

filled with the spirit of obedience, and that their understandings would be so awakened that they would begin to comprehend the object God had in view in restoring the everlasting gospel to the earth. It has had that effect; but it has been slowly manifested; it has dawned upon us ray by ray, gradually opening our minds to the comprehension of the great work the Lord has established on the earth; and to-day, after years of experience, the church of Christ has barely commenced to comprehend the great work God had in view in establishing His kingdom on the earth. But we are learning it now more rapidly than we have in past years. The knowledge is being brought home to us to a greater extent, because we are in a position where we can be better taught these things than before. We are beginning to understand that there is something, besides that which concerns our spiritual welfare, needed for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God on the earth; we begin to understand that the Lord wishes us to be a people wise in the arts and sciences, full of understanding and wisdom in the building up of cities, in the erection of beautiful habitations and magnificent temples, and in the exhumation of minerals from the bowels of the earth, and their proper application for the beautifying of the cities of Zion and the convenience of God's people. We begin to understand that the gospel has been revealed to show unto us the object of our existence, that it affects every action of our lives from birth to the grave, and that we cannot do anything but what is comprehended in the gospel. We hope our children will learn this lesson better than we have, and to a greater perfection than we have learned it. As I have said, it is necessary in the first place that we should have confidence in the servants of God—in the affairs that pertain unto our eternal salvation, and we would suppose we might trust them with the direction of our temporal affairs, if, indeed, temporal and spiritual can be divided, which really cannot be done.

There is one point we should be guarded against, and the brethren have endeavored to impress it upon our minds, that is, in our seeking to develop the resources of the earth and build up cities and temples and the various works that are incumbent on us, that we should not forget to keep our minds right before the Lord, that we should have his Holy Spirit abiding within us. When the cares of every day life increase upon us, in the business of forming settlements, pioneering and performing our labors from day to day, we are too apt to forget that we should constantly seek to God with the same fervor and diligence for His aid as we do for spiritual blessings. I find that I have to be careful while engaged in business, for I know that the tendency of my mind is to devote all my thoughts and all my time and attention to the business that is in hand—that happens to occupy my attention at the time. This is the tendency of people generally, and we have to guard against it, and for which we have to be reproved, that we may not yield to it to so great an extent as to drive the Spirit of God from us. There is no necessity for this. If we grieve the Spirit of God when we are performing our temporal duties, it is because we allow the one idea to absorb our attention too much. While we are engaged in these duties we should have the Spirit of God resting upon us, as if we were engaged in preaching the gospel.

It is recorded in the Book of Mormon that when the Nephites were oppressed by the Lamanites, who would not suffer them to pray orally unto God, they prayed in their hearts, while engaged in their labors, for the blessing of God to be granted unto them, for His deliverance to be extended to them, and that their enemies might not have power to hold them in bondage; and the word of the Lord came to them, and whispered peace, and told them that the day of their deliverance was nigh at hand, the day in which He would emancipate them from the thralldom of their enemies. This is a good example for us to follow. It is possible for us to bring ourselves into such a condition that we can pray unto God in our hearts, no matter what labor we are performing. We are exhorted to pray constantly unto Him, and it is possible for us to concentrate our thoughts on the things of God while we are doing our labor, and our thanksgivings can ascend silently unto God, and they are not unheard by Him, and His blessing can descend upon us, and His joy can fill our hearts, and we can become the happiest and the most blessed people upon all the face of the earth. I know it requires a struggle to concentrate our thoughts on the things of the kingdom of God, while

we are engaged in business; but this is one of the things which we have to train ourselves to and to overcome.

I am pleased to see our people developing the resources of the earth as they are. It is gratifying to see them enjoying the blessings of the earth, to see them wearing clothing of home manufactory, and to see their houses carpeted with home-made carpets. To see the sisters wearing beautiful dresses, spun with their own hands, is more pretty to my mind than brocade silk or satin or fine cloth imported from foreign parts. In these things I can see the independence of our people being gradually secured.

I will bring my remarks to a close, praying God to bless you, my brethren and sisters, and those who may speak unto us, and to fill them with His holy spirit, and also us who listen to their sayings, that our hearts may rejoice together with exceeding great joy before Him, which is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ: Amen.

CAPT. BURTON ON THE KINGDOM OF DAHOMEY.

At the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held on the 16th of September last at Bath, Capt. R. F. Burton read a paper on the Ethnology of Dahomey, of which the following is a pretty full report:

In the years 1863 and 1864 I twice visited Dahomey, a country the savage and somewhat peculiar customs of which have made for it a name in Europe. My first flying trip lasted one month—from May 18th to June 17th. It extended only to Kana, a ruined town where the King Villagiatara was in country quarters. The second visit was prolonged to nearly three months, between December 8, 1863, and February 29, 1864, and its length enabled me to learn a modicum of the Ffon, or national language. I am induced to offer the following remarks in the belief that my experience will rectify many popular fancies.

