

terial objects to which we have referred. Often it was supposed that the god came among them, and spoke through the father or some other member of the family, telling them what to do in order to remove a present evil, or avert a threatened one. Sometimes it would be, that the family would get a canoe built, and kept it sacred to the god. They might travel in it themselves, but it was death to sell or part with a canoe which had been built specially for the god.

Another class of Samoan deities may be called gods of town or village. Every village had its god, and every one born in that village was the property of that god. I have got a child for so-and-so, a woman would say on the birth of her child, and name the village-god. There was a small house or temple also consecrated to the deity of the place. Where there was no formal temple, the public house of the village, where the chiefs were assembling was the temple for the time-being, as the occasion required. Some settlements had a sacred grove as well as a temple, where prayers and offerings were presented. The Swift one, the Sacred One, Destruction, the God of Heaven, the Great Seer, the King of Palotu, were the names of some of the village gods.

In their temples, they had generally something for the eye to rest upon with superstitious veneration. In one might be seen a conch shell suspended from the roof in a basket made of coconut-network; and this the god was supposed to blow when he wished the people to go to war. In another, two stones were kept. In another, nothing resembling the head of a man, with white streamers flying, was raised on a pole at the door of the temple, on the usual hour of worship. In another, a coconut-shell drinking cup was suspended from the roof, and before it prayers were addressed and offerings presented. This cup was also used in oaths. If they wished to find out a thief, the suspected parties were assembled before the chiefs, the cup sent for, and each would approach, lay his hand on it and say: "With my hand on this cup, may the god look upon me, and send swift destruction, if I took the thing which has been stolen." The stones and shells were used in a similar way, but the cup is especially interesting. (See Kitch's "Bible Illustrations," vol. i. p. 426, on "Divining Cups.") Before this ordeal, the truth is rarely concealed. They firmly believe that it would be death to touch the cup and tell a lie.

The priests, in some cases, were the chiefs of the place; but in general, some one in a particular family claimed the privilege, and professed to declare the will of the god. His office is hereditary. He fixed the days of annual feasts in honour of the deity, received the offerings and thanked the people for them. He decided also whether or not the people might go to war.

The offerings were principally cooked food. As in ancient Greece, so in Samoa, the first cup was in honour of the god. It was either poured out on the ground, or waved towards the heavens, reminding us of the Mosaic ceremonies. The chiefs all drank a portion out of the same cup, according to rank; and, after that, the food brought as an offering was divided and eaten. This feast was annual, and frequently about the month of May. In some places it passed off quietly; in others, it was associated with games, sham fights, night dances, &c.; and lasted for days. In time of war, special feasts were ordered by the priests. Of the offerings on war occasions, women and children were forbidden to partake, as it was not their province to go to battle. They supposed it would bring sickness and death on the party eating who did not go to the war, and hence were careful to bury or throw into the sea whatever food was over after the festival. In some cases, the feasts in honour of

the god, were regulated by the appearance in the settlement, of the bird which was thought to be the incarnation of the god. Whenever the bird was seen, the priest would say that the god had come, and fix upon a day for his entertainment.

The village gods like those of the household, had all some particular incarnation. One was supposed to appear as a bat, another as a heron, another as an owl. If a man found a dead owl by the roadside, and if that happened to be the incarnation of his village god, he would sit down and weep over it, and beat his forehead with stones till the blood flowed. This was thought pleasing to the deity. Then the bird would be wrapped up, and buried with care and ceremony, as if it was a human body. This was not however the death of the god. He was supposed to be yet alive, and incarnate in all owls in existence. The flight of these birds was observed in time of war. If the bird flew before them, it was a signal to go on; but if it crossed the path, it was a bad omen, and a sign of retreat. Others have seen their village god in the rainbow; others have seen him in the shooting star; and, in time of war, the position of a rainbow, and the direction of a shooting star, were always ominous.

The constant dread of the gods, and the numerous and extravagant demands of a cunning and avaricious priesthood, made the heathenism of Samoa a hard service. On the reception of Christianity, temples were destroyed, the sacred groves left to be overrun by the bush, the shells and stones and divining cups were thrown away, and the fish and fowls which they previously regarded as an incarnation of their gods were eaten without suspicion or alarm. In a remarkably short time, under God's blessing, hardly a vestige of the entire system was to be seen.

DR. LIVINGSTON'S TRAVELS AND RESEARCHES.

