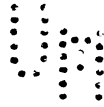


THE STORY OF MADAGASCAR.



BY THE

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Consolation to a Christian in Fetters.



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THE STORY OF MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY SLAVE IN MADAGASCAR.

IT is to an English boy named Robert Drury that we owe the earliest and fullest account of Madagascar and its inhabitants. Against the wishes of his kind parents, Robert was determined to go to sea. His mother pleaded with him to change his mind, but in vain, even though at one time she went down on her knees to her obstinate boy. Go he would, and go he did, and long and sore was the punishment he brought upon his own head. His first voyage was from London to India. He left London February 19, 1701; and on his return, the ship being leaky and likely to sink, it was resolved to put in to the nearest land. While the men were working at the pumps below, Robert and another boy were sent to the mast-

head to look for land. They soon descried a white cliff, and smoke ascending at a distance, when Robert cried out, "Land! land!"

One of the crew recognized the land as Port Dauphine, the south-eastern cape of Madagascar. This was the territory which the French had attempted to colonize, and where their violence and cruelty to the natives had been revenged some years afterward by the massacre, in a single day, of every white man in the colony. This part of the coast, therefore, was avoided by all Europeans, and Robert's shipmates preferred to trust their leaky and sinking vessel for a while longer, rather than attempt a landing there. After sailing sixty miles along the southern coast the ship was run ashore, and nearly all the crew escaped from the breakers and got safe to land.

And now poor Robert, helpless, destitute, thousands of miles away from home, among savages and in an utterly strange country, had time to think of his disobedience and its fruits. He lay down upon the ground, with only a piece of muslin for his bed, and could not close his eyes to sleep. "The thought of my tender mother," he says, "begging me on her knees not to go to sea, gave me the most distracting torture. I could now see my error

and repent, but whom could I blame but myself? Tears I shed in plenty, but could not with any justice complain of fate or Providence, for my punishment was but the natural result of my own ill conduct.”

Having learned that the present king of the Port Dauphine region was not unfriendly to foreigners, the captain and crew of Robert's vessel determined to penetrate the country in that direction. The natives of the region where they had landed, being under another and hostile chief, attempted to detain them. The Englishmen boldly seized the person of the chief and commenced their journey, carrying him along as a hostage. This aroused the entire native population, a whole army of whom followed them on their march, and as one and another of the ship's company lagged behind from weariness, pierced them with lances, until but a dozen out of over a hundred remained alive. Most of this small number escaped to Anosy, the region of Port Dauphine, where two years and a half afterward Robert heard of their safety and freedom. Robert however was captured by the pursuers, and though not slain himself, was compelled to see the murder of the captain and many others of the company. One of the native

officers lifted up his lance to pierce him through, but was prevented by the man who had him in custody, for the reason, as Robert afterward understood, that he was to be the slave of the king's grandson.

After they had robbed him of the money he had about him, and had plundered the bodies of the slain, the natives hurried him back to their village. Faint with long fasting and fatigue, he had to bear the shocking sight of the mangled bodies of his former companions strewn along the path. By and by the party paused and kindled a fire to roast some beef which they had carried with them. It was cut into long strips like ropes, with the hide still on it, and half roasted. This contemptible food, which a beggar in England would not have touched, poor Robert thought the most delicious entertainment he ever met with. At the next meal he was instructed by signs to cut off a piece of flesh for himself; he cut about a pound without any part of the hide, which his master perceiving imputed it to his ignorance, and so cut a slice with the hide and dressed it for him. Robert dared not refuse, but ate it with seeming thankfulness. Besides their regular mess of beef, they had yams for the digging, some of them a yard

long, which when roasted were an agreeable substitute for bread or potatoes.

Although treated with much kindness by his master, Robert's mind was distracted by terrible fears concerning his fate. He fully expected to be killed, if not tortured to death by slow degrees. His sleep was broken by dreams, and once he was so terrified that he started upright, trembling in every joint, and was unable to get another wink of sleep all that night.

At length his master, whose name was Mevarrow, reached his home, which was a considerable town. His arrival was announced by the blowing of a large shell which sounded like a post-horn. This brought the women to a spacious house, twelve feet high, in the middle of the town, which Robert saw was his master's home. No sooner had he seated himself at the door than out crawled his wife on hands and knees, and licked his feet; her mother followed her in the like disgusting act, and then all the other women saluted their returning husbands in a similar manner, after which each man sought his own home.

Robert's mistress showed great kindness and sympathy for his unfortunate condition, and provided him food and sleeping accommodations with

the attention of a mother, so that all his terrible fears passed away, and he laid down and slept without concern. This poor heathen woman was herself, like Robert, a captive and a slave in a strange country, and had good reason for the compassion she showed him.

At this time the whole country was divided up among many different tribes, who acknowledged no common head, but were almost constantly at war with each other. Their chief wealth was in herds of cattle and slaves, and their chief occupation was to seize one another's cattle, and carry off the women and children of the villages and keep or sell them as slaves. Yet their laws among themselves were very strict. To steal a neighbor's cow or oxen was a capital offence. No man's cattle were allowed to trespass upon another's plantation without the most serious consequences. Robert's business was to attend his master's herds, drive them to water and keep them from committing depredations; he had also the carrying of the water from the stream to his master's house, which he found a very irksome task. He tells us that sometimes the dews were so heavy that the inhabitants, who had no water near them, would go into the fields of a morning with two wooden dishes and a

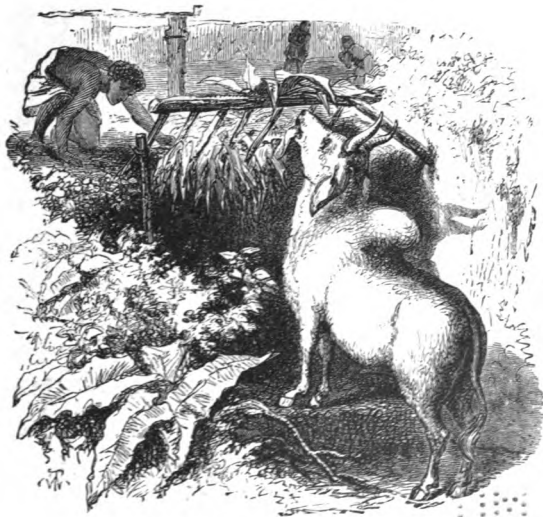
tub, and in less than an hour collect about eight or ten gallons of dew water.

In about a year's time the chief Mevarrow went away on a marauding expedition, leaving Robert behind. On his return, his wife and the native men whom he had left behind came crouching to him and licked his feet. Robert, who had not forgotten the principles of the religion of his country, refused to perform so degrading an act. The king's anger was kindled. He wanted to know why Robert could not do what his own wife, who was a king's daughter, and his own mother so readily condescended to. Robert answered that he would obey all his lawful commands, and do whatever work he thought proper to employ him in, but this act of divine homage he could never comply with.

