unite with the Transvallians in helping on the work of extermination ”

Robert Moffat to one of his Children.

“ August 20, 1856.

“ In taking up the pen to write to you, according to promise, I shall endeavour to give you an account of my present labours, that you may form a tolerably correct idea of the difficulty I find in obtaining time to write letters. Doubtless you are by this time pretty well acquainted with the difficulties attendant on the translation of the sacred oracles into a language but lately reduced to writing ; but these difficulties also increase or diminish according to the circumstances of the translator. Of course it is a work which demands all the time and pains which can possibly be bestowed upon it, and after all may not come up to what may be desired. Here I am, and have been among a people whose wants are endless, and whose demands on my time are incessant and uncertain as the course of the wind. Many, many are the times I have sat down and got my thoughts somewhat in order, with pen in hand to write a verse, the correct rendering of which I had just arrived at, after wading through other translations and lexicons, when one enters my study with some complaint he has to make, or counsel to ask, or medical advice, and medicine to boot, a tooth to be extracted, a subscription to the auxiliary to be measured or counted ; or one calls (as at the present moment) to say he is going towards the Colony, and wishes something like a passport ; anon strangers from other towns, and visitors from the interior arrive, who all seem to claim a right to my attentions. Here we cannot so easily ring the bell and bow visitors to the front door. More generally they expect entertainment of a tangible character. Repairs want doing or superintending ; the general concerns of the station devolve upon myself. I have to correspond with native teachers, and to see their wants supplied—all these, and twenty other things of a similar kind, leave very little time indeed at my command or that of your mother. Public services and visits to out-stations of course demand their share. The worst is that

all or most of these interruptions dart on one with the uncertainty of a shooting star, and render the appropriation of time as devious as the flight of the bat. When I take up a newspaper, it is only to glance at it with a feeling like that of committing sacrilege. I have sometimes been arrested with something interesting, and have read it with ten or more strokes in the minute added to my pulse, from the anxiety caused by the conviction that I am spending precious time apart from its paramount object while I feel perfectly composed over anything which I am satisfied has a direct bearing on the true object of the missionary. As I have a small mechanical bump in some corner of my head, I feel a relief occasionally in mending an article, or it may be a gun-lock for some needy body; but I cannot imitate the musical souter, whose picture I have seen, holding his chin in one hand, while he is whistling a tune to a new-made shoe he is holding up with the other, with the violin and flute at his side to vary the exercises of the last. Every time I make a halt from such causes in the course of my duties I feel as if I must endeavour to make up in some way for the loss. The moment I have finished any little job I throw down my tools and am back to my work, so that my little workshop would beat any Irishman's garret you ever saw; but it does not incommode me any more than confusion in my study. Your mother has some difficulty at times to get permission to brush out my study, for it is visited by all sorts of people, some of whom are neither brushed nor buttoned, independently of the dusty character of the country. . . .

“With regard to the Bechwana Mission our present prospects are anything but bright. This arises principally from the pressure of foreign influence. It is the time of ebb with us, and has been for some time past. Few have been added to our churches, notwithstanding the increase of means in the way of books and, I might add, good congregations and attentive hearers. There is a general deadness over which we mourn. We feel we need the kindling influences of the Holy Spirit. The public mind has been greatly soured by the policy of our Government towards the native tribes on the northern border, who have never given the shadow of a reason for being so dealt with. The odious powder ordinance, put into force to meet the wishes of the inhabitants of the Free State and of the Transvaal Republic, precludes the natives from procuring a single ounce of ammunition, either to defend themselves or to kill their own game. This is tantamount to depriving them of their arms that they may become an easy prey to their enemies. The members of our churches of course know that this is no fault of ours, though we are sadly ashamed of it, and can no more open our mouth to say a single word in favour of our nation, once so respected and honoured by the aborigines.

“The conclusions drawn by the heathen are very natural: viz., that the English connive at their extermination. This has an indirect but powerful influence in prejudicing them against everything emanating from that quarter; but we know that this, like other things which the gospel has had to contend with, is destined to fall at the Divine mandate. Though compared to the teeming millions of the Eastern world the tribes are small, yet there is a large population speaking the

language in which the whole of the oracles of God will shortly be printed. The gospel has already been made the power of God to the salvation of many of them, and while we know that Jehovah's hand is not shortened, nor His ear heavy, we continue to hope that the mental desert will yet rejoice and blossom as the rose.

“Hitherto the progress of the gospel has been, as it has always been, among the poor and middling sort of folks. Our chiefs are sordid and sottish. Yantye of Lekatlong is one who has influence, but he has not much energy. However, he has around him a Christian community, under the ministrations of our worthy brother, Helmore. Though there may be a solitary village whose chief might refuse a native instructor, there is no chief in the whole country, from here to the Zambezi River, that would refuse the services of a missionary. Pity that Sechele is so beset with difficulties from the Transvaal Boers, for he is the most intelligent and energetic of all the chiefs, and he is resolved not to retrograde, as he is now building a chapel or school-house on his mountain, which is surrounded by many thousands of Bakwena and other tribes who have fled from the iron rod of the Boers. Surely all these souls cannot be left to perish !”

CHAPTER XXX.

FOURTH JOURNEY TO MOSILIKATSE.

1857.

IN 1857 the translation of the Old Testament was finished, and the whole Bible was in the hands of the Bechwanas in their own language. To the translator the labour had been simply herculean. His work had been carried on in the face of countless interruptions as already described by himself. These may have saved him from a concentration on study resulting in serious consequences, but it required indomitable energy and strength of will to overcome them. The distance of other stations, and the absence of means for speedy intercourse, prevented his fellow-labourers, with the exception of Mr. Ashton, from taking any important part in the work. At the time it was going on they were also, for the most part, at work on comparatively new stations, and fully absorbed in overcoming the difficulties incident to such undertakings. The New Testament, which with the Psalms had been printed in 1840, on the occasion of Moffat's visit to England, was already in full circulation. It is worthy of remark, and is a tribute to the character of the translation, that the identical text is still in use after more than forty years. No one would be so foolish as to say that it cannot be improved, but as yet the improvement has not been made.

Before the last sheets of the Old Testament had passed through the press Moffat was laying his plans for further action. He felt great concern for the many tribes comparatively within reach to the north-east, who for some years had enjoyed the presence of missionaries, and were now again left to themselves. Especially was his mind exercised for Sechele, chief of the Bakwena, who united with a forwardness to receive the gospel and its accompanying civilization quite unusual an erratic waywardness of disposition, which caused grief and fear to his best friends. So

Moffat had made up his mind to visit Sechele and his neighbours, and to strengthen the hands of one or two native teachers who still held their ground.

Meanwhile Livingstone, after disappearing at Loanda on the west coast, had reappeared at Quillimane on the east, and had made his way to London. The supporters of the London Missionary Society had come to take a strong interest in the Makololo, who under their chief, Sekeletu, had shown such confidence in the missionary, and such capacity for enterprise; and steps were taken for the establishment of a mission among them. There was one condition necessary, that the Makololo should leave the marshy network of rivers about the Chobe where they were living, or rather slowly dying, and should remove to the high country about the Kafuë, on the north bank of the Zambezi, and opposite to the Matebele, on the south bank. But the two tribes had a long-standing feud, and the Makololo distrusted their southern neighbours, whose love of plunder would sooner or later assert itself and lead to a renewal of the attacks which had formerly caused the Makololo to abandon that region and betake themselves westward to the shelter of the marshes and rivers. So a great plan took shape, which, like a good many other plans of man's making, after costing a deal of money and life, came to nothing. It was thought that if a mission could be established simultaneously among the Makololo and Matebele, the two tribes could be got to live in peace. The outcome of all this, so far as Moffat was concerned, was a letter from the Directors proposing that he should go for a twelvemonth to the Matebele, taking with him two younger men, and plant a new mission.

There were many things to be considered. He was sixty-two years old, of which forty-one had been spent in hard work for the Society; but that consideration did not weigh for a moment. Though he might be fit for such an undertaking, his wife was not. She was still active and energetic, but she only kept herself in working order by extreme care and method, such as could be secured on an old and well-established station like Kuruman. It would be necessary for her to remain behind. True, the Bechwana Mission, already almost abandoned, would be more completely bereft by the so long absence of the one man whom his two or three companions would readily acknowledge to count for a host in himself. Ashton would be left at Kuruman, Frédoux at Motito, Ross at Taung to the eastward, and Hughes at Griqua Town. Helmore was away on furlough. But Moffat felt that if he went forward it was for the Directors to look to it that the hands of those in the Bechwana field were strengthened.

A still more serious consideration was as to how such a move would be regarded by Mosilikatse and his people. Had it rested solely with Moffat at this time he would not have advised an immediate commencement of a mission to the Matebele. But he felt that the action of the Directors was in part the result of what he himself had written home, and he was too chivalrous to draw back at such a moment. In two days his mind was made up. "I will go," he said, "but I must start at once and first prepare the minds of Mosilikatse and his people for the coming among them of missionaries, and explain to him the whole plan." So in a few days more he was off, ploughing the sandy plains to the north-east, with seven hundred miles thither and seven hundred miles back again of travelling in the slow but trusty ox waggon.

On his way he made use of the opportunity to visit the Bechwana tribes along his line of route. He found himself face to face with a grave question at Sechele's. Three missionaries had arrived—a Mr. Schroeder, with two companions, belonging to a Hanoverian Society under the direction of Pastor Harms, of Hermannsburg. Curiously enough they had come through the Boers, and in some measure by their aid, in answer to an appeal from Sechele, who had begun to despair of further attention from the London missionaries. At this time Pretorius was in power at Potchefstroom. He was a man of mild disposition, and sought to pursue a more peaceful policy towards the native tribes. The Boers were harassed by dissensions among themselves, and a certain party of them were cultivating the friendship of the border chiefs, particularly of Sechele.

When the worthy Schroeder arrived in the town of the Bakwena, accompanied by a Boer functionary from the Marico District, the chief began to realize the true significance of the step he had taken. His people, not actuated by his intense desire for a missionary, were quick at catching up an objection to these men. They had come with and from the Boers, their coming meant no good. If the Boers wished the Bakwena to have the word of God, why had they driven away Ngakè (Livingstone), burnt his house, and pillaged his property?

When Moffat appeared on the scene his own mind was full of somewhat similar thoughts. But he had not been long in the company of the new-comers before he was reassured. He found them good and worthy men, whose connection with the Boers was merely accidental. They had come that way from Natal because they did not know how else to get there, and when they had found that the Bakwena were under the care of the London Missionary Society, and had among them a native teacher, they had,

through their own Superintendent in Natal, taken steps to communicate with the Directors of that Society; and hearing that Moffat was expected from Kuruman, they meanwhile awaited his arrival. Still the position was perplexing. Here was a case of intrusion, and a departure from the rule of courtesy and convenience which the Evangelical Societies observe towards each other. A word would have been enough. Schroeder would have withdrawn instantly if he had been asked to do so, and Sechele was only wanting Moffat's word for it, which he earnestly desired, when he found, to his mortification, that in receiving his new friends he was parting company with his old ones. But Moffat felt that he could not say the word. If these missionaries left, Sechele could then justly claim to be supplied with at least one European agent by his old Society. And this was just what Moffat could not promise. So the Hanoverians remained. They have done and are doing good work within the Transvaal, where they have many stations. Their nationality, and their concessions to the Boers on some points, give them a footing where English missionaries would be shut out; but it is open to question whether it would not have been better for the Kalahari tribes outside of the Transvaal to have had their wants supplied entirely by the Society which had first commenced work there.

Moffat arranged that Paul, the native teacher, should remain to assist the new missionaries for a time, and successfully combated the prejudices of the Bakwena. It was decided that the mission should be transferred to the Hanoverians, and so it remained for some years, when they withdrew, and their place was again supplied by the London Society. Moffat went his way, and in due time arrived at the headquarters of Mosilikatse. The task in hand was not so simple and easy as it might seem at this distance of time. The failure of attempts in former years to establish missions among his people had not left a good impression on the mind of Mosilikatse. Yes; he was willing to have missionaries, but my friend Ramary must come himself. "These new men, I do not know them. All men are not alike." Then he and his people shared in a deep conviction that the opening of the country to white men to come and settle would be the beginning of the end. They were not far wrong there.

However, all these difficulties were overcome by patient effort, and the way seemed clear. Again and again was the chief reminded that the new-comers would come with their wives to make their homes there, and would not be merely visitors as Moffat had been, and that their great work would be to teach and to preach the gospel. It was obvious even then that the chief's mind was

full of other things. He thought of certain temporal advantages which in his mind would be connected with their advent and residence in the country.

To the north-east of the Bakwena, on the road to the Matebele, lay the Bamangwato, a large tribe ruled by Sekhomi. The legal chief, by name Macheng, had been taken prisoner by the Matebele when a boy, about twenty years before. On his former journey to Mosilikatse Moffat had been importuned by Sechele and others to bring back Macheng, if possible, out of captivity. He had declined to do so, because it seemed to him to be trenching to an undesirable extent upon the region of politics. But on this occasion his objections had been overcome, especially when Sekhomi declared his willingness to abdicate his power in favour of Macheng, whose rights he never attempted to dispute.

Accordingly, when the main object of Moffat's journey was accomplished, he sought and obtained the release of Macheng. It was not a small matter to set free a captive, and even to forego such ransom as might have been expected in his case as the chief of a large tribe; but consent seems to have been readily given, and towards the end of the year Moffat turned his face homewards, accompanied by Macheng. On his arrival at Shoshong, the town of the Bamangwato, there was, of course, much excitement, and Macheng was welcomed back; but Moffat refused to give him over to any one but Sechele, in whose keeping he was when captured by the Matebele, and in accordance with whose request Moffat had obtained his liberation. On the arrival of the travellers at Lithubaruba, an immense concourse of Bechwanas, representing eight different tribes, were assembled, and in their presence Macheng was handed over, and shortly escorted back to his own people. The transaction was not attended with the best results. Sekhomi gave way, but never ceased to plot and agitate. After several revolutions and countless wars, which nearly led to the dismemberment of the tribe, Macheng and Sekhomi both died in exile, and the tribe is now ruled by Khame, the son of the latter, a man of more than ordinary character and enlightenment, and a decided Christian.

Mary Moffat to one of her Children.

“ July 13, 1857.

“ All pens have been going except mine, and I feel a sort of hankering after it too, though I dare not write much or it would so far stupefy me, as to cause me to forget some part of the provision necessary for your father's long journey. You can hardly conceive of the variety of things which go to equip a person on such an expedition, into a country totally uncivilized. The importance to the mission of Bessie's

having come out was never more evident than now. Your father would hardly have seen it his duty to leave me now had she not been here. As it is, all is comparatively easy. The poor heart will ache in anticipation of all these separations, and the life of privation and hardship which seems destined for so many loved members of my family. I cannot help contemplating what is before the Livingstones and yourself, as well as your father at his advanced age. Thus my sympathy is excessively excited—I say excessively, but this I ascribe to my physical debility, for what I would have faced courageously (when once convinced of my duty) seems now very formidable to me. I can, however, call to mind how we have been sustained and strengthened for the last forty years, and our lives preserved, till we have seen the whole of the precious volume in print in this language. Thus I take courage for you all, and doubt not you may be honoured to see greater things than these in this poor benighted country. The tribes in this part do not duly appreciate their privileges, and it may be that they will value them more when they see teachers passing them by; and then they will have to fall back on the written word like the Malagasy—and we have seen how quick and powerful has been the sword of the Spirit there. Conceive, then, our joy on the completion of such a work, and we feel that we owe much to the cause in which we are engaged as a proof of our gratitude for such an honour put upon us.”

On his return from his journey to Mosilikatse, Moffat found the news awaiting him that the Livingstones were starting for the Zambezi, and were to call at the Cape on their way; and that a large party of new missionaries had been appointed to commence the new Interior Missions. Mary Moffat had a strong conviction that if her daughter once went to the Zambezi she would not return, and here was the chance for a last meeting. Moffat himself saw an opportunity of meeting and conferring with the Doctor, who, though no longer in the service of the London Missionary Society, was expected to be an important auxiliary to operations among the Makololo. The path of duty seemed to be clear, and the Moffats started for the Cape, using the utmost expedition, travelling over the northern wastes of the Colony and through the Karroo for the first time in their lives in a horse waggon. In due time the Government expedition arrived, and after a short stay at the Cape went on its way; and Livingstone said good-bye for the last time to his wife's parents. She had suffered so much on the voyage that it was thought better for her to accompany the missionary party overland, with the view of meeting her husband on the Zambezi. It was some time before all arrived; and it was August before a start was made for the interior. Helmore was to go to the Makololo with Mackenzie and Price; Moffat to the Matebele with Sykes and Thomas. Moffat's younger son was to

accompany the latter party, sustained in the capacity of a missionary out of Livingstone's private resources. The latter, in giving up official connection with direct missionary work, felt a desire to have a sort of deputy to take his place, and devoted more than a fourth of his Government salary to this object.

During his stay in Cape Town, Moffat met with many proofs of goodwill. Old and faithful friends, whose friendship dated from days of darkness and evil report, welcomed him as warmly as ever after an absence of fifteen years. Beyond the limits of this circle there was a strong and widespread interest in the new undertakings, which at that time seemed to promise such great things for Tropical South Africa. Sir George Grey was then Governor, and showed an unusual and practical determination to forward the objects of the party.

Whilst there was much to encourage, there were also great difficulties to be overcome. One of those severe droughts, unhappily so common in the history of South Africa, made the long journey from Cape Town to the Orange River one continuous struggle. When the various parties reached the northern limit of the Colony, it was after a much more tedious journey than usual and at a ruinous cost in oxen. It was while struggling through the Karroo that sad news met the Moffats from Kuruman. The Batlaping, the southernmost of the Bechwana tribes, had hitherto managed to avoid collision with the Boers. Their country was in itself not so attractive as the well-wooded slopes and fruitful vales of the Bahurutse and Bakhatla, further to the north-east. Unfortunately, along the lower Vaal River there were people, mostly Korannas, in scattered bands, who recognized no chief and were guilty of occasional lawless acts. Some of the more turbulent spirits among the Batlaping, notably one or two of the young chiefs, followed their evil example, crossed the river into the Orange Free State in their company, and put to death the men of a Boer homestead, bringing away two of the women as captives. These, it may be said, were not ill-treated, and were eventually restored by the intervention of Edward Chapman, a trader. These infatuated freebooters brought upon themselves and upon their tribe severe chastisement. A Boer expedition crossed the Vaal River, attacked the Batlaping, whose principal chief, Gasebonwe, fell with many of his people. A large booty in cattle and other property was taken, and the force retired, promising to return shortly and to complete what they had begun, and to go on to the missionary station of Kuruman, which lay farther to the westward.

When the missionary party began to muster here towards the end of the year 1858, so far from an extension of work in the in-

terior, it seemed doubtful whether Kuruman itself would be spared.

The Free State people, having carried out what appeared to them just reprisals, had nothing more to say ; but the Transvaal Boers were strongly disposed to carry matters farther, and as the year 1859 wore on it became evident that mischief was brewing, and an expedition was on foot to attack Kuruman and to root out the mission there. At the same time a document was received from certain local officials on the north-western border of the Transvaal, informing Moffat that his intention to accompany a party of missionaries to the Zambezi would not be allowed, and that in case of his going he would be stopped by force. On these matters coming to the ears of Sir George Grey, he, as High Commissioner, caused it to be made known to the Boers that such things could not be tolerated ; and the result of this was that the malcontents in the Transvaal found themselves bereft of support among their own people, and were fain to drop their intention.

Several months were, however, lost, owing to the delay and uncertainty involved in these matters and in the extended preparations of such a large party of missionaries going to such a distance into the interior. The time was occupied by Moffat in attending to the wants of the station, and in pushing through the press an additional hymn-book. His wonderful energy seemed irresistible, and to grow at a time of life when other men would have been feeling inclined to take a little rest.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE NEW MISSIONS TO THE NORTH.

1859.

SOME changes of plan had to be made. It was evident that the hope of Mary Livingstone meeting her husband at the Zambezi was too uncertain to be counted upon, and she returned to the Cape. Ashton, so long Moffat's colleague at Kuruman, was transferring his service to the Griqua Mission at Philippolis, and left in the month of May. He had been called in the month of February to suffer the irreparable loss of his wife, the partner of his work for sixteen years.

Mackenzie had decided not to accompany this expedition to the Makololo in the first instance, but to follow a year after.

Robert Moffat to his brother Richard.

“ June 22, 1859.

“ A short letter at any time is better than none, and as it will be the last I can address you before leaving for the interior, I embrace this opportunity. The dark cloud which has for a time hung over our prospects has to all appearance dispersed for the present, and within a month we all hope to take our departure for the Matebele and Makololo Missions. We have been put to much trouble and expense as well as delay from the threatened attack of the Transvaal Boers on the Kuruman, on account of the removal of goods to the Colony, which have only just been brought back. The Boers appear to have been shamed by letters from the Governor, as well as by influence exerted by others, into the abandonment of their purpose. Whether they will attempt to prevent us from passing their assumed territory remains to be seen. The subject has called for fervent prayer to God, here and in Cape Town. These prayers have been heard, and to God would we give all the praise. We also consider it an omen for good, believing that He who has thus dispersed the threatening storm will still make our way plain in carrying the light of the glorious gospel to the dark regions beyond. If all go well, I shall in all

probability remain about a twelvemonth among the Matebele, or at all events until I shall see that, under the Divine blessing, the mission is established.

"I think it is since I wrote to you that Mrs. Ashton died. Not long after, John's son, born at Beaufort, died. That was soon followed by the death of Mrs. Sykes and the child to whom she had given birth. Since then Mr. Ross, at Lekatlong, has lost a daughter, so that death in our missionary band is warning us to be also ready. I am much as usual, but the worse of wear ; and have been, ever since our return from the Cape, worried almost to death with cares and engagements—now, with all the preparations of myself and others, getting to a climax. Mrs. Moffat is not nearly so strong as she was, but, like our late beloved mother, will be doing."

On the seventh of July, 1859, the first division of the party started from Kuruman. They were Mr. and Mrs. Helmore and four children, and Mr. and Mrs. Price. There was Tabe, a native teacher from Lekatlong, who had determined to accompany his old missionary, and there was the usual staff of native attendants. Every one was impressed with the gravity of the occasion. The end of the journey was a point a thousand miles farther into the interior, to which none of those now going had ever been except a couple of the native servants, who had accompanied Livingstone on one of his former journeys. All were happy in the thought that a start was really being made, but there was a calm and subdued feeling which befitted the occasion. They went out, knowing not whither they went, and what was in store for them ; but they went in faith. It was just a year and a half after this that Roger Price returned, bringing with him two orphan children of the Helmores ; and they, with the broken remnant of their Bechwana followers, were all that remained of the missionary band. The story of the failure of the Makololo Mission is well known—failure in one sense, but not in the highest, for such episodes leave behind them influences which can never die. For some years nothing was done, but latterly the work has been recommenced. Arnot, of Glasgow, has been for a time alone, verily a pioneer of apostolic mould ; but the Coillards and their niece, with their colleague Jeanmairat, have now gone to establish a mission for the Paris Society.

