

"I have been guided by a vanished hand."

The old lady smiled.

"We are all guided," she said. "But sometimes the guidance is more plainly manifested than usual, or it may be that our perceptions are quickened. You will be disappointed when I tell you that I don't know where Jamie is now. However, you must keep up your heart, and not be discouraged."

"I will not be discouraged," Elsie answered resolutely. "Did Mrs. Penn take the boy away with her?"

"She did. She went away more than a year ago, and she has not fulfilled her promise of writing to me. If I had not

been old and rheumatic I would have kept the little fellow myself."

"I wish you had kept him," Elsie said earnestly. "But until he is safe in my own keeping I shall not rest."

"That was spoken like Miss Neale," the old lady remarked. "You are prettier than she was; I am an old woman, and you won't mind my plain-speaking. She was not as tall as you are, and her eyes were grey instead of brown as yours are; but she had your black lashes and eyebrows. She always wore a very peaceful look, a look that comes to some people after great suffering. Your face is more eager than hers."

"Mrs. Beaton," said Elsie, bending forward entreatingly, "I want to hear Meta's story from one who knew her. She has said very little about herself in her manuscript. Won't you begin at once, and tell me all that you know?"

"Yes, my dear, I will tell you," Mrs. Beaton replied. "I have missed her very much. She *used to come* and talk to me when she had a little time to spare. Hers was a busy life, and it was a life lived for others. She was always going about among the burden-bearers, and trying to lighten the burdens. That was how it was that she met Mr. Waring."

(To be continued.)

## WOMEN SOLDIERS.

"The maid with helmet head,  
Like a war goddess, fair and terrible."



HIS scarcely sounds like a description of the military women we have at present in our midst, the wonderful body-guard of King

Bedazin of Dahomey; but in times past it has been a truthful portrait of some heroines of the battle-field,

who have made in some instances chapters in the romance of history, and who may justly claim a place in the niches devoted to military glories in the temple of fame.

If we go back to the times of the Crusades we find frequent references made to the parts women played in these holy wars. Heroines often appeared in the *mêlée*, and disputed the prize of strength and courage with the bravest of the Saracens.

Omâd of Ispahan speaks of the Christian heroines who mingled in the fight. He adds that the young women fought, and the old women animated them by their cries.

Of really British origin we have not a great many Amazons. True, we had our Boadicea, whose courage in leading the Iceni against the legions of Suetonius deserved better fortune. We had Alfred's daughter, Athelfleda, who directed the slaughter of the Danes in the streets of Derby, and even Queen Elizabeth herself, whose Amazonian tendencies were prodigious. In her reign the bellicose barons were almost constantly at war, and they used to leave their liege ladies at home to fight any enemies who might choose this time to make a raid upon the castle.

The Dudleys of Northampton are said to owe their crest, a helmeted female with bare bosom and dishevelled hair, to an Amazon named Agnes Hotot, who fought a neighbour on behalf of her sick father about some disputed land, and the neighbour, it appears, got the worst of it.

Then there is Mary Ambree, or English Moll, who distinguished herself in the attempt to recover Ghent from the Prince of Parma in 1584. She was at the head of 1000 men, and sustained an equal combat with 3000 Spaniards for seven hours. When compelled to leave off she went into a castle and defied the enemy, challenging any three Spaniards to try their

pro prowess against her single arm, and when summoned to surrender she said "No."

"No knight, sir, of England or captain, you see,  
But a poor simple lass called Mary Ambree."

Another notable example is Hannah Snell, or James Gray, the Worcester hosier's daughter, who had such an extraordinary career: first enlisting in Captain Miller's company of Guise's regiment at Coventry, and finally becoming the possessor of a public-house at Wapping.

Christian Kavanagh or Welsh fought in the war of the Spanish Succession, and received innumerable wounds and a pension from Queen Anne. She married a soldier named Davis at Chelsea, and at her death she was buried with full military honours in the burial-ground of the soldier's hospital.

Mrs. Christian Davis, the trooper of the Scots Greys, commonly called "Mother Ross," was a hardy Irish Amazon who led a strange and decidedly romantic career, and was wounded at Ramilies, at which battle the Greys took sixteen or seventeen colours and standards. These are only a few examples of female military courage picked out at random, but there are hundreds of instances which might, if space permitted, be cited.

There were also naval Amazons who did good service as able seamwomen, such as Ann Mills, who served as a seaman on the Maidstone frigate, and on board the *Queen Charlotte* an African woman served for eleven years, receiving frequent commendation for her excellent work. Then there was Rebecca Ann Johnstone, who fought and died on board one of Nelson's ships.

