

ish writers say that, at every cross-road, signs were erected in some conspicuous place, pointing to the cities of refuge, on which was inscribed, "*Refuge, Refuge,*" which, with many other similar provisions, were designed to direct and facilitate the flight of the unhappy man who was pursued by the avenger of blood.—*Bible Dictionary.*

CALABAR FABLES.

How dreadful it would be to be without books! How much are we dependent on them for entertainment and instruction. As you are aware the Old Calabar people were entirely without them; their language lived only on their tongue, and we found them destitute of even that traditionary knowledge which is frequently found amongst tribes that have no written language. It is true, the Calabar people have many old traditionary stories, *in* like they call them, but they are the silliest fables you can well think of. I shall tell you one or two of them, and you will see how silly they are.

How fire was brought to the earth.

—At first man did not possess this useful minister to his comfort; it existed with Abase, the supreme being. Being desirous to receive a portion of it, man wrapped around his dog a quantity of dried grass, and the dog going near to the fire of Abase, soon found himself enveloped in flame, and immediately scampered off to his master, who thus possessed himself of this element.

How corn was brought to the earth.

—Abase was accustomed to supply all the creatures he had formed from his large stores of food, but man wished to have corn that he might plant it for himself. In order to procure it, he asked the bird to carry some of it in its crop to him the next time that Abase distributed his bounty, and the bird agreed to do so. Corn was thus conveyed to the bosom of the ground, so that it sprung up and multiplied; but whenever the

bird sees corn growing in a field, it goes and eats of it, for it says, "That's mine."

How the elephant has such small eyes.

—In the times of old, the little bush-tortoise was the wisest of animals.—Abase had given it this superiority, and it had frequent wars with its huge neighbor the elephant. On one occasion, by its tricking, it had got the better of the elephant and deprived him of his eyes. The elephant found himself in a sad plight, and all the worse that this misfortune befel him on Abase's chop day,—for it seems Abase had his feast days as the Calabar chiefs have, when he invited all his creatures to his table.—Seeing the worm crawling along on its way to the chop, the elephant says to it, "I have lost my eyes, pray lend me yours, for I am such a big beast I shall readily be missed, and when I come back from the chop I shall give you them again." The worm consented to this proposal, and gave the elephant its eyes; but the elephant forgot to return the loan, and so it comes to pass that the elephant has small eyes and the worm none at all.

The tortoise, however, had not always the advantage over the elephant, for on one occasion the elephant seized it with his trunk and dashed it against a tree, so as to break all its skin. Upon this the tortoise had to set to and patch up its skin again; and thus it happens that the shell of the tortoise has that form which it now exhibits.

A great many such silly stories they have, and the wives of the chiefs shut up in their harems spend much of their time, for they have nothing else to do, in rehearsing these old inke. How sad to think of the blindness of their minds, even as to the knowledge of this world, and their childishness when such absurd fables are their mental food and their only stores of instruction. Improve your privileges of instruction, my young friends. You do not know how highly God has blessed you in bestowing them upon you; and ever remember that