THE COVENANTERS

ODD TENETS OF SECT LITTLE KNOWN.

Few Hundred Members in This City—Merger Takes Place To-day.

To-day the members of the Second Reformed Presbyterian Church, otherwise known as the Covenanters, will hold their last service in their building in 39th street, between Eighth and Ninth avenues. The building has been sold, and the congregation intends to unite with the Fourth Reformed Presbyterian Church, in Harlem, the new body to bear the name of the downtown church and to continue under the ministrations of the Rev. R. M. Sommerville, who has served as its pastor for more than thirty-five years.

The denomination, which has only a few hundred members in New York City and not above ten thousand in the United States, is notable for the marked manner in which it is differentiated from other Protestant denominations. It is as firm in its tenets as is the Roman Catholic Church, although as far removed from the latter as any of the Protestant denominations. It is probable that no Protestant church maintains with so little modification the customs and tenets adopted at the time of the Reformation as does this denomination. Any one who chances to attend the service in West 39th street to-day will witness anachronistic customs that he would hardly imagine possible in New York City at this day.

The service will be the semi-annual communion, usually held in May, but advanced in this instance in order that the last service in the building may be a communion. The visitor will hear no musical instrument, for it is an article of the faith of this Church that the only music permissible in Christian worship is that of the human voice. The basis for this custom is a Biblical one. In the Apostolic Church, the Covenanters say, no instruments were used, therefore none should be used in the Christian Church to-day. The church never has any trouble with quarrelsome choirs and organists.

PSALMS THE ONLY HYMNS.

As the communicants approach the communion table they will sing a metrical version of the Psalms of David, a precentor leading them. The Psalms of David, which means all of those included in the book of Psalms, are the only hymns sung in worship by the Covenanters. They covenant not to sing hymns in any other church in which they chance to find themselves, for they take the ground that all other songs of praise are of human origin, the Psalms only being from the hand of God. The metrical version used is that of Francis Rous, an English theologian born in 1579, who was an intimate friend of Pym, a member of several Parliaments and a supporter of Cromwell and the Commonwealth. His "Psalms of David in English Meeter," is his chief claim to remembrance. This version had the sanction of the Westminster Assembly, the estates of Scotland and of Parliament.

As the communicants reach the communion table each will hand a card to a member of the Session standing at the foot of the table. This card contains the name of the person who presents it. In some Covenanter churches the "token," as it is called, is a metal piece. The "tokens" are distributed at the preparatory services held in the course of the week prior to the communion service to those who announce their intention of participating. The token is a memento of the days when the Scotch Covenanters were hunted by the myrmidons of Charles II. They were not safe even in their homes, notwithstanding that the edict was supposed not to affect gatherings in private houses. They met in caves in order to conduct services, and for the purpose of preventing spies of the King from interfering with their meetings they gave tokens to those who were entitled to attend the services. These were the passports to the secret communion services.

PULPIT PRIVILEGE GUARDED.

The Rev. Mr. Sommerville will be assisted by a clergyman from a Boston Covenanters' church. It is the custom to have a clerical assistant at the communion service from another church. No clergyman of another denomination or another branch of the Presbyterian Church is ever permitted to speak from a pulpit of this denomination for fear that he will enunciate some teaching at variance with its peculiar tenets.

No Covenanter will swear allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. For this reason there are no lawyers among them. They will not serve on juries when the oath requires allegiance to the Constitution. Because of this objection to the oath they never cast a ballot, preferring to live under the ministrations of a government of the choosing of others. A militant people, as the Stuarts discovered, they resist the desire to serve in the army, unless by special dispensation they are permitted to enlist without taking the oath of allegiance.

The Civil War was a great temptation to them. They had been consistent abolitionists, endeavoring to get rid of slavery. They are credited with having been in the front ranks of the abolitionists. It was one of the tenets of the faith that no Covenanter could hold slaves. It is said that on one occasion Dr. Willson, a Philadelphia clergyman of the denomination in antebellum days, was asked if it was true that the Covenanters would not permit a slaveholder in the communion.