Few places in Africa have been more copiously written of than Dahomey, and yet so well-informed a journal as the *Saturday Review* (July 4, 1863,) gravely tells its readers that "the King of Dahomey has lately been indulging in a sacrifice of 2,000 human beings, simply in deference to a national prejudice, and to keep up the good old customs of the country." It will presently appear how the reviewer misunderstood the matter.

The first of the word Dahomey—not Daho'me. The existence of this once great military empire was first made known to Europe by a letter dated Aboney, November 27th, 1724, addressed to Mr. B. Lamb or Lambe, agent for the English African Company, to Mr. Tucker, the Commandant of the English Fort Whydah. In it he describes, as an eyewitness, the dreadful slaughter of the people of Allada, an inland and independent city, by the conquering King Agaja Dosu of Dahomey, "when there was no stirring, for bodies without heads; and had it rained blood it could not have been thicker on the ground." Yet the Kings of the rival settlements were Scotch cousins after the following fashion: About 1620, an old and wealthy chief of Allada Proper died, and left his dominions to his three sons. These agreed that the eldest should reign in his father's stead, which he did in peace and prosperity, under the name of Allada Khosa, or King of Allada. "Do," the youngest, or some say the second, invaded the upper waters of our charts, and founded "Hwebona," which we have since known as Little Adrah, or Porto Novo. Hence the Dahoman King still calls him of Hwebona brother, although now under French protection.

The little province of Ukwaur belonged to a chief named Aurse, who allowed the ambitious stranger to settle there. "Dalto," by degrees becoming powerful, encroached upon a neighboring kingdom, Dauh, meaning the shade in the rainbow. As his followers greatly increased, and he was even seeking more ground from Dauh, the latter exclaimed, in truth, "Son, thou wilt build upon my stomach." Dauh bided his time, slew the king, and erected upon his corpse the old palace of Dahom, meaning the Dauh's stomach. Hereupon the Ffons changed their name to Dahomans, and thus, about 1625, arose the once great military empire familiar to the ears of Europe. The extent and population of Dahomey has been grossly exaggerated. Its superficial area cannot be more than 4,000 square miles. Commissioner Forbes puts its population down at 200,000; M. Wallon, 900,000. Commodore Wilmot, 180,000. It would reduce it to 150,000, of whom,

perhaps, four-fifths are women and children. The population is not a third of what the country could support. The annual withdrawal of both sexes from industry to slave hunting, and the customs of the capital, the lack of reproduction in Amazons, and the losses by disease, have made the country in parts a desert. So contemptible is the African Power which is, perhaps, the best known throughout Europe. Capt. W. S. Cumming is the first Englishman that visited a Dahoman monarch. Since his day (1726) the custom has been regularly kept up.

The grand customs take place only after the death of a king. They celebrate the annual rites in splendor and in bloodshed. Travelers give terrible accounts of the slaughter which accompanies the rites. Dazell, (1791) said they lasted three months, and were marked almost every day with human blood. Captain Taylor and Mr. Hogg, Governor of Appalonia, were present, and both affirm that not less than 500 men, women and children were sacrificed. The last grand customs were performed in November, 1860, by the present sovereign, in honor of the manes of his father. The horrors of the rite were exaggerated with ridiculous adjuncts. It was reported that the King floated a canoe and paddled himself in a tank full of human blood. The report arose from the custom of collecting the gore of the victims in pits about 2ft. deep and 4ft. diameter. The reports of Wesleyan missionaries show that very little change has taken place in regard to the number of victims. The yearly customs form continuations of the grand custom, and periodically supply a departed monarch with fresh attendants in a shadowy world. The Dahomians declare that this world is man's plantation, and the next his home. They, of course, own no future state of rewards and punishments.

The number of victims has been greatly swollen by report. Mr. James, at the beginning of the present century, found the *maximum* of three several years to be 65. Commissioner Forbes owns that, in the late years of the last King's reign, not more than 36 heads fell. During my second visit 40 men were put to death. I presume that an equal number of women were sent to the next world, but if so the executions took place within the palace. The men were all criminals and war captives. No innocent Dahoman is ever killed on these occasions, and the King imprisons those accused of capital offences. He is so particular about the lives of his subjects, that throughout the empire coroners' inquests must follow every death, and certify that it has not been violent. The time of execution is the hour of darkness. The public stays within doors under pain of death. The King personally superintends the executions. Some are clubbed and others are beheaded by the Mingham, or Premier. The second Minister also takes his part in the tragedy. After death the bodies are exposed in the market place for a few days, after which they are thrown into the city ditch.