A week after the Makololo party had started, Mr. Thomas and John Moffat, with their wives, left, to be followed speedily by Robert Moffat and Mr. Sykes. Once more Mary Moffat was called to part with her husband, and with her two daughters was left in comparative solitude ; there being, for a time, no one left even to carry on the public services on the station, except the

native elders of the church, until the Mackenzies returned from their visit to the colony.

Robert Moffat overtook his own company at Sechele's, but the Helmores and Prices were too far on their way; and although some communications took place by letter, at Shoshong the roads diverged and the Matebele party turned to the north-east, and saw their companions no more.

From Sechele's town to Shoshong, the headquarters of the Bamangwato, the road crossed a corner of the Kalahari Desert. The country consisted of slightly rolling plains of deep white sand. In one part of this there was an interval of sixty miles without water. It was a hard struggle to get the train of six heavily-loaded waggons across this thirsty desert. Progress was slower than usual. On former occasions Moffat had travelled this road alone, with the object of spending a few months only in the interior, but now it was a question of carrying requisites for the permanent settlement of families. When civilized people put together what they need for two or three years to come for residence among utter barbarians, seven hundred miles from the nearest shop, they make the discovery—if they have not made it before—that their wants are neither few nor simple. By dint of hard work by day and by night the desert was crossed, and the waggons were drawn up under the shadow of the Bamangwato mountains.

From this point onwards the sand ceased, and the course lay through a wooded region, which continued the same in character to the end of their journey. The country onwards had by this time become better known than it was when Moffat first groped his way through it five years before; but as yet there was no beaten track. Each traveller made his own way, and left but little trace behind him. So when we had coasted round the eastern end of the hills, and had set our faces to the north-east, there lay before us a region, as far as the eye could reach, almost level and of a dark colour, on account of the unbroken woodland. Day by day the waggons followed in line. Two or three pioneers had to walk in front seeking the most easy path. Fortunately, as a rule, the forest was not dense. The trees stood fairly a part, the undergrowth being mostly long, rank grass, through which the foremost waggon ploughed its way as through a field of corn, each succeeding vehicle finding progress easier, until, when the whole train had passed, there was something like a beaten track. Here and there ant-hills, some of huge size, had to be avoided, and occasionally great stones or stumps lay hidden in the grass, and sorely tried the wheels and axles of the heavy waggons. Occasionally the forest was found too dense, a halt had to be called,

and all who could chop, white or black, had to fall to, until, by their united efforts, a way had been cleared. Foremost among these would be the veteran himself, who would never allow the younger men to get the better of him in any form of activity. Hour by hour this slow progress would go on; for days no clear view of the horizon could be obtained, or indeed any view more distant than a few hundred yards. Now, again, the way would be barred by one of the many channels in which water flowed only after the summer rains. The river-beds were full of white crystalline sand, and under this sand water was to be found pure and cool. It often took a good part of a day to get the waggons down and up the steep banks and across the expanse of sand, often eighty or a hundred yards broad. Each day as the sun began to sink behind the tree-tops a halt would be called, a space sufficiently open would be fixed upon, the waggons were drawn into a circle, the oxen unyoked and allowed to graze, while all hands were again at work felling mimosa bushes, dragging them to the waggons, and making a kraal. Some would be collecting large heaps of fire-wood. As the shades of evening fell, the oxen would be enclosed in the kraal, the fires would be lighted, cooking would commence in real earnest. When the travellers were ready for rest a call would be sounded, all would assemble at one fire, a hymn would be sung where no such sound was ever heard before, prayer would be offered, and in another hour nothing was to be heard but the chirping of the beetles, the snoring of the sleepers, and the occasional inarticulate sounds by which the tired oxen showed that they were contentedly chewing their cud.

Very little disturbance was experienced from wild beasts. The season was dry; the game had moved to more favoured localities, and the lions had followed suit. Occasionally the distant roar of the latter was to be heard during the silence of the night, but it was not unpleasant at a distance. The occasional dismal howl, or rather yell, of the prowling hyæna, who used to hang about the outskirts of the camp, was not much regarded; and still less the cheerful yelping of the jackals. Not often a sudden hubbub at one of the fires made night hideous, when it would be discovered that a snake or a larger scorpion than usual had insinuated himself among the sleepers round the camp-fires. The nights were always still; even if it blew during the day the nights were calm, and at this season of the year cloudless, so that there would be a bright moon, or starlight. As the dawn crept up the sky the camp would awake to life, the still burning fires would be replenished, the oxen turned out to graze, and the coffee kettles put on for a hasty breakfast before the start. Once or twice there were

forced marches for want of water, meat would run short on account of the scarcity of game, an axle would break by a waggon running against a stump or rock ; the energy of the leader rose over each impediment. He seemed to have the strength of three men, and was here, there, and everywhere in turn.

At length, twenty-six days after leaving Shoshong, signs began to appear of approach to the land of the Matebele. The first outposts of the Makalaka, a tributary people, were reached, and from this point onwards, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles to the headquarters of the chief, the journey was through an inhabited country.

On their progress through Bechwanaland it had been necessary for some of the party to buy oxen with which to fill up their dwindling teams. It proved that these were infected with "lung sickness," a disease which had ravaged South Africa, but which had never reached the dominions of Mosilikatse. Moffat saw that it would not do to run any risk of connecting the advent of the gospel among the Matebele with that of such a scourge as a pestilence among the myriads of their cattle. On his arrival at the firsts outposts he sent forward messengers explaining this to the chief, and proposing that the draught cattle of the expedition should be left in quarantine, whilst Mosilikatse might supply his own oxen to bring the party to headquarters. A second message had to be sent before the chief could be brought to see the merits of the case ; and then he gave orders that the oxen were to be left as proposed, but that as his own draught oxen were "all dead" he would send men to drag the waggons. Moffat knew well enough what value to attach to the statement about the oxen, but it was best to let things take their course, and to fall back on patience, a commodity without which little can be done in the interior of Africa. In due time a band of warriors appeared, but they were only eighty in number—not half enough for the task of dragging six heavily-loaded waggons over hill and down dale, through gullies and brushwood, for upwards of a hundred miles. After ten days' valiant struggle on their part, the slow progress made convinced the despot that his whim could not be gratified, and at last the oxen—which he had kept back for reasons best known to himself—made their appearance.

Unfortunately, though originally trained, it was years since most of them had been in the yoke. A whole day was taken up in compelling the unwilling submission of a sufficient number to drag three of the waggons, and progress was but slow. At last, however, on the twenty-eighth of October, the party approached the chief's camp—some waggons drawn by oxen, others by men.

Mosilikatse, with a very small number of people, was encamped in a dense, gloomy forest on the banks of the Impembezi.

He received his old friend with his usual cordiality, but as time wore on it became evident that something was wrong. The younger missionaries, who had come to settle in the country, and to whom it was of importance to provide for the future by getting seed into the ground, as the rainy season was commencing, were naturally eager to get to work. In this their senior and leader fully sympathized, and many were his earnest representations to the chief that it was desirable at once to point out a place for a station. From day to day he was met with evasions and delays. The days became weeks. The summer advanced, and the way-worn travellers had to endure days of tropical heat, with a succession of equally tropical thunderstorms, with no better shelter than the canvas tilts of their waggons and the tents that they had pitched. Happily their camp was on a slope of hard ground, which did not get muddy. It was a trying time to all; not least so to the older missionary, who could not understand the change that had come over the chief, and who began, not without reason, to suspect that he was repenting of the permission he had so freely given for the establishment of a mission in his country. This suspicion proved to be correct. During Moffat's visit to the Cape in the previous year Mosilikatse had sent messengers out to visit Mahura, then chief of the Batlaping, at Taung. These were present when the Boer attack upon the Batlaping took place; and the Batlaping, soured against all white men, had sent a message that missionaries not only destroyed the old customs, such as polygamy, but that wherever they came the Boers followed in due course. The experience—which the Matebele had not forgotten—of the advent of the American missionaries at Mosega, followed so closely by the attack of the Boers, gave colour to this charge; and now that this large party of new-comers were actually on the spot, not merely as visitors, but to settle in the country, the fears, perhaps more of his people than of the chief himself, were aroused, and the question was in actual debate as to whether the settlement should be allowed.

This suspense was not even relieved by the consolation that the missionaries were in contact with the people, for there were scarcely any people on the spot, it being Mosilikatse's own encampment, and not a town. As time wore on things got worse instead of better. At the beginning of December the chief, without a moment's warning, broke up his camp and removed with his waggons to a town at some distance, telling the missionaries that he would send people with them to the spot where they

were to settle, and where he would join them afterwards. As he did not supply them with oxen for their waggons, it was difficult to understand what he meant, and for a fortnight longer things seemed as gloomy as they well could do. Day after day the missionaries waited, their waggon supplies diminishing, and the chief having apparently forgotten that they were dependent upon him for meat, for there was no one from whom they could buy.

About the middle of the month there was a sudden change in the whole aspect of affairs. One morning two headmen arrived with beaming faces. They seemed to have had a load taken off their minds. Mosilikatse was on his way to Inyati, and had sent two teams of oxen, with which the missionaries were to go and join him there at once. No time was lost; tents were struck, waggons packed, and a start made. The distance was about twenty-five miles, but it took a week's hard work to get to the end of the journey. Owing to the rains, some parts of the country were little better than a morass. On the twenty-second of December, after almost incredible exertions, the whole party was assembled on the outskirts of the kraal of Inyati. All was settled. A spot which looked well for a station, about a mile from the town, was pointed out; and after spending Christmas Day together in their camp, the last mile was travelled with no little satisfaction, and the new-comers felt that they had reached home. Each selected for himself a tree under which to pitch his tent, until he should have raised a more solid dwelling. Moffat had now accomplished one stage of his undertaking. To him the experience of the previous two months had been perhaps the sorest trial of faith that he had known in his life. At one period even he had wavered in doubt whether it would be possible to establish the mission: and yet, while harassed with doubt himself, and chafing under the suspense and enforced inactivity of these two months, it was necessary for him to prop up the weaker faith of his companions, who had never seen Mosilikatse under any more favourable aspect, and, not having the same strong personal bond of friendship, were inclined to think that whilst other doors were open to the gospel, it was wasting time to press its acceptance upon a chief and people so unwilling.

Mary Moffat to her Brother-in-law.

"Feb. 22, 1860.

"MY DEAR BROTHER RICHARD,—It is now so very long since we heard from you, that we hardly know how things are with our Scotch friends. So many of our contemporaries are dropping off one after the other that we scarcely expect to receive a post without some such information, and we cannot help feeling it will soon be said of us too,

'They are gone.' Well, the grand thing is to be found prepared when the summons does come, having our loins girt about and our lamps burning, waiting the arrival of the Bridegroom. If I had not felt it before, I should do so now, that all earthly things are vain and trifling, except we are enabled by Divine grace to use them to His glory. My strength is gone, and I begin to feel myself of so little use in the world that my affections are more and more loosened from it, and I feel that I could very willingly leave it; for I know in whom I have believed, and, when heart and flesh fail, He will keep that which I have committed unto Him. I have very little hope of meeting you on this side Jordan, but if we may meet on the other side it will make rich amends for all the pain and separation here. Your brother, my dear husband, is much more likely for life than I am, yet I think he feels very much as I do on the subject—that is, he lives under a conviction that his time here may be short. He has been called to an arduous duty, that of commencing a new mission amongst a thoroughly barbarous and naturally unpromising people, because under the dominion of an absolute tyrant, to whom they yield all the powers of body and mind in the most abject subjection. Nothing short of Almighty power can make them dare to receive that instruction which is now offered to them; but the Saviour who said 'Go,' has also said, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth.' As you will perceive from Robert's letter, they have had their discouragements from the very outset, though eventually light dawned upon them. It was especially painful to him, who was expected by his influence to have ensured for them a more cordial reception. The enemy had been at work, and fears had been excited. We can hardly wonder that subjects of Mosilikatse, after remaining with the enemies of the gospel in this quarter for some months, should have imbibed notions such as they did, and should take them to the ears of their master; and then he had so many months to con over them before they could be counteracted.

"Nearly the same thing took place in the commencement of this mission. After Mr. Campbell had promised to send teachers, the enemy crept in and said, 'Do not receive them; they are agents of the Cape Government, just coming to tame your young men, who will then be taken to become soldiers.' Had your brother urged the commencing of this mission he would have had more painful exercises than what he had; but he had not done so, but went in obedience to the wish of the Directors, though much to his own satisfaction, for he and I had often wondered together what end was to be answered by all the intercourse he had had with that people, and the extraordinary attachment of that poor savage to him. When, therefore, the proposal came from London, the question seemed to be answered, and we both stood ready to make any sacrifice to which we might be called for so great an object. I feel much for him at his age, for though yet strong, he is not what he once was, and it costs him more to labour so hard and endure privations than it did in middle life; and I know him too well to suppose, whatever be his resolutions, that he will not have much hard labour and consequent fatigue while he does remain."

CHAPTER XXXII.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MATEBELE MISSION.

1860.

THOUGH his principal object was gained when Moffat saw his younger companions settled at Inyati, yet the labours which remained were not few or small. The first six months of the year 1860 were a time of incessant toil, in which none wrought harder than he. There is no lack of manual labour in all new undertakings in an uncivilized country. There were houses to be built, waggons to be repaired, garden ground to be broken up. Early and late Moffat was to be found at work, always at work—it might be at the sawpit, or the blacksmith's forge, or the carpenter's bench, or aiding the younger men where their own knowledge and skill failed them. In addition to all this, the chief must have a share of his company. It had been hoped that regular communication might be established with the Livingstone expedition on the Zambezi by way of Matebeleland, and as soon as matters had fairly settled down Moffat addressed himself to the task of persuading Mosilikatse to give aid to the project; but it soon became clear that the plan could not be carried out. It was with a good deal of difficulty that the chief was induced to send a party to the Victoria Falls with a post for Helmore and Price. It was more evident than ever that he was determined not to have the country opened in that direction. It was quite enough for his suspicious nature to have one outlet to the world by way of Kuruman. There he and his people feared no danger; but elsewhere the policy pursued was one of absolute isolation. Such was that isolation, that nothing could be learned of what had become of the other missionary party at this time lying stricken with fever at Linyanti. It was not till more than twelve months later that the little company at Inyati heard the news that the

Makololo Mission was broken up, and that a mere remnant had returned to Kuruman to tell the tale; yet a fortnight's travelling, had the way been open, would have brought the news.

As time went on it became apparent that the Matebele country was not so entirely free from fever as had been hoped, though much more healthy than the immediate vicinity of the Zambezi. Fever invaded the missionary camp. The Europeans enjoyed immunity from attack, but the Bechwanas from Kuruman seemed especially liable to its inroads. For a while a stop was put to work, and gloom overspread the little community. Only one fatal case occurred, and as the cooler weather drew on, the invalids plucked up courage, work was resumed, and all was hopeful again.

In the *Sunday at Home* for 1875 there is a paper by Moffat himself, of which the following paragraph relates to this juncture:

“There was a young man among those engaged to accompany the missionaries from the Kuruman to the Matebele. He had been for some time one of the inquirers, and would soon have been received into church fellowship. He was clever and intelligent. After some months our camp was visited by the well-known African fever. Everything was done that our knowledge or experience could suggest. It was not long before most of the patients were recovering. Marelolé, the young man, had a relapse. He became insensible to all around him, and to every entreaty to take something which might again do him good. He lay for two days motionless in a comatose condition, from which no effort could rouse him. On the evening of the second day I was at work repairing my waggon, about thirty yards from the house in which the sick man lay. I heard some one singing with a strong, clear voice. Inquiring who was singing to the sick man, ‘It is himself,’ was the reply. I hastened to the spot, and found it even so. He was lying as I had left him about an hour before, but with a firm voice he was still singing one of our hymns, which embodied some of the striking parts of the 84th Psalm. When I entered and knelt down beside him he was singing the last verse, to which I listened with inexpressible feelings of gratitude, presuming that there was a change for the best. I addressed him—he was deaf; I tried to arouse him—it was vain; I felt his pulse—it was performing its last beats; and while I was looking at his motionless lips, his spirit departed to that heavenly Zion about which he had just been singing.”

In the month of June Moffat felt that his work at Inyati was done. He had spared no labour of body or of mind to aid in planting the mission. So far as his personal influence could go, he had done all. He was willing to have remained longer if there had been anything for him to add to the exceeding abundance of his services. He had smoothed a hundred difficulties, such as

must of necessity arise with a chief and people so jealous and suspicious, and he had taught his younger brethren lessons of patient and humble self-devotion which none of them could ever forget.

On Sunday morning, the seventeenth of June, he walked up to the chief's kraal for the purpose of speaking to Mosilikatse and his people for the last time on the great themes of life, death, and eternity. As we followed him along the narrow path from our camp to the town, about a mile distant, winding through fields and around patches of the uncleared, primeval forest, no step was more elastic and no frame more upright than his. In spite of unceasing toil amid tropical heats and miasmatic exhalations, in spite of cares and disappointments, his wonderful energy seemed unabated. The old chief was, as usual, in his large courtyard, and gave kindly greeting. They were a strange contrast as they sat side by side—the Matebele tyrant and his friend the messenger of peace. The word of command was given; the warriors filed in and ranged themselves in a great semicircle, sitting on the ground; the women crept as near as they could, behind huts and other points of concealment, and all listened in breathless silence to the last words of "Moshete." He himself knew that they were his last words, and that his work in Matebeleland was now given over to younger hands. It was a solemn service, and closed the long series of such in which the friend of Mosilikatse had striven to pierce the dense darkness of soul which covered him and his people.

On the morrow there was the last leave-taking, and Moffat started for his distant home. That was twenty-four years ago. Of the three men whom he left in the work, one has passed to his rest, another has retired from the field, and the third, William Sykes, is still at his post. Mosilikatse, faithful to his promise, was a steady friend to the new missionaries; and in this respect his son, Lobengula, has followed in his steps, but the mission has as yet been without visible success. Time only will tell what has been the meaning of this strange history. It is more than fifty years since Moffat first visited the Matebele. In the meantime attempts have been made by the Paris missionaries and by the American board to establish missions among them, but in vain. Sykes and those now associated with him have been able to maintain a foothold in the country, but it is difficult to see any result commensurate with the existence of a mission for twenty-five years. The day will declare it!

Mary Moffat, meanwhile at Kuruman, writes to her son on the fourth of April:

“On the tenth of next month it will be twenty-five years since I parted with your father when he visited the tyrant Mosilikatse the second time, he being then the terror of the tribes in the latitudes north of us, and it was deemed prudent to conciliate him that the interior might not be closed against the progress of the gospel. How little did I then think that the very babe who sat before me on his nurse's lap was destined to go to that savage people to hold before them the lamp of eternal life. Unable as I then was to hold you in my embrace, your sweet smiles, which in my solitude I so often witnessed, are yet engraven on my now shattered memory. Often did I wonder how that dear child could seem to love me so much, though I could not fondle him or have him to drink at life's fountain. I could only laugh and talk very feebly then. Now, after what I have been spared to see, those sweet infant smiles so tenaciously held in my remembrance seem to have had language. Methinks they said, ‘Cheer up, dear mother; though you think your course is nearly finished, I am destined to live to fulfil your heart's desire. I shall yet become a missionary to that very people for whom you have so cheerfully parted from him who could, better than any one else, have succoured and cherished you in the season of debility and weakness.’

“In those lone hours I had many meditations, as a matter of course, and I did then fondly hope that the sacrifice I had made was acceptable to my Lord and Master; but little did I think that you, my dear son, would so many years afterward have your name lisp'd by those rude barbarians as their missionary. But so it is, and may you and dear E. have grace to persevere with your colleagues till you see the influences of the Holy Spirit descending upon those poor ignorant men and women, till of such stones God does raise up children unto Abraham. Wonders and miracles of grace are being wrought in all parts of the world where the light of the Word has reached, and why not among the Matebele? Almighty power is needful to enlighten the most polished, as well as those who have not one theological idea, and the Saviour has said, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.’ Why, then, should we doubt? You may all have much to suffer, many, many privations to endure, and great sacrifices to make; but nothing is so calculated to quiet our spirits under such trials as to remember what Jesus forsook for us, and what He endured through life from poverty and shame, independent of the sacrifice on the cross. His was all for poor perishing worms; while we are but worms, doing what we can for fellow-worms. Have good courage. We can never stoop as the Saviour did—He, the mighty God. Many modern missionaries have suffered as much as you may be called to do, but what glorious fruits do we now see!”

Moffat found himself once more in his own home, after an absence of twelve months. Ashton also was returning. The duties of the station had been carried on for a time by Mackenzie, who had now left to follow his comrades to the Makololo, but only to meet Price coming back, and the mission abandoned.

Kuruman was again to become a scene of systematic and settled labour.

Robert Moffat to Dr. Tidman.

“ Nov. 12, 1860.

“ It is only four days since I forwarded a letter to you which contained what little information had reached us respecting our Makololo brethren. It was favourable, but alas ! alas ! it only seemed to lift us up that we might be plunged into the depth of sorrow. Helmore, the amiable, the unwearied, the apostolic Helmore, and his kind and devoted wife are no more inhabitants of this lower world. This distressing intelligence reached us last night by one of our people who had been on an elephant hunt as far as the Victoria Falls. He there met with people from Linyanti, who, when asked about the welfare of the missionaries, replied, in the fashion of the country, that they were all dead with the fever.”

This sad story proved to be to a large extent true. It was, however, ascertained that Mr. Price, with the remnant of the party, had returned, and that they were somewhere on the road back again. A long time had, however, elapsed, and no further tidings had come. Moffat, ever ready, determined to set out in search. He had a difficulty in getting people to go with him, but at last succeeded. He met what remained of the original expedition, and the Mackenzies with them, near Shoshong, and all returned sorrowfully to Kuruman.

Whilst carrying on their own work at Kuruman, the Moffats were ever looking to the north-east. The Makololo Mission had collapsed, but that among the Matebele still held its own, and it was with intense interest that every line from the missionaries was read. No pains were spared to supply their wants, and to convey to them in their great isolation news from the outer world. This was no easy matter to accomplish at such a distance, and among a people so disliked and shunned by their neighbours as the Matebele. The welfare of the mission at Inyati was bound up with that of their own at Kuruman. There was a family tie, but, over and above this, there was that entire consecration to the supreme object of carrying the gospel to the heathen which overflowed every other consideration. Another link of personal and family interest was to be formed. On the twenty-second of October, 1861, Bessie Moffat became the wife of Roger Price, and in the course of a short time went with him to Shoshong, in the hope of the way being opened to join the Matebele Mission. This object was afterwards relinquished, and the Prices took up the work among the Bakwena of Sechele, that station having become vacant by the retirement of the Hanoverian missionaries.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FAMILY BEREAVEMENTS.