"Why, yes," he is reported to have replied, "we don't even allow horse thieves."

MR. LINCOLN'S ORDER.

The Covenanters, therefore, when the war broke out, wanted to enlist in the Union armies. It is said that the Synod sent a committee to President Lincoln, explaining the situation, and he issued an order that Covenanters should be accepted without taking the oath.

This is all because they believe that civil government is a divine ordinance, and the Constitution begins, "We, the people of the United States," etc., giving no credit to divine authority. It is therefore a secular government, although, as they admit, a form of government of a very high order. They believe that the Bible furnishes a basis for all moral laws and that it is the obligation of a nation to recognize those laws. A nation is God-created, they say, as men are born into it, but the laws of the United States are man-made, failing to recognize the divine nature of the government which should exist in the realm of the Son of God.

No Covenanter may be a Mason or a member of any oathbound secret society. In this respect they are following the example of Jesus, who said, "In secret have I said nothing."

Claiming a history beginning with the preaching of John Knox in Scotland, and, therefore, the right to be considered the parent stem of the Presbyterian Church, they hold strictly to Calvin's five points of belief. They do not believe in card playing, dancing, smoking or the use of tobacco in any form, or in the use of alcohol as a beverage, and no one who violates these requirements may be a minister or hold an office of any kind in the denomination. Although so modest a denomination, it maintains a denominational press. Its members support it so loyally that it ranks well with the press of other denominations.

NEW RIVER BOATS

To Supplant Familiar Types on Mississippi.

Drawings made from the engineer's plans of the new boats to be used by the Mississippi Valley Transportation Company have been received, and show a remarkable divergence from the type of boat with which river men are familiar.

There are two types shown by these drawings, one a towboat and the other a freight barge. At first glance one notices the towboat is a sidewheeler, radically different from the Sprague and other sternwheel boats now in use. The absence of the high cabins and immense smokestacks forward and the substitution for them of a low, stout, raking smokestack like that of an ocean steamship next catches the eye.

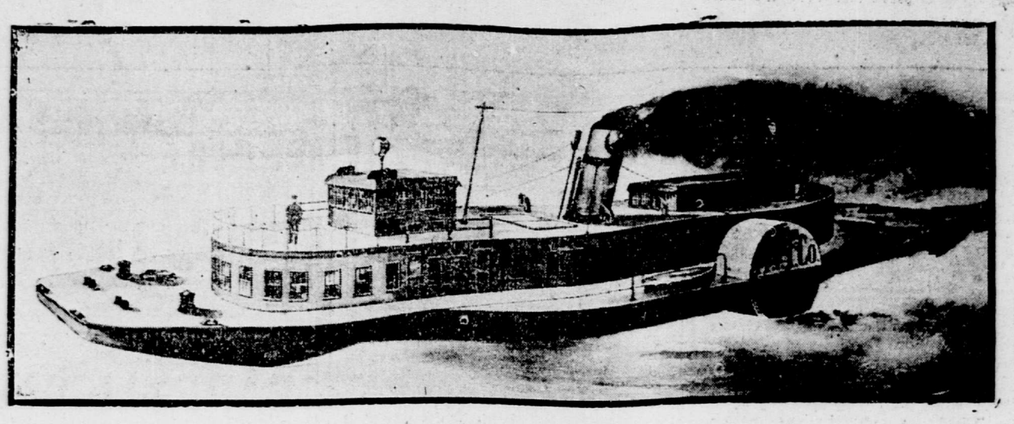
The hull of the boat, as it appears in these drawings, is shaped like that of a yacht, running out gracefully forward, so that it displaces the water with the least effort. The cabins, with ample accommodations for the officers and crew, rest on the main deck, where ordinarily in the old-fashioned river boat would be the boilers, and the pilot house, looking more like the pilot house of an ocean liner than a river boat, is immediately above the forward cabins. Back of this is to be seen the hatch covering the fuel hopper, for all the fuel will be taken aboard from a chute overhead, as it is taken on by the locomotive tender, thus saving time and labor.

