



Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa (Classic Reprint)

David Livingstone

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Excerpt from *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa*

When honored with a special meeting of welcome by the Royal Geographical Society a few days after my arrival in London in December last, Sir Roderick Murchison, the President, invited me to give to the world a narrative of my travels; and at a similar meeting of the Directors of the London Missionary Society I publicly stated my intention of sending a book to the press, instead of making many of those public appearances which were urged upon me. The preparation of this narrative has taken much longer time than, from my inexperience in authorship, I had anticipated.

Greater smoothness of diction and a saving of time might have been secured by the employment of a person accustomed to compilation; but my journals having been kept for my own private purposes, no one else could have made use of them, or have entered with intelligence into the circumstances in which I was placed in Africa, far from any European companion. Those who have never carried a book through the press can form no idea of the amount of toil it involves. The process has increased my respect for authors and authoresses a thousand-fold.

I can not refrain from referring, with sentiments of admiration and gratitude, to my friend Thomas Maclear, Esq., the accomplished Astronomer Royal at the Cape. I shall never cease to remember his instructions and help with real gratitude. The intercourse I had the privilege to enjoy at the Observatory enabled me to form an idea of the almost infinite variety of acquirements necessary to form a true and great astronomer, and I was led to the conviction that it will be long before the world becomes overstocked with accomplished members of that profession. Let them be always honored according to their deserts; and long may Maclear, Herschel, Airy, and others live to make known the wonders and glory of creation, and to aid in rendering the pathway of the world safe to mariners, and the dark places of the earth open to Christians!

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