

ing. Africa's redemption is at hand. Where sin did abound grace does much more abound; and to-day as formerly "the Cross of Christ is the power of God unto every one that believeth."—*From the Missionary Review, June, 1896.*

Religion of the Kaffir Race.

Kaffirs, or "Bantu" people, so called, number about 50,000,000, one fourth of the estimated population of Africa. Their habitat is chiefly the south-eastern part of the continent, and many are found on the west coast under the equator, and in the Congo basin. Of this race we regard the Basutos and Zulus as the most intelligent and progressive. The former live near the Orange Free State, the latter in Natal, the Zulu country, and Matabeleland. They are not polytheists, but believe in one supreme God, the Creator of the universe and of the human family. Their views, however, in regard to his character are extremely vague and crude. The generic term of their worship may be called fetichism, which appears in a variety of forms. Objects of their worship are ancestral spirits as in China, but African fetiches or mediums of approach to departed relatives are more gross and repulsive than those of the "Celestials."

Probably in no part of the world are religious rites so corrupt and cruel as in West Africa, among the Pongwe and kindred tribes, where rum-drinking is freely mingled with their worship. Kaffir priests, or diviners (for many of them practise the arts of divination), are sometimes called, and not improperly, "spirit doctors," for they profess to be in communication with the spirit world, the only individuals who hold the key to that world, and are consequently able to call up from their subterranean abode those who can tell how to avert mundane calamities. Zulus name them "izanusu," literally "smellers out"; hence discoverers of poisoners, witches, etc. They often brand individuals as witches and therefore receive the name "witch doctors." While studying for their profession in the school of African prophets, and before practising in public their art, they undergo a great amount of self-denial and even torture. They isolate themselves from their fellowmen, wander about at night among wild beasts, handle live snakes, fasten to their hair gail bladders of sheep and goats and a profusion of hens' feathers, covering their heads with grease and red ochre, making a truly hideous spectacle. They will not descend into hades until they have received an ox as payment for their services, and before the ceremonies are concluded another ox is generally demanded to satisfy the hunger of the spirits below, as well as of worshippers above.

I once witnessed in Zululand an exhibition of the skill of a Zulu diviner. In this case a woman officiated. She was about forty years of age, tall and thin, with sharp eyes and great volubility of tongue. The scene took place in a hut filled almost to suffocation. A man was ill, and his relatives wished to know the cause of the complaint and the required remedy. For half an hour the priestess shouted "Yizwa! yizwa!" ("Hear! hear!") "Strike the ground!" which they did with their canes and knob kerries; she, in the meantime, pouring a lot of nonsense into their ears, which seemed to produce a hypnotic effect, until all assented to what she said, whether true or untrue. Her final statement was: "The grandfather of the sick man is hungry. He must have beef, or the man will die." Immediately a cow was given to the spirit as a propitiatory offering, a por-