1862-1867.

WHEN Moffat had returned from meeting what remained of the Makololo Mission, his work north of Kuruman was done, so far as his personal presence was concerned. No more was he to be seen climbing the hills of the Bakwena and Bamangwato. No more was his voice to be heard pleading with chiefs in their court yards, and with their people in assembled congregations, beseeching them, as he was never weary of doing, to put aside their feuds and fightings, and, more than all, their brutish indifference to the gospel, and to arise and come into the light. But the stream of his interest flowed as strong as ever. Both he and his faithful partner watched with intense anxiety the progress of events in the Matebele country. Whilst regarding with goodwill the newly-established Hanoverian Missions, it was natural that their feelings should be most deeply stirred on the behalf of those who still further on were trying to plant the gospel among a people for whom Moffat had done much, and had endeavoured to do so much more.

They deemed no care or trouble too great. No opportunity or shadow of an opportunity was lost of sending post-bags and supplies; and when, after months of isolation at Inyati, the little community there would be roused into joy and excitement by an arrival from the far South and news from the outer world, there were always words of warm encouragement from Kuruman, and stores of practical sympathy from the patriarchal pair, who seemed to live over again in Matebeleland their old hardships and struggles in the early days at Lattakoo.

It was enough that any one was an interior missionary. At Kuruman he was sure of attention to the forwarding of his commissions; he was sure of a warm welcome and of good cheer for

weeks together ; he was sure of sympathy in all his plans and endeavours ; and he might be equally sure that, whether present or absent, no prayers would be more earnest or sincere than those offered daily at the family altar at Kuruman for the success of his work. Meanwhile, Kuruman itself was still a scene of activity. A revision of the New Testament was in progress ; the youngest daughter, now the only child at home, was working hard at schools and classes ; Mr. Ashton, after a short absence, was once more at work with his old colleague.

In 1862 a great blow fell upon the home at Kuruman, which seemed to add visibly to the weight of years already becoming heavy. For some time Moffat's elder son, Robert, had been carrying on trade on the station. He was a man of great energy, and added to commercial pursuits a love of philological study. He had commenced a laborious work on the Sechwana language. He had been in poor health, and, regardless of this, had been overtaking his strength. His wife and family were at Durban, in Natal, and he had arranged to start early in August for the purpose of bringing them to Kuruman, where he had made a home for them. When the time came he was not well ; but, in his anxiety to keep his engagement, he started in opposition to the wishes of all. It was, however, thought that the journey in a comfortable waggon, with good servants, would be beneficial rather than not. It was otherwise ordered. He had only reached a point six hours' distant when he became worse, and before any of his own family could reach him he had passed away. It was a merciful providence that Mrs. Ross, the wife of a missionary, a woman of good judgment and strong character, was travelling in the same direction, and finding him in a dying state, remained with him till the end.

His loss was deplored far and wide in the Bechwana country. He was a man of impetuous disposition, but generous to a fault. By his manly and upright dealing he had gained the confidence of the natives, and had endeared himself to them ; and he had become a great help to the mission, though not officially connected with it. The loss fell heavily upon his parents. They had been greatly exercised in mind by his going into the native trade ; but he had succeeded in showing them that it was not necessary for him to lower his standard of uprightness, and they had come to lean much upon him, so that he had promised to be not only a help to the mission, but a stay to them in their declining years.

A great multitude came to show their regard for the departed, both for his own sake and as the son of their missionary. It was a help and a comfort to the household plunged into mourning

that there was no lack of gentle and willing hands to perform the last melancholy duties. Moffat's colleague, William Ashton, a man who had himself borne many sorrows, with the hearty aid of the few English neighbours, took everything in hand, and he conducted at the grave a service full of tender sympathy.

Not many weeks after this, sad news came from the Zambezi. Mary, the wife of Dr. Livingstone, had gone to her rest—four months before her brother. The news was scarcely unexpected. Her mother had made up her mind at once, when she heard that her Mary had left for that fever-stricken region, that she had gone "a sacrifice ready offered up;" and though the end came sooner than even she had quite looked for it, yet it had been to her as an object of contemplation, only a matter of time. So strong, however, was the missionary feeling, that half the sting was taken away by the joy that her daughter had been permitted to meet her end in the front rank of those who had gone to strive for the welfare of the heathen children of Africa. There was much of this Spartan fortitude, or rather, perhaps, of the martyr spirit, in Mary Moffat, which strove with her intense and womanly love for her own kindred,. This latter showed itself in her unceasing care for them all, and in her efforts to reach them, wherever they were, if only by letters. In distant New Zealand, or in the United States—it mattered little where—whether nephew or niece, brother or grandchild, each was remembered.

A year after their own bereavement the Moffats were called to sympathize with others. News came that William Ross, the missionary at Lekatlong, about eighty miles distant to the south-east, was seriously ill. This was enough. In a few hours Moffat was on his way; he had the sad satisfaction of doing all that could be done to alleviate suffering, and of succouring the lonely widow and the weeping children.

The death of Ross led to Ashton being transferred to Lekatlong, and for a while the whole weight of duty at Kuruman rested on Moffat's shoulders. This was more than was fit or desirable. His energies were flagging, and his health failing. Early in the year 1865 an event occurred which taxed his physical frame, and deeply wounded his spirit at the same time. For some months a young man living on the station, who had hitherto borne a promising character, had begun to show signs of a disordered mind. His vagaries were endured by his neighbours as long as they were merely annoying, but they became at last too serious to be quietly tolerated. This was a contingency for which no provision existed in a community like that at Kuruman, where for years crimes of violence had been unknown, and where moral influence alone had

been found sufficient to maintain order. The comparatively feeble patriarchal control exercised by certain headmen was not equal to the emergency. An appeal could have been made to the Batlaping chiefs, but it was thought best to avoid this as long as possible. It was necessary for the missionary to give his advice and co-operation. Under his superintendence measures were taken to impose a certain amount of restraint. This was too partial to prevent mischief, and had the effect of exciting in the lunatic himself a violent personal animosity against Moffat. One evening, returning home from the church in the dark, he was fallen upon by the unhappy man, who, armed with a knob kerrie, inflicted some terrible blows, and then fled, apparently frightened at his own violence. But for the wonderful tenacity of the iron frame the consequences must have been serious; as it was, the heart was sorely grieved, and it was many months before the shadow of this sorrow was removed. The event caused a profound sensation; the culprit was arrested and removed to another part of the country until it was seen that his mental condition gave no further ground for alarm.

Mary Moffat to one of her Children.

“ August 9, 1863.

“ I am sorry that your father is not here to add his share to what we now send. Doubtless Janie will have told you that poor brother Ross’s sufferings have ended, and that he has entered into rest. His end was emphatically ‘ peace.’ He was full two months very ill, and needed much attention. It is cause for devout thankfulness to me that your father was there, for besides the common debt which we all owe to each other in such circumstances, I felt I could never repay Mrs. Ross for her kind attention to our own dear departed, when we were all unconscious of what was going on.

“ Mr. Ross has been a hard-working, plodding man in evangelistic work. Itinerating seemed to be his *forte*, and we calculated on his holding on for a long time to come, being in nowise feeble in health; but his Master had otherwise ordered, and now there is a blank in this region to be filled up (for a while at least) by the brethren here, unless some of you young men have to retreat southward; this our noblest principles forbid us to hope for, but the will of the Lord must be done. What we see going on in other parts of the world precludes despair even for those dark places where your lot is cast. Look at what has taken place at Abbeokuta, in West Africa, and take courage. You will see the post has arrived, and we have more hopeful news of Madagascar. As Mr. Thomas has the papers you will see in that of the 11th of July a letter; but we cannot feel sure about the real state of feeling until we see something from Mr. Ellis’s own pen.”

Towards the end of 1865 the mission was reinforced by the arrival of John Brown from England, and Moffat’s own son, having

come out from the Matebele, his labours were in a measure lightened. He took advantage of this to push on more zealously the work of Scripture revision, the preparing of additional hymns, and the carrying of smaller works through the press. The now narrow circle of his Scottish relations was still more contracted by the death of his aunt, Jean Gardiner, and his brother Richard. The latter had been his steadfast correspondent from the early years of his missionary life. His letters were not frequent, but they were regular, and when they came they were something to read, containing as they did the annals of the home at Inverkeithing and of its surroundings; then a digest of the political news of the day, and an array of ecclesiastical items; enough matter in fact closely written into an enormous sheet to have filled a small newspaper. By such means, in days when public journals were a rarity, an interest had been kept up in the outer world which had never grown faint.

For many years the Paris Evangelical Society had been represented in Bechwanaland by a station at Motito, about thirty-six miles to the north-east of Kuruman. This station had latterly been held by Jean Frédoux, who had married Moffat's second daughter. Frédoux was a man of gentle disposition, addicted to study, possibly the last man among the missionaries in Bechwanaland whom any one would have expected to fall a victim to violence in a country where missionaries, whatever might have been their hardships and trials, had been almost entirely exempt from such forms of suffering. Missionaries had hitherto, even from the earliest times, found their persons and lives safe among the natives of South Africa, who have heathenish vices enough, but certainly have not been noted for treachery or bloodthirstiness.

Unfortunately the development of trade had brought into the country a good many characters of a different stamp from the respectable storekeepers who had hitherto been found aids to the mission. These waifs of civilization had drifted into the country, had obtained waggons and a few goods on credit from some merchant, and used to wander from one native village to another; and, whilst carrying on some sort of trade, they debased others and were themselves debased, coming in contact with a race in whom the vices of heathenism were still strong, and among whom Christianity was still in its infancy.

Early in March, 1866, Frédoux started on a tour to the westward to carry on evangelistic work among the Barolong villages along the margin of the Kalahari Desert. Whilst at Morokweng one of the class of unfortunates above referred to arrived. The news had preceded him that he had been guilty of atrocious con-

duct at Frédoux's own station. The chief at Morokweng and his people took the matter up warmly. They insisted upon the trader returning to Kuruman and submitting his conduct to investigation there, where a sufficient number of white people could be assembled to go into the case. He refused, and on it becoming apparent that the natives would take him by force, he entrenched himself in his waggon, with all his guns loaded, and dared any one to lay hands upon him.

Frédoux, whose camp was at a little distance, seeing that matters were becoming serious, went over to try and bring the man to reason by persuasion. He drew near, and, standing by the side of the waggon, within earshot, but out of sight, gently urged the trader to go quietly to Kuruman, assuring him that the people were resolved that he should go, if not peaceably, then by force. To this there was only a blasphemous refusal. One who was standing in a position to command a view of what passed inside of the waggon, and who survived the catastrophe, testified that at this juncture he saw the man strike a match, and in a moment an explosion took place. There were two hundred and fifty pounds of powder in the waggon. The waggon itself and its misguided occupant were blown to atoms; the mangled form of Frédoux was found not far away: he had passed to his rest after a blameless and laborious career. Twelve natives also lost their lives, and about thirty more were injured.

Directly the sad news reached Kuruman Moffat hastened to succour his widowed daughter, and to consign to the grave at Motito the remains of his late son-in-law. It was another sore blow, and added materially to the cares and anxieties of the aged missionary and his wife to the end of their days. A few months later the shadow of death again darkened the doors of the little community at Kuruman. The Browns had taken up their abode and work there. Mrs. Brown was a woman of exceptional accomplishments and great energy of character. Her removal was one of those enigmas respecting which all human penetration is at fault. She was on the very threshold of what seemed to be her work; she was entering upon it full of earnest hope; she had shown a special aptness for learning the language: but Divine wisdom saw what was best and she was called away. Shortly after his wife's death Mr. Brown removed to Lekatlong, and was afterwards appointed to take up his position at Taung, the headquarters of the Batlaping tribe, where he remained for some years.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DEPARTURE FOR ENGLAND.

1868, 1869.

MOFFAT was thus left once more in sole charge of the Kuruman until early in 1868, when he was joined by his son. For two years more he held on his way, but the conviction began to force itself upon him that he was really getting old—a conviction not easily received. He had been so long the central figure, not only of the mission but of all matters in Bechwanaland, and so accustomed to take the lead, that it was difficult to imagine anything different. As long as he remained at Kuruman it was not possible for him to rest, and he was often drawn on to exertion which told upon him afterwards. He suffered during the winter months from a short and constant cough, which during the nights aggravated his natural tendency to sleeplessness. Still he could not be inactive. He visited all the out-stations, and took upon himself work multifarious enough to have taxed the energies of a younger man.

A great care had been thrown upon him by the death of Frédoux. The widow and seven orphan children were practically unprovided for. All this while, and in fact for years, the Directors had not ceased to urge him to come home. In one sense it was not a question of going home, but of leaving it. It was about fifty years since Robert and Mary Moffat had entered upon their work in Bechwanaland. More than forty of these years had been spent in the house where most of their children had been born. The shady street with church and schools, the surrounding villages all full of hearts in which deference and love reigned superior to every other consideration, where Ramary and Mamary were sure of a respectful welcome from all, old and young, and maintained an almost absolute rule, though wielding no other sceptre than that of gratitude and affection, were things which made it hard

for them to leave Kuruman. One of the pleasant recollections of those last years at Kuruman was the presence on the station of Mr. and Mrs. Levy. Mr. L. was continuing the business which had been founded by Moffat's son Robert. The Levys were more than usually considerate neighbours. Their tender reverence for the aged missionary and his wife was shown in a thousand acts of unobtrusive and refined attention. Even when at last the affectionate entreaties of the Directors had been responded to, and they had come to a final determination, it was with slow and faint steps that preparations were made. It was as though they were waiting for something to hinder them.

On Sunday, the twentieth of March, 1870, Robert Moffat preached for the last time in the Kuruman church. In all that great congregation there were few of his own contemporaries. The older people were for the most part children at the time when they had first seen the missionaries. With a pathetic grace peculiarly his own, he pleaded with those who still remained unbelieving amid the gospel privileges they had now enjoyed so many years. With a fatherly benediction he commended to the grace of God those who had been to him a joy and crown. It was an impressive close to an impressive career. Many years must pass before that service can be forgotten in Bechwanaland.

On Friday following the departure took place. For weeks before messages of farewell had been coming from the more distant towns and villages, from those who were unable to come themselves. But the final scene was such as could scarcely be described in words. As the old missionary and his wife came out of their door and walked to their waggon they were beset by the crowds, each longing for one more touch of the hand and one more word; and as the waggon drove away it was followed by all who could walk, and a long and pitiful wail rose, enough to melt the hardest heart. It was characteristic of Mary Moffat that amid these sad scenes she was full of thought for others; and that her last few minutes with her son, who was remaining in charge of the station, were spent in interceding with him on behalf of the unhappy man who had some time before, under the influence of a disordered mind, made an attack upon her husband, and had remained ever since under a sort of ban.

At Backhouse, where they crossed the Vaal River, the Moffats spent a Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Hughes. Mr. Hughes was a somewhat younger man, and had joined the Bechwana Mission a few years later than the Moffats; but his course was all but run, and not long after this he entered into rest. The journey through the Colony was marked by no special incident, beyond the

universal respect and kindness everywhere manifested. In Port Elizabeth Moffat had the pleasure of renewing his intercourse with his old colleague Roger Edwards, with whom he had worked so long at Kuruman before his first visit home.

Both in Port Elizabeth and in Cape Town he received a welcome which was a surprise to him. Most of his older friends who had stood by him when missions had their darker days in South Africa, were gone; but a few still remained, and there had risen up a new generation to whom he was the object of a peculiar interest. On the tenth of June, 1870, he embarked for England, and looked for the last time on the mountains of Africa. It was a few months more than fifty-four years since he had landed there.

It falls to the lot of few men to have seen such a change in a country, and to have taken so large a personal share in having brought about that change. When he landed in January, 1817, the northern frontier of the Colony was only a short distance from Beaufort West, which was itself little more than a central point in the enormous district, at which lived a clergyman and a Government officer. The only village worthy of the name outside of the Cape district was Graaff Reinett. There was a small military post on the heights overhanging the sandy shores of Algoa Bay. From the northern frontier to the Orange River stretched an immense and desolate region, inhabited, or rather roved over, by hordes of wandering Bushmen. North of the Orange River it was known that there were tribes of Bechwanas, and a party of travellers had actually penetrated that country to some little distance, and missions had been established at Lattakoo and at Griqua Town. Of Bechwanaland proper scarcely anything was known. The tribes, living apart, carried on but little intercourse with each other; when peace prevailed small trading parties would venture to visit their neighbours, but tribal disputes and cattle-lifting frays would interrupt all intercourse, and for months or even for years tribes would be as isolated as though each lived on islands apart.

The country now known as the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and Basutoland were utterly unvisited by European travellers, not to mention Natal and the whole region along the coast-line. The South African Missionary Society had commenced work within the Colony, and at one or two points in Namaqualand. The Moravians were at Genadendal. Missions were truly in their infancy, and were regarded with scant toleration by the Government as doubtful and dangerous experiments.

Alongside of the colonizing movement which has absorbed the whole country south of the Orange River has crossed the upper

part of that stream and the Vaal beyond, and is now filling up the country between the latter and the Lempopo, Moffat lived to see Kafirland, Basutoland, and Natal occupied by an army, not merely of missionaries, but of missionary societies; while his own Bechwanaland is through its length and breadth feeling the influences of his work and that of his companions, a work which has extended its operations to the very banks of the Zambezi River, upon the upper waters of which Arnot, Coillard, and Jeanmairat are holding the outmost post of advance. The following extracts from a paper in the *Leisure Hour* for Nov., 1883, are worthy of note in this connection:

“The Bechwanas, as Dr. Moffat was careful to point out with his usual sense of justice, were by no means among the lowest of uncivilized races. To some extent they had the use of metals. But the community was largely nomadic, and regular industry was despised. In the work of agriculture and building which he so assiduously followed at the Kuruman mission-station, he describes himself as employed at manual and menial labour the whole day, ‘working under a burning sun, standing in the sawpit, labouring at the anvil, or treading clay.’ It is only incidentally that such glimpses are offered of the course which Moffat pursued for many thankless and weary years, the but of the people for whom he was devoting his life. Enough, however, transpires to show the almost incredible resource and cheeriness of spirit which he brought to bear upon his work. Mere temporal reverses and difficulties, sometimes of a grave kind, he would meet not only with equanimity, but often with bantering humour. In one year he was slaving for months to carry a water-ditch, several miles in length, from the Kuruman River into the kitchen garden of the humble mission-house. The site of the station was a light, sandy soil, where no vegetables would grow without irrigation. Artificial irrigation was to the natives entirely unknown, and fountains and streams had been suffered to run to waste, even where crops of native grain, which support amazing drought, are seldom very abundant, owing to the infrequency of the rainfall. The natives saw the effect of irrigation upon the mission-house garden, and did not scruple to divert the stream in order that it might flood theirs. The result was that Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Moffat were daily compelled to go alternately three miles with a spade about three o’clock in the afternoon, the hottest time of the day, and restore the water-way, so that they might have a little moisture to refresh their burnt-up vegetables during the night. Thus, after working hard all day, they were obliged to irrigate during the precious hours which ought to have been devoted to sleep. Even then the natives stole the crops which had been raised with such difficulty; and after a year’s toil the missionary and his household scarcely reaped anything to reward them for their labour.

“At a later period, when the people had become truly evangelized, irrigation, and even the preparation of the soil, were intelligently adopted in the Kuruman district. Writing in the year 1864, Dr. Moffat

records the progress made. He tells us: 'The views of the natives have undergone a material change upon many points of importance, and among others as to the cultivation of their fields and gardens. When they first saw us employ people to convey the contents of our cattle-folds to our gardens, the act was in their judgment too ludicrous to admit of reflection; they laughed boisterously, supposing it to be one of our foolish customs, in order to "charm the ground," as they were wont to do to their own gardens (their own custom was to chew a certain root and spit on the leaves, to make the plant more fruitful). Thus, from time immemorial, millions of heaps of manure were turned to no useful account. It was very long before they were convinced, but at last they discovered that manured gardens not only did not "get old," but could be made very young again. To-day, therefore, the veriest heathen among them may be seen carrying manure on their backs, or on the backs of their oxen, to the garden ground. Lately one of them remarked to me on this subject: "I cannot persuade myself that we were once so stupid as not to believe what we saw with our own eyes."' Writing at a later period with regard to ploughs, Dr. Moffat says: 'When I went out there was but one plough in the country, now there are thousands. The same may be said of waggons. It was formerly women's work to plough, but now the men have been induced to take that work upon themselves.

"Instances of Dr. Moffat's attainments as a true 'captain of industry' would fill a volume. The difficulty of raising a high roof on a newly-built chapel in a country where there were neither blocks nor tackle for the purpose is perhaps only known to those who have tried it. At New Lattakoo Dr. Moffat and his helpers found it an herculean and dangerous task. Few would trust themselves on naked walls whilst engaged in the work. The feat, however, was successfully achieved. Whilst it was proceeding, the natives often remarked that the missionaries must have been brought up in the baboon country, and so have become accustomed to precipices and walls.

"The natural resources of the country and their capacity for development did not escape Dr. Moffat's observation even during journeys of the most hazardous kind. Even when famine or death by wild beasts stared him in the face his trained eye was involuntarily noting the plants, the minerals, and the geological structure of the tract through which he was passing. He remarks the meteorology as affected locally by mountains and other causes, a problem subsequently worked out in detail by his son-in-law, Dr. Livingstone; and he is struck with the extent to which the climate must have been affected by the natives' reckless habit of destroying the forests. It must be remembered that fifty years ago the climatic effect of deforesting a country was by no means the familiar topic it has since become, and Dr. Moffat's observations are among the very earliest made by modern travellers. He says the whole country north of the Orange River and east of the Kalahari Desert presented to the eye of a European something like an old neglected garden or field, and the explanation was not far to seek. 'The Bechwanas,' he says, 'and especially the Batlapis and the neighbouring tribes, are a nation of

levellers, not reducing hills to comparative plains for the sake of building their towns, but cutting down every species of timber without regard to scenery or economy.' Thus, of whole forests, where the giraffe and elephant were wont to seek their daily food, nothing remains. To this system of extermination may be attributed the long succession of dry seasons. 'Missionary Scenes and Labours' shows how persistently the author laboured to teach the natives the necessity of preserving the forest.