Dr. Livingston has addressed an interesting letter to the Secretary of the London Missionary Society. It is dated Linyanti, on the River Chobe, 12th October, 1856. He has since completed his journey and arrived at Mauritius. He describes minutely the physical features of the country and the climate. The following are his remarks regarding the inhabitants of that part of Africa through which he has passed, and the openings for trade, civilization, and christianity:—

"The Inhabitants: their Numbers, Character, and Accessibility to Christian Influence."

"In regard to the people inhabiting this large and populous territory, it is difficult, in the absence of all numerical data, to present a very precise idea. The tribes are large, but divided into a great number of villages. So thickly were these dotted over the country, that in travelling in a straight line, in which we could rarely see more than one on each side, we often passed ten or twelve hamlets in a single day. Occasionally, however, we marched ten miles without seeing any. In no part of south I have visited is such a population seen. Angola contains 600,000 souls, and Loanda, a more populous, and of larger extent than it. The Cape Colony, with 200,000 souls, possesses some hundreds of missionaries and other Christian instructors and schoolmasters, but it will bear no comparison with Loanda as a missionary field. The Makololo territory has several tribes,—Batoka, Barotsa, Bashuba, Ilanyeti, Matlotlora, &c.—and there is no impediment to immediate occupation by missionaries; and to such as aspire to the honour of being messengers of mercy to the actual hea-

then, there is no more inviting field in South Africa. I am not to be understood as meaning that any of these people are anxious for the gospel. They are quite unlike the intelligent, inquiring race in the Punjab, or the vivacious islanders of the Pacific. But there is not such callous indifference to religious truth as I have seen elsewhere, nor yet that opposition which betokens progress in knowledge. But there is a large population, and we are sure, if the Word of life is faithfully preached, in process of time many will believe. I repeat again, that I know of no impediment to immediate efforts for their instruction. Every head man and chief in the country would be proud of the visit or residence of a white man. There is security generally for life and property. I left, by mistake, a pontoon in a village of Loanda, and found it safe eighteen months afterwards. Some parcels sent by Mr Moffat, by means of Matebele, lay a whole year on an island in the Zambezi, near Mosiatumya. It is true it was believed that they contained medicine which might bewitch but regular rogues are seldom scared by such preservatives. The Balonda are a friendly, industrious race, and thousands of the Balobale find an asylum among them from the slave-dealing propensities of their chiefs. They seem to possess a more vivid conviction of their relation to the unseen world than any of the southern tribes. In the deep, dark forests near their villages we always met with idols and places of prayer. The latter are spots about four feet broad, and forty long, kept carefully clear of vegetation and falling leaves. Here, the worshipper, either male or female, comes alone and prays to the gods (Barimo), spirits of departed relatives, and when an answer to the petition seems granted, meal or other food is sprinkled on the spot as a thank-offering.

"The Balonda extend to 7 deg. S. lat., and their paramount chief is always named Matimbo. There are many subordinate chiefs, all nearly independent. The Balobale possess the same character, but are more warlike, yet no prudent white man would be in the least danger among them.

"It seems proper to refer to the Chilbroke Bashinje, and Bangala, who treated us more scurvily than any I had previously met with in Africa. Sometimes they levelled their guns at us, and it seemed as if we must fight to prevent entire plunder, and reduction to slavery. But I thank God we did them no harm, and no one need fear vengeance on our account. A few more visits on the same principle would render them as safe as all other tribes, concerning which it may confidently be stated, that if one behaves as a Christian and a gentleman he will invariably be treated as such. Contrary conduct will give rise to remarks and treatment of scorn.

"Openings for Trade and for the Ultimate Spread of Civilization and Christianity."

"The Africans are all deeply imbued with the spirit of trade. We found great difficulty in getting past many villages; every artificer was employed to detain us, that we might purchase our suppers from them. And having finished all the game, they are entirely dependent on English calico for clothing. It is retailed to them by inches; a small piece will purchase a slave. If they had the opportunity of a market they could raise on their rich soil abundance of cotton, and zingoba beans for oil. I cannot say they were lazy, though they did seem to take the world easy. Their hair was elaborately curled; many of their villages were models of neatness, and so were their gardens and huts. Many were inveterate musicians. The men who went with me to Loanda, did so in order to open up a path for commerce, and without any hope of payment from me. Though compelled to part with their hard-won earnings in that city is. And, on