

**CHRISTINA FORSYTH OF
FINGOLAND; THE
STORY OF THE LONELIEST
WOMAN IN AFRICA**

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Christina Forsyth of Fingoland; the story of the loneliest woman in Africa by W. P. Livingstone

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MRS. FORSYTH

Photograph by the author taken the day she appeared before the Foreign Mission Committee on her return from Africa.

CHRISTINA FORSYTH
OF FINGOLAND

THE STORY OF
THE LONELIEST WOMAN IN AFRICA

BY

W. P. LIVINGSTONE

AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE QUEEN OF OKOYONG,"
"MARY BLESSOR OF CALABAR," ETC.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

MRS. FORSYTH, the heroine of the following narrative, lived alone for thirty years in an isolated mission station in Fingoland, South-East Africa, amongst a wild and dissolute tribe of heathens. During that period she never moved outside a radius of twenty miles from her humble mission-house. She seldom saw a white face; she was unknown to the majority of South African missionaries, even to those of the Church with which she was connected; only a few had come across her; fewer still had been at Xolobe. To all who knew of her she was a marvel. The missionary under whom she worked declared that there was not one woman in five hundred who could have lived the life she lived.

Her character was almost as unique as her work. "It is curious," writes another missionary, "that she should have a bio-

graphy; one can scarcely imagine her reading it. She was simple and unassuming to a degree. Praise was very far from her—she who merited praise more than any of us. We often spoke in admiration of her—but never to her face. In her house, her dress, her speech, her bearing, her surroundings, her whole outlook on life and manner of life, her simplicity and humility and abnegation of self were evident.”

Before she retired, at the age of seventy-two, the attention of the writer was drawn to her remarkable career, and he desired to essay some account of it, but waited until she returned to Scotland in the expectation of obtaining abundant material from herself. For the sake of the mission cause she was persuaded to consent to the project, but, when it was undertaken, only grew enthusiastic about her converts, and was smilingly reticent about personal details. What is written, therefore, has been compiled chiefly from an early diary, her reports and letters, and material supplied by friends. Special acknowledgment must be made of the assistance rendered by the Rev. James Auld,

M.A., and his sister, Miss E. M. Auld, of Paterson, Kafraria, to whom the book owes much of whatever interest it possesses. When she read the MS., Mrs. Forsyth's only remark was: "There is too much about myself in it."

It is a simple human story. The range of interest and action is a narrow one; no large events or important policies emerge for treatment; the racial, political, and economic problems which bulk so largely in South African affairs find no place in it. But in the whole range of missionary biography one will find few figures who are at once so lovable and so strong, so lonely and yet so happy, so humble and yet so great.

Mrs. Forsyth was very like Miss Slessor, the pioneer missionary of Calabar, in character, faith, humour, patience, and courage, and there are some curious parallelisms in their careers, but the two differed greatly in their methods. Miss Slessor was a worker on a large stage and touched thousands of lives. Eager for territorial expansion she thought in terms of towns and districts.

Mrs. Forsyth was an intensive worker, thinking in terms of individuals. To use her own words she was "a watcher for souls." She was as brave and tenacious in seeking to conquer a man or woman as Miss Slessor was to win a tribe.

But it was the same spirit which impelled both, and the service of the one was complementary to that of the other. Hence the record of Mrs. Forsyth's career may complete a picture which Miss Slessor's life began—a picture of how women's faith and love and effort are seeking, along different lines of activity, to redeem and re-create the people of Africa.