"Dr. Moffat's early practice in his native country as a gardener and botanist proved of admirable service in South Africa, where he took every occasion of applying it and enlarging his knowledge. Many of his interesting geological observations were doubtless due to his early habit of noting soils and their constituents. The traveller in South Africa to-day finds it interesting and instructive to compare Dr. Moffat's earlier notes on the rocks of the country with those of later and more official investigators. Travelling in his route they are struck in Namaqualand as he was with the old volcanic dykes, which have forced themselves up to the surface at a later period than the schistose rocks which figure so frequently in his pages. At Griqua Town, beyond the plateau (now a diamond field), the visitor with an eye for rock scenery will recognize the long parallel range of jaspideous rocks cropping out, and presenting the wonderful group of yellow, brown, chocolate, and red jaspers, with magnetic and other ironstone, and beautiful seams of the blue and yellow mineral known as crocidolite. The blue asbestos at Gamaperi was duly noted by Dr. Moffat, and it was fortunate for him as a traveller on several occasions when taking the compass bearings that he knew the magnetic character of the schistose rocks, on the top of which, as he found, the compass moves at random. He was constantly noticing the way in which the rocks decompose at the surface, and become fitted more or less to support vegetation; and long after he had left Africa he took a keen interest in the progress of the geological survey by the accredited officers from Cape Colony.

"It is easy to see how such observations, added to agricultural knowledge acquired in his earlier years, increased Dr. Moffat's means of usefulness to his African *protégés*. He introduced into suitable soils, and on levels available for irrigation, both grain and fruit, among the former being wheat, barley, peas, potatoes, carrots, and onions. The improvement in the implements was quite as marked. Instead of the primitive pick used by the women, the plough was introduced and driven by the men. Harrows, spades, and mattocks followed. 'The man who before would have disdained to be seen in such occupations with the old tools, was now thankful to have it in his power to buy a spade. In their appreciation of irrigation several of the natives set to work one day in good earnest, and in their enthusiasm cut courses leading directly up hill, hoping the water would one day follow.'

"Happily there came a time when affairs at the Kuruman mission-station improved, and the strain of labouring year after year to make the place yield sufficient supplies of food for himself and his family

could be relaxed. He was at length able to proceed to his great work of acquiring the Bechwana language. To achieve this object Dr. Moffat spared himself none of the drudgery and self-sacrifice it involved. It required among other measures the temporary abandonment of his own home for some three months, during which he tells us he lived a semi-savage life among heathen dance and song and immeasurable heaps of dirt and filth. In short, this is doubtless one of the experiences which made him remark to friends on his return to England that a missionary to people in the condition of the Bechwanas needed a strong stomach in addition to a warm heart. He, however, succeeded in his object, and was the first to reduce the language of the Bechwanas to a written form. The task of reducing a vernacular to its elements, and then presenting it in a synthetic and grammatical form, was not one for which Dr. Moffat had been equipped when he left England, but he accomplished it, even under the greatest disadvantages. No wonder that after the further task of translating the Bible into the Sechwana language he complained that he felt as if he had shattered his brain. In the interval he went to Cape Town and learned the art of printing. Returning to the mission-station with type and a printing-press, he produced catechism and spelling-books for the schools. He gratefully acknowledges the help he received from the British and Foreign Bible Society during this period.

“ Much might be added in illustration of Dr. Moffat's extreme versatility in acquiring every industry or art which the exigencies of the place might demand of him. His treatment of the bodily ailments of the natives who came to him was almost prophetic of the medical missionaries, of whom so much has happily been heard in later days. Enough, perhaps, has been said to indicate the manifold resource and adaptiveness which helped to establish the memorable mission to Bechwanaland.

“ The question of the bearing of civilization in such circumstances upon the work of evangelization is a weighty one, and the testimony of such a veteran missionary as Dr. Moffat would not fail to be of the greatest value. It is one, also, on which he has spoken with no uncertain sound, for the facts were pressed upon him at an early period of his work among the Bechwanas. After twenty-six years of missionary work he writes : ‘ Much has been said about civilizing savages before attempting to evangelize them. This is a theory which has obtained an extensive prevalence among the wise men of this world, but we have never yet seen a practical demonstration of its truth. We ourselves are convinced that evangelization must precede civilization. It is very easy in a country of high refinement to speculate on what might be done among rude and savage men, but the Christian missionary, the only experimentalist, has invariably found that to make the fruit good the tree must first be made good. Nothing less than the power of Divine grace can reform the hearts of savages, after which the mind is susceptible of those instructions which teach them to adore the gospel they profess.’

“ Dr. Moffat here spoke from practical and dearly-bought experience,

and his narrative, to which we have so often referred, supplies an ample explanation of the verdict so explicitly given. It is true that he was for many years occupied in maintaining those civil and social relationships with the Bechwanas that were the base of the spiritual campaign which was the sole object of his presence, and during this period he sought to exemplify in all outward things the blessing of a Christianized civilization. 'It would appear a strange anomaly,' he said, 'to see a Christian professor lying at full length on the ground covered with filth and dirt, and in a state of comparative nudity, talking about Christian diligence, circumspection, purification, and white robes.' Moffat accordingly did his best for civilization as a matter of course, and always made light of it so far as personal toil was concerned. It is, moreover, a significant commentary on his view of civilization that none of its blessings were really appropriated by the natives until after their evangelization. Then all the past work which had cost him so much became, as it were, fertilized at once. Their habitations, their dress, and all the external hindrances of better habits of life, were reformed, the outward means having been brought within their reach through years of the missionary's devoted labours. Dr. Moffat's views of the first principles to be held by all missionaries to uncivilized peoples, as given in the sixteenth chapter of his well-known work, have to-day lost none of their high and almost unique value."

CHAPTER XXXV.

DEATH OF MARY MOFFAT.

1870-1872.

FROM this point onwards the Editor of the memoir is largely indebted to his youngest sister, who accompanied her parents to England, and remained with them through all the later years, and the rest of the story will be told for the most part in her words.

On the way down to the coast we were entertained at Graaff Reinett by Mrs. Murray, sen., and by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Murray. The journey was long and tedious, owing to the wetness of the season. The Sunday's River was flooded, and we had to wait five days on its banks, during which time Mr. Kitchingman and his daughter overtook and encamped with us until we were able to cross. By Sunday (we crossed on the Monday) fifteen waggons had congregated, principally Dutch farmers carrying their wool to the coast. Our father held a Sechwana service for the sake of our servants, and we were somewhat amused to find that during the singing of the hymns the farmers had congregated behind the tent listening, quite charmed with singing such as they were unaccustomed to hear. We happened to have two or three of our best singers with us. Mr. Kitchingman also conducted a service in Dutch for the farmers. This Mr. Kitchingman was a son of Moffat's old colleague, and was also a missionary. He, too, has now passed to his rest. We reached Bethelsdorp in time for our father to proceed to Port Elizabeth, and to take a part in the meetings of the Evangelical Union, especially the united communion service, in which brethren of every nationality took a part. It was an appropriate farewell to his work in South Africa. We remained at Bethelsdorp with Mrs. Merrington several days, and then went on to the Bay.

Mr. Macintosh came out with a cart and horses to take our mother on ahead of the waggons. "No," she said, "I will stick

to my waggon as long as I can," preferring not to quit it till she reached Port Elizabeth. We stayed ten days there, during which Mr. Edwards was indefatigable in his kindness, and so was Mr. Macintosh. We sailed in the *Roman* for Cape Town. Our six Bechwana servants came on board with us (one excepted, who was afraid to venture on the sea), and when they rowed off again in a small boat for the shore we felt the cable was cut, and that we had really left Bechwanaland. A sore moment! We had a very stormy passage to Cape Town, taking four days instead of two. On arriving we found that a public farewell breakfast had been arranged, and this took place next morning. We remained a fortnight in Cape Town, bidding farewell to our many old friends, and then sailed in the *Norseman* for England. Both parents bore the voyage extremely well—indeed, as regards seasickness, better than any of the passengers. We were six weeks on the voyage, owing to an accident to the engines, which kept us under sail for a week while repairs were being made.

We arrived at Plymouth on Sunday evening, the twenty-fourth of July. Mr. John Snow was there to meet us, and went on with us to Southampton, where we landed next day, exactly four months after leaving Kuruman. Here we found Helen—who now saw her parents after a separation of twenty-seven years. It was a memorable meeting. Mr. J. Kemp Welch was also at Southampton to represent the Directors of the London Missionary Society.

We took up our abode in Canonbury for a few weeks. A public breakfast of welcome was given at Cannon Street Hotel. Our father was much better in health after the journey and voyage, but still far from strong. It was the first communion Sabbath after our arrival in England, that at Mr. Binney's wish—most heartily reciprocated by our parents—we went to the Weigh House and partook of the Lord's Supper there. Of course we went very soon to Knockholt, later to Brighton, and then our father was much pressed by Sir Roderick Murchison to go to the meeting of the British Association at Liverpool. He arranged to do so on his way to Scotland, calling also at Manchester to see our oldest friends the Sheldons, and Mrs. Woodward. At Liverpool he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Crossfield. Thence he went to Scotland, calling on the way at Newcastle to see the Bruces. In Edinburgh he found still many old friends, and some relations; and was entertained by Mr. Stone, Miss Peek, and the Cullens. Thence he went to Glasgow to visit his grandchildren the Livingstones. During his absence in Scotland our mother was at Buckhurst Hill, at the house of Mr. Alexander Fraser, who had kindly

placed it at our disposal during the temporary absence of his family.

On our father's return from the north we went in October to Brixton, where we spent the winter at the house of Mr. Henry Vavasseur, he letting us make it our home for six months, until we should settle upon a permanent residence. This was a particularly acceptable arrangement to our mother, who shrank from entering at once upon housekeeping in England, little thinking that this was to be the last halting-place in her long earthly pilgrimage. Before Christmas both parents paid visits to old friends, to Miss Eisdell at Epsom, to Mr. Davison at Canonbury, Miss Fletcher at Peckham, and Mr. and Mrs. James Spicer at Woodford, all friends who had been faithful to their children or grandchildren in England while they were still in Africa. During the few months she was at Brixton our mother found great pleasure in the ministry and friendship of the Rev. D. Herschell. On the twenty-first of December our father received a birthday gift of one thousand pounds. The initiative had been taken by Miss Peek, whose name is associated with so many good works, and her action had been heartily responded to; and it was one of the last events crowning many acts of kindness received which so brightened the close of our mother's life. Christmas was spent at Knockholt, with the family circle there. On the return to Brixton our mother took cold; and after a few days' illness passed away. On the Monday morning she had seemed by no means worse, very bent on getting up and coming downstairs, and with some difficulty we kept her in bed till afternoon; but she talked very ramblingly all the morning, which made me uneasy. I wrote a joint letter to John and Bessie, and she knew all about it and sent messages. Poor mamma! how active her mind was to the very last. She talked about everybody. She imagined she was talking to John. She said, "Where is he gone? I was speaking to John." The doctor pronounced her no worse, and said that on the morrow she might get up earlier; as she was so bent upon it, it would make her feel as if she were recovering. She got up that afternoon and spent about three hours, as happy and quiet a time as she had had all through. Then about half-past seven she wearied, and went to bed; but her breathing became much oppressed, and nothing would relieve it. It appeared to be becoming easier, and we hoped she would get some sleep—which she was longing for, having had none all day and but little the night before. Then her cough, which had been very troublesome, became so helpless that I felt alarmed, and we watched her anxiously. Oh! so sudden it seemed at last that the cough quite ceased.

She drew a few long, deep breaths, and was gone! Not one word of farewell! for never had I known her so little alarmed at indisposition. Never even in her clearest moments did she utter a word to us to intimate that she thought she was going; but at the same time she was at heart conscious of the probability, for while I was in her room on Monday evening I heard her praying, clearly and distinctly, that if it was God's will to take her she might be willing to go, and that papa might have strength given him to bear her leaving, and that his way might be made plain. It was a beautiful prayer; I would fain have remembered every word. Poor dear mamma! how little we all thought it, as we enjoyed our merry Christmas at Knockholt. For her verily it is all joy; for us, and above all comparison for papa, how sad! We have been loaded with kindness—above all from Mr. Fraser, and Mr. Henry Vavasseur. Mr. Spicer also has been most kind.

[Robert Moffat wrote to his old friend and fellow-labourer, Roger Edwards, of Port Elizabeth, as follows:

“The black border has, I presume, already told its tale, that I am in affliction. Yes, it is even so; for the wife of my youth, the partaker of my joys and sorrows for more than half a century, has been taken from me. She is gone to the many mansions to which she has been daily looking forward with the full assurance of faith for more than sixty years. She never knew what it was to have a single doubt or fear as to her eternal happiness. The winter was too severe for her. She caught cold, but knew not how. It excited no particular alarm for some time, till it assumed the form of bronchitis. The day before she died she walked about the bedroom, anxious to come down to the parlour. The last words she spoke, about an hour before she expired, were begging me to go to bed, as Jeanie's presence would suffice. As she said she could not sleep till I should go, I only hid myself for a few minutes. She did fall asleep, but it was the sleep of death. Her mind, for three or four days previously, occasionally wandered, but it was always in the right direction: the Redeemer's reign among the heathen, the printing of the Scriptures, Kuruman and the Bechwanas. How lonely I feel! and but for Jeanie it would be much more so. I long unusually to hear from you, and how your family and all the Bay friends are. My dear brother, old friends are leaving us for a better, a happier world, and we naturally feel our hearts cleaving closer to those who yet remain. How are dear Mrs. E. and your children, and how is your own health? We are both looking forward to our heavenly home.”

Reference has already been made to her wide-spreading sympathy. The ties of kindred were by her esteemed worthy of religious cultivation. Besides this, she gave systematic recognition to the claims which arose out of brotherhood in Christian work.

This did not attenuate the strength of her sense of duty in her own home. She watched over her husband's health and comfort with a care which only grew more constant in the course of fifty years. She used to say, that although not able to take a prominent part in direct missionary work, it was her satisfaction to provide for the temporal wants of a servant of Christ who was doing this work; and she felt—what was true—that he never would have been the missionary he was but for her care of him. Even when life was numbered by hours, and on the very shore of the dark river, she would not rest until assured that his wants were being attended to. Her children thank God for such a mother.]

At first we feared much for our father, who had been so dependent upon her. His first exclamation on finding her really gone was, "For fifty-three years I have had her to pray for me." We remained at Barrington Road till May, 1871. Our father turned from all thoughts of a settled home, feeling as if no place could be home now that our mother was gone: so we took apartments in the Brixton Road, and these were our headquarters till the winter. In April we paid a short visit to Miss Eisdell, at Epsom, our father preaching on the Sunday. In May he attended the London meetings. In June we went down to Manchester for the missionary meetings there. He addressed a Sunday-school gathering in the Free Trade Hall on Sunday, June the eleventh. Dr. Turner, of Samoa, and Richard Fletcher, son of a previous minister of Grosvenor Street, also took a part. He went through the whole series of missionary services at Manchester and Liverpool; and had the satisfaction of again meeting old friends such as the Sheldons and Mrs. Woodward. Then he passed to Nottingham, where he met Dr. Mullens, and the first collections were made for the proposed Institute at the Kuruman; Mrs. Rogers, widow of Professor Henry Rogers, and daughter of Samuel Fletcher, of Manchester, having made the first donation. From Nottingham he returned to Manchester, and so on to Warrington. There we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Walter Ashton, and we also spent an evening with Dr. Mackie, whose adopted daughter was baptized by our father. One day was spent in visiting High Leigh with Dr. Mackie and Mr. Rylands. He of course found there many alterations, but plenty to remind him of his early life there: particularly the room or cottage in which he had lived, the church, and many of the trees. After visiting some other places endeared by old associations, we returned south and spent a month at Knockholt. During this month he went to Wimborne for the Bible Society, and was entertained by the Hon. and Rev.

Carr Glynn. He always looked back with great pleasure to this visit. We returned to Brixton, and remained there till the middle of September. He was not very well, and made a stay at Brighton with Mr. Unwin till recruited, and then set out for the west, partly on missionary duty and partly to visit old friends. It was on this occasion that a thousand pounds were raised in Bristol for the Institute in Bechwanaland. In the middle of October he again paid Lancashire a visit to attend missionary meetings, and visited the Reyners and Cheethams of Ashton and Staleybridge. He visited the old house at Dukinfield from which our mother went forth to Africa in 1819, now called "Plantation Farm." He also went to Fairfield, the Moravian school at which our mother was educated. The matron remembered her, having been a little girl at the school when our mother was an elder one. The building was the same, but the surroundings changed. From this time onwards, till near the end of the year, he was engaged in deputation services, which resulted more especially in the raising of large sums for the Institute.

[For many years it had been plain to those engaged in the Bechwana Mission that a necessary step in advance would be the planting of a seminary, and the training of a native ministry. More than once attempts had been made in this direction, but no permanent success had been achieved. In a meeting of missionaries at Kuruman a short time before Moffat's departure, the attention of the Directors at home had been formally drawn to the subject, and their aid had been requested. Nothing was done, but the subject was much on Moffat's mind. On the occasion of a visit to Nottingham, in which the late Dr. Mullens took a part, reference was made to the need of special funds for this object; and the Nottingham people took it up with great spirit, subscribing at once, in addition to their ordinary annual contributions to the general purposes of the Society, a sum of two hundred pounds. This was the signal for a general movement, and with wonderful energy and cheerfulness the churches throughout the country took this way of doing honour to the old missionary, by whose name it was proposed to call the Institute that was to be founded. Some thousands of pounds were readily raised.

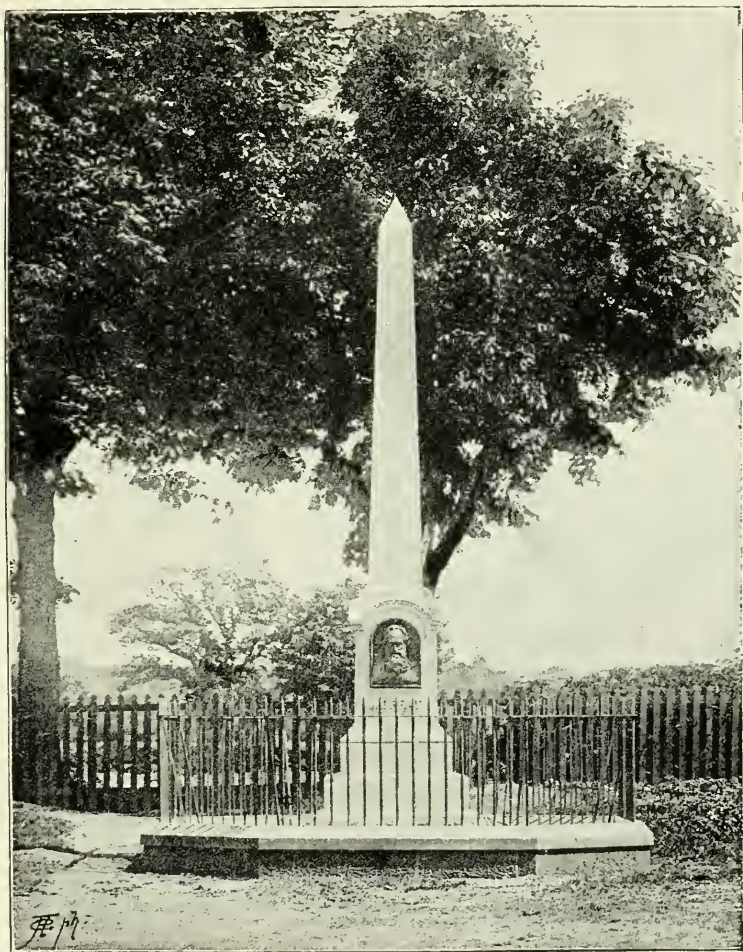
It was not his privilege to see this money applied as his judgment and experience would have advised. With his departure from the Kuruman new men had come to the front in Bechwanaland, and with them came in new plans, more theoretical than practical. But his unswerving loyalty to the Society—a loyalty which had carried him for fifty years through the friction and the

trials incident in the official working of even a Christian organization—bore this test also.]

In the middle of December we left our Brixton domicile, and went to spend the winter at Ventnor. During the whole of the year 1871 he had been revising proof-sheets of the Old Testament in Sechwana, and he devoted himself more entirely to this work at Ventnor. We remained there till the beginning of April, 1872. We went thence to Gosport, where he addressed meetings, and stayed with Mr. Jellie in Dr. Bogue's old house, the same in which our mother sojourned when, as Mary Smith, she was waiting to sail for Africa. Here he heard that the Queen was to cross from Osborne the next morning, and expressed a wish to get a sight of her, never having had that privilege. Through the kindness of an officer, a member of Mr. Jellie's church, he got a good standing-place, and not only saw her, but, to his surprise and pleasure, was by her Majesty's own desire introduced.

Whilst at Ventnor he had received from the Senate of Edinburgh University the offer of a degree, which, after consultation with friends, he agreed to accept; and after a visit to Brighton, to meet his son and family just arrived home from Africa, he proceeded to Edinburgh, where he was duly capped D.D. Returning from Edinburgh, where he had been the guest of the Rev. G. D. Cullen, he entered on an extended course of deputation work for the Society. The notes of the year point to places all over the north of England. He had the happiness of seeing other friends whose attachment had been lifelong, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Greaves, of Sheffield.

Our father had started from London tired, and his exertions ever since made him almost come to a halt at Kendal. However, having promised to go to Scotland, he pushed on, and gradually gained strength. Whilst in Scotland we visited Inverkeithing and Ormiston, both places full of interest. He spent the Sunday at Ormiston, and preached in the old parish kirk, in the graveyard of which his grandparents were buried. In the evening he gave an address at Winton Castle, the residence of Lady Ruthven, with whom he was staying. In the gardens of Ormiston Hall, the cottage still stands in which his mother was born. He could find only very distant connections in Ormiston, and the cottage in which he was born was not standing. However, he much enjoyed the visit. Thence he went to Melrose, and spent several days with Adam Black, then in his ninetieth year. It was a pleasant time. Mr. Black was hale and hearty, and Mrs. Black so cheerful and kind a hostess, although quite blind. Dr. Lindsay Alexander was also a guest, and added not a little to the



ORMISTON, THE BIRTHPLACE OF ROBERT MOFFAT. SHOWING THE
MONUMENT ERECTED TO HIS MEMORY.

enjoyment of the party. The weather was exceptionally beautiful, and besides fully exploring Melrose Abbey which Mr. Black's grounds adjoined, he greatly enjoyed visiting Dryburgh Abbey and Abbotsford. He then went to the west, more especially to see the Livingstones. The visit was much clouded by the serious illness of Dr. Livingstone's son Thomas, an illness from which he never fully recovered.

