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An African Fashion

(By Julia Macnair Wright, in 'Forward'.)

Some people are very fond of finding fault and making statements about matters of which they really know little. These critics return frequently to the theme of the magnificent homes of missionaries—even in Africa.

Wearied by these remarks, a friend of missions wrote to ten missionaries in Africa these queries: 'How large is your house?' 'Of what is it made?'

The answers returned were: 'One story high; two rooms.' 'Built of mud and sticks.'

The grumblers said, 'Missionaries had no right to live in vile huts; it degraded their cause.'

Said the missionaries, 'We have no other material but mud and sticks, with leaf

tent of the liquor traffic in that unfortunate country where strong drink and slave markets have been the gifts of the favored white races.

One dangerous and hated visitor goes often to the chief's house—indeed to every African house. Along the road, across the grass, you suddenly see what might easily be mistaken for a moving brown rope about six inches in diameter, its length lost in the herbage as it writhes and twists along. A snake? No. A column of driver ants, when it reaches a house it takes possession, and sweeps all before it. Living creatures fly or die; books, food, clothing are devoured as if by the breath of fire. By lighting the grass in the path of their advance, they can be turned aside, or by surrounding the house by a deep band of some fine, floury sub-

stantine, but had no money; would he trust her? and she would be sure to pay him next time he came. Seeing that she really wanted it, he said he would give it to her, which he did, after marking a few passages for her.

About a month afterwards he again visited the village and called at this woman's house. As soon as she opened the door he could see there was a difference; her very appearance was altered; she was cleaner and tidier, and with a bright smile she welcomed him and invited him to come in. She then narrated what had taken place since his previous visit. She told him that as she read the Word of God she became more and more convinced of sin, until one night she was so miserable she could not sleep, but lay tossing on her pillow till about midnight, when she seemed to hear a voice saying to her, 'Get up and read your Testament.' Doubtless it was the Holy Spirit speaking to her heart, but to her it was so real, it seemed like a voice in her ear. She arose, lit her candle, sat down, and read the third chapter of St. John's Gospel.

When she came to the sixteenth verse, she said, she read it over and over again, and it seemed to go through and through her, till, kneeling down at her table, she poured out her confessions to God, and soon had the joyful knowledge of sin forgiven. She had told her husband, but he was very angry, and had begun to persecute her on account of her 'religion,' and she asked the colporteur to pray for his conversion. The entrance of God's Word had given her light and joy and peace.

The Christian Colportage Association has now a staff of 130 colporteurs, who in town and country have circulated 900,000 Bibles and Testaments and fourteen millions of books and magazines, while eleven millions of Gospel tracts have been distributed free.—'Christian Herald.'



THE HOME OF AN AFRICAN CHIEF.

thatch; all the chiefs live in similar houses.'

An African chief sets up a row of poles, weaves other poles in and out, daubs this foundation with mud, thatches it with leaves, and possibly covers the walls with white lime wash. We say the chief does it; we mean, he orders it done, and sits and looks on while his wives do the work. The house is under a great tree, and about it are built other similar rooms; for storage, for council meetings, for the wives—according to the wealth of the chief. The woods about the house glow with bright-winged birds and gay-colored flowers. The chief has no aviary or flower garden; his taste does not lie in that direction. His wives have yards full of chickens; the chief plants, instead of flowers, a great ring of bare poles near his dwelling, and here he exhibits his treasures—the refuse of the white trader. Empty tin cans, battered metal cups, broken crockery and bottles, bottles, bottles!

The bottles are stuck on the poles; the sun flashing against the dark glass brings out the red, blue, green, purple color, and the chief thinks the exhibition magnificent.

The immense number of bottles about every African home suggests the shameful ex-

stance that will cling to the ants' legs and hinder motion, the march can be checked, if seen in time.

When an African chief becomes interested in true religion and desires instruction, he frequently makes a gift of several of his mud, stick and leaf houses to serve as a chapel, school house and missionary's house. When books and preaching have enlightened him, his bottle yard is exchanged for a vegetable garden.

A Navy's Wife's Fourpenny Testament.

'I have not seen a Bible for sixteen years.' This was said by a poor woman, a navy's wife, living in a lonely village on the Wiltshire downs, to a colporteur who offered her for sale a fourpenny Testament. It was down a little court in the village, where the colporteur found two or three untidy-looking women standing gossiping. As soon as he produced the Testament all the women left except one, who listened quietly as he spoke of the Word of God and the message of salvation, and then said sadly, 'I haven't seen a Bible for sixteen years—not since I was married.' She said she would like to have

His Call to Preach.

(Youth's Companion.)

Bishop Matthew Simpson has told in a most touching manner the story of the early struggles that led him to the ministry. As he left boyhood behind, the conviction grew upon him that he must preach. But how could he? He was halting in speech, with a harsh voice and with an impossible manner of declamation—the last one to face an audience.

After turning the question over in his mind many times, with increasing discouragement, he at length reluctantly dismissed it and took a three years' course in a medical college.

But the idea of entering the ministry haunted him day and night, so that it almost seemed to him, as he said, that if he 'did not become a preacher he could not be saved.'

This led him to pray over the matter and, as a result, the morbid anxiety that had grown upon him vanished entirely one day at the sight of a scripture text: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.' The words had been written on purpose for him, he said to himself; and from that time he felt content to let God decide his course.

A day came when his obedience to the di-