The king passionately upbraided him with ingratitude, and still insisted, but Robert firmly maintained his purpose. On this the enraged king rose from his seat and made a push at him with his lance, which, however, was turned aside by his brother. The brother then took Robert apart, and after considerable persuasion induced him to render the service required, as it was nothing more than the greatest princes were obliged to do when taken prisoners in war.

The next day the master performed the usual ceremonies of thanksgiving for his prosperous return. There were no priests among them, and the chief of the town or family performed all the divine offices himself. These consisted in hanging the little household charm, made of trifling pieces of wood, and called an owley, upon a cross timber, supported by forked sticks driven into the ground, and placing a pan of incense under it. Sometimes the fat of a slain ox was mingled with the incense. A prayer was then offered, in which all the people joined, and an ox was slain as a sacrifice by drawing a knife across his throat. Sometimes a green bough was dipped in the blood, and the owley sprinkled with it.

Robert refused to take any part in these heathen ceremonies, although expressly ordered to do so by his master. After they were over, the latter took the owley in one hand and a lance in the other, and approaching the sturdy youth, asked him with a frown whether he was prepared for the consequences of his conduct. He answered that he would rather die than pay divine homage to any false deity whatsoever. And it was only through the most earnest and decided remonstrances of his brother and the people generally that Robert



FAHITRA.—A MADAGASCAR CATTLE-PEN.

The breed of cattle found in the island of Madagascar is similar to that known in India and many parts of Western Asia, and is remarkable for the prominent *hump* between its shoulders. When cattle are to be fattened for use, a pit is dug and a thatch for shelter thrown over it. The animal is confined in this pit, and fed from a rack inserted into a ledge cut at the surface from the clay side of the pit. Although the breed is an inferior one, the people are so impressed with its superiority that they carefully guard their cattle from any admixture with foreign stocks that have been imported from the Cape of Good Hope.

Madagascar Cattle.

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did not fall a martyr to his better faith on the spot.

He now returned to his master's cattle, which he tells us were very unruly. Larger than any of the kind he had ever seen, they were yet so active that they would leap high fences like greyhounds. They had a fleshy hump, almost like a camel's, between their shoulders, sometimes as much as eighty pounds in weight. They are beautifully streaked and spotted, but do not give as much milk as the English cows.

Robert's experience as a herdsman was hard enough. He was obliged to remain night and day with the cattle several miles from the village, and to provide for himself in the wilderness. The little milk given by the cows, and the scanty supplies of roots that could be dug, or of animals that could be trapped, left him and his companions on the verge of starvation, so that they were driven to the very natural but dangerous expedient of killing their master's cattle, or others that strayed into their neighborhood, and cooking them for food. Robert nearly came to his death for taking part in one of these cooking operations.

The cattle and their drivers were now summoned home on account of the invasion of the country by

a neighboring chief. This was no other than the king of the Anosy region, or Port Dauphine, and his errand was to demand satisfaction, after two years and a half, for the murder of Robert's ship-mates when trying to escape to his own dominions. Robert's hopes were immediately excited to a high pitch, especially as the king who had thus espoused the cause of the white men proposed to purchase him from his master. The price offered was two guns, and the trade was about to be made, when Mevarrow, fearing some fraud, withdrew from the bargain, and sent Robert away under a strong guard to the woods; and although the king of Anosy, Tuley Noro, continued to press his suit, Robert was not ransomed, and went almost crazy from disappointment. The bitter cup of slavery was again presented to his lips. He was sent five miles away from the village to work his master's plantation, and was compelled to provide for his own support by digging yams until he had cleared a patch for himself and could raise his own eatables. It was a whole year before he could say he had a full supply of needful food.

One of the most important productions of the country was honey. The chief use to which it was put was in the manufacture of a drink called

toake, somewhat intoxicating and resembling our mead. Robert managed to gather quite a number of swarms of bees, for which he constructed hives, after the manner of the country, from the hollowed trunks of trees. But the neighbors would plunder his hives, and in order to save the honey he made use of one of the superstitions prevailing in the country.

The fortune-tellers of that region were called umossees. One of them told Robert's master that he had a secret or charm that would effectually prevent his honey being stolen, but he was afraid to acquaint him with it, for it would infallibly kill the person who should but taste of it. Mevarrow said he did not care for that, and a bargain was struck that the umossee should have two cows and two calves if his plan proved effectual, if he remained to test its success.

The next morning the umossee singled out a tree of a kind unknown to Robert, but any tree would have done as well. He went to the eastward of this tree and dug up a piece of its root, then turned to the westward and dug up another piece. The eastern root he ordered should be rubbed on a stone with a little water and the water sprinkled among the bees and upon the combs; and if any

one, said he, should steal the honey and eat the least morsel of it, in a quarter of a day he will swell and break out in spots like a leopard from head to foot, and in three days he will die. But when the owner or his family wished to use the honey, all they need do was to rub down the western root with water and sprinkle the hives with the liquid. That would take away all the ill effects of the eastern root. So if you caught any one stealing honey which had been sprinkled only with the first preparation, and you wished to show him mercy and spare his life, you need only give him some of the second preparation, which he called *vanhovalumy*, or root of life, and all the ill effects of the former dose would disappear.

But how was all this fine scheme to be tested? Mevarrow sprinkled his hives and honey, as directed by the magician, and offered an ox as a reward to any one who would come forward and put it to trial, but no one would venture. The superstitious people placed such confidence in the magician's power, that Mevarrow's honey was already rendered secure by his arts.

Robert, however, did not share their fears. He knew that the whole thing was a piece of trickery, and he came forward and offered to put it to the

test, provided his master would communicate the secret—for the magician and his master had kept it to themselves—if he survived the ordeal. The master cheerfully agreed to this, and Robert proceeded to swallow down the sprinkled honey by handfuls before them all, asking them, in the mean time, if they would eat some with him. They replied no, not for ten thousand cattle, and they looked every moment for some dismal calamity to befall him. His plan was to keep up their belief, and so, after eating all he could, he secretly drank a great quantity of milk and switched his skin with nettles, so that, with the swollen and discolored appearance of his body and the rumbling of his bowels, the natives were convinced that the poison was doing its work. All the symptoms threatened by the umossee had really appeared.

His master had prepared the antidote; the people, terrified at his danger, flocked around the door; some pitied him and stood astonished at the great learning of the umossee, who was quite as much Robert's dupe as the people were his.