Our father left Hamilton for Stirling, and met with a slight railway accident, the only one in all his travels. He was, however, none the worse, beyond the momentary shock, and was able to assist a fellow-passenger to walk the little distance that remained. Leaving Scotland, he spent six weeks in Yorkshire and Lancashire, holding four or five meetings every week, and enjoying the hospitality of many friends old and new. His stay at Crow's Nest, the residence of Sir Titus Salt, was especially interesting; the last two days of it Dr. and Mrs. Binney, Dr. and Mrs. Raleigh, and Mr. Samuel Morley being also guests. He returned to London tired, but wonderfully vigorous considering all that he had done.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MOFFAT REVISITS CARRONSHORE.

1873.

DURING the winter of 1872-3, after wandering about homeless for two years and a half, although enjoying the hospitality of so many friends, he made up his mind to settle once more into a home of his own, and accordingly in January, 1873, took up his abode in Knowle Road, Brixton, where he lived for nearly seven years. The great privilege he enjoyed here was the ministry of the Rev. Baldwin Brown. When not himself engaged in preaching, he was almost invariably in his seat morning and evening, for he never liked to lose an opportunity of hearing Mr. Brown, between whom and himself sprang up a warm affection. He soon became interested in the mission-work in Lambeth in connection with Mr. Brown's church. He first went down to the penny dinners, and then was frequently present at the tea meetings and other entertainments for the poor, whether held at the Mission Hall in Lambeth, or in the lecture-room of Brixton Independent Church.

[To a very large extent the motive which had given strength to the stream of liberal contribution to the Institute to be founded in Bechwanaland had been a desire to give expression to the love and respect which had gathered round him who alone survived of the early founders of the mission, but it was felt by many that an even more direct proof of these feelings might be found. In the year 1873 he was presented by a large number of friends with a sum of upwards of five thousand pounds. This noble and unlooked-for act of liberality not only provided for his wants during the remaining eleven years of his life, but enabled him to serve the Directors and the cause of missions without being chargeable upon the regular income of the Society. It moreover enabled him to meet the wants of a widowed daughter and her fatherless family, for whom no other support was forthcoming.

The same year the Rev. Sabine Knight called upon him as a casual visitor, like many more. But Mr. Knight had a message of unusual interest to convey. Reference has been made to a brother of Mary Moffat who had gone to the United States, and had been lost sight of for many years. His sister, with the tenacity of affection which marked her character, would not give him up. From year to year she looked for news of him, but no news came. On one occasion, seeing a name similar to his in a Van Dieman's Land newspaper, she had written thither, drawing a bow at a venture. This letter was returned, the person into whose hands it came being not the brother whom she sought. For some years familiar with the prospect of her departure from this world, and in view of it, she had again written a long letter treating of the great subjects ever so near to her heart, the realities of eternity, and sealing it up, had placed it in her husband's hands to be in readiness when wanted.

Mr. Knight had just returned to England after a residence of some years in the State of Tennessee, and from him Moffat had the happiness of hearing that his long-lost brother-in-law was still living, and was thus enabled to fulfil his Mary's cherished wish. The brother, who thus received a message as it were from the grave, has himself since passed away.]

In May our father went down to Scotland to address meetings, glad at the same time to escape the bustle and excitement of the anniversaries in London. Miss Baxter was his hostess at Ellangowan, near Dundee; and he broke the journey by resting a day and night with his old friends Mr. and Mrs. Habershon, at Rotherham, and a night in Edinburgh at Mr. Cullen's. He attended many meetings in the towns along the east coast of Scotland, and had, moreover, the happiness of seeing Murray of Lintrose, near Cupar Angus, one of the African travellers who had been in the habit of calling at Kuruman, and had left such pleasant memories behind them there. His friends in Manchester claimed him for their meetings, after which he again made his way back to Scotland, apparently unfatigued, and was the guest of a fellow-passenger from the Cape, Mr. Yellowlees, of Stirling. Here he again attended meetings, and visited Carronshore for the first time after sixty years.

[Mr. Yellowlees has furnished the following account of this visit, which will have an interest of its own :

“STIRLING, Jan. 12, 1885.

“MY DEAR MISS MOFFAT,—When my wife and I had the privilege of being fellow-passengers with you on the voyage from South Africa in the summer of 1870, your late father told me that several of his

youthful years were spent at Carronshore, an out-lying village on the banks of the River Carron, near its junction with the Forth, and about nine miles distant from Stirling. We agreed then that on his first visit to me here we should spend an afternoon at this village, that he might revive old memories and possibly renew acquaintanceships formed in 'the days of auld lang syne.' This intention was carried out in the autumn of 1872, and the following short sketch of this incident in the life of your honoured father may not be out of place in the Memoir now being edited by your brother; at all events I send it to you that he may make what use of it he thinks proper.—With much respect, I remain, yours sincerely,

“ROBERT YELLOWLEES.

“Dr. Moffat left Carronshore in 1809, when he was fourteen years of age, and as his father had removed to Inverkeithing he had never had occasion to return; so that sixty-three years had elapsed since his leaving, till his return to pay a visit to this home of his boyhood.

“On our driving up to the village green it was some little time before Dr. Moffat could realize that this was just the place he had left so long ago, principally on account of roadways and truck-lines to coal-pits that were all new to him. But soon his eye lighted and rested on a certain red-tiled cottage near the old storehouses of the Carron Company, which he fondly recognized as having been his father's dwelling, and ere long the rest of the village and its surroundings became familiar to him. He expressed a wish to find out whether any of his old companions still survived after so long an interval; so I accosted a group of collier lads who were busy at a game of pitch-and-toss, and, after telling them who their venerable visitor was, Dr. Moffat made inquiry about a family of McKillops. No, there was no such name now in Carronshore. 'The Patons?' No; one of the lads was sure he had heard his father speak about people of that name, but they were all gone long ago. 'William Monteith?' 'Ah, did he drive the carrier's cart from Falkirk to Edinburgh?' asked the spokesman of the group. 'Yes, that was just the man. Well, he is deid lang syne, but the woman you see standing at yon door is a dochter of his.'

“This link of connection with an old acquaintance so excited Dr. Moffat's eagerness to make further inquiries, that we drove to the only available stabling-place to get the horse put up. Before leaving the stable door, we were struck by the appearing of a little, quaint, old-fashioned woman, wearing a Scotchwoman's undress of short skirt, short gown, and mutch. She ran up to Dr. Moffat, seized him by both hands, and then, quite speechless with excitement, racing, and chronic asthma, stood gazing up to his face, while the Doctor looked down on her with a benign but puzzled smile.

“At last she found some utterance, and gasped out, 'Are—you—really—the—*great* Moffat?' 'Well, I believe I must be the person you refer to, whether great or not; but why do you ask?' 'Why I

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 have aye keepit 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 you 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'

"Under the guidance of this enthusiastic conductor, the first visit was paid to his father's old cottage. The tenant, Mrs. Arthur, courteously invited us to enter, and here there was no indistinctness of memory as the Doctor rearranged the furniture by telling us how 'our eight-day ciock stood here, and the girnel (oatmeal chest) stood there, and the aumrie (cupboard) stood over in that corner ;' and as he recalled, not without fitting emotion, the scenes of domestic piety, of gladness and of sadness, that he had witnessed there, and by which his life and character had been impressed and moulded.

"Our next visit was to the shore of the Carron—here a deep and torpid river of, I should think, about forty feet in breadth. His fond imagination had wonderfully widened it ; but when he saw it as it was, he was disillusioned and almost painfully disappointed. 'Is it possible,' I remember his remarking with great naturalness, 'that this really narrow stream is what I have so long thought of as a broad river ; and that I could think myself to be a man when I was able sixty-three years ago to swim from the one bank to the other ! But, after all, I need not wonder at the difference between my conception of the size of the Carron and the reality, for it seems to me that even the Firth of Forth has shrunk in wofully since I first knew it !'

"At Mary Kay's invitation we then went to rest in her cottage, and there she fulfilled her promises about the likenesses. She produced an ancient volume (Baxter's 'Saint's Rest,' if I remember rightly) which answered the purpose of a modern album, for its leaves were interspersed with numerous woodcut likenesses of Dr. Moffat, clipped out of illustrated almanacs, London Missionary and other magazines, &c. These were her favourite art treasures, and she declared they were all faithful likenesses : 'they were even like him yet, except that he had grown a terribly lang beard, and she never could thole these lang beards. Although,' she added, apologetically, 'to be sure, John Knox had a lang beard, just like yersel.'

"Dr. Moffat was anxious to know whether any more of his school-mates were still alive and resident in the locality. Mary Kay could tell us there was only one, and she was then on a visit to grandchildren at Greenock ; but there was a master tailor in the village—whose name I may suppose to be Andrew Johnstone—who might perhaps remember him ; it was worth calling to see. We called, and found the old tailor cross-legged on his board, and busy at work. Our zealous guide introduced us by saying, 'Andrew, man, here's Moffat come to see you, the great missionary from Africa.' 'Aye, aye, maybe he is,' replied the cautious Andrew ; 'but there are plenty of folks gangin' about the country noo-a-days passin' themsel's aff as great men, and they are just a when impostors.' This was rather a stag-

gering response ; but it was met with, ' O man ! Andrew, are you no believin' me, and I've kenned him mysel' a' my days.' On this Andrew stopped his needle for the first time, looked round on Dr. Moffat, and in an oracular tone said, ' Are you aware, sir ! that if you were really the person you represent yourself to be, you would be the father-in-law of Livingstone, the African explorer ? ' ' And so I am.' This quiet reply from the Doctor was rousing ; the crossed legs became straight and perpendicular. Andrew raised his spectacles to get a fuller view of the visitor, and exclaimed, ' Is it possible that the father-in-law of Livingstone stands before me, and under my humble roof ? ' His doubts were dispelled, and he tried by effusive expressions of respect to make amends for the somewhat rude incredulity that marked his reception of us.

" Meanwhile a crowd of collier lads and other villagers had gathered round the tailor's house, and Dr. Moffat, ever ready to advance the cause for which he lived and laboured so nobly, gave them an open-air address on South African Missions ; and, before parting, came under a promise to meet them again ere long, and give them a fuller account of mission work.

" I shall conclude the sketch of this visit by remarking that this promise was faithfully redeemed. Dr. Moffat afterwards addressed crowded and enthusiastic meetings in Carronshore ; he came specially from England to take part in the opening services of Carron Church, where my brother was and still is minister. Moreover, he gladdened Miss Kay's heart by presenting her with copies of his published works, and enriched her album with a photograph ; which (if alive) she still no doubt cherishes as the gift of her old schoolmate—' the great Moffat.' "]

While at Stirling our father was invited by John Wilson, of South Bantaskine, Falkirk, to be his guest. It was the first of many pleasant visits, and the beginning of a friendship which lasted in this world till the year when both were called home. From his bedroom window at Bantaskine—the spot where the battle of Falkirk was fought, a mile and a half south of the town—he looked out upon the same furnaces at Carron Iron Works upon which he had looked as a boy. He could point out every change that had taken place in Falkirk in the way of building, and it was hard to say whether he or Mr. Wilson most enjoyed their visiting together the old scenes of his boyhood—Carronshore, the school at Falkirk to which he used to walk every day for a year three miles each way, the church at which he used to attend with his mother, and Park Hill, Polmont, where he served his apprenticeship. Each visit to Bantaskine—which was about every two years after this—he entered afresh into all the old memories, and never failed to visit and to have a chat with two old school-fellows, Mrs. Gilchrist and Mrs. Higgins.

However wearied and worn-out with meetings, when he arrived at South Bantaskine there was something in the very air and surroundings, as well as in that genial home, which made him begin to rally at once, and sent him away with strength renewed.

After his first visit to Bantaskine he proceeded on an extended tour through Scotland, and then part of England, renewing old recollections and visiting friends, but always and everywhere addressing audiences on missionary work, a duty of which he never wearied, as he had never wearied of the work itself. Whilst on this tour, the news reached him of the death in East Africa of his grandson and namesake, Robert Moffat, who died whilst serving with the search expedition which had been sent out under Captain Cameron to follow Livingstone.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FAREWELL TO CHILDREN.

1874.

OUR father was not sorry, after an absence of four months, to return to his home in Brixton, where he spent the winter free from public work : the principal family event being his son's departure for South Africa. A farewell meeting was held at the Rev. Baldwin Brown's lecture-room, and the sailing of the steamer being deferred, the next day was spent in his home at Brixton with a crowd of his children and grandchildren around him. The seeing the voyagers off was sad enough, with the prospect of beholding them no more in this world, and the intense desire to go with them—for his heart was still in Africa. The solemn and earnest gaze which he fixed on his children till the last possible moment, as the vessel slowly moved away, was more eloquent than words. A few weeks later, Livingstone's remains were brought home, and he went down to Southampton to meet them. The part he had to take in the identification, and his presence at the funeral in Westminster Abbey, were all to him deeply affecting circumstances. About this time he was called to stand by the grave of another old friend, Thomas Binney. A strong attachment had existed between the two men, dating from our father's first visit home in 1840. Binney had given him much valuable assistance whilst writing his book, and had been a kind adviser to each of his sons successively when home for their education.

The greater part of the year was spent in deputation work for the Society, beginning with London and its neighbourhood, until after May, when extended tours were taken, and meetings held in nearly all the southern counties of England and Wales. We reached home from this round in November, and the winter was spent quietly at home, with occasional attendance at meetings of one sort or another.

In April, 1875, he again began work with the meetings of the season. He paid a hasty visit to Glasgow in May, to be present at the wedding of his grandson, Oswald Livingstone; returning immediately to London, where he had the pleasure of welcoming his daughter Bessie and her husband, on a visit home from South Africa. His summer campaign on behalf of the Missionary Society was in the eastern counties, after which he started for Whitehall, Cumberland, the residence of Mr. George Moore. Mr. Moore was in the habit of having a gathering of London friends who helped him in conducting Bible Society meetings in the neighbouring villages. It was a very interesting and enjoyable season. Besides the guests at the Hall, who represented all denominations, the town missionaries of Westmoreland and Cumberland were entertained at the inn, and had the full enjoyment of the beautiful grounds, each day attending a conference in the old baronial hall. Mr. Moore presented each of them on leaving with a copy of "Guthrie on the Parables," as a memento of their meeting with our father. At the close of this pleasant week he went on to Carlisle, where he held meetings for the Missionary Society, and then proceeded to Hamilton to the marriage of his granddaughter, Agnes Livingstone, with Alexander Bruce of Edinburgh. After a month spent in Scotland he returned to London, taking some deputation work on the way: but not to rest, for before he settled in for the winter he had visited Lancashire and Yorkshire, and various places in Kent, Hampshire, and Wales! He might well say, as he often did, that people either could not or would not see that he was getting old. All this while he was seldom without some occupation in the way of revising proof-sheets of the *Sechwana Hymn-book*, *Scripture Selections*, and the "*Pilgrim's Progress*," a new translation of which last, based upon his own, had been prepared by his son-in-law, Roger Price.

On St. Andrew's Day he lectured on Missions in Westminster Abbey, and afterwards supped with Dean Stanley at Mr. Flood Jones's, Lady Augusta being too ill to entertain him.

On the twenty-first of December, 1875, he was eighty years of age. This day had been fixed upon by Mr. Baldwin Brown and his helpers for the opening of the new Mission Hall in Vauxhall Street, Lambeth. He was asked to attend—though without the knowledge that it was his birthday; and thenceforward the hall was called the Moffat Institute. He had always been greatly interested in this mission, and now felt it had a special claim upon him. He received many congratulatory tokens on this day, and, not least, a visit from a deputation of Congregational ministers, who presented him with an address signed by a great number from

every part of the country. This address remains to his children one of the most valued mementoes of the regard in which their father was held by so many of his fellow-servants in Christ.

The winter of 1875-6 was spent in London, but he had a good many public engagements in the neighbourhood. In March, Roger Price sailed for Zanzibar. Later on our father visited, at Horsham, the daughters of his former fellow-labourer Helmore, who laid down his life for the gospel at Linyanti, in the Makololo country.

From Horsham our father went on to Brighton, and spent a week with Mrs. Goult. It was always a special pleasure to visit her. She and her late husband were reckoned among those friends who had welcomed him on his first return from South Africa, and their attachment never wavered.

[The following letter was written to Mrs. Goult a year or two later on :

“ BRIGHTON, *March 23, 1878.*

“ Among the many thoughts which have passed through my mind to-day, you have not been forgotten. To-morrow you will enter on the eighty-seventh year of your pilgrimage. I think I can in some degree enter into your feelings of wonder and gratitude—wonder in having been spared so long, while so many thousands have passed away and gone to an unchangeable and deathless state. Even among our contemporaries how few, if any, remain. Among the last of mine is James Parsons, of York. I have been affectingly impressed with the succession of mourning-cards for friends received since my return from a long life in Africa to the land of my forefathers. They are gone, but they are only gone before, enjoying what they so long desired—to be present with the Lord. How impressive and how solemn to think of the stream of human beings rushing on to the vast eternity, and still more so to think of the multitude moving along without a thought of their future destiny. Our hearts sink within us at the thought of the untold myriads perishing for whom Christ died. How the reflection awakens our inmost emotions to exclaim, ‘Oh to grace how great a debtor!’ and ‘Why was I made to hear His voice?’

“ The remembrance of the Brighton Kuruman Lodge and the many incidents, and the now happy Mary playing on the piano while I was studying the sermon I had to preach before the Directors! Can I ever forget the attention of your late beloved one, who received charge from the Directors to care for me that my voice might, through many a walk on the wavy beach, return to perform the task appointed to me. It would tire you to refer to the variety of apparently small, but to me never to be forgotten, events. Will these things be thought of when we reach ‘the heavenly fields, and walk the golden streets’?

“ Oh how little we are made to know of that ‘land afar off.’ What are its shining inhabitants doing? Perhaps the departed are, though in glory, very near to us. I was with you in spirit during your severe attack; and how good it was of Lizzie and Isabel to report progress,

which I hope continues ; but old folks like you and me do not rally so soon.”]

At this time he was much troubled by the severe illness and death in Egypt of his grandson, Thomas S. Livingstone, who had been for some years in failing health. He longed to accompany the friend who went out, but felt it was too far. Tom's genial spirit and frequent visits to his grandfather had greatly endeared him, and his death was a great sorrow.

May brought its usual round of meetings. On the sixth he dined with the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace. About this time the Jubilee Singers were in England, on their second visit. He was quite in his element when with them, and lost no opportunity of hearing them sing. When at Brixton they came in to him at Knowle Road, and he and they were both much pleased. They afterwards gave him a photograph group of themselves. In this month he received an invitation from the Corporation of London to attend a ball given at Guildhall in honour of the Prince of Wales on his return from India. He accepted it, and went, greatly amused by all he saw, though not sufficiently charmed to desire a second such opportunity. Later in the month he spoke at the Moravian Missionary Meeting, which always drew out his sympathies, as he considered he owed his wife to the Moravians. A day or two after he was to have been with the “Friends'” Foreign Mission Association, but was unable to attend on account of a cold. “Sad disappointment,” he writes in his notebook. A round of engagements followed in town and country. On the twelfth of July, 1876, he had the pleasure of breakfasting with Mr. Gladstone in the house of the Rev. Newman Hall, along with a number of ministers.

In August he went to Edinburgh to be at the unveiling of Livingstone's statue, which took place the day before a similar ceremonial for Prince Albert. He took a great interest in both, but perhaps still more in another quite informal interview with the Queen, who, hearing of his presence in Edinburgh, sent for him. She was just starting for a drive when he arrived, so that they really met and exchanged a few words on the staircase of Holyrood Palace. Later on we find him at Bristol, always, as usual, in the thick of meetings. He visited Müller's Orphanage, and was intensely interested. One little girl asked him to accept her doll, a very minute one. This touched him exceedingly, and the doll took its place on his study mantelpiece till the day of his death.

Constant engagements filled up the remainder of the year. One

day it would be a public meeting ; then an address to the boys at Mill Hill School, in which he took a special interest from the presence there of two of his own grandsons ; then he was to be found assisting in mission work at the Institute in Lambeth. He spent a day at Wimbledon with Sir Bartle Frere, then starting for South Africa. His mind was very much occupied at this time with African affairs, and full of anxiety. The East African Missions were being started, and two members of the Bechwana staff transferred to them—which did not meet with his approval ; nor did other changes then taking place in the Bechwana field. He never could see any start being made for South Africa without being greatly excited. A longing always came over him to go too. He was restless till the party was away, which in this case was early in 1877, when Price and Dodgshun left for Zanzibar and Cockin for Matebeleland. Some of the party were of his own family, and started from his house, and his deepest feelings were stirred.

When all this was over, he went in April, 1877, by invitation of the French Missionary Society, to Paris. The day after his arrival he addressed, through Theodore Monod, four thousand Sunday-school children—a sight quite unexpected in France. They were assembled in a circus, and the place was crowded. These corresponded, with our French friends, to the English May meetings ; but the children were thus collected only once in two years, it being a much greater undertaking than in England. During his three weeks' sojourn in Paris he addressed nine meetings, besides one in Orleans. On all these occasions the audiences were large. Not the least interesting was a meeting held in one of Mr. McAll's Mission rooms. Here particularly the people seemed to anticipate the meaning from the gestures, even before they heard the interpretation. Another meeting of special interest was held in the Halle Herz at the request of Madame André, a benevolent and missionary-spirited lady, who asked our father to give a lecture on Livingstone as a corrective to the idea of sceptics, who, it appeared, rejoiced in Livingstone as one who had given up the propagation of Christianity as hopeless and had turned to science. This address was much appreciated and commented upon in the Paris papers. Among his hearers was the Emperor of Brazil. His host and hostess were Dr. and Mrs. Casalis, of the Missionary Society. Dr. Casalis having been twenty years in Basutoland, they had much in common. The Casalis family were indefatigable in their kind attention, and thus besides these meetings our father got through a great deal of sight-seeing during the three weeks, including two days spent with Madame André at Versailles, and he en-

joyed all immensely. I think the tomb of Buonaparte impressed him most of all. The fact that Dr. and Mrs. Casalis had been shut up in Paris during the siege, and that Madame André's house had been the headquarters of the Crown Prince at Versailles, added not a little to the interest of the sojourn with them.

On one occasion there was quite accidentally a very interesting gathering at the breakfast-table in the house of Dr. Casalis. Major Malan, who was so devoted to Africa, was also staying there, and it happened that the Messrs. Moir, bound for East Africa, were passing through Paris. The daughter of Casalis, born in South Africa, and married to the son of a South African missionary, was there with her husband, besides several young French students boarding in the house, their destination being also South or West Africa. Very soon after, in a few days, all were scattered; but I think that unpremeditated meeting, and communion of kindred spirits old and young, would hardly ever be forgotten. So much work and pleasure was compressed into those three weeks that our father was pretty well worn-out, and was glad to feel quiet at home again for a day or two before going to Glasgow to address the missionary meeting of the United Presbyterian Synod. Here he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Kidston, and he never visited Scotland again without renewing his enjoyment of their friendship. From Glasgow he went to the Free Church Assembly meetings in Edinburgh, and here also addressed the missionary meeting. He was the guest of Mr. Dickson for the week. Dr. Andrew Bonar, of Glasgow, and a Norwegian minister were also guests, besides others whom he met, making the occasion one of special enjoyment.

