



LIVING IN TREES.

NATIVE TREE HOUSES.

IN THINLY populated districts of Southern and Central Africa, where lions, leopards, and hyenas abound, the natives live in huts like gigantic beehives, firmly fixed among the large branches of the Baobab tree. On the approach of night they ascend to their huts by means of rude ladders, while the lions roar about their camp fires until the approach of day drives them to their lairs.

As many as thirty families have been found to occupy a single tree. In many instances, natives who till the ground at any great distance from their tribe build these huts for nightly accommodation. In travelling through the country one frequently sees these trees alive with baboons and other kinds of the monkey tribe, busy in collecting the fruit and indulging in ceaseless gambols and chatter; for this reason it is commonly called the monkey bread tree. When the tree is not occupied as a habitation, the hollow trunk is used by the natives as a place to bury criminals in—the law of the people denying them the right of burial, and inside the tree the bodies dry up, and to a great extent resemble mummies. To a European this tree is a marvel; coming across one inhabited by monkeys, it is extremely dangerous to shoot any unless one is with a party, for, if any are wounded, the whole colony take up the battle, and more than once a retreat in short order becomes necessary.

One who has seen these funny houses says:

"My first experience of living in the air was very novel; the first night was one continual growl, roar, etc., so much so that I found it an impossibility to sleep. Finally, the most horrible squeal broke out directly under me. It was very dark, and being unable to see any objects, but knowing something was wrong, I threw a can containing water out of the hut door down in the direction from where the noise proceeded, but with little results, though the squealing became fainter; in the morning a small pig we had been keeping and put in a pen over night was missing. What took him nobody ever knew, as no trace remained; it only went to illustrate how we might have fared had we been camping on the ground. Having found a friendly tribe who placed their huts at our disposal, this saved us much anxiety of mind, and a few days later a number of their men accompanied us a considerable distance to the south, not, however, going outside the precincts of their country."

This wonderful tree is also found in India, and is there held in great veneration by some natives; so much so that any one guilty of cutting the trees down is regarded by them with great abhorrence. Wild beasts don't know enough to climb a ladder. Reason teaches the lowest savage how to guard himself from them.

to give; but I think that, if these little soldiers try always to remember for whose sake the sacrifice is made, whose great self-denial this season commemorates, they will not grow weary in well-doing."

And they did, at times, find it very hard indeed. It was no small thing for five little girls to do; but they kept bravely on, and when, toward the end of Lent, they were rewarded by the sight of those neat piles of finished garments, I do not think there was one among them who would have given up the real, true happiness which filled her heart; the happiness of having given her very self for another.

And, oh, the eager little group that gathered to pack that wonderful box; each laying in a garment, that all might share in the work to the very end. Many were the treasures which were slipped quietly into odd corners, things really dear to the hearts of the little givers, and therefore precious offerings in the sight of the Great Master. And on Easter morning I do not think that, in all the congregation, there were any happier hearts than those of the little maidens who had come to the beautiful service feeling that "good desires" had been put into their hearts, and that, by God's help, they had been brought to "good effect."

How many Christians are there who so thoroughly believe God made them that they can laugh in God's name; who understand that God invented laughter and gave it to His children? The Lord of gladness delights in the laughter of a merry heart.