

## Retrospect to be Inserted in the Journal, 10 March 1870

*David Livingstone*

Published by Livingstone Online ([livingstoneonline.org](http://livingstoneonline.org))

[0001]

Retrospect to be inserted in the [40]  
Journal if I get back to where it is left in  
Ujiji -

I often ponder over my missionary  
career among the Bakwains or Bakwena  
and though conscious of many imperfections  
not a single pang of regret arises in the  
review of my conduct except that I did  
not feel it to be my duty while spending  
all my energy in teaching the heathen, to  
devote a special portion of my time to  
play with my children - But generally  
was so much exhausted by the mental &  
manual labour of the day that in the evening  
there was no fun in me - I did not play  
with my little ones when I had them &  
They soon sprang up & left me conscious  
[When half grown in England subsequently]  
that I had none to play with [^] I was  
conscientious in punishing glaring  
faults when these were brought before  
me and now think that Solomon's  
dicta which mainly guided me were a  
mistake "He that spareth the rod hateth his  
child" "Let not thy soul spare for his crying"  
seemed to me then to be virtues - axioms -  
and I punished when my nature said  
forbear = The severe inculcations were  
intended for the mild East & not for the  
hard ungenial temperaments of the North  
and West - no Eastern would beat his  
son too much - scarcely at all - His  
wife might punish but it would be  
feminine strokes - H[S]olomons opinions  
were to be taken as the command  
"Give to everyone that asketh of thee  
but joined to providing for ones own"

[0002]

My first missionary efforts were necessarily

directed to the chiefs because without their sanction  
 nothing could be done - The first chief Mosielele  
 was as his name implies a weakling - I was accom-  
 -panied by a much older man than myself and he  
 advised caution & reserve as to our objects - I listened  
 to the voice of age & we made no efforts to teach in a  
 formal way - Messages had however been sent from  
 chieftains further south explaining our objects  
 and that our mode of procedure would be pretending  
 liberality of sentiments which meant hiding our  
 real objects till we had gained a footing among  
 the people and then said old of Motito farewell  
 to your power & chieftainship - We were to be closely  
 watched and any one shewing an inclination to  
 to harm was to be prevented - My associate soon  
 put his foot into his own system for having obtained  
 information privately by some improper [deeds] ~~cond-~~  
~~-duet~~ on the part of the chief he gave his inform-  
 -ant his views of such conduct, and Mokhosi  
 the spy proceeded at once to utter all that had  
 been committed to him in confidence before  
 a full meeting of the principal men - so long as I  
 was busy building a comfortable house and  
 laying in water for irrigation on a fine  
 garden I endured this underhand system  
 but I went to the Bakwena or Bakwains  
 & was at once formally invited by the  
 chief Sechele to come & teach him & his  
 people - I accepted this call joyfully and  
 began by teaching the chief himself the  
 alphabet - He was greatly superior in every  
 respect to Mosielele and told his people that  
 he was determined to examine this new  
 system to the foundation for himself -  
 and would go into it too if he found it  
 worthy of trust - I had hard manual labour

[0003]  
 in building here too, but it was lightened by [41]  
 feeling that every day I was doing real mission-  
 -ary work - Glancing back at my associate  
 he very soon had some quarrel with Mosielele  
 lost all control of his tongue & pronounced  
 him to be a fool in words which he had a  
 special aptitude in picking up - The chief  
 forbade man woman or child to go near  
 the school or have anything to do with the teacher  
 and this prohibition lasted with rigour for eight  
 years - The mission spent all the little zeal it  
 had on a few emigrants from Kuruman  
 who already christianized came to enjoy better

pasturage for their cows - The Boers ultimately rooted out the whole affair - The chief many years afterwards was reported to be eager in getting his children instructed by a native teacher who has good command of his tongue -

Sechele's progress in knowledge was rapid - He was much taken with the idea that in learning to read he was acquiring the key to all that we know of the gospel He could then judge for himself as to its value and teach his people accordingly This he gave as a reason for his great assiduity in learning - I have no doubt but that his heart too was touched by what he learned - "This man said he has been sent to us by Jesus" - He did not know our name but he put it into his heart to go & warn us" = I was anxious to avoid public profession of faith on account of the effect on the people of a weak wavering converts whose defects would all be noted & commented on

[0004]

and especially for the effect on the superfluous wives & their relatives The wives were the best scholars we had and I longed that they should understand the gospel before any action were taken by husbands or others Sechele said to me "I firmly believe the word of God to be true - I invariably tell my best friends so - but I am in great difficulty - You cannot understand how fast I am bound by our customs Oh I wish you had come afore I was enchained by them" - As it then seemed the vesture of his chieftainship depended on his keeping on good terms with the relatives of the woman whom he had married - they in fact built him up when his father was murdered and made him all that he was - "Let me go to your country where I shall be free" - As I have published some account of this chief I shall not add more than that though he has given some cause for dissatisfaction by his weakness & subsequent inconsistencies I can solemnly declare that I considered him to be a true

christian - The first extempore prayer  
he uttered in my presence could  
not have been learned [] but from  
the Holy Spirit - The phraseology was  
not acquired from me or from