After a visit to Falkirk and Stirling friends he found a quiet resting-place in a visit to the Kidstons, then at Portencross, on the west coast of Scotland, where the sea air quite set him up, as it generally did. He thoroughly enjoyed the primitiveness of this then out-of-the-way fisher village, and felt a great pleasure in giving some idea of his work in South Africa to the children of the village, on the Sunday evening in Mr. Kidston's house. Returning to England he continued his public work at various places, and spent a month in visiting members and connections of his own family, carrying at the same time an edition of the Sechwana hymn-book through the press.

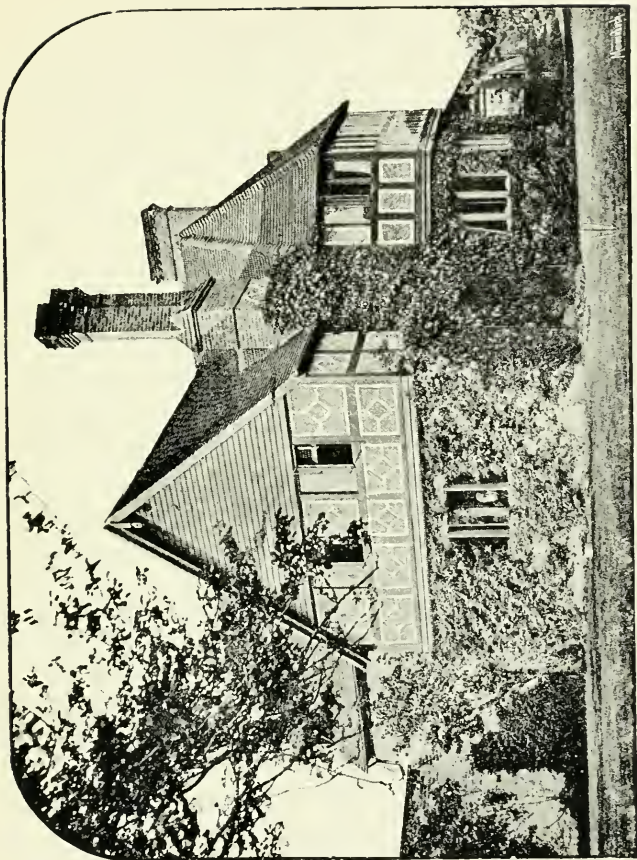
CHAPTER XXXVIII

CLOSING SCENES.

1878-1883.

THE winter was spent quietly at Knowle Road, the only break of importance being his admission to the Turners' Company, through the nomination of his friend Professor Tennant. This took place on the twentieth of December, and a few days later he received the freedom of the City of London. He still continued his visits to the Moffat Institute in Lambeth, and attended steadily Mr. Baldwin Brown's weekly lectures on St. Bernard, Francis of Assisi, and Wycliffe, besides the Sabbath services. In the spring of 1878 our father again had the pleasure of breakfasting with Mr. Gladstone, at the house of Mr. Birks, in Harley Street. In May he assisted, with Mr. Baldwin Brown, at the marriage of another of his granddaughters, now Mrs. Mannhardt, of Hanerau. The year passed quietly in visits to friends and in some public engagements; but in January, 1879, came another of those seasons of parting of which he had had so many. On the ninth of January his daughter Bessie, with her husband and younger children, left our house to return to their work in South Africa. As usual, this was the signal for a severe struggle in his own mind in the desire to go too.

In addition to other public engagements among his own people, having promised to address the Wesleyan missionary meetings at Huddersfield, he did so, returning *via* Rotherham to visit our old friends the Habershons. It had escaped his memory that the annual meeting of the Bible Society was so near. He suddenly discovered it while seated at the tea-table surrounded by friends, and could not rest till it was settled that we should start next morning early enough to be at the meeting; and start we did, in spite of sleet and snow, by the train leaving Rotherham at seven in the morning. He arrived in time to enter soon after the meeting



PARK_COTTAGE, LEIGH.

had commenced, sat it through with great satisfaction, and then returned home to Brixton, by no means overdone and quite lively. Soon after this he started on another round of public duty, getting as far as Scotland, where he baptized a great-grandchild, Mary Livingstone Bruce.

At the end of July we went to Jersey and Guernsey for the Missionary Society. We were accompanied by the Rev. Edward Jones. We were entertained in Jersey by Mr. Williams, who made the deputation week a combination of pleasure and work, driving to all the villages for meetings by the most interesting routes, and occasionally picnicing for the sake of seeing some beautiful spot on our way. The weather was magnificent, so that the enjoyment of so much fresh air and change of scene, with the delightful company of his genial coadjutor Mr. Jones, quite counteracted the fatigue of the many meetings. It was while we were at Guernsey that we first heard of Park Cottage, but did not go to see it till some weeks after our return to London.

Our father had for several years been craving a change of residence. He was weary of looking at bricks and mortar, and feeling it difficult to refuse the many applications for work in the neighbourhood of London during the winter months, he longed for the quiet of the country, or more still a seaside retreat. Nothing suitable, however, was found by the sea, and Park Cottage seemed just the kind of home he desired. Thither he went in November, first paying a visit to Swansea for meetings there. On arriving at Leigh a very warm welcome awaited him from Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Morley, whose tenant he had become, and their thoughtful attention never wavered from that day until he passed to the heavenly home.

The winter was bitterly cold. The morning after the first heavy fall of snow his delight was great. He stood gazing out of the window upon the beautiful white covering which made trees and shrubs all look like fairyland. It was an old-fashioned winter, and reminded him of the days of his youth, for even in England he had not seen snow in the country more than once or twice. But when it lay for a month his enthusiasm vanished, and he longed to see the green grass again, and to feel the sun's rays. He longed, too, to be at work in the garden, and so watched for the spring. He was quite in his element when he was able to go out and guide the gardener. He seemed to feel more at home in his own house than he had ever done since he had come to England. The village life and all his surroundings seemed so much more natural to him. Of course some privileges were missed, but others made up for their loss. He attended regularly the little village

chapel, always in the morning and often in the afternoon, and was always glad to help in the services. Some friends remonstrated with him, when leaving London, upon going to bury himself down in the country; but when they saw him after a few months, especially in his own house, they had not a word to say.

One of the first of these visitors was Baldwin Brown. It was a flying visit, but a very welcome one to all at Park Cottage. Several friends from South Africa also visited him at Leigh, among them Mr. and Mrs. Coillard of the Basuto Mission. Mr. C. on entering the study, from the window of which he looked into the garden, exclaimed, "Why you have got back to Kuruman here!" A door from the study led out to the garden. He would be in and out all day. There was always fresh enjoyment to him in showing his friends the progress of his plans and the growth or improvement of certain plants. Then he was so pleased to show his visitors Mr. Morley's beautiful grounds, upon the charms of which he would stand and expatiate with all the zest of a connoisseur.

Of course there were gloomy days when he could not venture out. On these he often took refuge in some Sechwana work, and felt that always the best means of forgetting the weather. The thoughtful sociability of his neighbours in the village did much to render the years at Leigh happy, and one or two, particularly, made a point of dropping in on dull days, diverting him by their cheerfulness from all thought of the sombre skies of old England, and making him talk of the sunny land to which his heart was always ready to turn. He read a great deal, particularly newspapers, and in the evenings always read aloud any scraps which interested him.

He was intensely interested and excited during the Transvaal War. It never entered his head that England would give back the Transvaal to the Boers. To the very last he allowed himself to believe that it would continue under the government of England, and thus the natives be protected. I remember well coming into his room the morning the news of the retrocession was published. He sat in his armchair the picture of sadness, his hands clasped, and the paper thrown down by his side. "They have done it," he said. "The Transvaal is given back!" For days he was as though he had received a death-blow, nor to his dying hour did it cease to be to him a bitter sorrow.

We were seldom alone, often having a friend to stay with us, as had been the case as long as he had had a home in England. The holidays found him surrounded by some of his numerous grandchildren. During the first year of his residence at Leigh he

had a visit from the widow and children of Robert, his elder son, from Natal, where they have long lived. His comparative retirement did not by any means end his public work. He still travelled both for the Bible and Missionary Societies.

In May, 1881, he was at the Mansion House, the guest of the Lord Mayor, Sir William McArthur, for several days, and rather enjoyed sleeping in the middle of the city, and waking up on the Sunday morning to its marvellous stillness. He attended the usual May meetings this year; and in June, in fulfilment of a long-standing promise, went down to Kendal for the Bible Society. It was a week of hard work, as he made long speeches at Kendal, Grasmere, and Ambleside. All that could be done was done to make him comfortable by his old friends Mr. and Mrs. Charles Braithwaite.

From Kendal he went on to Falkirk, there to preach at the opening services of Carron United Presbyterian Church, close to the home of his boyhood. His host here was, as usual, John Wilson, and after the excitement of the London May meetings and those at Kendal, winding up with the service at Carron which drew so largely upon his feelings, he found South Bantaskine once again a haven of rest, and recruited as usual there. It was on this visit, I think, he talked for an hour to a large number of Sunday scholars on the lawn, most of them belonging to an evening school carried on by one of the daughters of the house. After another visit to the Kidstons he returned to the house of one of his granddaughters in Edinburgh, Agnes Bruce. While there he addressed, one Sunday evening at a valedictory service in the United Presbyterian Assembly Hall, nine young men leaving the Livingstone Medical Mission for all parts of the world, and belonging to all sections of the Church.

He greatly enjoyed seeing all his old friends once more, not knowing, yet always ready to think it was the last time. His only remaining cousin, Mrs. Moodie, who is quite blind, referring to that visit three years afterwards, said, "I mind how he said, 'I have come straight to you, the first call I have made in Edinburgh,'" and it pleased her well. Before returning to England he again went for a few days to Bantaskine. There Mr. Wilson gathered a representative assembly from different parts of Scotland to meet him at a breakfast in his own house.

The following report of this meeting appeared in the periodicals of the day :

"On Tuesday a gathering took place at South Bantaskine of a deeply interesting character. Dr. Moffat, who is at present on a visit

to his native district of Carronshore, is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. On their invitation a large number of representatives of different churches assembled to do honour to the veteran missionary. After luncheon, Dr. Lindsay Alexander introduced Dr. Moffat, who spoke on his African experiences and of the work he had been able to accomplish for the Hottentots and the Bechwanas. Several gentlemen testified to the esteem in which Dr. Moffat is held by all the churches; and the following address was drawn up and signed by the undermentioned gentlemen, who were guests on the occasion:—‘We, the undersigned members of various religious denominations, having, through the great kindness of Mr. and Mrs. John Wilson, of South Bantaskine, been invited to meet the Rev. Dr. Moffat in a friendly manner at their house, desire to express our kindest Christian sympathy towards the venerable missionary who has so long laboured in the high places of the heathen field, and who has been honoured to accomplish so great a work in the moral and spiritual elevation of the long-neglected tribes of South Africa, and our great delight at seeing him in the midst of us in the enjoyment of vigorous health; and our earnest prayer is that the close of his long and useful life may be crowned yet more abundantly with the blessing and favour of his Divine Master.’ Sir Peter Coats of Auchendrane; Rev. John Ker, D.D., W. H. Goold, D.D., William Wilson, D.D., Sir H. Wellwood Moncrieff, Bart., D.D., W. Lindsay Alexander, D.D., Professor Duff, LL.D., Rev. D. C. Scott, J. B. Kidston, Esq., Glasgow; Rev. R. S. Scott, D.D., Rev. James Rennie, Glasgow; James King, Esq., Levenholme; Professor Dickson, D.D., Glasgow; Rev. Charles R. Teape, D.D., Principal Douglass, Glasgow; William Wilson, Esq., Banknock; Rev. James Brown, D.D., Paisley; Robert Moffat, Esq., M.D.; Rev. T. A. Wylie, LL.D., Rev. Hugh Mair, Rev. Finlay Macpherson, Sheriff Bell, Falkirk; Rev. J. Elder Cumming, D.D., Rev. J. C. Herdman, D.D., Melrose; Rev. John M’Laren, Larbert; Rev. John Anderson, Falkirk; Principal Cairns, D.D.; Professor Crum Brown, Edinburgh; J. A. Henderson, Esq., banker, Falkirk; Rev. John Yellowlees, Carron; Alexander L. Bruce, Esq.; W. Leckie, Esq., Edinburgh; Rev. George Wade, Falkirk; and W. Macdougall, Esq. Letters of apology for absence were received, among others, from Principal Sir Alex. Grant, Bart.; Sir James Falshaw, Bart.; Principal Rainy, Professor Calderwood, Dr. Charteris, Dr. Culross, and Rev. Mr. Brooke, Falkirk. It is interesting to state that there were also present Mrs. Bruce, daughter of Dr. Livingstone, with her husband, and the Rev. David C. Scott, who is about to proceed to Africa to take charge of the Blantyre Mission, and for which purpose he was ordained yesterday in Edinburgh.”

It was a happy day for all concerned. Several remained the night, and it was a rich treat to him to enjoy a little more at leisure the society of such choice spirits. Among the guests at breakfast the Dr. Scott above mentioned left Mr. Wilson’s house to go to his own wedding. Within two years at least five of that

company had gone to the better land, including the large-hearted host as well as the central figure of the gathering. The first to depart was Ex-Provost Russell, brother-in-law of Mr. Wilson, whose hearty welcome to Falkirk our father never missed. W. Lindsay Alexander, another of the party, has also gone from us.

One more peaceful day after all the pleasurable excitement, and our father started southward, unconsciously bidding farewell for ever to the scenes of his boyhood. John Wilson and he, however, met once more; the former being on deputation from the United Presbyterian Synod to the Presbyterian Church in Paris, called at Leigh on his way, and the friends spent a happy Sunday together. Delightfully interesting as this visit to Scotland had been, he was glad to get home; but he was soon earnestly entreated by his Manchester friends to go to the Congregational Union meetings in that city, to address the missionary meeting, and especially to preach in Grosvenor Street Chapel. He could seldom resist Manchester, and the weather being uncommonly fine for the time of year, he went and took up his abode at Broughton with Mrs. J. J. Sheldon, senior. He attended the evening meeting at the Free Trade Hall. The sight of the whole assembly rising as he appeared on the platform was overpowering. He always felt that in Manchester there was a deeper feeling in many hearts when they rendered that reverence than often dictated such demonstrations. It dated back nearly seventy years when our mother and he there consecrated themselves to the work to which they were so truly faithful even unto death. The most interesting service was the one at Grosvenor Street, where sixty-five years before he had been ordained to mission work by William Roby. He looked round, and recalled where one and another had sat—all now passed away except those who then were children; and where he himself had sat and had received the solemn charge. The meetings over, he went to spend a week at Cheadle with Mrs. Stephen Sheldon. After resting there he started homewards, and spent the winter at Leigh. In March, 1882, he visited at Knockholt his daughter Helen, who was on the eve of sailing on a sorrowful mission to New Zealand; and he then entered on another series of engagements of a public nature. On one occasion he attended a Salvation Army meeting in Exeter Hall. He was much interested and impressed by the earnest tones of those who took an active part, but could not get over the irreverence of manner. In the evening of the same day, Mr. Evan Spicer, whose house was his home when he slept a night in London, took him to the Electric Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, to his great delight. June and July were spent in visits to some of the

many friends whose doors were always wide to receive him. Ketshwayo was at this time in England. Our father's sympathies were all with him, and he went to see him. As he could not speak Zulu, he had to be content with interpretation; but Mr. Shepstone brought to him an attendant, saying, "This man can speak Sechwana."

It was such an unloosing of his tongue as he had not had for many years, and the man's delight was beyond bounds. He had been in the train of a son of Mosilikatse during his exile in Zululand. He had heard of our father, but never expected to see him, and seemed hardly able to believe it. He asked again and again, "A u Moshete?" (Are you Moffat?) When convinced, he exclaimed with beaming eyes, "I see this day what my eyes never expected to behold, Moshete!"

Two days after this episode we again started for Lancashire to visit the Reyners and Cheethams; but our visit was much saddened by the blanks in homes where all had been old friends. He much enjoyed going over the past with Mr. Cheetham, and visited with Miss Cheetham the house at Dukinfield, sitting down in the very room in which he first saw our mother. But there was an intense pathos about it all—so many were gone; and pleasant as it was to see their children and children's children, he still felt the want of the absent ones. A week spent with Miss Sheldon at Cheadle, where death had taken away our dear old hostess since our visit the previous year, completed his last sojourn in Manchester. He found that even very moderate public speaking this year made him dizzy, and he therefore declined nearly all requests. Returning to Leigh we settled down for the winter, during which he enjoyed good health; but as January wore on, debarred from air and exercise, he was feeling weak, and craved a change, so we went for a fortnight to Brighton.

For the next two months he was remarkably well—quite extraordinarily bright and active. He made a short visit to London in March, and slept the last night in his first Brixton home, the house of Henry Vavasseur. For two months he took special interest in his garden, planting many things with his own hands. In April, according to promise, he went to Hampstead to lay the foundation-stone of a new church. He enjoyed the occasion, but complained of great weariness and intermittent pulsation. This now troubled him so constantly that he at last sought advice two months later. Nevertheless, he was otherwise wonderfully well and bright for a month, up at six in the morning as often as not, and out at work in the garden. He attended the Bible Society's meeting on the second of May, but returned very tired. The

irregularity of the pulsation increasing, his symptoms during the ensuing week caused some anxiety ; but he would not be dissuaded from going up again to the Society's meeting on the tenth. "It may be the last time," he said. On Friday he did not seem more tired than usual after such a meeting ; but that night he was very ill. From the twelfth of May he never fully rallied, although often so bright and well as to dispel our fears.

He was greatly cheered in May by a visit from Mr. and Mrs. James Spicer, of Woodford. Mr. Spicer and his sons had served him unweariedly in many ways during all the years after his return from Africa—managing business matters for him, and taking off his mind concerns which would otherwise have been a sad care to him.

On Monday, Mr. and Mrs. Morley being at Hall Place for a day or two, asked him up to tea. After tea, Mrs. Morley and he walked round the gardens and hot-houses. He had gone up just to see the Morleys for half an hour, but fully two hours they spent together, and it was the last walk he ever had round the grounds. Then he went to Knockholt, and we hoped for the usual effects of a change of air ; but, alas ! we felt that he was no stronger when he returned home. He was at last persuaded to see his friend Sir Risdon Bennett, who, with his usual kindness, gave him advice, and tried to cheer him, but at the same time confirmed the worst fears of those who were anxiously watching, and dreading that this was the beginning of the end. So wonderfully, however, did he rally under Dr. Bennett's treatment, that we could not help hoping that there was a mistake.

He was so much better, that early in July he again paid a visit to Knockholt. His daughter there had invited two dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. George Sturge, to spend a day, that they might all meet again without over-fatigue to either. They walked together round the garden in pleasant converse ; the afternoon passed, and they parted—two of the number to meet again within one month in heaven. Mrs. Sturge departed on the twenty-ninth of July, and our father on the ninth of August. He returned home brightly, but in a few days began to suffer still more. Yet with all this he was in and out of the garden, and took two drives, Mrs. Morley sending her carriage whenever he felt able. After the second drive, on the fourth of August, he took half an hour's walk ; and every evening he strolled round the garden, noticing how things were going on. One evening he remarked upon the beautiful crop of apples not yet ready for use, and said, "We must not forget to send Mr. Stacey some of these." Mr. Stacey, the devoted servant of the Society and faithful friend of all the missionaries, had long been laid aside with paralysis.

To his friend Mr. Dickson, of Edinburgh, he wrote about three weeks before his departure :

“ I have for some time been experiencing a weanedness from all that concerns this life, and feel a growing desire to spend my future in praise and prayer. Of course it is natural that one at my age should be frequently looking at the ‘ goodly land ’ beyond the ‘ narrow stream.’ The prospect is sublimely grand, for there

‘ Our best friends and our kindred dwell,
And Christ our Saviour reigns.’

I have oft felt much pressed in mind from the reported sufferings of the Bechwanas, robbed and trodden down by the Transvaal Boers ; and now our Senators have got their hands full of perplexities. How sad it is to reflect on the present state of Madagascar ! What a comfort, among all these dark and ominous prospects, that our Father in heaven surveys it all, and in due time will show who is the only potentate. When we think of the glories of eternity, how small the mites of power in this world are. Love to your dear sons, and believe me ever gratefully,

“ ROBERT MOFFAT.”

The following was one of the last letters he wrote. It shows that to the last his heart beat in unison with the interests of the Society, to the service of which he gave himself in 1810, and whose faithful servant he was for fifty-seven years :

“ July 23, 1883.

“ MY DEAR MR. ROBINSON,—Only a few lines to say that but for an attack of illness I should probably during the five weeks past have visited the Mission-house once and again. I have been laid up, though not in bed ; and though I still feel great weakness, I think I am gaining strength. I have suffered great weakness in my lungs, so that the least exercise made me puff and blow as if they were going to stop altogether. I mustered energy to visit my old friend Sir Risdon Bennett, and am attending to his prescriptions. If it be the Lord's will to restore strength, I shall not fail to call, longing as I do to see you all again. But such is life ; prop after prop is being removed, but nothing will be suffered to remove the ‘ blessed hope ’ of reaching the blissful shore beyond the narrow stream. I have managed to write a couple of letters to friends who may be wondering what has become of me, and I feel fatigued. Some seem to suppose that I do not get old like other folks, as applications still come in for services at public meetings. My platform and pulpit days are over, and I have had a tolerable share. I hope you are still receiving good accounts from Wardlaw Thompson. What a noble tale he will be able to tell us on his return ! With every sentiment of regard, yours,

“ ROBERT MOFFAT.”

On the thirtieth of July Dr. Risdon Bennett kindly came down to see him. His visit was a great comfort, and did good for the time; but the sun was rapidly nearing the western horizon, and nothing could stay its course.