The engines, which do not appear in the picture, lie horizontally, and are double compound, fast working engines, the wheels being designed to turn forty revolutions a minute. Steam capstans and bitts forward and aft show that this towboat is designed either to lash up with her tow ahead of her by the present system, or to tow it on a long line astern by the system used on other rivers and the Great Lakes. It is possible it will be used to tow by the one method downstream and by the other upstream.

In spite of her difference from the current type, the new towboat has everything in her favor as regards appearance. She looks trim, powerful, fast and efficient, and more like a boat than like a floating boarding house, which the old type always resembled.

The freight barge is a long, broad, steel barge, absolutely lacking in the superstructure, even in the shed roof, which is used in the old Crescent barge. Her deck is cut by a frequent succession of hatches, through which every part of the hold can be used. The holds in the bow and stern indicate the fact that there is a small cabin at each end for work and storage and for the crew.

The towboat is to cost $80,000 and the barges $50,000 each. The barge is designed to carry 4,000 tons on 9 feet of water and 1,200 tons on 4 feet. The towboat has 2,000 horsepower, and is 150 by 33 feet, and draws 30 inches with her fuel on board.



NEW STYLE OF PACKAGE FREIGHT BOAT TO BE USED ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

GUARD NOTES.

There is no vacancy on the First Brigade staff as aid. General George Moore Smith selected a man for the place some two weeks ago, although he made no formal announcement of the fact. The general was very indignant at the statements that he desired applications from wealthy society men for the place. He said:

"There is absolutely not one word of truth in the statements in question, nor did I ever authorize them in any way. When I desire to fill any vacancies on my staff it is not necessary for me to advertise for applicants, as there are any number of deserving officers in the guard to choose from, aside from my persona, friends in civil life."

Company F, of the 7th Regiment, will hold a dinner at the Princeton Club next Thursday night. Some professional talent will be on the programme. Colonel Appleton, who for some years was commandant of Company F, will be among the guests. The riding class of the company will go on an outdoor ride up in Westchester County next Tuesday. Teams from Companies C and A will play a game of indoor baseball next Wednesday night, and Companies B and D will play a game next Thursday night.

A review of the 8th Regiment, by Brigadier General David E. Austen, chief of coast artillery, will be held next Tuesday night.

Open Olympic games under the auspices of the 22d Regiment will be held at the armory next Wednesday night. The measurements for the twelve events will be the same as were used in the Olympic games, and a large number of the athletes who took part in them will compete. There will be three prizes in each event.

Officers of the national guard in Manhattan and Brooklyn are wondering when the Armory Board is going to hold a meeting and pass upon a number of matters that need attention. It is now several months since the board met.

Delegates from all the National Guard organizations in the state will gather at Albany next Wednesday and Thursday to attend the annual convention of the National Guard Association of New York. Governor Hughes will be entertained at dinner by the delegates on the night of February 24 at the Ten Eyck House.

At the review of the 22d Regiment tomorrow night by General P. F. Wanser, commanding the national guard of New Jersey, there will be a large delegation of national guard officers from that state. Colonel Hotchkin has nominated Sergeant Ladew, of Company A, to be second lieutenant, and Second Lieutenant Deeves, of Company M, to be first lieutenant. It has been decided to form a signal detachment of twenty-four men, made up by detailing two men from each company. Lieutenant McEwen will be in charge. Captain Henry S. Sternberger, the regimental commissary, will go to the West Indies for a pleasure trip for a month, leaving the city on the Moltke on February 22. Besides the West Indies, he will visit ports on the Spanish Main and the Panama Canal, Bermuda and Nassau. Companies A and L are to give joint games open to the Military Athletic League in April. Company D will hold a promenade concert at the armory on March 12. Despite the uncertain weather, considerable work has been done on the new armory.

GENERAL LEE STUDYING THE FEDERAL RESERVES BEYOND THE NEAR LINE OF BATTLE.

Winning design in competition for a $50,000 commission for a monument in memory of those Virginia soldiers who took part in the battle of Gettysburg.

(F. William Sievers, sculptor.)

