

passion for war and blood abhors every feeling, and this passion, fed by their national customs, makes them a band of brutal executioners.

**Description of Abomey, the capital city.**—Mr. Forbes, visited Abomey along with Mr. Duncan, in October 1849, and again along with Mr. Bercroft, in 1850, and rendered the following interesting account. "Abomey, 70,000 inhabitants, is a city of about eight miles in circumference, surrounded by a ditch about five feet deep, filled with the prickly acacia, its only defence. It is entered by six gates, which are simply clay walls crossing the road, with two apertures, one reserved for the king, the other a thoroughfare for his subjects. In each aperture are two human skulls; and on the inside a pile of skulls, human, and of all beasts of the field, even to the elephant's. In the centre of the city are the palaces of Dange-lah-cordah and Agrim-goum, adjoining, on the north stands the original palace of Dahomey. All the houses are low and thatched, and only one in the palace of Dange-lah-cordah, and one in that of Comassce, can boast of two stories." The wall which surrounds the former of these palaces, was, 1785, surmounted by thousands of human skulls, the heads of captives taken; when Badagry was subdued. The Rev. T. B. Freeman, of the Wesleyan Mission, at Cape Coast Castle, saw them when he visited Abomey in 1839. In the centre of the wall were the palaces, as usual. "The walls of the palace of Dange-lah-cordah are ornamented, at a distance of twenty feet, with human skulls, many of which glistenly ornaments time has decayed and the wind blown down. Happy ones! they are not replaced. But, in the account of his second visit, relating to this wall of skulls, and to the hope expressed that the practice of exposing the human skull was to be discontinued, he says, "Such is by no means the case; in the centre of the square stands a small octagonal building, which was now adorned with the skulls of the palaces, and furnished the heads of some of the victims of the dreadful tragedy of Oheadon," a town destroyed in a slave hunt. "Thus there are skulls on the gates, skulls on the palace walls, skulls on the pavilions in the palace square, and, in fact, skulls are the common and appropriate ornaments of this slave-hunting people, whom the advance of white men, trading in blood, has degraded and demoralized.

**The Ikohanghekehé or Display of the King's Wealth.**—This remarkable ceremony, intended to impress the minds of the people with an idea of the power and grandeur of the king, took place on 30th May. There was much show and pomp; but the revealing features of the scene were, as usual, ghastly and disgusting. "When we arrived in the public square," says Mr. Forbes, "at the foot of the ladder leading to the palaver-house, on each side were three human heads recently decapitated, the blood still oozing; on the threshold of the entrance-gate was a pool of blood from six human sacrifices, over which we had to step. In the centre of the courtyard stood a crimson tent or pavilion forty feet high, ornamented with emblems of baskets of corn, and other objects in a smaller and more barbarous and disgusting. On the top was the figure of a Dahomean standard-bearer (or half-bearer, as they are called, having half their head shaved) bearing a standard, having for a device a skull in a calabash, standing on other three skulls. About the yard were many flags of all colours, some bearing, as their devices, men cutting off others heads, and others trying prisoners." All the royal, civil, and military classes of the kingdom were present in gay array. The king's wealth in a smaller way to the market-place and back again on the heads of between six and seven thousand persons walking in procession. Every article which the king possessed was orientally displayed, down even to those domestic utensils which civilized persons studiously conceal. Mr. Forbes gives a catalogue of the articles shown. We select the following as illustrating the character of the people:—"Four men, each carrying on his head a man tied hand and foot, and lashed in a wooden can, intended for to-morrow's sacrifice; eight men carrying on their heads, in a similar manner; one man carrying an alligator, lashed in a basket for sacrifice; one man carrying a cat for sacrifice; three men each carrying a human skull; three men carrying the royal stool of state, ornamented with human skulls; twenty men carrying the royal drums, one ornamented with twenty human skulls; twelve men carrying a huge tub, ornamented with carved men's heads; six men carrying a drum, ornamented with twenty human skulls; twenty women carrying drums ornamented with twenty-four skulls; twelve women carrying drums ornamented with twenty skulls; twelve men carrying three large calabashes full of the skulls of kings, &c., killed in war; six women carrying skulls in calabashes; forty amazons armed with maces; guarding eight skulls-ornamented banners; sixty amazons, banners, skulls &c., surrounding the lady holding the title of the royal mother; sixty amazons, banners, skulls, &c., surrounding the royal grandmother; ten women carrying human skulls; two amazons carrying each a large knife mounted on a human skull; five amazons carrying each a shield ornamented with a human skull; twelve men carrying three large banners, the pole surmounted with a human skull. These things were mixed up in the procession with cowries, tables, jugs, sticks, washing stands, and all sort of things. But the following specimen of royal personal female ornament is still more dreadful:—"One umbrella that shaded a noble princess was decorated with 148 jaw-bones; and many of these ladies, brides being attended by slaves carrying swords and shields bearing these ghastly ornaments, carried at their girdles each a polished skull drinking cup; these latter groups did not leave the yard, but took up their position under trees and open space such as dance at times." "Ceremonies of this day concluded with market dances, sword dances, and various other sorts of dances, in which the king took a part, and was of course, greatly applauded. Mr. Forbes, who has a low idea of the king's wealth, says,