Our father enjoyed seeing his friends as they looked in now and then, but could not bear much company, though he brightened up for the time. On Sunday the fifth he would fain have gone as usual to the chapel, but was dissuaded—the first time I ever remember his being absent from morning service. He spent a peaceful Sunday at home. In the evening he enjoyed the singing of a few hymns, after our usual stroll round the garden. He could not join in the singing, but chose the hymns—"The sands of time are sinking," as it is in the Presbyterian Hymnal, and he seemed to enjoy it peculiarly; also, "Come, Thou Fount of every blessing," "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," "At even when the sun was set," and "Nearer, my God, to Thee." He was very fond of hymns, and at home, even when quite well, it was his habit when most of the household had gone to bed, and he smoked his pipe before going himself, to repeat hymn after hymn. He had learned several by heart quite lately, among them, "Abide with me," and "I long to hear the story." He was struck with the latter when he heard it was the last hymn his friend Mr. Wilson sang before his death, and he committed it to memory during the last three months of his life. His New Testament (in large type), a copy sent out to him and our mother years ago by Miss Anna Mary Braithwaite, was his constant companion during those last weeks, and he seemed to live with the Apostle John. Even at family worship he was in the course of reading John over a second time when he passed away. In fact those who were with him during the last months were all struck with the way in which his thoughts turned ever upward. It mattered not what was the topic of conversation, and however heartily he entered into it, somehow or other it always turned to heaven and the Saviour.

On Monday, August the sixth, he seemed markedly better, and very much enjoyed visits from Miss Unwin, of Walthamstow Hall, a dear friend, and his son-in-law James Vavasseur. He heard also of the return of a grandson and granddaughter from South Africa whither they had been on a visit, and he looked forward to seeing them on the morrow with great joy. He was very bright on the Tuesday, was down early, walking in the garden before breakfast. When his grandchildren came he listened eagerly to the tale they had to tell of old friends and old places in "his own loved country." On the Monday morning when we came down he had been reading the *Daily News* as usual, and threw it down

sadly, saying, "Oh, there is nothing about Africa ; they are just letting it drop." When reminded that there was to be a discussion that night in Parliament, he brightened a little, and read the next day with great interest Mr. Forster's speech, which gratified him much. On Tuesday evening, after his grandchildren had left, he took his usual walk round the garden, and seemed wonderfully better and very happy. At ten o'clock he went upstairs, and then it was that a great fear took possession of me, for I heard him praying upstairs so fervently, in such a quavering voice—not as usual, quietly with the door shut—that I felt sure he was worse, and hastened up. He had a night of pain and sleeplessness, and rose on Wednesday very weary and low. Yet he was out several times directing the gardener, though the weather was drizzling and dull, and once he went out with the garden scissors, leaning on his umbrella, and clipped some twigs of a hawthorn, the which overhung the path. While he was doing this a neighbour called, and I was glad of the excuse to call him in, for he was evidently feeling so weak. Mrs. Heath said, "Why do you exert yourself so, when it could be done for you?" "Ah!" he answered, "I like to feel that I can still do it." He looked very ill that day, but otherwise did not seem worse than he had been several times before, or so bad as when we had sent up for Dr. Bennett ten days before. It was holiday time, and there were four of his grandchildren with us. At tea-time, when he had retired to his armchair, he said, "Why are you all so quiet? Talk away, for I cannot hear." I explained that the children were going out to spend an hour or two with our neighbours the Towers, and had not time to talk. He was so sensitive about our denying ourselves in any way for him.

So little did we look for any immediate change, that he and I were left alone in the house when the children went. We had not even a servant at hand. As I sat beside him he asked when his daughter Helen was likely to come. I said I thought probably next day, as I had written that he was not so well again. I begged him to let me send for Dr. Fraser, but he said, "No, to-morrow will do." Very soon after he was much worse, and had a fainting fit. He became very ill, and determined to go upstairs. I begged him to remain where he was ; but he said, "No, I must go ; I feel I can, because I will," and, thank God, he reached the top of the stairs without falling. He remained on the bedside and rested awhile, propped up with pillows, until he felt able to undress, which he did, with but little assistance, as collectedly and deliberately as possibly, even winding up his watch with a cold, trembling hand—"for the last time," he said.

By this time the children had returned, and Roger Price went for a doctor, and help speedily poured in. Our kind neighbours were all ready. Mr. Morley instantly sent off a carriage to Knockholt for Mrs. Vavasseur—Mr. Towers, a clergyman who lived close to us, going all the way to bring her. The doctor came in a few minutes after being summoned. He said that my father had broken a blood vessel. He was glad to see the doctor, and told him just how he felt. Our father slept beautifully most of the time till between three and four o'clock. Mrs. Towers remained with us until Helen arrived. He received her thankfully and calmly, folding her in his arms and asking how she came. He was full of thankfulness to Mr. Morley and Mr. Towers. From this time he continued to sleep, waking at intervals, and was much inclined to talk when awake.

He was just full of his Saviour's love and mercy all through his life; he repeated many hymns and passages of Scripture. About eleven in the forenoon of Thursday, he tried to get out of bed, but fell back in a fainting fit and was caught by my sister. We feared that it was the end, but he revived. Dr. Fraser was at hand at once, and also Mr. Maxted, the superintendent at the village chapel, whom he had wished to see. Mr. Maxted's ministrations were very acceptable, and he responded most heartily, dwelling on Christ as the only stay and help. He referred to our mother's peaceful departure, and to the question of recognition in heaven.

He was very pleased to have a visit from Mr. Morley, whom he truly loved (and also Mr. Henry Morley), and thanked him so warmly for sparing time from his many engagements. He talked with wonderful vigour of the mysteriousness of Providence, and was evidently clinging to the hope of the restitution of all things, but wound up with the words, "It is all a mystery. Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

A dear friend who was to have spent the day with us, and had missed our telegram, came. He knew her, and was very glad to see her. Several grandchildren had come to see him, and he bade them a loving good-bye, kissing them and giving them his blessing. Mr. Towers came in and offered a few words of prayer, beautiful and appropriate. This was the last visitor he saw. Mr. Edward Jones had come from the Mission House, but we feared the flood of association and excitement his presence would have caused, and our father did not see him. He had asked for his Testament, and tried to read during the day, but he could not. We read to him, as he wished, portions of Scripture. The last was the thirty-fourth Psalm. He repeated many hymns, among them the Scotch version of the hundred and third Psalm, but stopped and said,

"There is nothing like the original," which we then read to him. One hymn he would have us read to him was, "Hail, sovereign Light," his mother's favourite, published in very few hymn-books now.

Just at the last, Dr. Harry Pye Smith came. He had been deputed to take charge of my father's case by Dr. Bennett when leaving town, and kindly came. When I thanked him he said, "I only came because it was he. I knew quite well that at his age I could do nothing."

He had another sleep, and when he woke from this it was evident the end was near. He signed to us to cover his poor, cold hands, and lay, his looks wandering, unconsciously we think, from one to another. It seemed a hard struggle for that wonderful frame to let the spirit go, and then came the quietness which was unmistakable, leaving the beautiful face so natural. He ended his pilgrimage at half-past seven on the evening of Thursday the ninth of August, 1883.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FUNERAL, AND NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

THE following account of the funeral is taken from the columns of the *Daily News* :

“Yesterday afternoon the funeral of the Rev. Dr. Moffat took place at Norwood Cemetery, the interment being preceded by a service in the Wesleyan Chapel (of which the Rev. J. McTurk is the minister), situated opposite Tulse Hill railway station—a very large edifice, which was filled throughout with mourners and sympathisers. The friends of the family met, as previously arranged, at the house of Mr. Evan Spicer, Upper Lawn, Tulse Hill, whither the body had been conveyed from Brixton. It had found a resting-place the previous night in the house of Mr. Henry Vavasseur. The funeral procession left at two o'clock, being joined by deputations from various societies, and by many other persons. The centre of the chapel was reserved for immediate friends of the deceased and the deputations, the chief mourners being in front. At the entrance of the chancel, where the coffin remained during the service, were three large African palm-trees and several smaller ones, symbolizing, as it were, the scene of Dr. Moffat's half-a-century's missionary labours. As the procession entered the chapel the organ played Mendelssohn's 'O rest in the Lord,' and the scene was deeply impressive. The service in the chapel was performed by the Rev. J. C. Harrison, Congregational minister, Camden-town, and the Rev. Dr. McEwan, Presbyterian minister, Clapham. It commenced with the hymn beginning 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.' This was followed by the reading by Dr. McEwan of selections from the Holy Scriptures, including part of the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the reverend gentleman offered up an appropriate prayer.—The Rev. J. C. Harrison delivered an address, in which he took a comprehensive survey of the life, character, and labours of Dr. Moffat. After speaking of 'entireness of consecration' as one great feature that marked his missionary career and made him 'king amongst men,' and also of the 'personal fascination' which produced such wonderful effects upon the heathen, he dwelt upon Dr. Moffat's 'perfect disinterestedness,' illustrated by the fact that so long as he had just enough to sustain him he seemed never to covet anything more; his wonderful

catholicity, which made him love all good men and rejoice in every good and great work, there being no littleness or bitterness seen in him, though he had indomitable firmness when the gospel was in question ; his guileless simplicity, combined with abundant shrewdness and a great deal of mother wit ; and his astonishing faith in the power of the gospel—a faith which gave wonderful beauty and consistency to his whole character. In concluding his brief sketch, the speaker read a letter written by the subject of it only fourteen days before his death, which he characterized as ‘breathing the old loyalty to the London Missionary Society,’ and expressed an earnest hope that some of the young men who were present would endeavour to imitate his Christian heroism and be inspired by his earnest missionary spirit. The rev. gentleman concluded the service with the benediction. While the organ was playing the ‘Dead March,’ the coffin was again carried to the hearse—an open one—which was waiting outside, its destination being Norwood Cemetery, and the intervening distance about half a mile. The number of carriages forming a funeral *cortège* and conveying the family and immediate friends and the deputations was about twenty-five, besides which there were several private carriages. At the grave, which is about a hundred yards from the cemetery chapel, there was a very large public gathering long before the hour of interment, and it was with some difficulty that adequate space could be kept for the chief mourners and others who arrived in carriages. In the grave was seen the coffin of the deceased’s wife—the figures ‘1871,’ visible on the lid, indicating the period of her burial. The inscription on Dr. Moffat’s coffin, which rests on that of his wife, is as follows : ‘Robert Moffat, born 21st of December, 1795, died 9th of August, 1883.’ The final service having opened with the singing of the hymn commencing ‘How blest the righteous when he dies,’ the Rev. R. Robinson (Secretary of the London Missionary Society) read part of the Burial Service of the Church of England. The Rev. J. G. Rogers delivered an address, in which he pronounced a eulogium on the deceased similar to that of Mr. Harrison in the chapel, and also on the late Mrs. Moffat, whom he described as having sympathized in all Dr. Moffat’s cares, and entered into all his hopes, his sorrows, his vicissitudes, his troubles, and his fears, and who, he added, was a true-hearted and noble-minded woman, a grand example to the wives of missionaries, as Robert Moffat was a grand example to missionaries themselves ; so true, so noble, so courageous, so heroic, was that great apostle of South Africa. The Rev. Dr. Kennedy afterwards offered prayer, and closed the proceedings with the benediction.”

The expenses of the funeral were undertaken by the Directors of the London Missionary Society, who thus gracefully crowned the long period of affectionate connection which had been maintained with unbroken constancy on both sides.

It is difficult to select from the many kind words which were spoken at the time, but it would be impossible to do more than to give one or two citations from the columns of the press. On

the day after the funeral a leader appeared in *The Times*, from which the following is an extract :

"Dr. Robert Moffat, who was yesterday laid in the grave, has left an abiding name as a pioneer of modern missionary work in South Africa. He was born in 1795, a year memorable as that of the foundation of the London Missionary Society, and in 1816 he entered on his career in South Africa as one of the Society's missionaries. He left that country finally in 1870. During that long interval the dark continent was attacked and explored in all directions. Scientific travellers and missionary travellers were busy pushing their way into regions to which Moffat had never penetrated. It is Moffat's honour to have been among 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 laboured, and other men have entered into his labour. 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 among the Bechwanas, that he should obtain the applause of men. His one care was for those among whom he had cast his lot. He was an enthusiast, of course—a man would be worth little for missionary enterprise if he were not this at all events. But he was an enthusiast with a clear sense of the right means to employ for the accomplishment of his unselfish task. He had a message to deliver of love and of peace, and he must prepare men to receive it by instructing them in the arts of peace. The progress of South Africa has been mainly due to men of Moffat's stamp. In him, as in David Livingstone, it is hard to say which character has predominated, that of the missionary proper or that of the teacher and guide. Certain it is that apart from the special stimulus they felt as proclaimers of the gospel message, they would never have thrown themselves as they did into the work to which their lives were consecrated. It was by no zeal for the spread of civilization on its own account that they passed weary years labouring

and teaching among savage tribes, amid dangers of every kind, amid privations of which they themselves made light, but which only a sense of their high spiritual mission could have prompted them to face and undergo. One part of Moffat's work has been to prepare the way for others. He has given, so far, what promises to be a lasting stimulus. It is another question whether his own work will endure. He welcomed the annexation of the Transvaal by this country as the commencement of an era of blessing for South Africa. He saw in this the only possible guarantee for the safety of the Bechwanas from the greed and tyranny of the Boers. He has lived to see the Transvaal handed back, freed from English control, and sending forth once again the old swarms of adventurers to rob and plunder in Bechwanaland, bidding fair to undo his work, and to force the entire region back again into sheer barbarism. It would seem, indeed, that it is only by the agency of such men as Moffat and his like that the contact of the white and black races can be anything but a curse to the blacks. Even the arts of civilization are of little avail by themselves. In some parts of the world their chief result has been to furnish the savage with means of enjoyment which have proved fatal to him. In others, the black man has been looked upon as fair prey. He has been forced into contact with a race superior to his own, not that he may learn from them, but that he may serve them; not that he may be raised to their level, but that he may be brought down to something even lower than before. It is the missionary alone who seeks nothing for himself. He has chosen an unselfish life. If honour comes to him, it is by no choice of his own, but as the unsought tribute which others, as it were, force upon him. Robert Moffat has died in the fulness both of years and of honours. His work has been to lay the foundations of the Church in the central regions of South Africa. As far as his influence and that of his coadjutors and successors has extended, it has brought with it un-mixed good. His name will be remembered while the South African Church endures, and his example will remain with us as a stimulus to others and as an abiding proof of what a Christian missionary can be and can do."

Among Robert Moffat's many friends may be reckoned the Rev. William Guest, formerly of Gravesend, and his wife. The latter especially had been instrumental in rendering a service to one member of the family which had greatly cheered and comforted the aged missionary, who was not without his cares. It has been truly said of him by Mr. Guest, that "he never forgot a kind attention. Nothing in him was more marked than his affectionateness of gratitude." He had taken a very warm interest in Mr. Guest's efforts in connection with the establishment of the Milton Mount School. During the spring of 1882 Mr. and Mrs. Guest spent a day or two with their old friend at Park Cottage, which was a season of enjoyment to all concerned,

They were subsequently amongst his latest visitors. Mr. Guest thus refers to that occasion in the obituary notice which appeared in the *Nonconformist and Independent* of August 16, 1883:—

“Three weeks ago it seemed to me due to go over to Leigh to pay a mark of respect to the veteran missionary. His natural gracefulness seemed rather heightened than diminished under very obvious physical weakness. On quoting to him the thought of the aged Whittier, on the Quaker poet’s birthday—

“ Before me, even as behind,
God is, and all is well ! ”

he replied that his thoughts recently had been much occupied with the three words, “That blessed hope.” With those old tones of musical cadence and pathos, he repeated and emphasized the epithet “blessed” as applied to the vision of the Saviour; and he seemed anxious to assure me that it was not only to “the glorious appearing” of the Lord Jesus that his prevailing thoughts adverted, but to his own approaching introduction to Him. It was a beautiful attitude for the spent servant—the long life-work finished—to think chiefly of seeing the dear Master who had graciously appointed, and sustained him in the service.’ ”

The Editor is glad to be able to put before the readers of this book a letter from the Rev. Hugh Collum, vicar of Leigh, which will be interesting for many reasons. It brings out well the fact that Robert Moffat was not so much in sympathy with any particular branch of the Christian Church, as with all good men in that Church. He had his own views, and he held them tenaciously, but his mind dwelt on a different plane from that of ecclesiastical discussion. Exception must be taken to one remark, and then this work, which has been a labour of love, is done. Mr. Collum says, “He had no love for the Boers.” This may go for more than it really means. Among the Dutch in South Africa there were many with whom Robert and Mary Moffat had kept up an affectionate friendship. They often spoke with almost reverential regard of the high Christian character of some of these. Bitterly as their hearts were grieved at the sorrows of the natives, and the lawless and oppressive acts of which the more turbulent emigrant farmers were guilty, the Moffats never withdrew from them the Christian charity which we are enjoined to accord even to those who have wronged us. They never measured words in condemning their unjust and cruel conduct but they would have been the first to try and win them over if conciliation had been found possible.

"It was in the year 1880 that I first made the acquaintance of Dr. Moffat. It was impossible to look into his face, beaming with intelligence and benevolence, still less engage in conversation with him, without being fully persuaded that you were in the presence of a man far above the average. There was something about his whole appearance—so massive and masculine, yet so gentle and yielding; so venerable and dignified, yet so simple and winning; so thoughtful and serious, yet so full of humour and playfulness—which completely captivated the imagination. His conversation was easy, natural, unaffected, without reserve or self-consciousness—the outcome of a beautiful, grave, and transparent soul—betraying a wide knowledge of men and things, an intimate acquaintance with human nature and human life in all their complex variety; a combination which to me was of infinite charm.

"I always esteemed it a great privilege, a rare treat, an intellectual and moral feast of fat things, to have an hour's chat with my ever-to-be-regretted venerable friend. I invariably felt that I came away after my visit a better and a wiser man. I carried away with me a higher estimate of our common humanity. In studying such a man I realized, to an extent which I had seldom done before, that there are infinite possibilities in human nature, when unspoiled and unsoiled and suffering to develop itself, without 'let or hindrance,' beneath the genial, fostering influences of the Divine Spirit.

"Some men of inferior mould in Dr. Moffat's position, courted by the great and good, would have completely lost their balance—they would have been spoiled by human admiration and applause. 'The smoothness of flattery,' that tendency to hero worship which is a characteristic of our day, would have marred and corrupted a character built up of feebler fibre.

"Happily for himself, Dr. Moffat combined the well-balanced mind of a Christian philosopher with the attractive docility and simplicity of a child. He was a living example of the teaching of our Divine Master, 'Ye must become as little children before ye can enter the kingdom of heaven.' In my intercourse with him I was often struck by the spontaneous expression of his profound reverence for Almighty God; his deep and sincere attachment to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his unbounded admiration for and belief in the Divine authority and regenerative influence of the Holy Scriptures. In an age in which it is confidently alleged that 'we are apparently becoming less religious,' when the supernatural is being discarded by some eminent men of science for the natural, when the creed of Christendom is being emasculated by agnosticism, Dr. Moffat's faith remained unshaken, undriven about by the shifting winds and currents of modern doctrine. At the same time, he was fully capable of, and enjoyed, entering into the discussion of those deep problems which are exercising the thought and intelligence of some of the master minds of our age. He also approached with deep interest the consideration of political and social questions. The critical and revolutionary state of Ireland engaged his attention. He had a strong conviction that the ills of Ireland were largely due, not merely to past misgovernment and maladministration of her affairs, or differences of

race, but also to the pernicious influence of the predominant Roman Catholic religion, which is a thorn in the side of every independent and Protestant government. But the question which pre-eminently interested him was the condition of the native population of South Africa. He was strongly of opinion that there had been grievous mistakes of policy and administration. He had no love for the Boers; while he had the utmost sympathy for Cetewayo, whom he looked upon as an ill-used and unjustly-treated man.

"We often had friendly discussions and arguments on religious questions. He was, it is needless to say, a staunch but liberal-minded Nonconformist. I was often intensely amused at his quaint, original, and humorous way of looking at Church matters. He evidently thought that, in the case of the venerable Church of England, the primitive purity and simplicity of the faith had been marred and materialized by contact with social forces, and hampered by State alliance. It was a perplexity with him to reconcile the titles, rank, incomes, and mode of living of 'the dignitaries of the Church' with the self-denying, hard-faring lives of the apostles and pioneers of the faith—'the servant,' in his judgment, 'not being greater than his Master.'

"Even the most bigoted and narrow-minded Churchman, however, could not take offence at Dr. Moffat's friendly and not unnatural criticisms of our system, services, and ceremonial, which to him must have seemed somewhat strange. They were offered, from an independent and by no means unsympathetic standpoint, with the utmost candour and *bonhomie*. To my mind they were rather refreshing and stimulating, and I enjoyed listening to what could be said 'on the other side of the question' by one whom I so greatly admired and esteemed.

"But if the good Doctor did not on occasion scruple to point out what to him appeared the defects of the Church, even while freely acknowledging the good work she was doing, he was by no means blind to the imperfections of Nonconformity. As a large-minded and large-hearted man, who had seen much of the world, who had been brought face to face with the degradations of heathenism and of bastard forms of Christianity, he had no sympathy with what was narrow, bitter, sectarian, or intolerant, whether it were found within the Church, or in systems outside her pale. If I mistake not, Nonconformity no less than ecclesiasticism had its own peculiar puzzles for him. He never attempted to justify or palliate those too numerous and grievous divisions which marred the symmetry, broke the unity, and weakened the influence for good of the Church of Christ in its increasingly hard struggles with 'the powers of darkness;' and in his generous heart he longed for the reunion, in the one true faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, of a divided and distracted Christendom, thus realizing the devout aspiration of the Founder of our faith, 'that they *all* may be one.'

"He was always most ready to take part in any village gatherings—turning out of his home on dark and cold winter evenings. He attended many of our schoolroom lectures, and was ever willing, when requested, to say 'a word in season.' He highly approved of our Penny Readings, and thoroughly appreciated the musical selections, readings, and recitations.

“At the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society in our schoolroom, we always looked for his welcome presence, and I do not think we ever looked for it in vain. He seemed to take a *special* pleasure and interest in these gatherings—when Christians of all denominations could meet on a common platform in support of a common cause. He was wont to say, ‘I have two masters: the London Missionary Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society,’ and they both commanded his allegiance and affection. More than once he publicly referred to his arduous undertaking of translating the Scriptures into the Bechwana tongue. He had first to give shape and grammatical structure to a language which had never been reduced to writing, before he could proceed with the work of translating. This, I think, he regarded as his *magnum opus*, and it left its abiding mark on him in the shape of sleeplessness and other evidences of an overtaxed brain. On these occasions it was most touching to see him passing his hand apologetically over his deeply-furrowed brow, whilst labouring to recall some particular episode or passage in his varied African experience.

“Looking back upon the residence of Dr. Moffat in this parish, I can say, without fear of contradiction, that it was an unspeakable blessing to the place and neighbourhood. ‘We ne’er shall look upon his like again.’ His influence was eminently Christian and genial. He lived so simply, and sought so thoroughly to identify himself with the interests of his neighbours of all classes, and to harmonize his life with the circumstances in which he found himself. Everybody in the parish appreciated and esteemed him—from the philanthropic squire down to the humblest villager and school-child. We all came to look upon him as one of ourselves. We miss, beyond expression, his familiar and venerable form going in and out among us; but his memory abideth green, and will long survive.”

