



Negro Superstitions.

The negroes of the West Indies have long been, as my young readers know, an interesting class of people for missionary labours. It was amongst them that the first modern missionaries from the Brethren's church began their labours, and it is there where not only Moravians, but Wesleyans, Baptists, the Church of England, and the London Missionary Societies, have had, and still have, some of their most interesting fields of labour. Thousands of this oppressed and once most degraded and despised race of the human family, have thus been blessed by the gospel of Christ, and multitudes are now to be found in heaven surrounding the throne of God, sent there from the mission churches in those parts.

The condition of these poor negroes, when the missionaries first went to them, was sad in the extreme. They were dreadfully oppressed by their cruel masters; but the worst part of their condition was to be seen in their ignorance of God, their foolish superstitions, and their immoral conduct. You know that the negroes came originally from Africa, where they belonged to different tribes, and prac-

tised different superstitions. Some were Mandingoes and some Foulahs from the banks of the Gambia and the Senegal; others were Whidahs, Eboes, Congoes, Angolas, Coromantees and Mocoer, from Upper and Lower Guinea. Each party had their own heathen practices at home, and brought them with them when they came.—Amongst them were parties who worshipped the devil, and others who worshipped serpents, lizards, yellow snakes, and other reptiles. Connected with these idolatries were many very wicked practices, and all sorts of vices were common amongst the people. Witchcraft was believed in by them, and men and women who pretended to be able to practise it, were very common.

Most of their ceremonies and wicked customs were practised at night, when the work of the day was over; and dances, plays, and religious superstitions, were strangely mixed up together.

On public holidays, such as a Christmas and New-Year's day, they had festivals of most disgusting and foolish character. They would dress themselves up in various fantastic