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David Livingston – Part II

Lead: On October 23, 1871, two men greeted each other on the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Africa. It was during this brief encounter there was uttered one of history’s most famous phrases. “Dr. Livingston, I presume?”

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts

Content: In 1866, missionary David Livingston embarked from there on what would be his last journey to Africa. His goal—to find the source of the Nile River. Livingston began with a party of 30

porters, several Indian soldiers, freed slaves and local recruits. But most of party dropped out—leaving only Livingston and a handful to continue.

To avoid embarrassment, some deserters spread the word that the explorer had been murdered by Ngomi warriors. Back in Europe, rumors began to spread. Many set out to find the explorer's body. Even Livingston himself unwittingly helped fuel the stories. His health was quickly deteriorating—to the point he could barely hold a pen. For two years, he did not correspond with anyone in Europe. Gradually, most people assumed he would never be found. Sir Henry M. Stanley was given the assignment to find the

missing Livingston and report on his condition for the *New York Herald*. After months of searching, the two finally met on the northeastern shores of Lake Tanganyika in present day Tanzania. Stanley supplied the explorer with food and medicine, while Livingston gave him a tour of the region.

After a six-month visit, the two parted. Stanley returned to the United States to make his report, but Dr. Livingston's health continued to deteriorate. After a long illness, he eventually died from an intestinal blood clot. His heart was buried on African soil and his body returned to England to a hero's interment in Westminster Abbey.

David Livingston was, in many ways, typical of 19th century European missionaries. He saw little distinction in value between Christianity and Democratic institutions, and commercial exploitation of colonial possessions.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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