Robert drank of the vanhovalumy, or "root of life," and after a three or four hours' nap rose up perfectly well. The remedy was thus considered as powerful as the poison, and the umossee was

regarded a very great and wise man, and became not a little proud of his success. He immediately put up the price of his roots to twenty cows. Mevarrow not only disclosed to Robert the secret, but gave him a cow and a calf for his trouble. On returning to his plantation, his neighbors and fellow-slaves begged him to put a mark on all his hives, so that when they went out honey-stealing they might not be killed by eating any of his.

This was exactly what he had been aiming at, and accordingly he put a white stick before every hive, and never lost any honey afterward. In fact, nobody would go near his hives for fear his bees should sting and the very wounds prove more serious.

About this time Robert profited very greatly by another of their superstitions. Whenever they had an ox to kill, they were obliged to go a long way for one of the royal family, as it was not considered right for a common person to do such an act. But now they pitched upon Robert, as the only white man among them, to do this special work of butchering. A fee of four or five ribs was always given to the butcher, and Robert, being sent for far and near, now lived in plenty, and could act generously toward his neighbors.

Sometimes he undertook to communicate to the natives the truths of revealed religion; he found them curious and attentive, but disposed to be critical and unbelieving. They told him they firmly believed in a god above who was the supreme lord of all other gods, demons or spirits whatever. They would not receive the truth that God had made a revelation of his will, or that Jesus Christ arose from the dead. They had laws against theft, adultery and murder. They revered their parents long after death, and imposed a fine upon any one who would curse another man's parents. They used no profane oaths, and they gave their slaves one day in seven for rest and recreation. They never persecuted another for his religious opinions. But they were terribly imposed upon and victimized by the magicians, and they were engaged in almost perpetual plunder and war, enslaving one another and living in constant uneasiness and fear of attack upon their villages or their cattle.

It is not necessary to repeat the story of the wars and raids in which Robert was obliged to take part. Sometimes the people with whom he lived were reduced to the verge of starvation by the loss of their cattle in this way. There was,

however, a prince among these tribes who acted the nobler part of a mediator, and who succeeded for a time in quieting their cruel and disastrous contentions. According to Robert, he was led to this course by his religious convictions, heathen though he was, believing that the supreme being could never look down with favorable eye on a man who would refuse to relieve his fellow-creatures from such calamities as his countrymen now suffered.

After many strange experiences, Robert made up his mind to run away. His master, suspecting his intentions, called for one of the native conjurers, and had him put under a powerful spell to prevent his leaving. The master had such entire confidence in the power of the charm to keep Robert from running away, that he gave him all his usual liberty. One evening, Robert purposely left a heifer in the field when he drove home the other cattle. His master, noticing its absence, told him to go the first thing in the morning and hunt up the missing animal. This gave Robert exactly the opportunity he wanted to get a good start before his absence was marked.

So at the break of day he took his departure, and at sunrise he had walked or rather ran ten miles,

and before the day was over he had gone as much as fifty miles on foot.

This brought him to the residence of a friendly chief, who received him with great hospitality, and when his old master, a few days afterward, sent to demand his return, refused to deliver him up. Robert thought it a good opportunity to show the messengers how little effect the charm of the magician had had upon him.

“See,” said he, “how my legs are swelled! How the spirits have made my bones rattle in my skin!”—his health and strength being perfectly good at the time. They answered that he was a white man, and they had no power over him. So they continued doubtless as much under the power of their superstitions as ever.

Robert was treated with much kindness by the friendly chief Afferer, and might have enjoyed himself here if he had not longed for his home and country. He had grown so familiar with Madagascar life and language that he could scarcely talk English at all. But he soon found that he was held a captive as truly as under his master, Mevarrow. When he proposed to leave, the chief Afferer flew into a passion and promised to take care that he never got out of his country. Two men were

ordered to keep him in sight constantly, night and day. And for two months he was never allowed to go without an attendant.

At the end of this time, the chief took him out to hunt wild cattle. After an exciting day's chase, when the rest of the party were overcome by weariness and sleep and a hearty supper, Robert rose up, and with a prayer to God marched away to the north, and never saw their faces again.

For many days he roamed through a trackless forest and over lofty hills, living chiefly upon the nourishing roots of the country, and sleeping on the grass, the stony soil, or in the branches of a tree. Occasionally he got confused, and wandered without purpose hither and thither, but most of the time he made progress in the right direction. At one time he saw a party hunting wild cattle on a hill a good way to the westward. He could see them throw their lances and kill three beeves, which he knew was more than they could carry away with them at once. Waiting till they were gone, he hurried to the spot and took up as much meat as he could carry. This kept him in substantial food for some days.

At another time he came to the brow of a hill which was too steep to descend. Without due

thought, he threw down his lances, hatchet and beef, expecting to get down by a very tall tree whose top branches reached close to the edge of the hill. When he found he could not do this, not willing to lose his lances and other materials, he made ropes of the bark of a tree; and fixing them to the strongest branches, he slid down, and thus got to the bottom of the hill.

One evening, seeing a hole in a large rock, he decided to take up his lodging there for the night; but peeping in, he was suddenly greeted with a great outcry, which, with the echo in the rock, made such a confused noise that he could not conceive what it might be. Nearer and nearer it came, when Robert, planting himself with his back against a tree, with a lance in hand, waited the attack of the supposed murderers. They turned out to be a herd of wild swine, who, as soon as they caught sight of him, fled away as terrified as himself.

Another night he slept so soundly that a fox came up to him, and seizing him by the heel with its teeth, attempted to drag him away bodily. Robert, starting up, seized a firebrand and dealt the fox a staggering blow, but nothing daunted, he returned to the attack and flew at Robert's face.

By this time on his feet, he seized one of the lances and dispatched the creature. But he could see the eyes of three others shining like diamonds through the dark; and when he had fallen asleep again, and his fire had burned low, one of them boldly ventured to attack him again.

Robert's traveling was much hindered by the wounds received from the fox. He had to rest six days, making now two weeks since he had left Chief Afferer's. On the sixteenth day, at noon, he reached the open country, and walked once more on level ground. He calculated that if he had found the path he could have made the distance in three days.

On the eighteenth day he came to a deep river; as he was searching a place to wade or swim over he spied a large crocodile; still walking on the banks, in a short time he saw three more. At length he found a shallow place, where he entered, and waded for ten yards, expecting to swim over the rest in four or five minutes, but a crocodile boldly made after him, and when he turned to run pursued him till he got close to the shore.

In this perplexity he thought of a plan he had seen in operation in Bengal, where the crocodiles are so bold that they will pull a man out of a

shallow boat, and that was to wait until night and build a small fire at the bow and the stern of the boat. This will keep the crocodiles at a distance. So he cut a stick into long splinters, waited till it grew dark, then lighted his splinters and fastened them to the end of his lances, and committing himself to the care of Providence, went to the water and swam over on his back, holding his hatchet and firebrand in his hands.