It is not, however, at the customs that the great loss of life takes place. As in the city of Great Benin and at Thomasi, the capital of Ashanti, almost every day witnesses some deed of blood. Whatever action, however trivial, is performed by the King, it must be reported to his sire. A victim, almost always a war captive, is chosen, the message is delivered to him, an intoxicating draught of rum follows it, and he is despatched in the best of humors. I heard of only one case where the victim objected to lose his life; but those who were prepared for the customs which I witnessed, sat looking at the various ceremonies, beating time to the music and eyeing all my movements. At my request the King pardoned about half of them, but no man thanked me. There are two ethnological particulars in Dahomey which require notice—the corporeal duality of the King and the precedence of women over men. The monarch is double, two kings in one. The King has two courts, masculine and feminine, and the high officers of both courts correspond in name and dignity.

Of the Amazons about two-thirds are said to be maidens—a peculiar body in Africa, the remaining third having been married. The fighting women are not *de facto* married to the King, but it may take place at his discretion. The Amazons affect male attire, especially when in uniform. There is nothing savage or terrible in their appearance. When young they are compelled to dance, to take violent exercise, which renders them somewhat lean. As they advance in years they grow in weight, and many of them are subjects for the treatment of Mr. Banting. The soldiers are not

divided into regiments. They are, however, three distinct bodies. The King generally pays distinguished strangers the compliment of placing them in command. I had this honor, but was not entitled even to inspect my corps. In 1863 I saw all their women troops marching on service out of Kana, and a careful computation gave a grand total of 2,038; but of these one-third or one-half were unarmed or half-armed. On Tuesday, March 15, 1864, the present King carried out his favorite project—an attack upon Abepona, where his father had left name and fame. The attempt was contemptible in the extreme, and resulted in a loss of 1,000 killed and about 2,000 captured. Thus Dahomey yearly loses prestige.

THE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH TO RUSSIA.

Facilities for inter-communication between civilized countries are demanded by the enlightened progress of the age, but so stupendous an enterprise as that of establishing an overland line to Russia in the midst of a gigantic civil war, is one of the most remarkable thoughts conceivable.

We have already stated that the Russian Government has given permission to M. Collins, an American citizen, to construct a telegraph line from Russia to Behring's Straits, and that the British Government has granted the right of way through British Columbia, to connect it with the existing United States lines, thus uniting the two continents, apart from the submarine cable across the Atlantic. The last impediments to this great project have finally been overcome, and Mr. Collins, conjointly with the Western Union Telegraph Company, has fitted out an expedition under the immediate command of Captain Charles S. Bulkely, U. S. A., for Oregon, the coast of Russian America, and the country beyond Behring's Straits, to survey the route, and make other needful arrangements to put the whole extent of line under contract during the ensuing year. It is understood that the projectors of the enterprise are sanguine that the line will be in successful operation between New York, San Francisco and London by the middle of 1866. Mr. Hiram Sibley, President of the Western Union, and of the Russian Companies, sailed in company with Mr. Collins, the enterprising projector of the Russian American telegraph line, in the Scotia, on the 21st inst., for Liverpool and St. Petersburg, with a view to complete the arrangement already initiated for expediting the early completion of the line. Four ships have been chartered and freighted with the telegraphic wire, implements, provisions, tents, ect., for San Francisco, and the Government of the United States has detailed a man-of-war for the purpose of helping the Company. Four exploring parties will be left respectively at New Westminster, Frazer River, Point Desolation, on the line between British and Russian America, and at Cook's Inlet. These parties are to explore the coast, if possible obtain all the timber wanted, and prepare the ground for next spring's work. The capital of ten millions of dollars for this trans-continental line has been subscribed in the United States, and the Russian Government builds on its own account the line from Petersburg to Nicolaef, on the Amoor. The line has already reached Chita, a town situated at the confluence of the Shilka and Erion, the beginning of the Amoor.—[N. Y. Shipping List.

DRUNKEN OFFICERS.—A private letter from a Trinitarian in Sheridan's command says that quite a number of general officers were brutally drunk when the fight of Oct. 19th commenced, having taken advantage of Sheridan's absence to get on a spree. All the confusion in the early part of the engagement grew out of this cause.—[Trinity Journal.

A BEAUTIFUL LIGHT.—An ingenious Englishman has been permitted to try some experiments at the gas-works at Malines, the most successful of which was the sudden appearance throughout the city of a beautiful clear red light, which threw around rays of the most brilliant description. It is said that by the addition to the gasometer of some chemical salts, an increase of light and changes of color can be instantaneously produced.

—Many regard themselves as moral, disinterested, truthful and gentle, merely because they inexorably insist that others shall be so.

—Bread is the staff of life, and liquor the stilts—the former sustaining a man, and the latter elevating him for a fall.