Brigadier General George Moore Smith, First Brigade, will leave for Camden, S. C., on February 24, to be gone a month for a rest. His departure will leave the brigade under the command of Colonel Daniel Appleton of the 7th Regiment.

The 69th Regiment, at its annual inspection and muster on the night of February 11, made the best record in its history, and, so far as the general appearance of the men and the condition of state property were concerned, one of the best records in the state, say the inspecting officers. These represented both the War Department and the state. Companies D, F, I and K each paraded 100 per cent of their membership. Out of 773 members on the roll there were 755 present. Company I, Captain Charles Healy, had a full membership of 103 officers and men present—the first time in the history of the regiment that such a record has been made at the state muster. On the morning of the day set for the inspection Company I had two newly elected lieutenants who had not been sworn in, and to get this done it was necessary for the Governor to get the examination papers in order to wire authority for the officers to take the oath. Private Eagan was chosen to take the papers to Albany, leaving here at 9:30 a. m. Permission was wired from Albany at 3:20 p. m. that Lieutenant Colonel Conley could administer the oath of office to his two lieutenants, and Private Eagan returned from Albany the same night, in time to be mustered in with his company.

A review of the 69th Regiment by its former colonel, Edward Duffy, will be held in the armory next Saturday night, and a reception will follow. This will be the first review by the colonel since he was retired. Company C, Captain McSherry, will hold an exhibition drill and dance at the armory to-morrow night.

Captain George L. Bouton, First Lieutenant Albert Clements, and Second Lieutenant Angelo Bianchi, of Company A, 14th Regiment, have each the unusual record of performing 100 per cent of duty for ten years. All three officers are Spanish War veterans.

Officers of the 23d Regiment will be divided into two equal parties to-morrow night at the armory, in order to fight out theoretically a problem of defence and attack, between a Blue and a Red army. Second Lieutenant Charles R. Coffin, of Company C, has been unanimously elected first lieutenant, vice Robb, promoted. First Sergeant George C. Douglass, of Company K, has been unanimously elected second lieutenant.

THE PACIFIC SLOPE

Alleged Attempted Murder a Coast Sensation.

[By Telegraph to The Tribune.]

San Francisco, Feb. 19.—Local newspapers have been filled this week with details of an investigation of a peculiar attempt on the life of a woman and her infant child at Dr. Willard Burke's sanatorium, near Santa Rosa.

Luella Smith, who had been a protégé of Dr. Burke for several years, recently gave birth to a child, and soon after returned to the sanatorium, where she was permitted by Dr. Burke to remain in a tent on the grounds. She asserts Dr. Burke is the father of the child.

Last week there was an explosion at the sanatorium and the woman and child had a narrow escape from death. Dr. Burke said the woman herself caused the explosion, as she had threatened frequently to commit suicide. He also declared she was insane, and that her charge that he was the father of the child was a mental delusion.

The authorities investigated the case and found so much evidence against Dr. Burke that they arrested him, and he has been held for trial for attempted murder. It is alleged he procured dynamite from his mine near Oroville and had miners show him how to use it. Luella Smith recently threatened to sue Burke for damages and to compel him to support her and the child. The case has excited great interest because of the prominence of Dr. Burke, who for many years has been the head of the sanatorium.

The annual report of the United Railroads of San Francisco shows gross receipts last year of $7,455,965, and net earnings of $3,213,316. The roads carried nearly one hundred and fifty million passengers. The financial report is the best in the seven years' history of the company.

Alden Anderson, State Superintendent of Banks, is the latest announced candidate for Governor. Anderson has a wide acquaintance among politicians and men of all classes. He was formerly Lieutenant Governor. He is one of the largest fruit growers in the state.

Los Angeles is making desperate efforts to procure the removal of the Union Iron Works from this city to its new seaport of San Pedro. It has offered a free site and many other inducements, but President McGregor says the great cost of maintaining two plants could not be equalized by cheaper and better labor conditions in the southern city. Los Angeles has enjoyed the open shop for many years, and the result is that it costs far less to manufacture or build in that city than in San Francisco, where the labor unions are still in complete control.

