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HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

NO. 94.—AFRICA.

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 Africa, the subject of this paper, my only knowledge is from reading. And the few facts I have gathered together may already be well known to you.

This immense continent, covering an area of eleven million miles, which was once, in its north-eastern part, the seat of civilization and learning, has become the least important, as regards the progress of the human race, till of late years, when the zeal of missionaries and explorers, and of commercial speculators, has opened up this unknown and mysterious dark continent. Yet still the difficulties are great, due as much to the pestilential climate as to the barbarous savagery of the native tribes. In the western, southern, and eastern dioceses, missionary work is being carried on by many devoted servants and martyrs for Christ's sake. Through persecutions and fearful deaths has the knowledge of our Saviour been carried to these ignorant heathen, whose only religion is the devil worship, with his prime minister,

the witch doctor, against whose fearful power the medical missionary alone can prevail. Cannibalism, infanticide, human sacrifices, and tortures most horrible have been practised throughout all ages.

Of the Western or Niger district, Bishop Hill,* the successor to Bishop Crowther, says "that here sin has done its worst; here Satan has most enslaved humanity." Under him work two native bishops, who are in charge at Lagos, but most uphill is the work before them.

Cruelty and savagery seem ingrained in the native. The great district of Yoruba is now thrown open to Christianity as never before, and two and one-half millions of heathen are still waiting like those of Macedonia. In the Soudan, ever to be associated with the name of the saintly and heroic Gordon, the work is, unhappily, for the present, at a standstill for lack of men to take the place of those devoted young soldiers of the cross now lying in the graveyard of Tokoja.



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Third Bishop of the Church of England in Eastern Equatorial Africa.
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, London, England.)

Why is it so? Is it not because, as the celebrated traveller, Isabella Bird, says, we are too fond of looking on the *work done*? To her, the *work undone* was vast and appalling—the terrible, terrible degradation and misery that

* Bishop Hill has since been called to his rest.