

CRUELTY IN AFRICA.

If it were for no other purpose than to put a stop to the cruelties which abound among the heathen we ought to give them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some very sad stories of cruelties perpetrated by African kings have recently been given to the world. The distinguished African traveler, Dr. Emil Holub, in his volumes just published, entitled *Seven Years in South Africa*, gives an account of Sepopo, King of the Marutse tribe, who live north of the river Zambesi. Sepopo's town, Sesheke, had been burned, and a new Sesheke was to be built. We will give in Dr. Holub's own words the story of a little boy whose cruel murder was planned by Sepopo, with the notion that in this way his new town would be made more fortunate.

"Sepopo brought it about that a resolution should be passed by his secret tribunal to the effect that in order to save the new town from the fate of the old, the son of one of the chiefs should be killed ; but that his toes and fingers should first be cut off, and preserved as a charm in a war drum. In spite of the secrecy which was enjoined, the rumor of the resolution came to one of the chiefs, who communicated it privately to many of his friends. This was about the end of September, when Blockley was the only white man left in Sesheke. Night after night groups of men were to be seen stealthily making their way past his quarters to the woods ; they were the servants of the chiefs, carrying away the young boys whither they hoped to have them out of the tyrant's reach, and some little time elapsed before either the king or his executioner was aware of the steps that were being taken to frustrate the bloody order.

"The appointed day arrived. Moshoku's emissaries were sent to ascertain from which of the chieftain's enclosures a victim might most readily be procured, but one by one they returned, and reported that not a child was to be found. At last, however, one of the men brought word that he had seen a solitary boy playing

outside his father's fence. Apprised of this, the king immediately sent directions to the father to go out at once and procure some grass and reeds for a hut that he was building, and then charged Mashoku to do no time. As soon as he had satisfied himself that the man had left his house, Mashoku sent his messenger to fetch the child to the royal courtyard, where, although the place was full of people, a perfect silence prevailed. The king was in a terribly bad temper, and no one dared breathe a word. The executioner's assistant made his way to the abode of the chief, and was greeted by the mistress of the house with a friendly 'rumela' ; he then proceeded to tell her that the kosana, her husband, was just setting out in his canoe, and that he had sent him to say he wished his little son to go with him. The mother acquiesced, and the boy was delighted to accompany the man, who, of course, took him off to the royal courtyard, where a sign from Mashoku announced their arrival to the moody king. Sepopo started to his feet, and accompanied by his band made his way towards the river, the child being led behind him. Bewildered as the poor little victim was, he was somewhat reassured by the direction they were taking ; but all at once he was alarmed by the shrieks of a chieftain's wife, whose house they were passing, and who, knowing the purpose on which they were bent, cried out in horror.

"At the river the whole party, numbering nearly seventy, embarked and crossed to the opposite side. The myrimbas were left behind, but the large drums were taken over. Shortly after landing the king seated himself on a little stool ; he made the executioner, a few of his own personal attendants, and the members of his secret council, form an inner circle ; beyond them he placed the drummers ; and outside these he ordered the rest of the company to group themselves so as to conceal from the town the deed that was being perpetrated. The poor boy by this time had almost fainted from fear ; but when, at a nod from the king, the executioners seized