

several unsuspecting towns and dragged hundreds of people to Abomey. When the lieutenant-governor of the French colony protested the king sent an insolent letter declaring that he recognized no treaty, that he had a right in Porto Novo because his fathers for ages had been the suzerains of that country and that he should continue his forays if he chose, because all the region occupied by the French belonged to him: and yet, as he knew very well, his father Geleve fourteen years ago gave up to France all rights to the port of Kotonu, and he himself had recognized the claims of France in Porto Novo. The young bully sent word to the French that if they touched one of his towns in the interior he would at once destroy Porto Novo and all the French posts. He was carried away with the idea of his power and the prowess of his fair-famed amazons, and undoubtedly believed that he could drive the French into the sea.

King Behanzin is a most extraordinary mixture of civilization and barbarity. The dominant note in his character is unlimited vanity. His younger years were spent in Paris, where he learned to read French. He subscribes regularly for several Parisian newspapers which are brought from the coast by special messengers. When he first saw a notice of himself and his capital in the *Figaro* he exhibited almost childish delight and danced around the paper containing the news, after which he caused his amazonian guard to be brought up and translated this information to them, at the same time giving orders for the preparation of another raid on the French settlement to show his contempt and fearlessness of the consequences.

In ordinary times the army of Dahomey is composed of 3,000 amazons and 6,000 to 7,000 men warriors. This is the well-drilled standing army, which is kept near the capital ready to take up arms at a moment's notice. In the present emergency the king has been compelled to call out all the available reserves, which gives him some twenty thousand amazons and men, all told. As the population of Dahomey is estimated at more than 200,000, any or all of which can be turned into soldiery by the king, it can be readily understood that the French will not have such a small affair on their hands as most persons imagine.

The most unique features of Dahomey are its large force of women warriors and its terrible system of religious sacrifices, in which hundreds of human victims are butchered at the capital every year. The sacrificial festivities take place in the autumn and spring and are called "customs." Last May the French report that not less than six hundred people were butchered in the market square at Abomey. A large shed called the "blood house" was erected, in which the prisoners are confined and exhibited prior to the butchery. They are bound to poles driven in the ground, and black and white goats are tied alternately to each victim, who is most fantastically arrayed in a peaked cap and short mantle bedecked with ribbons. A large patch of scarlet cloth is sewn on his shirt over the region of the heart. In addition to the human beings publicly sacrificed at the religious ceremonies, the amazons are allotted a very large number of victims, which they take to their quarters within the palace to torture and kill at their pleasure. No man is allowed to be

present to inquire too inquisitively into their horrible and peculiar rites.

Dahomey is the only country in the world which makes women a part of its military system. In the year 1729 the king, hard pressed by enemies, placed a large number of armed women among his soldiers. These women acted with such signal bravery and fought with such abandon and ferocity in the battles which brought victory to Dahomey that they were organized into a permanent regiment.

The flower of the fair sex is likely to get into the army as well as nearly all the strong-minded women, the viragos and the unfaithful wives. Now and then the king takes a consort from his woman regiments, but no other man may marry them. They are known in Dahomey by the names of "Our Mothers," "Tigers of War," and the "King Wives." They live in the king's palace and there perform their fetish mysteries. The amazon that sworn to perpetual celibacy and at the gate of their dwellings a curious fetish is hung, which is supposed to insure certain exposure to any amazon that has broken her vow of celibacy. The very fear of this fetish often causes an amazon who has gone astray to confess her sin. There are occasions, however, when violations of these vows are permitted and the moral code is completely relaxed. When the king sends his amazons through the country to enlist men for the army the fair recruiting agents are permitted to offer any inducement they please to tempt men into the ranks. The women are taught that they are not weak, but strong. Every womanly sentiment is suppressed and they become unsexed and unnaturally ferocious. The recruits are subjected to a very severe drill, which fortifies them to endurance of all kinds of hardships and physical pain. They are compelled to sleep outdoors in all kinds of weather, and are beaten, cuffed and kicked with amazing frequency, but everything is submitted to without murmur.

Col. Dods declares that in all his experience he has never met with such ferocious bravery as that exhibited by the amazons. He says that the amazons are by far the most formidable of King Behanzin's forces. They only fire at close range for a few minutes, then throw away their guns and uttering terrific screams and yells charge madly against the ranks of the enemy, using their large, curiously shaped knives with a fury that death alone will end. Even when shot down and trampled under foot they will fight to the last gasp, stabbing blindly at their assailants above, biting and tearing the legs of those standing over them. Before going into battle the amazons are given liberal quantities of rum, which gives them the frenzied fierceness and daring recklessness which always mark their attacks.

The uniform of the amazons is a short, sleeveless tunic of blue and white native cloth, with short half Turkish trousers and a curious headdress ornamented with horns. Old and young, ugly or handsome, they are all alike marvelous to see. As full of muscles as the male warriors, their attitude is as well disciplined and correct, and the leaders of each regiment are easily recognized by their rich attire and ferocious aspect. This is probably their last appearance on the field of battle, as France, when it annexes the Dahomey territory, will abolish this army of she-devils.

PROVO LETTER.

PROVO, Nov. 22.—"McAllister L. C. (the coming man)" in a small, cramped hand was on Sunday evening placed on the register of the Hotel Roberts by a man about thirty years of age, dressed in a neat business suit and wearing a light-gray overcoat. The man took his seat by the stove and commenced a conversation with several of the guests. A peculiar conversation it was. "Yes, I am Christ," he said, "and I can cure any disease you may have. I don't have to work for a living, any man I ask for anything must give it to me," etc. And in proof of his assertion, he persuaded one of the guests to give him a dollar. Subsequently, he went to the Baptist church, where services were being held, and interrupted the pastor in his text, accusing him of preaching false doctrine. He then went back to the hotel and retired for the night. During the whole of yesterday he paraded the street, proclaiming the doctrine that he had great supernatural power. He has been a resident of Nels Johnson's house in this city for about three years. It is said that he has become demented because the lady whom he adores has failed to reciprocate. At a late hour last night McAllister was locked up in jail.

A fifty dollar prize has been awarded to Hammond Simmons of Spanish Fork for raising the best five acres of sugar beets. The five acres yielded 106 tons, 850 pounds, for which he received \$482.83. Neil Gardner, of the same city, raised 22 tons, 710 pounds, on three-fourths of an acre.

Mrs. F. S. Richards and Mrs. Salisbury were in the city yesterday in attendance at the meeting of the Ladies' County World's Fair association. They expressed themselves as being well pleased with the progress being made in the county. After the meeting they were driven about the city for hours, visiting the various points of interest.

Mrs. Anna K. Smoot, president of the Primary association for Utah Stake, has suggested a novel design to represent the children of the Territory at the World's Fair. She suggests a glass and silver beehive, containing one grain of sand from each child in the Territory. "For," says Sister Smoot, "our children are as numerous as the sands of the seashore."

The meeting of the Utah county World's Fair association (gentlemen's) which was to have been held today, was adjourned until Friday next, at 2 o'clock, a quorum not being present.

At the session of the city council held last night, the following items of business were transacted:

T. O. Jones asked that he be permitted to operate a refreshment stand on the National Bank corner, property owners consenting. Referred to the committee on streets and alleys.

Bids were received for feeding city prisoners, and the contract was awarded to Thomas Fowler at 162-3 cents per meal.

The mayor was added to the committee on revision of ordinances.

The committee on fire department were authorized to have a fire alarm box placed in the western part of the city, the telephone company having