Mrs. Willa Dick Kip obtained a divorce this week from Lawrence Kip on the ground of desertion. She is the daughter of a well known capitalist of Indiana. Kip was the favorite grandson of the famous Episcopal bishop.

The University of California has received a valuable gift of anthropological material for its museum from Mrs. Blanche Trask, who got many of her specimens from the Channel Islands, off Santa Barbara. The collection comprises five thousand pieces, among which are many unique implements and weapons of the early dwellers on this coast. One peculiar exhibit is the framework of an ancient house made of ribs and large bones of whales.

The new California Limited train on the Santa Fe Railroad will be the fastest overland train running out of Chicago. It will make the trip to Los Angeles in sixty-four and one-half hours, instead of the present schedule of seventy-two hours.

The Santa Fe Railroad Company will build a $250,000 station at Barstow, which is one of the main transfer points to Los Angeles. The buildings will include a large hotel for passengers and employes, and a reading room for the latter.

WARN THE FARMERS

BAD SEED THREATENS LOSS OF $13,000,000.

Campaign to Prevent Sowing of Spoiled Corn on Nebraska Land.

In an effort to prevent the loss to Nebraska farmers of $13,000,000 on their 1910 corn crop, the Omaha Commercial Club has enlisted the assistance of thousands of business men in all parts of Nebraska, and a whirlwind crusade has been begun having for its end the saving of 27,000,000 bushels of corn to the state this year.

The condition which confronts the Nebraska farmers, and which has called forth concerted action on the part of the business men of the state, is one which has been brought about by the wet, cold winter, which has prevented the farmers from gathering their corn crop, with the result that the corn which will be utilized as seed for the 1910 crop has deteriorated to such an extent that a large amount of it is unfit for planting. To make matters worse, this deteriorated seed does not outwardly differ from good corn, so that the farmers are likely to plant this year corn without the knowledge that it will not sprout and produce a crop.

The Nebraska State Agricultural College some weeks ago called attention to this damaged corn condition, and the Omaha Commercial Club immediately took the matter up. Samples of seed corn were obtained from every county in the state, and a scientific examination was made of the samples. The result was astonishing. One out of every six ears submitted was found defective.

What this means to Nebraska and to the food supply of the country can be understood when it is said that this defective seed, if planted, would diminish the yield of corn by 26,924,000 bushels, valued at between $13,000,000 and $14,000,000.

WASTED LAND AND EFFORT.

Nebraska annually plants 6,500,000 acres of corn. If the farmer plants seed so poor that one grain out of every six does not sprout the effect is the same as if 1,075,000 acres of the most fertile land in Nebraska were permitted to lie idle this year. More than that, the farmers would plough and care for the poor corn plants the same as for those which produced the best crops. If tested and good seed are used these 1,075,000 acres will produce 26,924,000 bushels of corn, according to the average yield in this state.

Corn is planted in Nebraska in April and May, and in the mean time thousands of business men, storekeepers and grain buyers and dealers will be dinning it into the farmers that they should carefully test their seed this year. Additionally thereto lecturers from the State Agricultural College have been placed in the field and are talking nightly to gatherings of farmers. The industrial departments of the Burlington, Union Pacific and Northwestern railroads have got into the game, and, lastly, practically every newspaper in the state is telling the farmers of Nebraska that they must be careful this year to see that their seed corn is good, the penalty for general failure being the loss of $13,000,000 to the farmers and of millions of bushels of meal to the consumers of the country.

One of the most effective points of the campaign is that no generalities are dealt in by the men behind the movement. Each county is taken up separately, and the loss to that county alone is shown, should the poor seed be used. Then the loss for each particular township is shown and the matter is finally driven home by showing to hundreds of the men who farm great bodies of land the loss which they, individually, will sustain.

MAKE FIGURES STRIKE HOME.

For instance, the farmers of Saunders County are shown that they stand to lose $342,200 by the use of unselected seed; those of Gage County, $349,812; Custer County, $430,467, and Lancaster County, $534,130. These figures are based on the average yield of corn produced by these counties and are taken from the state and government crop reports. They are absolutely accurate, and, as such, have set the sensible, hard-headed farmers to thinking of just what portion of that loss will be sustained by each of them.