He accomplished the passage in entire safety, and finding some wild cattle on the other side, killed and cooked enough flesh for his purposes. He found food so plenty, and the wood so agreeable a place to live in, that he determined, rather than live with a bad master again, to fly to these woods and live there by himself.

Robert never found any fierce wild beasts or venomous serpents on the island. His worst enemies, besides men, were crocodiles as we have described; besides these, he was troubled at this time with mosquitoes, and on the twenty-first day of his travels he saw several wild dogs assailing a bull. They never attack a man unprovoked, but if interfered with are very dangerous.

On the twenty-second day a long line of fog lying from east to west appeared in the distance.

This Robert suspected to rise from the great river which emptied into the sea by the port of Augustine, and the sight put new life in him. The next day the fog appeared again, but much nearer, and in the afternoon, after penetrating the dense underwood on the bank, he reached the river's brink, and found it a large navigable stream twice as broad as the Thames at London.

The next morning he looked out for some fallen trunks of trees, which he dragged to the river side. Then he hunted up a creeper, large, strong and flexible, like a rope, and with this he bound together the materials of his raft. Next, he made a paddle or oar, which he used with one hand, while he held the lance prepared to ward off crocodiles with the other, and thus equipped he made the passage of the river in safety.

On the twenty-sixth day he came upon a settlement, and was very kindly received by the people, although they had been greatly impoverished by wars and raids.

They brought him to their chief, whom Robert recognized as one he had met in his military expeditions. At first the chief did not remember him, and Robert offered to kneel and lick his feet. This he would not permit; and when informed who Rob-

ert was, he rose up and embraced him with great demonstrations of joy and friendship.

The next day, going on a journey with his royal friend, he came in sight of the sea and the bay of St. Augustine. There were no ships visible, but he met with some Europeans and negroes who had cast their lot upon the island. With these people he remained some months, and just before he expected to return to the native chief he was taken dangerously ill, probably with the island fever, which always attacks foreigners on the coast. For a time he lay as if dead, and a consultation about burying him was held among his friends. However, he revived and slowly recovered, so that it was five months before he could go to the place he called home.

His native friends now employed him to carry aloft before their armies a charm prepared by an umossee, in order to ensure them the victory in battle. He bore it in his left hand three or four stones' throw in advance of the army while on the march, and at night set it up at the same distance from the camp, pointing it toward the enemy's country. This was to be done until the first engagement with the enemy, and he was to have ten beeves and two slaves for his trouble. It was sup-

posed that the charm had a poisonous quality, and Robert, little as he believed in it, was obliged to wash whenever he wished to come near any of the army.

The march was over nearly the same ground which Robert had just traveled and back into the territory from which he had fled. On reaching the river infested with crocodiles the umossee endeavored to persuade Robert that the charm was sufficient to protect him in crossing, but the umossee himself refused to venture solely under its protection. At the first battle, which soon occurred, Robert threw the charm in the proper manner toward the enemy and then gladly retired, as he was entirely unarmed. He afterward received seven cows instead of ten for his services.

During the wars that followed, Robert was taken captive by the Sakalauvor army, and made the slave of their leader. These Sakalauvors correspond, in all probability, with the Sakalavas of our own time, who now occupy almost the entire western coast of the island.

Here he was kindly treated, and the prince was deeply interested to hear the story of Robert's adventures. He gave strict orders that he should want for nothing. When one of his people advised

that a guard be set over him to prevent his running away, his master replied there was no danger of that; as white men have no home on the island, all places are alike to them, and they will stay with those who give them the best entertainment. This was true in Robert's case; he could not mend matters in the least by running away.

The chief ruler of the country into which he had now come was a very odd and yet formidable-looking person. His hair was twisted in rows of tight ringlets or knots from the crown of his head downward, each row being larger than the one above it. Strings of beads, some of them gold, were hung among these ringlets, a very fine gold chain was round his neck, two strings of beads hung on his shoulders, six heavy bracelets of silver were on each wrist, four rings of gold on his fingers, nearly twenty strings of beads were twisted closely around his legs, and two pieces of silk, called lambas, were wrapped around his person. This bedizened barbarian was over eighty years old; he had a tawny color like a Hindoo, and a fierce look, so that he was truly a sight to behold.

After Robert had greeted him in the usual abject manner, he placed him by his side and told him of another Englishman in the country named

Will. Robert was most eager to see him, but he was not in the village at the time, and Robert's master moved off with him before Will's return. Arrived at his journey's end, his master made him captain of the guard, and Robert enjoyed the liberty and privileges belonging to such a high station.

Traveling with his master on a pleasure-trip, at one time they came upon a village of very peculiar people known as Virzimbers, or, as they are otherwise called, "Vazimba." Robert speaks of them as of a race unlike the natives of the island, and using a language peculiar to themselves, although they could speak the general language if they pleased. The forepart and backpart of their heads are flat, probably from pressure applied in infancy. They have no idols, but pay great respect to the moon or to some animals. Until recently they were under no government, living among the Sakalavas, and unable to defend themselves from imposition and robbery. It is believed that they were the miserable remnant of the aboriginal tribe which long before settled and ruled the island. Their ancient tombs, scattered in the interior, are objects of superstitious reverence to the people to this day.

As Robert continued on his journey northward he saw many more Virzimbers living among the Sakalavas. He also found the natives of this region living at peace and giving their whole attention to the raising of cattle. The king's cattle were so numerous that it was not known within three or four thousand how many he had. Some of them were scarcely able to walk for age, others were so fat they could not stir. The principal herdsman kept a great court, and had full power to decide controversies and punish offenders without appeal. He had attendants like the king, and owned eight thousand head of cattle himself. Tallow and hides were so plenty that no one paid them any attention.

All these features of the country and people seem to have remained permanent. After nearly two centuries, cattle continue to be the main possession and chief article of food in Madagascar. Robert also found the people acquainted with the use and manufacture of iron, as they still are. He also found articles made of silver and copper, and afterward met people from the interior who worked extensively in tin as well as in all these other metals, these being the principal commodities in which they traded. A kind of silkworm was plentiful,

from whose cocoons a good article of silk was gathered and woven into excellent goods for wear. Their journey was brought to an end by the return of the rice-planting season. Robert noticed that men of the highest distinction looked after their plantations personally. The same deep and universal interest in the rice crop prevails on the island in our day.

Soon after his return Robert met with the Englishman of whom he had heard at the king's court. They soon recognized each other as countrymen, and were more overjoyed, says Robert, to see each other than relations are who live ever so distant.

Like Robert, William Thornbury was a runaway boy bent on going to sea, and was sorely punished by being left on the island on his first voyage. They were not able to remain together long, but they did not part before giving each other instructions where to find their respective friends in England, so that whoever escaped first might convey news for the other, and so aid in his escape also.