The writer of the following letter has done a kindness, not only to the Editor, but to all those who are likely to be readers of this book, in the loving testimony he bears to the kind of influence exerted by Robert Moffat over the minds of his fellow-men during the space of two generations.

“CLAPHAM COMMON, *May 20.*

“MY DEAR MR. MOFFAT,—My recollections of your honoured father extend a long way back. They are but slight, and I am afraid you may find them rather disappointing. It was in the year of his first visit to England that I first saw and heard him. But even then I learned to honour and love him. I was a mere lad at the time, and had gone to Liverpool to enjoy the missionary services. The annual meeting was held in Great George Street Chapel, which was crowded by a deeply interested congregation, who, however, had come together for the purpose of hearing other missionaries, and had no idea of the extraordinary surprise that was in store for them. Your father had unexpectedly come to the town, and was asked to speak. From the

first word of his address he kept the audience in a state of intense excitement and delight. His touching simplicity, his loving spirit, and his unaffected modesty, impressed the assembly almost as much as the wonderful story he had to recite. That speech made his reputation with the English public. It was the speech of an apostle, and he himself looked the apostle. A night or two afterwards he came to the little church of which my father was minister, and his coming was an excitement even in the sleepy little town where the church was. My happiest remembrances of him, however, are in the home where his visit was long remembered as a bright and joyous event.

“In my pastorate at Ashton-under-Lyne I was brought into contact with memories of your mother. She was one of the first members of the church at that place, which was founded under circumstances of difficulty which severely taxed the faith and patience of those who had entered upon an undertaking which at first seemed to have but little promise. It was owing, in truth, to the zeal and devotion of a very few that the foundation was laid of a church which has long been one of the most influential in the county of Lancaster. Among these your grandfather and your mother were conspicuous, and her name was fragrant in the memories of some of the older members even when I was the pastor.

“Of course, after coming to London I often met your father; but one interview in particular remains fresh in my recollection. I had the honour to be one of a deputation sent by the Congregational Board to congratulate him on his eightieth birthday. He received us with all that native grace and dignity which were characteristic of him, and the spectacle of the venerable patriarch was one not easily to be forgotten. It was his reply, however, to our address which most impressed me. I have often quoted it as a striking example of the modesty of true greatness, and of the way in which the noblest worker hides himself behind his work. ‘I never,’ he said, in those tender and plaintive notes of his that were so familiar to all, ‘I never thought when I was working in South Africa to see a day like this. I simply did the work of the day in the day, and never thought that any one in England would think of me or it.’ It was a genuine self-revelation, in which was to be found the secret of his power and success. Because he thought so little of himself, all his friends and brethren thought much of him. I cannot suppose that any one ever said an unkind word of Robert Moffat. While he was here he was cherished in the love of all of us, and now that he has passed away his life-work is a sanctified and inspiring memory.

“Believe me, yours very faithfully,

“J. GUINNESS ROGERS.”

Mr. Chesson’s indefatigable efforts on behalf of the Aborigines inspired Robert Moffat’s sympathy and admiration, and they frequently met to plead the cause of those whose interests they both had so much at heart. Mr. Chesson has kindly furnished me with some particulars of several of these occasions, of which the following is one:—

“One of my most interesting recollections of Dr. Moffat has reference to the occasion on which the committee of the Aborigines Protection Society presented a congratulatory address to Sir Bartle Frere on his appointment as Governor of the Cape Colony. This was in February, 1877. It is worthy of remark that both the deputation and the new Governor approached the native question from the same point of view; for Sir Bartle Frere told his visitors that ‘he should be exceedingly glad if he were allowed during what remained to him of official life to carry into effect the principles of entire justice to every class, race, creed, and colour.’ Dr. Moffat was greatly disappointed when he found that the new policy in South Africa involved the military conquest of the Zulus and the compulsory disarmament of the native tribes. He signed the protest against the Zulu war, which a large number of influential persons addressed to Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the Colonial Secretary, in the spring of 1879. Early in the following year he wrote a letter to me in which he put the disarmament question in a striking light. ‘There are some things,’ he said, ‘in the British Government which must appear to the native mind extremely perplexing. That Government allows its merchants in town and country to sell firearms to the native tribes to any amount, and gives licenses to traders to go far and near to sell and barter with firearms, and by which many have made ample fortunes and added to the revenues of the colony. By and by John Bull prepares a proclamation, and it goes forth that all those over whom he has power are to be disarmed, that is, deprived of the property for which they have honourably, and in some cases enormously, paid. Surely if our beloved Queen knew all these things she would not, on any account, give her consent.’ His views as to the native policy of the Boers in the Transvaal, and as to the duty of the Imperial Government to secure adequate protection to the loyal tribes within and near the borders of that country were equally emphatic. I well remember the speech he made on this subject at the residence of Mr. W. H. James, M.P., when, on Lord Shaftesbury’s invitation, he gave, from personal knowledge, a vivid description of the cruel and oppressive treatment which the natives had received at the hands of the Boers during his long residence in South Africa.

“A yet more important occasion was the dinner which Lord Mayor McArthur gave to Dr. Moffat in the Egyptian Hall on May 7, 1881. It was in some respects one of the most remarkable meetings of the kind ever held in the City of London. Certainly so varied and so influential a representation of the religious and philanthropic world was never before brought together to do honour to a Christian missionary. An eminent Wesleyan layman (now Sir William McArthur) occupied the chief magistrate’s chair. The guest of the evening sat between the Lord Mayor and Lord Shaftesbury, and his other near neighbours were Sir Fowell Buxton and the Bishop of Sodor and Man. The Archbishop of Canterbury—the lamented Dr. Tait—sat side by side with the Rev. E. E. Jenkins, President of the Wesleyan Conference. Lord Nelson, whose High Church proclivities are well known, fraternized with Mr. Joseph Hoare, a distinguished Evan-

gical layman. The Rev. Malcolm Macoll elbowed a converted Turk, and very appropriately that estimable member of the Society of Friends, Samuel Gurney, sat next to Mr. Chase, the chief of the Ojebways. The speeches were far above the average on such occasions. In proposing the toast of the Royal Family, the Lord Mayor dwelt on the interest which the Prince Consort took in the exploration of Africa, as shown by his having presided at the Niger meeting in 1840, when Livingstone (Dr. Moffat's son-in-law) was one of the audience. The speech of the evening was made by Archbishop Tait. Thanking the Lord Mayor for having brought such a unique assemblage together, he remarked that while it was common to recognize in this great city commercial industry and exertion, it was not so common to remember that far better than the defence of armies or navies, far better than the influence of commerce, is the power of that gospel which the missionaries make it the business of their lives to extend. He said he did not know anything more instructive than the fact that the representatives of so many missionary societies were able thus peacefully to assemble on a common platform. They were all determined to spread the gospel, and he thought that perhaps the best mode by which they could hope to arrive at one opinion at last was by each one of them resolutely and conscientiously disseminating his own views. His allusions to Dr. Moffat were full of good feeling. In paying a warm tribute to Dr. Moffat's mission-station as a centre of light, he said: 'Amid all the changes of life, and amidst all the varieties of opinion there is a reverence for old age, and for old and tried servants of the Lord Jesus Christ which makes us all feel as brethren in the presence of an old and devoted servant of the Lord.' The Archbishop thus struck the true key-note of the meeting. Canon Farrar spoke in the same spirit. 'While,' he said, 'the Archbishop was speaking I was reminded of the remark which Lord Macaulay made on his return from India. He said that he had been living so long in a country where the people worshipped cows that he was unable to attach any deep importance to the minor questions which separate Christians.' Dr. Allon gave expression to a similar sentiment when he remarked, that in the presence of a noble work like that of Dr. Moffat, 'sectarianism is dumb.' 'The venerable father of the missionary world,' as Mr. Alderman Fowler called him, was doubly honoured on this occasion—he was honoured not only by the compliment which the Lord Mayor paid him by the banquet he gave in his honour at the Mansion House, but also by the noble and appreciative spirit which pervaded the entire proceedings.

"I could repeat many other interesting facts connected with my venerated friend, but I have probably said enough for the special object which has called forth this letter.

"Believe me, very faithfully yours,

"F. W. CHESSON."

The following communication from the Rev. R. Robinson, so long the Home Secretary of the London Missionary Society, will appropriately close this Memoir. He represents the past

generation of directors and officials who conducted the affairs of the Society in the days of Robert Moffat's activity ; and those who know his many acts of goodwill will be best able to appreciate the genuineness of the strong regard expressed in this letter :

"7, MANOR ROAD, BROCKLEY, S.E.,

" March 24, 1885.

"MY DEAR MR. MOFFAT,—With much diffidence, yet with very sincere pleasure, I hasten to respond to your earnest request for some personal reminiscences of your late venerated father, whom I have known so long and revered so much, and with whom of late years I have had frequent opportunities of close and affectionate intercourse, and have also received from him many most interesting letters, both short and long.

"To me he has always appeared the very ideal of a true missionary, and my heart was stirred to its lowest depths when, as a young minister, I listened to his moving appeals addressed to crowded audiences during his visit to this country on his first and only furlough, more than forty-five years ago ; and now that in later times I have been brought into closer contact, I have felt constrained to regard him as one of our moral heroes and spiritual princes—a man, indeed, 'after God's own heart.' His vital godliness, his evident love to the Lord Jesus, his firm faith in the gospel, seemed to me to be as distinct and distinguishing as were his features, making him, everywhere and in every company, a *marked man*.

"When Dr. Moffat returned to this country in 1870, as his old friend Dr. Tidman had passed away, it was my official duty and personal privilege to pay him an early visit, to see what might be required to be done for the furtherance of the comfort of himself and his loved ones ; and I was then more than surprised at the Christian simplicity and self-negation both of himself and his devoted wife, for they seemed more than content with anything and everything that was arranged for them ; and truly it was evident that in Mrs. Moffat he had been singularly blessed with a noble and devoted wife, who was indeed a missionary *second only to himself!*

"I shall never forget what took place in my official room at the Mission House soon after their return from Africa. While talking over their past labours, Mrs. M., looking fondly at her husband first, turned to me and said, 'Robert can never say that I hindered him in his work !' 'No, indeed,' replied Dr. M. ; 'but I can tell you she has often sent me away from house and home for months together for evangelizing purposes, and in my absence has managed the station as well or better than I could have done it myself !'

"No wonder that when I went to see him the morning after this dear one was called home, I should find him heart-sore and bowed down with sorrow by his somewhat sudden bereavement. He told me that on the previous evening, finding there seemed to be an unusual silence, he went to the bedside, and, looking at the invalid, in alarm he exclaimed, 'Mary, dear, only one word !' But silence was the only response, for the Master had come and called her

‘And thus,’ said Moffat, with touching pathos, ‘she left me, after labouring lovingly together for fifty years, without saying good-bye !’ But *now* he has joined her, and together they continue the higher service in the Master’s more immediate presence, where work and weariness are no longer united.

“I have often been profoundly impressed with Dr. Moffat’s evident natural boldness in relation to the cause and kingdom of his Divine Lord. He was a man who, having planted himself on a principle, would stay there till he died ! When receiving civic honour at the Mansion House, London, on being introduced as one familiar with the African diamond fields, he responded, in the midst of the assembled traders, merchants, and civic dignitaries, that he could tell them little about the diamond fields, or the diamonds there, for he had gone to Africa to seek jewels of a very different character, namely the natives, in order that they might be made as gems to adorn the Saviour’s crown !

“I have also had many opportunities of marking his complete disinterestedness in the service of Christ. There was nothing sordid about him ; he had no desire to accumulate money, and ever showed a scrupulous anxiety to take for himself as little as possible out of the funds of the Society. And when I found him resolutely refusing any longer to draw his small stipend, I reminded him that our books showed a certain amount of arrears now due to him. He then in the strongest manner assured me that he would not receive a penny of it ! and could not be satisfied until he saw that the books were cleared of this amount !

“I might adduce many other personal recollections of this now glorified saint, but the foregoing must suffice for the purpose. I will only add that I know well how truly the Directors loved him, and would have done anything in their power to add to his comfort. The Society was greatly honoured by his connection with it, and to it he remained ‘faithful unto death ;’ so that his memory will ever be cherished as a precious ointment by the whole missionary circle, standing, as he does, as an example and an inspiration to the young men of our homes and colleges, which may well lead many of them to an entire and blessed consecration to the work of the Lord !

“For myself I will only say that I revered him as an honoured father, and felt it to be a precious privilege to read the burial service at his grave, where we left his mortal remains, gladdened by the thought that though the body was thus returned to the earth, the spirit had gone to the God who gave it, to be re-united with the loved ones gone before, that together they might glorify Him to whom they consecrated their lives, realizing that *He* had loved them, and given Himself for them.—Believe me, dear Mr. Moffat, yours truly,

“ROBERT ROBINSON,

“Late Home Secretary of the L.M.S.”

CHAPTER XL.

A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

I HAVE been asked by one whose opinion I value to try and tell the public a little more about my father, that is, about the man himself, apart from his work. My mother draws her own portrait unconsciously in her letters, my father does not.

The task would not be an easy one, and I should probably fail for want of skill ; though I may be able to give a few indications from which others so disposed may make a portrait for themselves.

The shy and somewhat silent Scotch lad who, nearly seventy years ago, stood trembling in Mr. Roby's study as a candidate for the missionary enterprise must have carried something unusual in his appearance : to judge from the eagerness of the good Manchester minister that the directors in London should at least see him for themselves, before rejecting him finally. He was confident that, if the young gardener could only stand before them, they would be convinced that here at least was a man, not polished by collegiate training, but having in him the real grit which would stand the wear and tear of missionary life. Probably Mr. Roby was right : for to those who knew Robert Moffat in middle and in after life, there was a something in manner or appearance which carried weight and gave him an advantage to start with in dealing with his fellowmen.

It was this that caused one of his own sons, who had been parted from him as a child and had not seen him for eleven years, and was expecting not at all to see him at that moment, to start with surprise and to point him out to others, as he appeared in a crowd at the ship's side ; yet seeing in him only a man remarkable among many other men, and not in the least just then knowing who he was.

Looking back to my own childhood, I see him as he was then, a man in the prime of life and in the fulness of his strength. During the four years which followed his return from England in

1843 I saw more of him in his own home life than I have done at any other period. Even then he was beginning to settle down to the long grapple with the translation of the Old Testament, a work which became afterwards every year more absorbing and agonizing in its hold upon his energies. But during those years there were still intermissions, not of work, but of that kind of work. At that period it was my occasional privilege, and a high privilege it was regarded, to be his companion, or rather his satellite, in some of his itinerating journeys. Not that there was much of companionship in the sense of conversation : it was enough to be with him and to feel that I had the honour of being with him. His mind at such times was often full of heavy thoughts about the infant Christian communities he was visiting ; matters about which he could not talk to a child. I never got tired of being with him, and if he was tired of me, well, he did not betray it.

Occasionally in our progress with the slow ox waggon from village to village, many miles apart, a herd of springboks might come in view. In a moment the ardour of younger days would rekindle, and seizing a rifle, he would spring from the waggon, and could be seen with swift and bounding step scouring the plain and showing that there was still the skill and spirit of the hunter.

No element of my boyish reverence was more fixed than the sense of his courage. Physical fear he knew not, or if at any time he felt it, his sense of dignity crushed it down. In some of the tremendous thunderstorms of Bechwanaland, when ordinary pursuits were discarded and men gathered together and sat in awed silence, there seemed to him to be a positive fascination in watching the sublime spectacle. He would choose some spot where, without being drenched, he could watch to full advantage the whole scene : the black whirling clouds torn to rags, the intense glare of the lightning, and the concentrated darkness which followed it for a few seconds, at once with a roar of thunder like the noise of ten thousand cannon. I have caught sight of his face at such times lighted up with a solemn ecstasy ; and then he would come in and say : " Eh, Mary ! it makes me think of what we shall see on ' that day.' "

I remember well on our return from one of his visitation journeys, a flooded river barred our way. Reluctant to lose another day from pressing duties on the station, at the earliest practicable moment he gave the order to start. A crowd of natives accompanied us to the ford to give assistance if needed. The stream was narrow, but dangerously swift. Our oxen, unaccustomed to deep water, swung round, carrying their leader with them. Team and waggon were on the point of being swept away ; the

water was rushing in under our seat. I looked up in his face as I sat by his side. With a cheery smile he said, "Jack! look after those things." By the time I had managed to secure our floating gear, which was in danger of being washed out of the waggon, a score of strong swimmers had sprung into the river, and we and our waggon were landed on the bank.

Another life-long impression was that produced by his reverence for holy things. No man relished a joke more than he—there was a good deal of fun hidden away under that long beard; but woe to the man who thought to approach the ark of God in a jesting spirit. The Word of the Lord was too real and too great for triviality. Even when I was alone with him on the journeys spoken of, no meal was commenced without a reverent doffing of the Scotch bonnet, his usual headdress in those days, and the solemn blessing; and our morning and evening worship were never missed or hurried.

His disposition was to think well of men and to believe what they said. He hated nothing so much as deceit. It was the one thing he could not forgive. He trusted men implicitly, and I think this accounts for the fact that the Bechwana, a people that carried the art of lying to perfection, seldom lied to him. They knew it was the one thing that would make him angry.

Speaking of anger, it was a rare thing in him: and never cherished. On our return from England in 1843 we were a large party, with three or four waggons. One night we outspanned in the dark, not knowing that we were on forbidden ground—within the limits of a farm, but a half-mile short of the homestead. In the early morning a young man rode up, and demanded to know what we were doing there without leave. My father gently explained that we had done it in ignorance, but his explanation was cut short by a harangue loud and long. The stripling sat on his horse, my father stood before him with bowed head and folded arms whilst a torrent of abuse poured over him, with a plentiful mixture of such terse and biting missiles of invective as greatly enriched the South African Dutch language. We stood around and remembered that only a few months before the man thus rated like a dog was standing before enthusiastic thousands in England, who hung with bated breath upon his utterances. Something of shame must have arrested the wrath of the young man, for he suddenly rode away without impounding our cattle as he had threatened to do. We inspanned and proceeded, calling on our way at the house, and there we found ourselves received by a venerable white-haired farmer and his wife with open arms, for they and my parents proved to be old friends. Right glad were we that nothing had been done on our side to make us ashamed to meet them.

In our home-life at Kuruman there was always plenty of variety. No traveller or trader at that time thought of passing into the interior without calling at the station. Then, again, natives would come from long distances round to get books or medicine, and chiefs to get advice or mediation in their disputes with each other. With so many distractions and calls upon his time, it was only Robert Moffat's immense energy that enabled him to accomplish large and connected results. The ground-work of his life in those days was translation—the revision and printing were latterly taken off his hands by Mr. Ashton—and for many days he would be in his study from early morn till late at night, appearing only at meals, and for an hour or two about sunset.

Even at table he would, at such times, occasionally sit silent and abstracted. His aged friend, Robert Hamilton, who lived with us, would try to draw him out, and give it up; nothing but the watchful eye of my mother would prevent him from leaving his plate untouched, while he was pondering some knotty verse for which he had been unable to find a rendering in Sechwana.

Then, after a period of intense application, outdoor demands would grow imperious—the garden, the workshop, was calling for the master's eye and hand; some epidemic would bring a crowd of applicants for medicine; the pen would be thrown aside, and he would be seen with swift steps hurrying from one point to another. That rapid, urgent walk of his was proverbial throughout the country, and was a specimen of all his ways.

Then waggons would need mending; there would be no smith at hand, so for a few days the smithy would be the scene of his labours, and there, with a few amateur assistants, his shirt-sleeves rolled up and the sweat on his brow, not only his mechanical skill, but his mighty strength, would be in full action, and the cheerful music of the blacksmith's hammer might be heard through the live-long day.

It was marvellous what a variety of employments would fill up the measure of a single week, into each and every one of which he would bring a concentrated purpose which seemed almost like a passion. Never mind what the work was, it was all part of the duty he had undertaken, and it must be done quickly and well.

He and the partner who stood by him all through the heat and burden of his life were in many ways a great contrast. He was tall and strong, with dark, piercing eyes, with more than ordinary endurance. She was under ordinary height, with blue eyes, and a complexion which never lost its delicate girlish bloom. She was never strong, and latterly lived and worked only by dint of great care and method. She found that to be able to accomplish anything at

all, she must make a compromise with weakness. She was astir with the sun, and carried through her multifarious household duties before noon. Then she would remain perfectly passive until towards evening, when she would revive and resume her activity.

She held eminently practical views of life. She used to say that her first duty was to take care of her husband's health and strength, and in this way to contribute to the success of his work, where she could not serve the cause more directly—by seeing that the table was well spread, and the family resources husbanded. Waste was abhorrent to her, and her life was full of struggle to teach the improvident and thoughtless natives that extravagance was not generosity.

But besides this, she had her own special work among the women and girls of the settlement. She knew them all, and watched them all with love and care. If a man appeared in church with a torn jacket or an unwashed shirt, his wife might reckon upon catching it the first time Mamary had the chance of getting speech with her; and a lecture from Mamary, though given in sweet and plaintive tones, was not to be encountered with a light heart, or to be easily forgotten.

But Mary Moffat had a much wider field of interest than the Kuruman district or the Bechwana country. After the arrival of a post, a great event in those days, it was her delight of an evening, after the labours of the day were over, throned in her own particular corner of the family room, to revel in the newspapers and periodicals, and all the news from home; and to expatiate to those around her on anything of special interest. The news from the old country never became a subject of indifference to her or to my father. They keenly watched the movements of the day, political and religious, and they followed with hearty sympathy the work of missionaries in other parts of the world.

Mary Moffat was a striking example of the courage which was lent by a sense of duty. Constitutionally timid enough (I have seen her effectually routed by a pugnacious turkey-cock), she was all through life subject to dark and anxious forebodings, which only Christian principle could overcome; but once let her see the path of duty, and nothing could turn her aside. I remember being with her on one of her long journeys, when she had none but her little children and her Bechwana servants, and we were suddenly beset by a crowd of strange and apparently mischievous natives. I knew that the mother's heart was palpitating; but orders were given by her calmly and clearly to our attendants—themselves all but demented with fear—and her resolute demeanour seemed to give them new life, and carried us through unmolested.

It is not without reluctance that I have penned these reminiscences. The bitter-sweet recollections so dear to their own children may seem to the public of less value. I will take the risk, however, and hope thus to add a few lines of further completeness to the portraits of my parents, and trust to the sympathy of the many who have shown that they share the love and reverence inspired by the memory of Robert and Mary Moffat.

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EDITED BY

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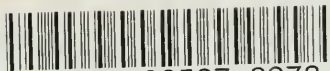
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