

SOME CURIOUS THINGS ABOUT ALASKA.

THE following incident is related of an old Alaskan: The day before he died, a missionary saw a Bible tied to the top of a stick about three feet long, set in the ground near his head, and asked why the book was tied there. The old man said, "I can't read, but I know that is the great Word; so when my heart gets weak I just look up at that book, and say, 'Father that is your book; no one to teach me to read; very good you help me; then my heart gets stronger, the bad goes away.'"

The Alaskans believe in Shamanism—"the giving of offerings to evil spirits to prevent them from doing mischief to the offerer." It is said to have been the religion of the Tartar race before the introduction of Buddhism, and is still that of the Siberians. Indeed, long ago, Paul declared, "the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to devils and not to God" (1 Cor. x. 20). The one whose office it is to perform these rites is called a Shaman, and is the sorcerer, or medicine-man of the tribes; has control not only of the spirits, but through them of diseases, of the elements and of all nature; he holds in his power success or misfortune, blessing or cursing. . . . All the Alaskan Indians are kept in abject fear by the conjurers, or medicine-men."

In front of many of their houses, and in their burial places, the Alaskans erect enormous poles, from two to five feet in diameter, and often from sixty to seventy-five feet high, and at a cost sometimes of \$1,000 to \$2,000. These are called totems, and are the genealogical records of the family. They are covered with carvings of the crests of the different families, generally in form of the raven, the wolf, the eagle and the whale. "The child usually takes the totem of the mother. For instance, at the bottom of the post may be the carving of the whale, over that a raven, a wolf, and an eagle, signifying that the great-grandfather of the present occupant of the house belonged to the whale family, the grandfather to the raven, the father to the wolf, and he himself to the eagle family."

The entrance to the houses was once through the holes made in these standards, but they have since learned to have doors. When these great posts were first erected, a slave was murdered and placed under each, and when their houses were completed and occupied, scores of slaves were butchered to show the power and wealth of the owner, that his slaves were so numerous that he could afford to kill and yet have plenty left. Founded and dedicated with human sacrifices, who can conceive of the aggregate of woe and suffering in these habitations of cruelty, year after year; at the wild, drunken orgies of the Indians, their horrid cannibal feasts, their inhuman torture of witches, their fiendish carousals around the burning dead? . . . When will the Christian Church awake to its responsibility and send the light into this benighted land?—From "Alaska," by Dr. Sheldon Jackson.

THE Jews are talking of transferring their Sabbath to our Sunday, beginning with the year 1900. The matter is exciting much attention in England.

Our Young Folk.

THE DARK.

WHERE do the chickens run
When they are afraid?
Out of the light, out of the sun,
Into the dark, into the shade,
Under their mother's downy wing,
No longer afraid of any thing.

Dear little girl, dear little boy,
Afraid of the dark!
Bid your good-bye to the daylight with joy;
Be glad of the night, for hark!
The darkness no danger at all can bring;
It is only the shadow of God's wing.

Where do the little violets creep
In the time of snow?
Into the dark to rest and sleep,
And to wait for the spring. They go
Under the ground where no storm can reach,
And God takes tenderest care of each.

Are you afraid, little girl or boy,
Of the dark of death?
Jesus will carry you full of joy
To the world of light, He sayeth.
Under the ground where the violets sleep
Your little body the Lord will keep.

FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

A PRISONER, condemned to solitary confinement obtained a copy of the Bible, and by three years careful study obtained the following facts: The Bible contains 3,586,489 letters; 773,692 words; 31,173 verses; 1,188 chapters, and 66 books. The word and occurs 46,277 times. The word Lord occurs 1,855 times. The word reverend occurs but once, which is in the ninth verse of the 111th Psalm. The middle verse is the eighth verse of the 118th Psalm. The twenty-first verse of the seventh chapter of Ezra contains all the letters of the alphabet except J. The finest chapter to read is the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The nineteenth chapter of 2 Kings, and the thirty-seventh chapter of Isaiah are alike. The longest verse is the ninth verse of the eighth chapter of Esther. The shortest verse is the thirty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter of St. John. The eighth, fifteenth, twenty-first, and thirty-first verses of the 107th Psalm, are alike. Each verse of the 136th Psalm ends alike.—*Standard.*

GIRLS IN CHINA.

GIRLS in China are believed to have no souls, and to kill them is not murder, and, therefore, not to be punished. Where parents are too poor to support the girl-children, they are disposed of in the following way:—