It was not long before a European vessel arrived on the coast, and all who had slaves to sell carried them down to the seaside. Robert petitioned his

master to sell him to the captain, but with no other effect than to arouse his anger and to fall into worse and more hopeless bondage.

Before the ship set sail Robert got a large leaf a foot and a half long, and wrote upon it: "Robert Drury, son of Mr. Drury, living at the King's Head, at the Old Jewry, now a slave on the island of Madagascar, in the country of Morandavo, or Young Owl." He handed the leaf to a native who was going to the seashore, and desired him to deliver it to the first white man he saw. When he returned, Robert asked him what answer he had. "None at all," was the reply, "for I suppose the white man did not like it, since he threw it away, though I am sure it was as good if not better than that which you gave me. 'Tis true I dropped yours, but then I pulled one of the best I could find from a tree."

This nearly broke Robert's heart with disappointment. The ship got away, taking Thornbury along, but leaving him to pine in slavery as before. Still his wonderful courage and spirits did not desert him. He fled to another prince, sought and obtained his protection and was made keeper of his firearms. Here he was so comfortable, and even happy, that but for his desire to see his pa-

rents again he would not have cared to go back to England. During the two years and a half of his stay with this prince, however, he had nearly lost his life from the hatred of his former master, who never forgave him for running away.

At last came the long-deferred hour of deliverance. Two vessels arrived on the coast; and while Robert was meditating how to avail himself of this opportunity of escape, two men came in where he was sitting with the prince, carrying a basket of palmetto leaves. It was intended for the white man, and upon opening it there were found in it pens, ink and paper and a letter addressed to Robert.

It was from the captain of one of the ships. Robert opened it like a man in a dream, and found it contained the announcement that there was a letter from his father on board the ship, and that the captain had full instruction to purchase his liberty at any cost.

The prince, seeing Robert's countenance greatly change in reading the letter, asked him what it meant. Robert told him what the captain had written. "How do you know all this?" says the prince. "Can you conjure?" He then took the letter, and turning it over and over, said he could

not conceive how any message could be carried in that way except by conjuration.

Robert had to wait until the next day before he could get his master's consent to his departure, and he leaves it to his readers to imagine what a night of disorder and agitation he must have spent. In the morning the prince made him the most generous offers if he chose to remain; but if he was determined to go, he gave him full permission, and not only allowed him to carry away all his property, but refused to take any compensation from the captain beyond some trifling present.

And so, in the month of January, 1717, Robert bade a joyful adieu to the land of his captivity, where he had spent his entire youth, the most important part of his life. He had gone away a wayward boy. He came back a man, but almost weaned from Christianity and civilization, though not from all religion. The vessel reached England on Saturday, September the 9th, making his absence from home cover the space of sixteen years and nine months. Here he found father and mother both dead, the latter having long before died from grief on hearing of her son's shipwreck. So severe was Robert's punishment for his early and thoughtless act of disobedience.



CHAPTER II.

MADAGASCAR—WHAT IT IS—INHABITANTS AND CUSTOMS.

THE great island of Madagascar, lying three hundred miles east of Southern Africa, is nearly the largest island in the world, being exceeded only by Borneo (not reckoning the continental Australia as an island) and being almost three times as large as Great Britain. It is nearly one thousand miles long and averages two hundred and fifty miles in width, containing an area of nearly two hundred and forty thousand square miles. This is considerably greater than that of the New England and Middle States combined with that of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio. If one end of the island were laid upon the city of Rochester, N. Y., the other end would reach to Jacksonville, Florida, and in width the island would entirely cover up the great State of Pennsylvania.

Over this vast territory the hand of Providence

has strewn the richest and most varied natural gifts. As in Mexico, you advance from a low, moist and feverish climate on the coast to high and healthful table lands in the interior, while a lofty range of mountains traverses the length of the island like a powerful backbone of rocks, some of the peaks rising to the height of twelve thousand feet from the level of the sea. There are numerous rivers and lakes, there are warm and cold and medicinal springs. The forest is everywhere deep, dark and often impenetrable to human feet. The lumber is valuable for building and for ornaments. Plants of rare beauty and marvelous size abound. A missionary, Mr. Ellis, found a kind of creeper growing upon the trunks of trees and bearing a magnificent flower seven inches in breadth, the same in height, with a spur fourteen inches long. The color is pure white and the flowers preserve their delicate beauty for five weeks. Mr. Ellis brought some of the plants to England, and their flowers formed part of the bridal bouquet of the crown prince of Prussia, "Our Fritz," on the occasion of his marriage with the princess royal of England. The "traveler's tree" is not only an exceedingly graceful and impressive object, but it gets its name from the

abundant store of pure water which it provides. Each one of its immense leaves, from four to six feet long, gathers up on its surface and sends down its channeled stem, six feet farther, to the natural cavity or bowl at the foot of the stalk, a quart or more of cool, clear water, which the thirsty traveler or workman may depend on finding there in the driest weather. Twenty-four of these bright, green, gigantic leaves are spread out like a fan at the top of the smooth branchless trunk, some thirty feet from the ground, giving a most striking appearance to the region of country in which they prevail. The forests of Madagascar also produce India-rubber trees, glue trees, trees furnishing food for silkworms; figs, tamarinds, pineapples, coconuts and oranges grow, with peaches and apples. Rice is the chief food of the inhabitants, but potatoes are extensively cultivated and the coffee plant flourishes. There is also a tree called "tangena," with a fruit as large as peaches, from the kernel of which a deadly poison is procured, which was formerly used by the cruel and superstitious authorities to test the guilt or innocence of accused persons.

Although comparatively little search has been made beneath the earth's surface for those mineral treasures which contribute so largely to the wealth

and progress of nations, Madagascar is already known to contain abundance of excellent iron, one of the mountains of the interior being called "Iron Mountain." The natives themselves have rude furnaces for smelting the ore, and for generations they have prepared their own pig and bar iron as an article of merchandise, which their own smiths have bought and turned into rude articles for the common use of the people. Coal and lime have also been found, but almost everything in the way of research and inquiry in this department yet remains to be done. It is not at all unlikely that all the elements of a career of wide prosperity and advancement have been provided by a wise Providence for this interesting people, now to be numbered with the Christian nations of the world.

