man.' Went into town to witness his funeral. This is the first native interment, all the ceremonies of which, I have witnessed. They were as follows:

Just before arriving at the town, I met three natives going for the coffin. This is a change in their custom. Formerly they put the body into a canoe, and left it on the surface of the ground. This is the third who has been buried in a coffin. As I entered the town, noises from drums, firing, mourning, and crying of the wives of the deceased were deafening. I proceeded to the house of the deceased, in front of which were assembled hundreds of women and children. Upon a rude bedstead lay the corpse in a state of almost perfect nudity. In his life-time he had been a warrior. At his head, on the left, stood fixed in the ground two spears, and a woman by them, holding up to the view of the multitude, leopard, monkey, and other skins, which he had taken in the chase, and some in war. On the right was his standard, the flag of which, composed of dark blue cotton cloth in the body, white cotton for the border, having a cross of red flannel in the centre, and a long tail of the same material, waved over his head. By his head sat his chief wife, with a bandana handkerchief, which she waved to and fro to keep off the flies, accompanying each stroke with a corresponding motion of the head and body, while she poured forth her lamentations loud and long. At the other extremity sat two other wives, holding each a foot in their hands, accompanied by contortions of their bodies, recounting the good qualities of the deceased, and mourning over their loss. Along the side were arranged the rest of his wives, all of whom (eight in the whole,) manifested by their uncouth movements and piteous exclamations, great sorrow at their bereavement. At a short distance on one side sat six or eight musicians, with instruments of hollow wood, and dried skins drawn tensely over one end; upon these as drums, they incessantly played, which, together with their war-horns, the mourning and crying of the women, the firing of guns, made up a scene unique beyond conception.

Amidst this confusion, approached a woman with an earthen vessel, containing a light coloured fluid. Dipping her hand into it, with the utmost solemnity, she spread it gradually over the face, and then the body. This, as it became dry, appeared like chalk, and gave to the corpse a hideous aspect. Next came two men, brothers of the deceased, with long strips of cloth, (calico, ginghams, &c.) which were spread successively over the body. This was to show the number and variety of his robes; in other words, that he was rich, consequently a great man. Then came his ornaments, such as strings of beads of various colours and sizes, strings of leopards' teeth, which in numbers, are a sign of wealth. These were laid upon and about his head, and his snuff-box by his side. Things being thus arranged, the body lay in state.

In another direction, in the centre of a little space or court-yard, around which are built the houses of the deceased, lay a heap of broken wooden bowls, crockery, &c. ready for the interment. These are considered money and ornaments; and the highest ambition of all who aspire to wealth and influence, is to have the inside of their houses hung with them in great numbers. Around this space, or little yard, were arranged six or eight grave, patriarchal looking men, having red woollen caps, long grey beards, and in their hands long and highly polished canes. These were the fathers of his wives. To their view and to that of the spectators, was opened an old leather trunk, filled with his treasures. From this was drawn, piece after piece, calicoes, checks and ginghams, in further display of the dead man's wealth.

Two or three hours were thus spent in exhibiting strips of calico, crockery, &c., to impress the surrounding multitude with a lofty idea of his rank and riches. The coffin was then brought forward, made in the usual manner with rough pine boards. The body was deposited therein, amidst the firing of guns, and terrific sounds of their drums and war-horns, and the wailings of hundreds of females. Upon and around the sides were packed the cloths before exhibited. The lid was then nailed down, and the coffin covered with blue cotton, striped over with white in figures of a diamond shape. This done, a bullock was produced and slaughtered by the head of the coffin; the blood caught in a

bowl was poured upon other cloths and crockery deposited in chests; a kid was likewise killed, and two fowls and rice prepared with palm oil, for the dead. At last came a moment of comparative silence; and soon after, by the confused movement of the multitude in an opposite direction, the chief of the tribe was perceived to be approaching to bid the final adieu to the remains. He wore a white silk hat and a piece of gingham around the waist; in this simple dress he proceeded to the head of the coffin, and leaning over it, resting upon his staff, spoke about five minutes to the corpse; no one could or would tell me what he said. Having finished, he retired to his house. Then stepped forward a man of striking appearance, and addressed the crowd with great energy. This it seems was the 'soldier-king, or commander of the military,' issuing the orders of the subsequent exercises. The soldiers were to proceed to the front of the agent's house upon the Cape, and there to fire a salute in honour of the dead. At this moment the coffin was placed upon the heads of two strong men, one at the foot and the other at the head, who immediately proceeded, at a rapid pace, through the winding streets of the town, till they came in front of the king's house. There they stopped and refused to go farther. Such movements are common in all funeral processions. The corpse at such times is unwilling to go, say they; the devil stand in the way. After much turning and pulling and shoving, by the bearers, this evil was overcome, when they proceeded with still greater rapidity, amidst the discharge of guns, to the agency house, as ordered by the 'soldier king.' Now commenced their salute, which continued an irregular and dangerous firing, or rather exploding of guns, for fifteen minutes. This done the procession moved on to the water's edge, in the same confused manner as before. The coffin was set down upon the beach, and further ceremonies performed, preparatory to a farewell from the wives of the deceased, and a passage over to a neighbouring island their place of interment. Now were renewed the horrible wailings of the women; some of whom threw themselves upon the coffin, others danced around it, tossing their arms in the air, while others again rolled over and over upon the sand, beating and tormenting themselves in various ways, betokening their grief. At last the time arrived for transporting the chests, containing the goods and articles to be buried with the body. These were carried first to the island, and placed upon the beach under the flying flag, which had been furled in crossing over. Then came the coffin, accompanied only by the number just necessary for performing the burial. The procession was again formed, and now advanced in greater order. The individuals bearing a quarter of the slaughtered bullock, the goat, fowls, and the rice, led the way. Then followed the standard bearer immediately preceding the body, and others carrying the chests of cloths and crockery. Winding their way between rocks and bushes, they proceeded slowly to the place of burial; the whole of the route being previously sprinkled with rice, by the way of appeasing and conciliating the favour of the devil. At last they stopped in about the centre of the island, where, digging a shallow grave, they deposited the body. Upon it they threw the crockery, &c. previously broken into a thousand pieces; and around the grave they strewed the cloths, calicoes, and ginghams, torn and mutilated in like manner. Upon a rock, and near the place, were left the meat and rice, the latter being scattered in every direction.

Thus closed the burial of a 'great man' of the Greybo tribe, in Africa. In witnessing this scene I was never more deeply impressed with their degradation. It seems to be nothing more than a vain desire of empty show, and affectation of wealth. But little or no sorrow, in my view, characterized their doings, and throughout the whole I could think of nothing else but 'devils and lost spirits.' When I thought of the usual consequences of death among this people, the charges of witchcraft, and the punishment of many innocent beings, by poison, sadness and sorrow 'gat hold upon me,' and I could but wonder at the delay of the 'wrath of God against such ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men.'

I have often tried to get at their real object in burying cloth with the dead, and in depositing meat and rice near them; but in general the only answer

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

VIII. Commissions and Reports

D. Reports of the Board of Managers
1835-47