

Young People's Department.



A VILLAGE IN AFRICA.

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YES, this is an African village, and a curious-looking one it is. The houses are very different from ours. The lower part is made of boards, set up on end. They are about five feet high. Over these is a round roof, ending in a peak at the top. This roof is made of bamboo, and covered with grass or straw, or something of that kind, to keep out the wet. The floor is of earth, beaten hard and smooth. In the centre of the house there is a fire, made on the floor; but they don't seem to have sense enough to have a chimney. The smoke has to go out by the door. They have no windows, either. They get light from the doorway. There is not much furniture in these houses. A few chairs and stools, and perhaps a box or two, are about all they have, and hung on the walls are some bowls and basins made of earth. For beds they have mats, which at night they spread out on the floor, with pieces of wood for pillows. In the morning these are packed away in frames over their heads. Their firewood is neatly packed away in the same manner. This firewood is gathered by the women in the forest, and carried by them on their heads. They are very particular to have it carefully packed

away overhead, for if they did not they would be called bad housekeepers.

Sometimes these towns are very large, and have as many as a thousand houses, all put together without any plan or order—no blocks, no streets. It is hard to find one's way amongst them without a guide. For safety from wild beasts and attacks of men, they build a wall all round the town. Nearly everything that the Africans build is round. They don't seem to have any idea of making things square as we do.

In these villages they have sometimes a large round building placed in the centre, where they hold meetings. This is the only variety that there is in their buildings. They have no church or temple. Missionaries are trying to teach them to build churches, and it is much to be hoped that in time they will succeed.

Several Sunday-schools have taken boxes for saving missionary money during Lent. The boxes are very pretty, and are in the shape of pyramids. The Rev. Dr. Mockridge, of Toron'io, will be glad to send more to any children (whether Sunday-school children or not) who will use them for getting offerings for missions. Missionary work is the true work of the Church. Without it the Church can never grow.