The animal creation in Madagascar contains no fierce and dreadful wild beasts, as the lion and the tiger. There are plenty of cattle, all with humps on their backs. Many of our common domestic animals, sheep, pigs, goats and fowls, are found. There are serpents, some very large, but they are for the most part believed to be harmless. The most unpleasant creature to meet is the crocodile, who will not scruple to seize a bullock and make a meal

of him as he comes to the water to drink. Fortunately, they will also devour their own young. These are hatched on the shore and make for the water as soon as they leave the shell. It is said that sometimes a whole row of crocodiles will be waiting to gobble them up as soon as they get within reach. That is a good service for man, but not a very encouraging reception for the young crocodile. They are also said to be partial to dogs, but the dogs are sometimes more than a match for them. When a dog wants to cross the water where his enemies are in wait, he will bark a long time at the water side to attract all the crocodiles together, and then, as he can move much faster than the lubberly crocodiles, he will run away and cross the river higher up before any of them can reach the spot.

The inhabitants of Madagascar belong to three or four different races. How or when they first occupied the island, or who were the aborigines or earliest inhabitants, is not certainly known, the Virzimbas being the oldest known to us. When Robert Drury was on the island, and as late as a half a century ago, there was no common government, but the different tribes ruled in their own territories in-

dependently of each other. At this time the Hova tribe occupied the interior portion of the island. The name of their king or chief was Radama, who had ascended the throne in 1808, when but sixteen years old. It is these Hovas and their rulers with whom almost the entire history of Madagascar is concerned.

Before the time of King Radama the island was indeed known to Europeans, but only slave-traders and pirates got a foothold on it. The thick darkness of heathenism, unbroken by a single ray of gospel light, brooded upon the vast and beautiful island, the scum and offscouring of Christian nations infested its shores and multiplied the miseries of its people. Long before the missionaries, Captain Kidd the pirate had settled there, and Portuguese and French and English had, one after the other, built forts and endeavored to gain a foothold upon the shore; but the deadly coast fevers and the opposition of the natives or other causes drove them all away, until at the time mentioned, Madagascar had been almost entirely abandoned by Europeans.

The Hova tribe have light olive complexions, hazel eyes and soft black hair, with features often somewhat regular and Caucasian, but generally heavier and coarser, though never approaching the

negro type. Frequently the heads are high and nobly formed, and the foreheads, according to Mr. Ellis, are always well shaped, which is not the case with other tribes on the island.

Much that is favorable may be said of these Hovas and of the people of Madagascar, or the Malagasy, as they are called. We have seen that they were far above a savage condition long before the gospel had reached and elevated them. They tilled the ground and made a business of raising cattle. Rice and beef were their chief articles of diet. Although the climate is warm, all above the very poor were decently clothed in silk or cotton cloths or goods made from the fibres of the palm tree, all of their own manufacture. Knives, axes and other articles of iron were in use among them before their acquaintance with English people. They had houses of wood and stone; they fortified their towns and cities with walls and ditches having gateways of stone; they were temperate in drinking, water being almost the universal beverage. Ardent spirits were prohibited at the capital, and drunkenness was unknown except at the seaports frequented by the Europeans.

Among the customs found among the inhabitants more recently, we mention several. They

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The Hovas.

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keep a cock roosting in the houses to rouse them by his well-known call. The time of day is told by the shadow on the ground. They amuse themselves with hunting, bull-fights and a game like checkers. Sometimes they buried a poor fowl in the ground, leaving the head out as a mark. He who could first hit the head with a stone became owner of the fowl.

The affection and pride taken by parents in their children are shown from the very singular custom of the father taking as his own the name he has given to his child ; instead of the child being called the son of so-and-so, the father drops his old name and calls himself the father of so-and-so. For example, if a man named Rabe has a child born, to whom he has given the name Soa, he drops his original name and becomes Rami-Soa, *i. e.*, the father of Soa. This feeling of pride in his descendants has been likened to that of the noble Roman matron Cornelia, as expressed in her memorable reply to the friend who wished to see her jewels. Waiting until her two sons Tiberius and Caius came in, she pointed to them, saying, "These are my jewels." At another time she is reported to have said, "Call me not Scipio's daughter, call me the mother of the Gracchi."

The fathers carried the little boys on their shoulders, and held them by one hand to keep them from falling, the mothers carried the children on their backs and sides, and some degree of reverence or affection is shown by the custom which prevailed among the grown-up children of offering to the mother a piece of money called "the fragrance or remembrance of the back," meaning that they have not forgotten the mother's care and kindness to them when little. The people are generally hospitable to travelers, meeting them as they enter a village with refreshments and welcoming them to their dwellings.

And now for the darker side of the picture. Slavery and the slave-trade were established institutions of the country. It is believed that from three to four thousand natives were annually sold away from the island. The sorrow of these wretched exiles is commemorated in the name given to the elevated place from which they could take a final view of the homes they were leaving, and catch a first glimpse of the sea which was soon to bear them for ever away. This spot, on one of the mountain roads leading from the coast to the capital, and surrounded by scenes of vastness, grandeur and beauty, is called "the weeping-place of the Ho-

vas." The slave population of the country was large, but ordinarily masters were not oppressive or cruel, though they had the lives of the slaves in their power.

There were courts of law and trials and testimony taken, and the accuser had to face the accused with proof of his charge, but nearly all was empty form, bribery was almost universal; no man's word could be depended on, honesty was scarcely known or valued and children were taught deception as an accomplishment.

Punishments were cruel and barbarous in the extreme. There were fourteen crimes punishable by death, and many of the modes of execution were such as to give the greatest pain, such as burning by a slow fire, beating, starving, crucifying, hurling over a precipice, drowning in boiling water and the administering of poison called tangena. Not even a form of justice was observed in this last-mentioned process. The tangena took the place of a trial. Any one accused of a crime, be he slave or noble, might be compelled to take it and be judged innocent or guilty by its effects. If it killed him, or if he did not throw up both the poison and the bits of skin in which it was wrapped, he was declared guilty; otherwise he was pro-

nounced innocent, and escaped. It is believed that a tenth part of the people have been compelled at some time or other to take the tangena, and some of them as many as two or three times. One-half of this number, three or four thousand every year, died under the dose, while those who escaped with their lives suffered often permanently from its evil effects.

The people from highest to lowest were great thieves. Madame Ida Pfeiffer, the celebrated German traveler, whose last journey was in this island, and who died from the effects of the Madagascar fever, had a gold watch and parasol stolen from her, but was told that it was of no use to try to recover them. There, she was told, everybody stole, even high officers; in robberies of any importance they were pretty sure to have a hand, and it was dangerous to attempt proceedings against them. Her parasol was taken while at the house of the chief-justice of the kingdom.

There is a custom of burying a man's money with him when he dies, and of course, when a rich man dies, the thievish propensities of the people are awakened. Immense and solid tombs of masonry are built at great cost for preserving the body and the treasures thus buried from plunder. While

Mr. Ellis was on a visit to the capital, a chief died and was buried in one of these large sepulchres, which had a stone in the doorway and earth heaped up against it. An armed watch was appointed till the masonry should be finished. On the second night ten men began operations for moving the treasure, and had to be fired on by the guard. Even the graves of the poor are robbed, the bodies stripped of their grave-clothes, and the small pieces of silver put in their mouth taken away.