[0005]

the native teachers but was his own & [42]  
expressed the exceeding greatness of our  
sins, and of the love of God which follow-  
-ed us when astray to save us - When he  
applied for baptism as a formal recog-  
nition of his faith with the express hope  
that when he had fully professed his belief  
some of his people would join him  
I could not refuse though I regretted the  
step because of its probable effect on  
wives & relatives who could not account  
for it but my powerful charm over  
him, by of course medicine - No sooner  
was he recieved than the news spread like  
wildfire vexing more especially all the  
Southern chiefs who were of one accord  
haters of christianity - Feelings of envy  
unfortunately found an entrance into  
the bosoms of some who had [^] [in vain] been advised  
by the Directors to follow my example  
in commencing a new mission, and  
[[^] enjoying comfortable homes in the south]  
~~found~~[gave] vent in words to native ears  
who readily adopted & exaggerated the  
opinion that I had been too precipitate  
in baptizing the chief = No account was  
taken of the three years in which I had  
carefully [^] [taken in and] watched his conduct, and found  
it more upright & christian than that  
of the majority of his censurers - He was  
declared to be a hypocrite and was  
deceiving me - various scurrilities  
concocted by christians & their leaders  
reached Sechele's ears = He accounted for  
them by people being of different temper-  
-ments - thus one teaching threw down  
his book on the floor and uttered un-  
-becoming invective against circumcision

[0006]

which is never publicly discussed - "You  
nature would not let you do this" - We  
must make allowances for differences  
in hearts" = Sechele's people too heard of these

scurrilities, and they lowered the christians in  
 their eyes - The only weakness I was con-  
 -scious of was unwillingness to drive  
 away the superfluous wives to be enemies  
 to christianity wherever they went - I wished  
 them to be kept rather in the town within  
 the sphere of christian influences - Sechele went  
 to one of his wives - one whom he could not  
 view as another man's - this rang still more  
 loudly all over the country & my weakness  
 & folly were supposed to be proved beyond  
 question - If to sympathize with these poor  
 women were weakness then I was guilty of it  
 A series of droughts and the encroachments  
 of the emigrant Boers made me turn my  
 face Northwards & listen to the invitation  
 of Sebitwane the chief of the Makololo - There  
 if I could open up intercourse with the coast  
 I might work out my plan of a widely em-  
 -bracing mission without pain from the  
 narrowminded who could not look beyond  
 their comfortable houses & gardens to the heathen  
 without naming any one it was painful to  
 have my wife insulted on a visit to her  
 parents by loud guffaws raised by the  
 brethren gloating over perverted versions  
 of my conduct from native telltales The  
 mission of bishop Mackenzie opened  
 still wider prospects than that of the Ma-  
 kololo but was all quashed by his  
 lamented death - His followers being all  
 utterly incapable of leading a movement

[0007]  
 against Heathenism - I took up the sources [43]  
 of the Nile with the intention of combining  
 a benevolent mission therewith in the  
 most favoured spot I should come across  
 It has taken much longer than I contemplated  
 to trace the springs from 12° South and I am  
 now so sorely knocked up - weak & toothless  
 I must retire as soon as I can fix the course  
 of Lualaba - I can only hope to be awarded  
 the honour of an example of perseverance  
 in doing my duty in spite of ill health - war  
 & unknown people opposing - a stout  
 hearted servant of Him who made fashioned  
 and owns all this region

In the Review of D<sup>r</sup> Todds work [^] [in Quarterly 1866] on  
 St Patrick & the Early Irish Church  
 surprise is expressed that we cannot

do as he did - I was offered lands and  
fountains of water by Sechele & by the  
Makololo but these are valueless unless  
peopled - land is absolutely of no value  
and missions could not be carried  
on without foreign aid unless indeed  
they were industrial institutions like  
the Moravian - Were I young again  
nothing would delight me more  
than attempting something of the sort  
but the Irish Monastic Institutions  
would have to be modified greatly  
before they would suit Africa - I  
pray to be guided in this & possibly  
the Basongo of Merere may be a  
suitable people to begin with - but  
age tells on my energies sorely & so  
does this unhealthy Manyema

10 March 1870 [1870]

to have St Patrick's success we would require a second  
Ireland and 2<sup>nd</sup> Irish

[0008]

Tongwe  
Tembwe  
Para  
Chanza  
Manda very large the  
best see hills  
Thupa  
Zongwe  
Tende  
Chunda ch D<sup>o</sup> land  
Luambo ch. & D<sup>o</sup>  
Mazanze  
Msenga, Karembe's ch  
Lonangwa pango River [large]  
Nange  
Karambwe = Tambala  
Msenga = chomba chief  
Chimembwe chief