

**MISSIONARY TALES
FOR LITTLE
LISTENERS**

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Missionary Tales for Little Listeners by M. A. S. Barber

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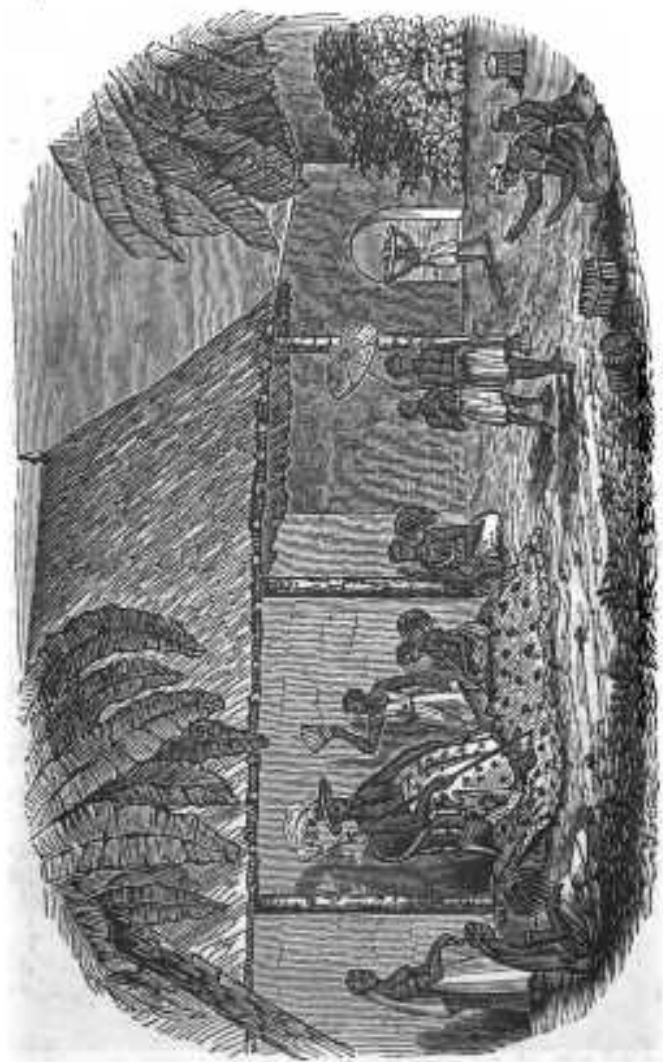
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M. A. S. BARBER

**MISSIONARY TALES
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COURT OF A NEGRO KING.

No. 91
MISSIONARY TALES

FOR
LITTLE LISTENERS.

BY
M. A. S. BARBER.



JERUSALEM.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even for ever.—*Psal. cxxiv. 2.*

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Much liberty has been taken in the way of omission, addition, and alteration, in preparing the present edition of this interesting little work, to suit it to the purposes of the Board of Publication, as a Sabbath School Library Book.

MISSIONARY TALES.

THE NEGRO VILLAGE.

AFRICA is a beautiful country; stately trees a hundred feet in height, the pullom, the tamarind, the locust, the delicately tinted cashew, and that renowned tree, which all my little readers must have heard of, the lofty palm, overshadow the land; the ground is strewn with flowers, of colours far more brilliant than any which peep forth in the cool fields, and amongst the fresh grass of our native country; blue, scarlet, purple, they hang like silken streamers from the lofty branches of the trees, or spread like a rich and variegated carpet over the ground; plants, such as we keep with the greatest care in hot-houses, spring up wherever they can find space: green and blue lizards, and golden with brown spots, glitter on the stones, and the air resounds with the song of the palm bird, and widow bird, and the humming of innumerable insects floating by

in the sunshine, while monkeys and parrots chatter among the trees.

The inhabitants, however, of this fine country, are, for the most part, idolatrous, ignorant, and cruel; taught by the evil and wicked example of white men, in former times and even now they steal and sell each other for slaves.

In their savage state the Africans may be said to worship the devil: they have an idea that he "lives in the bush," as they call their vast forests; they know nothing of God, their kind and merciful Creator, or of his love and care, over his ungrateful creatures; but they pay all sorts of respect to their Fetishes, for so the things they worship, are called, under the fear that if they do not, they will receive harm from them. An English traveller, who was making a voyage down the Niger, saw one of the negroes, when they came to a particular place in the river, rise up in the boat, and utter occasionally a loud cry; whenever an echo was returned, half a glass of rum, and a piece of yam and fish were thrown into the water; the Englishman, who had often suffered for want of provisions, was not very well pleased at seeing the food thrown into the water in this manner, so he asked the negro what he meant by it. "Did you not hear the Fetish," replied he; "if we do not feed him, and do good for him, he will kill us, or make us poor and sick." So the poor creature mistook the echo of his own call for the voice of

the Fetish. In some places they worship the tiger; in others, the snake, the alligator, the lizard, and the hyena; *sataka*, or offerings to the devil, are everywhere to be seen: once a missionary saw a party of negroes offering a sacrifice to three cannon balls and two decanter stoppers! Many other practices of their folly and superstition I could recount to you; they are also sometimes very cruel; in one of the States, it is the custom for the king to water the graves of his ancestors with the blood of people killed on purpose; and their huts and walls are ornamented with skulls and human bones. But we must not suppose, that these people are worse than others; our ancestors once did things almost as wicked and cruel, and we should have done the same, had it not pleased God to teach us better; we should, therefore, pity the heathen, and not despise them.

Near Sierra Leone, (a British settlement on the western coast of Africa,) situated among the mountains which surround it, stands a pretty village called Gloucester Town; here huts, gardens, and cultivated lands, bespeak a happy and industrious set of people. A little while ago, they were worshippers of Fetishes, as ignorant and foolish as any of their countrymen. But having been carried off as slaves, they were brought here by the English ships which rescued them. When they first arrive, they are generally in a miserable state, but they acquire by degrees better habits: First, they