

THE SIAMESE KING'S BATHDAY.

April 12th was the day fixed by the soothsayers for the annual ceremony of bathing the king's head in the river. I suppose it came in connection with the New-Year's season which is now upon us. Custom permits everybody to throw water over everybody else. The King's retinue had a great frolic as they crossed the river. The king was mounted on a large elephant, with a gilded howdah and rich trappings of solid gold. Before him marched a company of soldiers armed with muskets, and another company bearing the golden swords of state. After them the royal umbrella, and then a second elephant bearing the king's eldest son, followed by a numerous retinue of nobles and honorable servants. The whole procession, except the military, marched into the river, and across to a sand-bar where a shelter had been erected, everybody sprinkling his neighbor, with great shouts of laughter. The king dismounted, and after resting a little under the shelter, took off his jacket and proceeded to a small canopy of green boughs, where he set afloat a small raft, perhaps eighteen inches square, laden with images of various kinds of beasts, fruits, and the like. These I learned were used in the hope that the various spirits which might give the king trouble would, attracted by them, collect on the raft and be floated off down the river, together with the pollution contracted by his Majesty during the last year. While this was going on a number of doves were let loose from a hamper and allowed to fly away. The king, having washed his head and arms in a basin, waded out into the river and took a bath. Meanwhile while a salute was fired from cannon on the bank.

Then his Majesty remounted his elephant and the procession returned to the city.—*Woman's Work for Woman*.

AFRICA.

COAXING KAFFIRS TO A SABBATH SCHOOL.

About fourteen miles from our long-established mission station of Pirie in Kaffraria, there is an out-station, named Spreull, where heathenism still prevails. There is only one Christian man living at the station; but he holds his ground, and is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

It occurred to one of the daughters of

the Rev. Bryce Ross that the likeliest way to influence the people for good would be to gather in the young for instruction. A neighboring station, named Knox, furnished one or two girls capable of teaching when Miss Ross could not be there herself; but she arranged to go every second or third Sabbath, starting from Pirie on horseback at 6 A. M.; and not getting back till five in the afternoon.

It required many calls and some management to gather a class together, but this was accomplished, and the work started, when the attempt to enrol their names in a book dispersed them all again! The parents were sure such a process was fraught with danger to the children, and it was only by promising to do nothing of the kind in future that Miss Ross secured their return to school. They now requested that reading should be taught in it; and though it did not appear likely that a weekly lesson would prove very efficacious, Miss Ross took an alphabet over with her, which was highly appreciated. She next tried some Scripture prints, in the hope of interesting them, but to her dismay this had the effect of once more scattering her little flock! She could only suppose that the parents attached some superstitious notions to her pictures, and the whole process of wooing back the truants had to be gone through once more.

These difficulties surmounted, and teacher and scholars getting better acquainted, the little "reds" began to show quite a mania for learning, and a general rush to the class took place whenever Miss Ross was seen coming down the hill opposite their dwellings.—*Rev. J. Scott*.

PERSIA.

The first missionaries to go to Persia were Mr. Smith and Mr. Dwight, who started from Smyrna one bright May morning to see what they could find to do for the Lord Jesus in those unknown regions. They went on horseback, and you would have laughed to see them in their queer loose Turkish cloaks and turbans which they wore so that the people on the way might not notice but what they were Turks. They travelled for fifteen months, going over twenty-five hundred miles; and they found the people so poor and in such a miserable state without the gospel, and yet so friendly, they decided that some missionaries ought to go there and try to do them good.