

lining the sides of the pathway. Arrived at the outer gate, there is a halt, when a dog and fowl are killed, and their mingled blood spilled on the ground, to honor the egress of the dead chieftain into the country, and for other reasons. This ceremony over, the procession moves on, directing its way to a rough altar a few hundred yards from the gate. This altar is dedicated to the Spirit of the hunt, and is built of rough stones supported by spikes of wood driven into the ground, upon the points of which are placed skulls of animals killed in hunting. As the late chief was a hunter, worship is paid at this spot by singing and dancing, particularly on the part of hunters, the corpse being kept there while this is going on. During the advance to the altar, the different chiefs, with their clans grouped here and there about the slope, have been firing salutes (the honor done to the dead is measured by the quantity of powder expended); but the performance at the altar being over, the groups all converge towards the corpse, and surrounding it in an immense crowd of five thousand or more, musicians in the centre, they circle it continuously, chanting choruses, gesticulating, and leaping into the air as they move unceasingly round and round. Only those incapacitated through old age seem to refrain from this wild abandonment. Viewed from a rising ground, this is an impressive sight, seldom witnessed on so extensive a scale. The circling, swaying mass of black humanity, flecked with bright-colored cloths worn by the majority of them; the sea of heads being relieved by a variety of head-gear, from a handkerchief or a soft wide-awake to a silk hat or a policeman's helmet; the surface of the crowd continually broken by the men leaping with shouts into the air, in the ecstasy of the dance; the sonorous monotone of the chorus pointed by explosive shouts from the whole crowd; the mellow tone of the pipes and thud of the drums heard at intervals in the lull of the chanting: all this is a glimpse of heathen Africa not soon to be forgotten. This goes on for some two hours or more, when the incoming chief, who has been in seclusion in the Ombala, is sought for by some of the chief men, and escorted out to the crowd to be 'crowned'—to receive the insignia of office from the dead chief and his counselors.

It is evidently a momentous ceremony for all directly concerned, as well as for the onlookers. The chief takes his stand facing the corpse, still carried on the shoulders of two men; half a dozen or more chief men stand in a line on one side of the corpse; the same number on the other; the crowd closing round, gazing in superstitious wonderment at the performance. The chief, after a short address to the people, depreciating their choice of himself for the office, and expressing his appreciation of the honor shown him, commences an interlocution with the corpse, the latter being supposed to have power to move the bearers, who carry it backwards or forwards at its will, thus answering the questions put to it, forward being 'Yes,' and backward, 'No.' The interrogations are on this wise: 'You, my father, our chief! I have been chosen chief by the people in your place. I am not worthy of that position. There are many older chiefs than I am. You know me who I am. I was one of your family when you were here upon the earth. Is there anything to prevent my acceptance of the rulership of this people? Have I done evil that discredits me? Is there anything I have done that may prevent me from being chief in your stead? Speak, I

pray you, and let the people know if I am unworthy, or if you have any personal dislike for me.'

There is a pause; the silence is oppressive. The suppressed excitement is not only felt by all the people, from those surrounding the corpse who can see its movements, back to the outskirts of the vast crowd but the chief's strong, commanding voice quavers, and the eyes of the old men are rivetted on the bier in expectation of the answer. The two bearers, after standing motionless for some seconds, still amid perfect silence over the crowd, made tense by the suppressed breathing of the multitude, or the rustling of leaves stirred by the breeze in the trees near by, begin to sway slightly under their load; they incline a little to one side, then to the other; then move back a little; and finally and distinctly they lunge forward. The answer is propitious; the chest of the new chief heaves as he draws a deep breath. The old men breathe freely, and exchange wise nods of approval, and a murmur passes from the centre to the edges of the crowd.

The interrogation is continued in the same manner, and answered in the same way, until it is fully ascertained that the choice of the people entirely meets the wishes of the dead chief. Then the 'Master of the keys' of the old chief comes forward amid a murmur of applause from the populace, and hangs a bunch of keys that belonged to the dead chief around the neck of the new one—this being the insignia of his formal introduction to office.