Then these conditions are brought still closer home. The man who ordinarily plants 1,000 acres of corn is informed that unless he is careful in the selection of his seed, instead of producing the average crop of 25,000 bushels, his 1,000 acres will only produce 20,850 bushels, a loss of 4,150 bushels. Allowing only 50 cents a bushel, this represents a loss to that farmer of $2,075—and all because of his failure to plant good seed. And the farmer who plants 200 acres of corn is shown that his loss, under similar conditions, will be 833 bushels, worth at least $416. Even the little fellow who plants only 40 acres to corn is shown that he will lose 166 bushels, worth $83, unless he takes care of his seed this year.

But Nebraska farmers are not the only people interested in this movement. Twenty-six million bushels of corn weigh 1,556,000,000 pounds, and Nebraska railroads are interested to the extent of that much extra grain to haul if the farmers will test their seed. And grain dealers are interested to the extent of handling that amount of corn which they would not otherwise do. And banks are interested in handling the $13,000,000 for which the grain would sell. And storekeepers are interested in selling goods which farmers will purchase with the $13,000,000 so obtained. And millers are interested in grinding 27,000,000 bushels of corn.

And lastly, every family in the United States is interested to the extent of the one bushel of meal for every family in the country which would be provided by the extra 27,000,000 bushels of corn the Nebraska farmers will produce if they will only heed the advice of the business men of Nebraska and pay attention to their seed corn this spring.

A GETTYSBURG SHAFT

New York Sculptor to Erect It for Virginia.

To F. William Sievers, a young New York sculptor, has just been awarded the commission for the execution of a monument to the Virginia soldiers who took part in the battle of Gettysburg. The award was made after a competition, in which about twenty-five sculptors took part—nearly one-half of the designs being sent from New York to the Gettysburg Monument Commission. The Virginia Legislature has appropriated $50,000 for the monument.

In the winning design the sculptor has depicted General Robert E. Lee mounted on his well known horse, Traveller, and studying the federal reserves beyond the near line of battle. On the pedestal will be allegorical groups symbolizing Virginia and the branches of the service, infantry, cavalry and artillery.

The monument will be set up near Spangler's woods, in Confederate avenue, almost on the exact spot where General Lee viewed the Confederate soldiers charging Cemetery Ridge.

The sculptor has three years in which to finish his work. He expects to have it ready for unveiling at the great reunion of Union and Confederate soldiers in 1913.

QUEER PEOPLES DESCRIBED BY A VETERAN TRAVELLER

Men in the Mangrove Swamps of British Nigeria Paint Their Fiancees Red and Then They Are Fattened for the Altar.

By John Foster Frazer.

NO. 2.

If you look at a map of Africa, with British territory marked in red, you will find on the west coast a splash of color now known as British Nigeria, three times the size of the British Isles and covering four hundred thousand square miles of country. Running up through Nigeria is the wonderful River Niger, the birthplace of which was for ages as mysterious as that of the Nile itself. It is with some of the people who live along the banks of the river that I now propose to deal. They are among the latest of the King's subjects, for it was only in 1900 that they came under direct imperial administration.

Near the coast the land is low lying and swampy. But as the interior is reached there rise plateau after plateau, until at last high mountains are discovered. Climate and environment play an important part in the characteristics of a people. Accordingly, among the natives of the Niger Delta, living in the malaria soaked mangrove swamps, there is constant disease, and the negroes are addicted to every kind of foul custom and superstition. When, however, higher country is reached, where there are grassy plains and hills studded with fine trees, a brave and warlike type of negroes is encountered, men who are altogether in a higher state of civilization.

There is something terribly eerie about the dark forests which cling close to the slimy and foul odored banks of the Lower Niger. Along the innumerable creeks the heavily leaved branches of the mangrove trees are so interlaced that the light is completely shut out. The malodorous air, which sucks all the vitality out of the white man, is steamy, and the squelching mud is full of appalling and vile looking creatures.