Women played no inconsiderable part in the American Revolution. They helped to write some of the truly animating, patriotic songs which served to cheer and encourage the soldiers of both armies; they housed and sheltered those who were in danger; they carried despatches which, entrusted to other hands, would never have reached their destination, and some few of them fought themselves. Of these few perhaps the best known were Katherine Steel, or "Katey of the Tosh," as she was wont to be called, Jane Gaston, Mrs. Pickens, the general's wife, Mary Gould, Mrs. Wright, brave Deborah Samson, who served in the army as Robert Shirliffe, and was at the storming of York Town, Nancy Hart, "the honey of a patriot, the devil of a wife," who never by any chance looked in a mirror, so ugly was she with her cross eyes and her broad angular mouth.

There are others whose names are revered

in many parts of the States as brave, fearless mothers, wives and sisters, who forgot everything but their family and their country's honour in those terrible days when the States were deluged with blood, when homes were confiscated, and broken hearts and limbs the most common of possessions.

In speaking of famous military women we naturally turn to France, which has given birth to more courageous sword-women than any other country. From the time of the invasion of Gaul by Julius Cæsar, to the days of the First Empire, and even later, France can reckon to herself a whole series of heroines gathered from all ranks, from the throne to the most obscure women of the country. Lamartine says of these Amazons that all nations have somewhere in their annals a few miracles of patriotism, of which a woman is the instrument in the hands of God. When all is lost and seemingly hopeless in a national cause, still one must not give up hope if there remains one corner of resistance in a woman's heart.

The subject of military women is one which has been deemed worthy of all honour in France, and in addition to the many mentions of such heroines in the works of some of the greatest authors and poets, there is a delightful volume on *Les Femmes Militaires de la France*, by Alfred Traucleau and Jules Ladimir, which gives details of the life and work of every heroine who has won fame and glory amongst the ranks of the French Army.

The first we learn of the military heroines of France is of Saint Geneviève (451), Frédégonde, Hermangarde, Emma, and those remarkable women of the second crusade, known as "Les Dames aux Bottes d'or et ses compagnes," Blanche of Castille, Jeanne de Montfort, Jeanne de Blois, and the beautiful Jeanne de Belleville, whose husband's death was due to the treachery of the Lord Salisbury of the day (1343.)

In the next epoch we have the women of Orleans, and amongst them the military gem of many stars of female military glory, the intrepid Joan of Arc. Her exploits are too well known to need recapitulation here, so we will pass on to the ladies of Compiègne, who did so much towards the successful defence of that city on the Oise, the twelve brave *chevalières* of Angevines with Marguerite de Bressieux-Anjou at their head; Marguerite d'Anjou, another woman warrior whose deeds are familiar as household words to English readers, La Dame de Brétigny, Jeanne Hachette, and Catherine de Lire. The third epoch introduces us to many interesting women, including Rénée de Balagny, La

Chevalière d'Eon, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Anne de Vaux, all those heroines which French chroniclers name "Les dames de la Rochelle," "Les dames de Lille," and the dragon—Geneviève Premoy.

Finally there are the heroines of the eighteenth century, the Chevalière d'Eon de Beaumont, whose manifold capacities were tested as lawyer, ambassador, writer, courtier and warrior. Her parents ardently desired a son, and when Charlotte was born they did not reveal her sex, but brought her up as a boy, giving her a boy's education. Her career was such an extraordinary one, her military achievements so great, that I can only recommend those who are not acquainted with the facts to read them for themselves. Madame Drucourt, who so bravely withstood the siege of Louisburg in New England (1758), when eighteen thousand English, twenty-three line-of-battle-ships, and eighteen frigates stormed the walls of that city. She was the wife of the governor of Louisburg, and throughout the siege, day and night, she was to be found on the ramparts, her purse in hand, encouraging the soldiers with money, sometimes loading and firing the guns herself, and in every way sharing the perils and the glory of her husband. After Madame Drucourt we must mention the beautiful Corsican patriot, Princess Marie Laetitia Ramolino Bonaparte, mother of the first Napoleon, whose prowess and endurance during the civil wars of her own country would have rendered her famous, apart from the fact of her being the mother of one of the greatest of France's heroes. We must not omit a mention of the Amazons of the French Revolution. These were a battalion of young ladies who, under the name of Amazons, took up arms in 1789, after the taking of the Bastille. They wore a specially designed soldier's dress, they did all a soldier's work, and amongst the outlying districts of France they rendered yeoman service by the way they went about firing the enthusiasm and the love of liberty of the peasantry. These Amazons were never guilty of any excess, they lived pure if strangely unquiet lives, and when the revolutionary movement degenerated into what it did, they disappeared from the military arena, finding their way back to the homes they had left to take up their country's cause, and leaving their place to those shameful women, who, under the name of *Tricoteuses*, dishonoured France and their own sex. From 1789 to 1829, there are two or three dozen military women whose exploits made France ring with their praises, not forgetting brave Citoyenne Théroigne, general of the army, who was publicly whipped on the terrace of

