

## CAFFRE DANCE.

My Dear Young Friends,—Your attention is occasionally directed towards Caffreland in the Magazine, which is specially intended for your instruction respecting the dark places of the earth. I am amongst the natives of that benighted land at present; and while grieving at the many scenes of their degradation which I am called upon to witness from time to time, it has often occurred to me, that if you were to see some of their customs, and the manner in which they act, you would not only be more thankful to God for the glorious privileges which the Gospel confers upon you, but that your sympathies would, on that very account, be more powerfully called into operation on their behalf.



*An Abakweta Dancer.*

Last week, whilst itinerating amongst the Caffre kraals, I found nearly every one of them deserted; and, on inquiring, I was told that they were at the celebration of an "Abakweta Dance." I directed my steps towards the place, and, on the side of a hill, the scene, which I have endeavored to sketch

for your understanding the dance better, presented itself to view. My feelings were very different from those which seemed to animate the assembled multitude. A true-hearted Christian should never think of joining in those great balls or dances which are sometimes held in Scotland; and in Caffreland, if any person refuses to take his share in this national custom, he is suspected of not being a true-hearted Caffre. The "Abakwetas" were stumping and twisting, and shaking their strangely-decorated persons in a great variety of ways. Some of them were white-washed, while others, in order to distinguish them on account of their skill, were spotted like so many leopards.

At one side stood a party of women in their full native dress, beating with sticks upon a dried hide, which they accompanied with a kind of chanting. Numbers of other women were sitting on the ground, awaiting their turn to beat on the hide, and keep up the inspiring chant. Occasionally their ranks were put into disorder by an "Abakweta" coming into the midst of them, and slashing with the flexible rod which is in their hand. One old woman, who would have been much better employed in looking after her great-grandchildren at home, was ludicrously tripping along with a stick in hand, in order to teach the "boys" how to stamp their feet and shake their bodies. A great number of men were squatted on the ground, or seated or lying in all manner of attitudes, gazing with intense delight at the dancers, while others were shouting and clapping their hands, as loud as any do at the antics of "Merry Andrew" at a country fair.

My presence was by no means relished. It was useless for me to preach on such an occasion. I could only say a few words, first to one group, and then to another. Some of them said they came there to see the dance, and not to worship God. I said, they did not know that I was their friend—that they must not be impatient, as many of them having come from Tembuland, it was