Alongside these black recesses live the negroes whom I have called the men of the mangrove swamps. Something of the horribleness of their surroundings seems to have entered into their natures, for they take a fiendish delight in murder and torture and in practices of the most revolting character. The impression on the mind of the traveller, when his canoe pushes up one of the network of creeks, and in the blackness of the forest, so strange and so weird after the flaming light outside, he suddenly comes across a village of wattled huts and low caste natives, completely naked, with tattooing or raised scars upon their black skins, is never eradicated as long as memory holds.

Life is one long terror to them. They believe in ghosts which kill with spears, they believe that constantly on the steamy waters are travelling misty canoes, hurrying the living to the regions of the accursed; and they are sure of the existence of evil spirits which kill without a wound, or which mark their visit by daubing the huts with blood, smudging the faces of the sleepers with blood, and sometimes even filling the cooking pots with blood.

Away in the most inaccessible corners of the bush, so hidden that you can approach within a few yards without knowledge that you are close to a settlement, live the Ibibios, who are among the lowest of the tribes of the Niger Delta. Their villages are removed from the native roads, probably to escape the notice of slave traders, who used to be very active in these parts. By the roadsides may be seen spirit houses for the reception of the souls of men between death and reincarnation.

Until the coming of the British—and even now in remote districts—these people indulged in cannibalism. They made human sacrifices. As the birth of twins was considered of evil omen, the mother and her children were always slaughtered. Since British rule has been exercised these atrocities have been prohibited, and thus whenever disaster comes to the Ibibios they always ascribe it to their being prevented from making sacrifices to appease the devils of the woods.

The most important race on the Lower Niger, and living further inland, are the Ibos. The people speaking the Ibo language number some millions, though, of course, how many exactly it is impossible to say. They are not very big men, rarely taller than five and a half feet, but they are well made and muscular, and the women have skins so black and so bright that they look like ebony. When young they are often rather handsome, but as they reach manhood or womanhood they become either very fat or very thin. The black man's ideal beautiful girl is a very plump one, and accordingly before marriage the bride is specially fattened, so that her spouse may be all the better pleased with her.

The Ibos are great fishermen, and spend much of their time in that pursuit, leaving most of the trade in the hands of the women. They have towns, and these, as well as the villages, are governed by chiefs, recognized by the British government, each of whom has sworn allegiance to the local king. The streets are grassy lanes, across which stretch festoons of giant creepers, and the huts are so hidden among the scrub and low trees that they are almost indistinguishable from the surrounding vegetation. The king's palace is surrounded by mud walls. He is practically a prisoner, for only once a year is he allowed by the priests to go outside, and then only to perform a solemn dance before his subjects.

The Ibos inhabit the stretch of country extending from the Niger to the Cross River. The customs, of course, vary in different parts. Those who live near the Cross River have practices that are certainly peculiar. For instance, when a festival is in prospect the women spend many days beforehand in arranging one another's hair, smearing it with palm oil and then plastering it into singular shapes, which remain undisturbed for months at a time. Most men shave their chins, but the chiefs allow a small tufty beard to grow, and to the end of this they not infrequently fasten a small brass bell or some ornament.

As the English girl wears a ring when she is engaged to be married, so the Ibo girl wears necklaces in proportion to the number of lovers she has. The clothing is not profuse. The men are content with a straight piece of cloth, which falls from their waists to their ankles, while the cloth worn by the women reaches only half way to the knee. On occasions of festival the women, like their sex in other parts of the world, love to adorn themselves with gaudy ribbons of blue and orange, fastened in a bow to the right side of their waists. Both sexes paint their bodies on fête days, while when they are in mourning they mark white rings round their eyes.

LADIES OF ONITSHA, NIGERIA.

MAN IN THE COSTUME OF A WEST AFRICAN SECRET SOCIETY.