"There was much to disgust the white man in the number of human skulls and jaw bones displayed;" but he was particularly shocked with the sight of the "twelve human victims tied in small baskets, dressed in clean white dresses, with a high red cap, carried on the heads of their fellow men; these were Attahpahs, a portion of a people lately subdued. The *Ekhononshahmeh* or *Throwing of the Bones*—The king, on the great day in Dahomey. A large platform is erected in a public square, on which are piled cowries, cloth, kags of rum, and tubs of tobacco. The officers and soldiers are collected in front, and for hours a shower of these things is kept up, and all scramble for them. "This is the only pay that they receive. It was an extraordinary scene. "The naked multitude emitted an effluvia only to be compared to the fetid atmosphere of a slave-ship; and as the masses looked, there arose a vapour like the miasma of a swamp, as they were perfectly lashed with perspiration. Besides throwing gifts to the soldiers, his majesty was all studies and liberality in his donations to the ministers and a number of others; but to no one was any large sum given. The crowd can have no idea of the sum scrambled for; all they know is, that a continuous shower is kept up for seven hours, and they consider it must be immense. Even if a man gets none, he is contented to know that he has been unfortunate; and should he occasion his ill-luck, he would not be believed, each supposing the other to be dignifying the real quantity he has lost part.

**The Human Sacrifices thrown to the Mob.**—The last part of the ceremonies of this day consisted in throwing the human victims to the soldiers. Fourteen human beings were brought on the platform carried, as before noticed, on men's heads. "These sturdy men," says Mr. Forbes, "met the gaze of their persecutors with a firmness perfectly astonishing. Not a single sigh was breathed. In all my life I never saw such coolness so near death." Messrs. Forbes and Bercroft, who were present, were deeply excited, having succeeded in buying off three of the victims for a hundred dollars each, declined witnessing the horrid tragedy that was to follow. The king insisted on their viewing the place of the sacrifice. They looked over the side of the platform. "Immediately under the royal stand, within the brake of acacia bushes, stood seven or eight lull ruffians, some armed with clubs, others with scimitars, grinning horribly. As we approached, the mob yelled fearfully, and called upon the king in a loud tone, which they were hoarse."

The English withdrew to their seats, and as they did so, "a fearful yell rent the air. The victims were held high above the heads of their bearers, and the naked ruffians thus acknowledged the munificence of their prince. Silence again ruled, and the king made a speech, stating that of his prisoners he gave a portion to his soldiers, as his father and grandfather had done before. These were Attahpahs. Having called their names, the one nearest was directed to his clothes, the foot of the king, the foot of the parmpet, when the king gave the upper part an impetus, and the victim fell at once into the pit beneath. A fall of upwards of twelve feet might have stunned him, and before sense could return, the head was cut off and the body thrown to the mob, who, now armed with clubs and branches, brutally mutilated and dragged it to a distant pit, where it was left as food for the beasts and birds of prey. After the third victim had thus been sacrificed, the king retired, and the chiefs and slave-dealers completed the deed, which the monarch blessed to finish."

This is the town to which there is a reference in the intelligence from Old Calabar, given in this number, and which Mr. Bercroft says has at least 120,000 inhabitants, with three Christian churches. Tidings have lately reached this country, that in the beginning of March, Gezo attacked this town with a large army, and was repulsed with severe loss. Twelve hundred, a large proportion of whom were amazons, were left before the walls, and the retreating army pursued with great slaughter for many miles. It is to be hoped that this defeat will break the power of this slave-hunting king, and put a stop to his exterminating progress.

We may in a future number refer more particularly to the religion of Dahomey; and in the meantime, we ask those who have pursued these harrowing details, to observe what the slave-trade has made a people naturally gentle and inoffensive, and to consider the urgent claims which such a nation has upon the church of Christ. It is the Gospel alone that can put an effectual end to those horrors, and that Gospel it is in the power of British churches to give to Africa. The English deputies ransomed three men from death—all thanks to them for doing so; and, oh, it would be an enterprise worthy of any church to extinguish for ever these scenes of blood, and to make the wretched inhabitants of Dahomey exchange the habit of slave-hunters, for the gentle, happy, and beneficent service of the Prince of Peace. —*Us. Presb. Miss. Recor.*

#### AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION.

The morning of the fourth day of the present session of this body, met at Cleveland in August, was devoted to reports on the educational affairs of each state represented. We take the report of the *Cleveland Herald*: "Dr. A. D. Lord, of Ohio, remarked that the educational history of his state may be said to commence with its settlement. A plan was taken for organizing a college in early in 1813, and from that time forward, colleges had been chartered and had been organized from time to time, as the necessities of the country required.

The common school system commenced with the year 1845, but the