

# The Victorians

## Dr David Livingstone - 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?'

Written by Jeff Capel

Stanley:

Henry Morton Stanley - American journalist and explorer. My story begins – or rather ends - in Westminster Abbey in 1889. I had come to pay my respects at the tomb of Dr David Livingstone. I'm not sure I could call him a friend but perhaps I knew him better than most. I stood quietly and read the words inscribed in the stone:

*Brought by faithful hands over land and sea...  
Here lies David Livingstone, missionary...traveler...*

*For 30 years his life was spent in an unwearying effort...to explore undiscovered secrets...to abolish the slave trade of central Africa.*

Clergyman:

Ah, yes. The great Dr Livingstone. A most remarkable man. Only the great are buried here in this abbey. I spoke at his funeral. There was a procession of twelve carriages. And Royalty were there of course. Enormous crowds...

Stanley:

Yes, yes I know. I was there. I knew Dr Livingstone.

Clergyman:

I'm sorry, Mr Stanley, I didn't recognise you.

Stanley:

I have been back to Africa. But how did you...





- Clergyman: The look of an explorer, sir. And the American accent of course. It is an honour to welcome you here.
- Stanley: Thank You.
- When I set out to find Dr Livingstone, he hadn't been seen or heard from in two whole years. He was a famous man and the world wanted to know what had happened to him - whether indeed he was still alive.
- My journey through Africa had lasted many months so you can imagine my relief, my excitement, my joy, when I reached a place called Ujiji and found myself addressed by one of the villagers in English...
- Chumah: Good morning, sir.
- Stanley: Who are you?
- Chumah: I am Chumah sir, the servant of Dr Livingstone.
- Stanley: What? Dr Livingstone is here?
- Chumah: Yes, sir.
- Stanley: In this village?
- Chumah: Yes, sir.
- Stanley: Are you sure?
- Chumah: Very sure, sir. I leave him just now.
- Stanley: And is he well?





- Chumah: Not at all, sir. Not very well.
- Stanley: Run, Chumah, and tell the Doctor I am coming.
- Chumah: Yes, sir!
- Stanley: When I finally saw Dr Livingstone it was quite a shock. He was not yet sixty but with that white hair and bushy beard and few teeth, he looked like a very old man...
- Stanley: Dr Livingstone I presume?
- Livingstone: Yes.
- Stanley: I thank God, doctor, I have found you.
- Livingstone: I feel thankful I am here to welcome you.
- Stanley: Henry Morton Stanley.
- Livingstone: Well at least you speak English, Mr Stanley. As I saw you approach, I thought you were French. What a pair of white men we would have made if neither one spoke the other's language!
- Stanley: I have travelled 700 miles and 236 days.
- Livingstone: Then I forget my manners. Come out of the sun and sit with me at my hut. It's a little cooler. Chumah?
- Chumah: Yes, sir?
- Livingstone: Mr Stanley will be joining us for dinner.
- Chumah: It's chicken, sir...and goat....and rice.





- Livingstone: You have brought me new life, Mr Stanley. You have brought me new life.
- Stanley: And letters, sir. From home. Here. Please, take them to read.
- Livingstone: I have waited years for letters and none have come. That has taught me patience. I can wait a few hours longer. No, tell me the news. How is the world?
- Stanley: And so I told him of the affairs of state – like the opening of the Suez Canal. Then, as if occurring to him for the first time, he looked at me and said:
- Livingstone: Mr Stanley - I am wondering why you're here.
- Stanley: You don't know?
- Livingstone: I know you carry the stars and stripes of your American homeland. But not for what purpose.
- Stanley: Doctor, I have come after you.
- Livingstone: You've crossed swamps and jungles, and the lands of man eating tribes - just to find me?
- Stanley: Dr Livingstone...you are a legend. A missing legend. The world is fascinated by you. I work for a newspaper, the *New York Herald*. They've paid for me to find you. And they will pay to take us home again.





Livingstone:

Then, sir, you have had a long and costly journey for nothing. The source of the River Nile - still awaits discovery. Come with me, Mr Stanley. I am nearly blind. Rheumatic fever has left me partially deaf. My medicines stolen. You can be my eyes and ears. Come with me?

Stanley:

And for a time I was. We ventured further through Africa together. The Doctor stubbornly refused to give up his quest for the Nile's source. Eventually I had to give up and return home... and then I heard of his death.

Clergyman:

They say he was found dead kneeling in prayer. A servant of God to the end.

Stanley:

They removed his heart and buried it under a mpundu tree, near to the spot where he died. Chuma and the others carried his body over 1000 miles to the coast. Such was the respect and love they had for him.

A wonderful career and a fine advertisement for our glorious Victorian age. As a missionary he was the servant of God, as an explorer he was the servant of science and as an opponent of the slave trade he was the servant of humanity.