The tall commanding chief, with much dignity and grace, but still under great excitement, now addresses the corpse again, covenanting to rekindle new fires in the Ombala, when the fires of the dead chief shall be put out, and to keep them going all his lifetime; to build up the place and restore it to its former glory, as a good chief should; to be a wise judge and a father to the people, calling on the dead and the living to be witnesses to his covenant.

Amidst murmurs of applause, the crowd breaks up, and two processions are formed; one to escort the corpse to its last resting place with the remains of the former chiefs, and the other, headed by fifers and drummers, to conduct the new chief to his compound.

As one wended his way through the crowd in the evening twilight, back to the humble lodging that hospitality had provided for the white stranger, thoughts upon scenes just witnessed crowded one another. Among them this: Take away the servile superstition and fear from all those ceremonies, and there remains a substratum of native dignity, loyalty, and respect that the gospel will one day transfigure, enhance and glorify. Had the chief consulted the will of the people alone instead of the corpse; had he, with his dignified bearing and address, called upon the true God to witness his fidelity; had he covenanted with him and the people to be a good and true chief, it had been a most imposing ceremony.

It was the mission of the church in the early Christian centuries to lift our forefathers in Britain from similar heathen habits and customs into the dignity of a Christian people, capable of producing in the times then to come an Alfred, a Cromwell, a Gladstone, a Florence Nightingale, and a Queen Victoria. With the same power, it is the mission of the church of to-day to be the same instrument, and carry on the same transformation already begun in this dark land. It is the privilege of every Christian to have a share in it.

Sakanjimba, West Central Africa.

The Overcoming Life.

I knew a lady who was a Christian, but a very uncomfortable and unhappy Christian, and who made everybody unhappy around her, and had the special peculiarity that, while she kept good enough in her own room, when she went out to the family all the prickles came out, and she was exceedingly disagreeable. She knew it was wrong, but she did not know what to do, and thought she would lose her reason.

One day she had been as cross as she could be all day, and in the evening she met a gentleman friend, who said to her: 'If you will only take the sixth chapter of Romans, and kneel down with the open book on the chair before you, and read it verse by verse, and ask the Lord to show you what it means; and if you understand it and believe it, you will get deliverance.'

She promised to do so, and when reading in her own chamber that night she came to the eleventh verse: 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin!' and she could not understand that. 'I am not dead,' said she; 'it would be telling a falsehood if I said that. When I go out of my room I know that I shall do just the same as I have been doing all day.' But the blessed Spirit would not let her rest, and at last she made up her mind to obey this command, and to 'reckon' herself, on that authority, 'dead to sin.'

She turned to Gal. ii., 20, where Paul says: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' She repeated it over and over, and although she could not understand it, she claimed it by faith continually, and asked the Lord continually to enable her to understand it. She went to sleep doing it, she got up in the morning doing it, she did it as she went down stairs. 'But how will it be,' she thought, 'when I get into the dining-room?' But she went into the dining-room saying it, and went through her breakfast saying it, and the Lord made it true—she was dead to her old temptation.

After breakfast was over her mother said to her: 'What is the matter with you; has anything happened? You seem to be so happy.' She replied that it seemed as if her soul had sailed out into heaven. Since then, for three years, she has been living the over-coming life, reckoning herself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ; and not for a moment has the old temptation troubled her. Any Christian can do that, no matter what his present condition may be. At the very moment when he is in the worst possible condition he stands most in need of it, and God's Spirit stands ready to help.—'American Paper.'

The Find-the-Place Almanac

TEXTS IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

April 28, Sun.—Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

April 29, Mon.—Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.

April 30, Tues.—As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

May 1, Wed.—God is witness.

May 2, Thur.—Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

May 3, Fri.—Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

May 4, Sat.—Walk honestly toward them that are without.