

for her. She was then in the prime of life, as it afterward appeared, being seven years old.

In the summer of 1887, Sir John was again visited, this time at his town house in London. After greeting, he was asked about his royal pet.

'I have sad news to tell you,' he answered.

'What? Is the queen dead?'

'She died only yesterday. I have not had the heart to tell the news as yet even to my wife.'

Having offered my hearty condolence, I asked to see the dead queen. Sir John led the way to the room where his artificial nests were kept. The glass case which contained the special formicary in which the old ant had lived was opened up. Lying in one of the larger open spaces or rooms was the dead queen. She was surrounded by a crowd of workers, who were tenderly licking her, touching her with their antennae, and making other demonstrations as if soliciting her attention, or desiring to wake her out of sleep. Poor, dumb, loving faithful creatures! There was no response. Their queen mother lay motionless beneath their demonstrations.

'They do not appear to have discovered that she is really dead,' remarked Sir John. Afterward he wrote me of another queen which died at the age of fourteen. The ants dragged her body about with them when they moved until it fell to pieces.—Harper's Magazine.

The Japanese Hunchback.

Not long ago, a poor hunchback boy named Samuru, attending a mission school in a village in the north of Japan, went to the missionary and begged to be allowed to help in God's work. He had given up worshipping idols and had become a Christian, and now he wanted to do something to show his love for Christ. But so deformed was he, that it was difficult to find anything he could do. His legs were withered, he could neither rise from the ground nor walk.

While the missionary was revolving the matter in his mind, the lad himself made a suggestion. The British and Foreign Bible Society had just sent a consignment of Japanese Bibles and Testament to this mission-station. These were being displayed on a little book-stall in one corner of the preaching-room. 'I could sit beside the table, and sell the Bibles,' said the boy.

He was duly placed in charge of the book-stall, and proved a most successful salesman. When people came merely out of curiosity to look at the Bibles, he often persuaded them to buy a copy. He told everybody what a wonderful Book it was, and how much it had done for him.

Some of the volumes he sold accomplished marvellous things. They fell into the hands of the rich as well as the poor. Heathen men and women read them, and by this means came to know and to worship the true God.

One tradesman who, like the rest of his neighbors, had been in the habit of keeping his shop open seven days a week, discovered in one of these Bibles that God had commended that the Sabbath Day should be kept holy. After this, he closed his shop every Sunday, fastening up a notice outside, 'Day of Rest.'

Missionaries state that many of the Bibles travelled to other parts of Japan, and were the means of converting people who had never heard of the preaching-room in the little village in the north. Scores of men and women, scattered all over the islands, became earnest Christians through reading the Scriptures sent out by the Bible Society and sold by Samuru.

The Japanese boy told the people who came

to buy, 'The Bible is a wonderful book!' And so it is. It not only changes people individually, but it transforms whole countries. Do you realize that we owe all the blessings of our happy life in England to-day to the power of this Book? Do we value it as we ought? —'The Christian.'

A Big Tree's Life Story.

(The Springfield 'Republican'.)

A remarkable recuperative power following an injury was found after examination of the sequoias of the Converse basin. The facts are told in a letter from William Russell Dudley to Senator Platt. The effects of certain tremendous forest fires occurring centuries ago are registered in the trunks of these trees, and the record completely concealed by subsequent healthy growth. Among a number of similar cases the most instructive record of these ancient forest fires was observed in a tree of moderate size—about 15 feet in diameter—five feet from the ground. It was 270 feet in height and 2171 years old. This tree when felled had an enormous surface burn on one side 30 feet in height and occupying 18 feet of the circumference of the tree; this was found to have been due to a fire occurring in A.D. 1797. The tree when cut, in 1900, had already occupied itself for 103 years in its efforts to repair this injury, its method being the ingrowing of the new tissue from each margin of the great black wound. When the tree was cut the records of three other fires were revealed. The history of the tree was as follows:—

271 B.C. it began its existence.

The first year of the Christian era it was about four feet in diameter above the base.

245 A.D., at 516 years of age, occurred a burning and five years were occupied in covering this wound with new tissues. For 1196 years no further injuries were registered.

1441 A.D., at 1712 years of age, the tree was burned a second time in two long grooves one and two feet wide, respectively. Each had its own system of repair.

One hundred and thirty-nine years of growth followed, including the time occupied by covering the wounds.

1580 A.D., at 1851 years of age, occurred another fire, causing a burn on the trunk two feet wide, which took 56 years to cover with new tissue.

Two hundred and seventeen years of growth followed this burn.

1787 A.D., when the tree was 2068 years old, a tremendous fire attacked it, burning the great scar 18 feet wide.

One hundred and three years, between 1797 and 1900, had enabled the tree to reduce the exposed area of the burn to about 14 feet in width.

It is to be noted that in each of the three older burns there was a thin cavity occupied by the charcoal of burned surface, but the wounds were finally fully covered, and the new tissue above was full, even, continuous, and showed no sign of distortion or of the old wound.

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Admonition.

Lay low, Mistuh Fishin' Worm,
I gives you warin' fair,
De sun is shinin' warmer an'
I has some time to spare.
De ripple's on de river
Dat's a singin' soft an' slow;
I don't want no advantage
Mistuh Fishin' Worm, lay low.

It's gwine to do som digging'
An' it ain' no fault o' mine
If right soon you isn't swingin'
In de water on a line.
So you wants to start an' burrow
Jus' as fas' as you kin go,
It's givin' you fair notice:
Mistuh Fishin' Worm, lay low.
—Washington 'Star.'

Heathenism in West Africa.

Notwithstanding the intercourse of Christians in recent years with West Africa the African tribes remain largely under the power of a cruel and degrading heathenism. A Presbyterian missionary in Gaboon tells of things that might well be read and remembered by those who stand up for 'natural innocence' of heathen religions. Fetish worship in West Africa is very foolish and stupid but also cruel, shocking and debasing, showing what depths of darkness may be reached when the Lord God Almighty is shut out of the heart and mind. The fetish worship that widely prevails is very degrading and cruel towards women and children. The missionary in Gaboon whose narrative is before us, tells that not long ago, Obam, the elder of the Church under his care, died. For many years that elder and his wife had broken away from idolatry, and led an exemplary life in the midst of the darkest heathenism. When the husband died the heathen accused the wife of having killed him by witchcraft. He had died of a lingering illness, still they insisted that the wife had practised magic. The wife's name was Sarah. The chief man of the town, having stripped her almost naked, placed her on her hands and knees in the middle of the street and bound upon her back a heavy load of plaintain stocks. Then two men sat on top of the load on her back and thus all the men of the town drove the woman up and down the street on her hands and knees until they nearly killed her. This performance was repeated from day to day till the missionary, thirty miles away, heard of it. He hastened to the rescue, and put a stop to the torture. Then the chief who had led in this cruel outrage offered to marry Sarah. Polygamy prevails, and though he had eight wives already he constrained her to be the ninth. The eight wives subjected her to much persecution, and accused her of crimes of which she was notably guiltless. This little sketch illustrates the tyranny of a heathen religion. If one were to follow up the influence of fetishism and witchcraft, it would become manifest as among the darkest pages of human history. Hence we ought not to speak lightly of any reasonable efforts put forth to dispel the age long darkness of the unchristianized tribes of Africa.—Presbyterian Witness.

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