the Tuilleries May 31st, 1793, and Louise Andu, or La Reine Des Halles; there were also Jeanne Lacombe, the comedian who forsook the dramatic for the military arena; Madame de Champrond, the young sisters Félicité and Théophile Fernig, Rose Barreau, the grenadier who was nicknamed "la liberté," and who received in 1805 a military pension from Napoleon I.; Angélique Duchemin, decorated in August 1851, with the Legion of Honour, and who lived at the Invalides until 1860, where she died at the age of 88; Marie Schellinck, one of Napoleon's best officers under the Italian campaign; Theresa Figueur, or as she was known in the regiment "Sans Gêne," who had seen four horses die under her, and many others. In Hungarian history the most popular figure is that of Zrimyi Ilona, a female warrior of some merit. She defended the Fort of Munkacs for upwards of three years against the German troops, with on various occasions gave up the bombardment.

I would scarcely be doing justice to the subject of warrior women if mention were not made of those famous creatures, who, according to Orellana, who discovered it, gave the name to the majestic stream which runs through the centre of South America from the Andes of Peru to the Atlantic. The Amazons of South America were at the commencement of the sixteenth century one of the vexed questions of the day in Spain. Every traveller told of their existence, many of futile efforts to trace them, whilst the historians always included some mention of them in their accounts of the country. On the other hand, there were numbers of people who refused to believe in there being such tribes. Humboldt appears to have testified to the existence of tribes of women who lived independent of men. His solution of the matter was that he thought it possible that some women in all parts of America got tired of enduring the state of slavery men imposed upon them, and they resolved to migrate to some part where they might hope to live unmolested, their desire to retain their newly-achieved independence making them into warriors. Thus it seems that the first idea amongst bellicose women was to separate themselves from men; but later experience of them points to a desire to join the ranks of the sterner sex, to adopt their apparel and accoutrements, and in fact to throw off as much as possible the elements of femininities.

In the accounts of Columbus's voyages, there is frequent mention of tribes of women living independently of men in the West Indies. No doubt whatever can be entertained

of the existence of the female warriors of Dahomey. Have we not seen them at their martial drill and dances, and heard them singing their strange war-songs and triumph-hymns, one of which runs thus—

"Dahomey, thou art master of the universe,  
Thy daughters are more courageous than  
the men."

We, the Amazons, defend our king," etc.

A great deal that is interesting has been written about this Pretorian guard of the Dahomeyan monarch, several articles appearing in the French reviews in 1889-90-91, soon after the French operations in West Africa, and the memorable attack on Kotonou; and lately our English journals have devoted some space to these Amazons or "Minos" as they are styled at home. These women are very jealous of their soldier rivals, and seem to be afraid of losing or even of sharing the king's affection. They are continually employed in dancing before their master, and in singing him songs in which they tell him that he is stronger than the lion, that with him nothing is impossible, and that they will conquer his adversaries and devour their glens, which declamations apparently please his Dahomeyan majesty greatly. There are about fifteen thousand of these women, who all lived in the king's palace of Abomey, and who, although they are divided into two battalions, the "Elephants" and the "Alligators," the former being the better battalion, are both under one chief.

The French troops found these women-soldiers very formidable antagonists in Dahomey, and some of the encomiums passed upon them by the French army were certainly testimonials of their military skill and extraordinary courage.

In the face of these emancipated females from Africa, whose native country can certainly not claim the title of civilised, with the remembrance of the hundreds of women of all ranks and all countries who in the unenlightened days of the Crusades and other wars, threw off the trammels of womanhood and fought side by side with man for the same object, with the same fervour, how is it that every step woman takes in the direction of securing her own rights is met with sarcasm and put aside with ignominy? With all the boasted civilisation of the nineteenth century, we have no better examples of great female courage to show than those given by the Joan of Arcs and the Maids of Saragossa of olden days.

Laura Alex. Smith.