Great pains are taken in the painting of the figure. When a woman wants to look particularly smart she has a white mask painted over her own countenance, while a long white daub stretches down her spine. Although the skins of the men are as black as night, they always take the precaution, when setting out for warfare, to paint themselves black. When a girl reaches marriageable age she is painted red all over by the man to whom she is betrothed, which is a sign she must receive no more attentions from the other young men of the district. But after this coloring, and while she is being fattened for the marriage ceremony, she is invariably painted white all over when she goes out visiting her friends. The native seizes every opportunity to cover himself with paint of some sort. If he is sick he plasters himself with a thick green paint made from leaves.

The usual Ibo way of saluting a friend is to snap the fingers and shake the fist. The natives at Lokoja, however, salute one another by bobbing down to the ground and going through the pantomime of spreading dust over their faces, and taking it in turns to make weird noises. Thus when a man passes another he says "Ough, ough, ah, ah, ya yi oh ah." The other man meanwhile does the same, alternately with the first, both of them slowly and pleadingly and with rising intonation. Then suddenly one, changing, brings out a new word, which the other repeats, "Oh, oh, ah, oh, akoo, ah akoo," while the other comes in with "Aboo, aboo, aboo," and thus they pass each other, the plaintive "oughs" and "ahs" gradually getting fainter as the distance increases.

It is not surprising that among the people who inhabit the fetid swamps bordering the Niger and the gloomy shadows of the forests there should be innumerable secret societies. Most of these are chiefly for the maintenance of tribal order; some are associated with superstitious religious practices, while there are others which have terrorism and plunder as their main object. Youths are initiated into the lower grades of these tribual societies, advance in knowledge of the secrets as they reach manhood, and then attain high rank or office in proportion to their ability or their wealth.

Quite apart from these legitimate tribal societies are the brigand societies. Among the Ibibios there are societies known as "leopards" and "alligators." The "leopards" thieve and murder on land, while the "alligators" take the rivers and creeks as their province. The "leopard" society is so called because its members dress themselves in leopard skins; they go forth at night, make the woods echo with their yells, and if they come across any one murder him and steal his belongings. The native who hears their yell crouches in terror, for he knows that if caught his doom is sealed. The "alligator" societies have canoes made to resemble crocodiles; they lie in wait underneath the overhanging branches of a tree on the river, and when a native comes paddling down shoot out, upset his boat, kill him and seize his belongings. The difference between these murderous societies and the ordinary tribal societies is that, while the object of the former is the commission of crime, one of the chief functions of the latter is the detection and punishment of crime.

The most widespread of the secret societies in Nigeria is the Egbo society, which is partly religious and partly social in its functions, and may almost be compared to Freemasonry in England. The functions of the high officers are secrets which have not yet been discovered by European investigators. The societies meet in a secluded spot in the bush, and then set out in procession to different places, dancing in their fantastic costumes. They shout as they go along, but vary the tones of their voices from gruff bass to thin falsetto, and all the while shake wooden rattles.

Every member of Egbo is bound by oath, under penalty of death, to obey every command issued by the spirit under which the society professes to be organized. One of the members acts as priest, to represent the spirit. When his voice is heard every one in the town shuts up his house and remains within as long as the priest is near. When he goes forth he is preceded by runners, who carry whips of hippopotamus hide, and thrash everybody out of the way, while those who are not successful in getting out of sight take care to avert their faces. Of course the natives know that the orders are given by a human being, but will not confess, even to themselves, that the voice is any other than a spirit which must be obeyed. To disobey the laws enacted by the Egbo society is to risk death.

But there is an even more influential society than the Egbo in Southern Nigeria. It is called Idion, and consists only of men of rank and importance. No man who has not passed through all the grades of Egbo can be admitted. The laws of the Idion society demand that its members shall not steal, lie or do anything wrong.

These secret societies are valuable factors in the government of the country. When the British authorities can persuade the heads of them that a particular thing ought to be done or ought not to be done there is never any question on the part of the people to the order, but they obey instantly.

CAUSE FOR CONGRATULATION.

"Say," said the friend, "I'm in need of a little money."

"Bully for you, old man. I congratulate you," replied the other. "You're ten times better off than I am. I need a whole lot of it."—Detroit Free Press.