The difference between a lie and the truth seemed almost unknown. If a man could gain anything by deception, the deceit was approved and sometimes rewarded; if truth was disadvantageous, it was regarded a weakness and a crime to utter it. The love of truth for its own sake did not exist. In fact, a serious and public complaint was once made against the preaching of Christianity on the ground that it taught the people to hesitate about telling lies even to deceive their country's enemies.

Ida Pfeiffer says in general there is nothing more ridiculous than to hear a native speak of his family and of domestic ties. She never met with a more immoral people than those of Madagascar at the time of her visit. She dared not trust her pen to chronicle the many immoral customs that prevailed

even in the highest families in the land, and which seemed entirely natural to the people. A man might divorce his wife and take another as often as he chose. Female virtue was of very little account, and by the established customs of the country did not affect the legitimacy of the children.

If the children were born on unlucky days, it was not considered a crime to murder the little creatures. This was done by tying a string tightly around their necks and holding their heads in warm water, or they were laid upon the ground in front of a herd of cattle as they were being driven into an enclosure and suffered to be trampled to death. How differently the dear baby is welcomed in a Christian home! and this difference is just one of the things which most clearly illustrate the effect of Christianity upon the affections and character of a people.





CHAPTER III.

PROVIDENTIAL PREPARATION.—THE GOSPEL RECEIVED.

THE people of Madagascar were not without a religion. The whole land was full of idols. The sun, the moon, the stars, certain mountains, thunder, lightnings, earthquakes, hail and the like, were said to be God. Anything new which they could not comprehend, like a photograph, was also God. Great power was ascribed to their idols, and the people trembled in superstitious terror before them. They were beings or things without goodness, virtue or intelligence, and without power to raise their worshiper from degradation. The idols granted no favors out of mercy, but only for the pay the people had to bring to their priests. They were mean, covetous and cruel. The trial by poison, the tangena, was supposed to be peculiarly under their direction,

and the priests who prepared the deadly drink were paid for their work. When the victim was pronounced guilty and slain, and even when his wife and children were sold into slavery, his whole property was confiscated, and half went to the king and half to the priests, while the entire expense of the trial was exacted from the family or relations.

It would seem that the worship of the earlier inhabitants, called Vazimba, and of many of the tribes, was simple and comparatively spiritual. They had neither idol nor temple, but made an altar of a tomb and offered sacrifices of oxen, sheep and poultry, the blood and fat of which were offered on the altar and the rest eaten by the worshipers. There had been in all probability a great and rapid decline in the character of their religion not long before the knowledge of the true God was brought to their shores, thus in Providence creating a deeper spiritual need and preparing the people for a better appreciation of Christianity. It is said that the so-called national idols are comparatively modern, having been introduced by the rulers from political motives. In like manner, just before the appearance of Christianity, the religions of the Roman world were sunken to the

lowest point of degradation and could scarcely have been maintained but for political considerations.

Just as the world was prepared for a universal religion and for the missionary labors of the apostles by the universal empire of Rome, so the political unity of Madagascar was accomplished in time to make easier the spread of a new religion over the whole country. King Radama, whom we already saw ascending the throne of the Hova tribe in 1808, when a boy of sixteen, in a reign of twenty years proved himself the Cæsar or Napoleon of Madagascar. With the aid of arms supplied by the English, he conquered the other tribes and made himself master of the whole island, with the exception of two districts in the south. His tribe and his dynasty have ever since been lords of Madagascar, and instead of half a dozen different petty principalities, with various laws, religions and prejudices, missionaries have needed only to gain an entrance into one.

Radama, like Cæsar and Napoleon, was quite as famous as a ruler and a reformer as a warrior. Although he was utterly reckless of the waste of human life in his wars, and although he would sentence a slave to death from a mere whim, yet beyond all doubt he was deeply anxious for the

prosperity and progress of his countrymen. He was the first to open the door of civilization to the people. He formed a just opinion of the superiority of the European people, and desired his own to share their advantages. His policy was shaped by this desire. Under a treaty with the British he abolished the slave-trade, retaining slavery at home, however. He made himself acquainted with the work of missionary societies and their beneficial effects upon heathen countries; and when the first English missionary reached his capital, Antananarivo, in 1820, he was cordially welcomed by Radama, who promised favor and protection to him and to as many others, with their wives and families, as might come to his aid.

Radama kept his promise faithfully. Besides studying English and French himself, and so giving his people an example, he watched with the deepest interest the work of the missionaries in reducing the language of his own people to a written form, for it existed previously only on the lips of the people. He was amused at the several changes in the appearance of the words before the right spelling was agreed upon. Seeing the perplexity caused by the different sounds often attached to the same letter in English, he issued an edict

that in the Malagasy language no letter should have more than one sound.

The missionaries soon had their hands full in the work of teaching. An adult school under the special favor of the king was opened in the palace yard, in which the officers of the army and their wives, to the number of three hundred, were instructed by the king's secretary. The best native scholars were soon set at teaching the natives in the neighboring villages. The king was so well pleased with the result that he proposed the formation of one central model school, under the control of the missionaries, for the express purpose of training native teachers.

As may be supposed, Radama could not stop here. Complaints were made and excitement arose at the results of the teaching in creating disrespect for the national idols, but the king dismissed the complainants, bidding them mind their own business and leave the children to attend to their lessons. Afterward he cautioned the missionaries not to go too fast, and forbade gathering the children for public worship.

Although he continued to pay regard to the false gods of the island, he more than once showed that at heart he cared nothing for them. When the

priests required him to halt with his army outside of the capital for a number of days, he marched straight to his palace, without waiting in the suburbs in respect to their commands. When the people in one of the sacred villages applied to him for a piece of scarlet cloth for their idol, he answered, "Surely he must be very poor if he cannot get a piece of cloth for himself. If he is a god, he can provide his own garments."

When, in 1826, the first printing-press ever seen in Madagascar was received by the missionaries, no one rejoiced more sincerely than the king. It is among the many honorable events of his reign that it witnessed the introduction of letters into the language and the wide diffusion of education under Christian influence.

Fearful of endangering his throne through the violence of heathen prejudice if he suffered the missionaries to move too rapidly, he cannot be said to have encouraged the direct teaching of the Christian religion. He never was present at the preaching services, although the queen and some of his sisters frequently were. He never in any official way showed that he recognized the right of the people to become Christians. His great wisdom was altogether worldly. He rejoiced that the arts and

trades that made civilized nations so powerful were being introduced into Madagascar. He was ambitious to have his countrymen educated, industrious and prosperous. He despised the witchcraft, priestcraft and superstition under which they were crushed.

But he had no experience of the spiritual nature of true religion. He had no idea of faith in Christ as a ruling and guiding principle of his life. Had he taken an open stand as a Christian man and ruler and put his trust in God, he might have successfully resisted the opposition of the priests, and overcome the prejudices of the people, and made Christianity the religion of the kingdom, and saved it the forty years of heathen rule and bloody persecutions which followed.

As it was, not a single profession of Christianity was made in the island while he reigned. The people were in a partially-awakened state, and confusion and uncertainty prevailed. Perhaps he thought he was too young yet to take a decided stand, being scarcely more than a boy when he came to the throne. He may have thought that he had many years yet to live, when God called him to his account. He died on the 17th of June, 1828, at the age of thirty-six, having ruled for twenty years.



CHAPTER IV.

REIGN OF RANAVALONA.—THE BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION.

THE evil consequences of Radama's uncertainty were now evident. The officers of the court were confounded by his death, and for days afterward kept the bands playing in the courtyard, and announced every morning that he was better. At length a young officer told one of Radama's wives, Ranavalona, what had happened. This wicked woman seized upon the throne, murdered all others having any right to it on whom she could lay her hands, claimed to have received the kingdom by express appointment of the heathen gods, and became the Bloody Mary of Madagascar.

Among the cruel and bloody rulers of the world, the queen of Madagascar has won never-dying infamy. Every day seemed lost to her on which she did not consign half a dozen of her subjects to

death. Executions and massacres were often conducted on a vast scale. From twenty to thirty thousand persons fell victims every year to her bloody rule. Thousands perished from the excessive tasks imposed on them in dragging timber and in constructing her palace. Tens of thousands of persons were compelled to accompany her upon long expeditions for hunting or pleasure as soldiers, bearers, road-makers, or simply to give dignity to the royal movements. And as she made provision only for her own support on the journey, famine would soon make its appearance among the mass of her attendants. The whole country through which they passed would be stripped of provisions. Even the nobles in attendance suffered from want, and on one such occasion it is said that ten thousand persons, including many women and children, perished from hunger.

The chief amusement of this queen was the cruel spectacle of a bull-fight, which was frequently provided for her in the courtyard of her own palace. She had her favorites among the beasts, and used to inquire anxiously after their health every day. The only time she was ever known to weep was not when her husband, her father and mother or her children died, but when her favorite bull was

killed. Then she wept much and bitterly, and it was long before she would take comfort. She had the creature buried with all possible honors. The chief men of the kingdom were commissioned to lay it in the grave, and they were so proud of the honor that they boasted of it long afterward. Two great stones were placed upon the grave as a monument, and the queen cherished his memory as that of a dear friend. Thus even the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

Meanwhile, the population of the island was declining so rapidly that if her reign had been protracted Madagascar would have been a wilderness. It was calculated that half the people were swept away through her sanguinary policy, and a great number of villages had disappeared from the face of the land. It might well be expected that her Christian subjects would be the special objects of such a ruler's evil passions. If the Church of Christ in Madagascar was appointed to undergo a fierce and fiery trial, here was the instrument for the work. The reign of Queen Ranavalona was Satan's opportunity. And well did he use it. Like a roaring lion he went about seeking whom he might devour. And yet, just in proportion as he raged and as persecution and opposition increased, the

numbers of Christians multiplied and the evidences of the divine excellence and power of the truth were clearer and more convincing. Opposition seemed to foster rather than repress Christianity.

Among her first acts was to forbid the preaching of the word, to draft the teachers and scholars in the mission schools into the army and to break up the treaty with Great Britain. At her coronation, June 12, 1829, she took two of the national idols in her hands, saying: "I received you from my ancestors. I put my trust in you, therefore support me." The idols were then covered with gold-embroidered scarlet cloth, and held at the front corners of the platform to inspire the superstitious multitude with awe while the coronation was in progress.

When the French sent an expedition against the island, the frightened queen turned to the idols for help. Public acts of worship were paid to them and great efforts were made to revive the power of superstition among the people. The queen went in person to one of the sacred cities, and offered a large number of jewels and other valuables to one of the idols. A number of officers of the government were required to drink the poison at the capital, and a general purification of the country was or-

dered, in which many hundreds of innocent persons were cruelly sacrificed.

At the same time the wicked queen was shrewd enough to see the immense value of the civilization introduced by the missionaries. So she gave them express permission to preach and teach, and to make converts among the natives, and even to admit them to the visible Church. Perhaps she doubted the power of the idols, and wished to make sure of help from one quarter if the other failed. At all events, the work of evangelization was vigorously and boldly carried forward. In 1830 the missionaries were able to issue the native New Testament, besides many other native books, from the press. And in 1831, on the 29th of May, twenty converts were baptized and admitted to Christian privileges. One of them had been celebrated as a diviner or heathen prophet, and had become rich by deluding the people. Influenced by a Christian friend, he had examined the Scriptures; and deeply impressed with their truth, he destroyed or gave to the missionaries all his instruments of divination, and took his place among the learners of the alphabet. He was baptized "Paul."

These baptisms gave a great impetus to the work as well as roused some opposition. In a few

months word came that no one in the army and no one in the government schools should be suffered to be baptized.

In 1832 all natives were forbidden to join in the communion services of the church, and three Christians were compelled to drink the tangena, all of whom escaped. As the Christians increased in numbers, as they refused to observe heathen holidays or to join in public homage to the idols, the fears and hatred of the queen and of her counselors increased. They were charged with disloyalty to the government, and with the purpose to transfer the island to the English. The queen swore she would put a stop to these things by extreme measures. Profound silence was enforced throughout the palace. The music ceased, all amusements were suspended, some great calamity seemed to have befallen the court and widespread alarm agitated the country. A general gathering of the people was ordered for the first day of March, 1834. Meanwhile, a list of the names of Christians and of the places in which they met was made out and handed to the queen, who was astonished at their number and enraged that any one should accommodate them.

Meanwhile, the Christians continued to preach

and to worship with their usual publicity. The text of one of the native preachers about this time has been preserved. It was very appropriate: "Save, Lord, we perish." The missionaries sent a respectful communication to the queen in behalf of the religion they taught and of the people who had embraced it. Some of the native chiefs and counselors of the queen represented to her the great advantage of the missionaries' teaching, and tried to dissuade her from persecuting measures.

It was of no avail. The first of March came. Guns were fired with the dawn of the day. Fifteen thousand troops were drawn up on the plain of Imahamasina, and along the approaches to it, where it is believed a hundred thousand persons were gathered in obedience to the royal summons. Amid the noise of muskets and artillery the people waited in anxiety and alarm for the message which they had been summoned to hear.

At length the chief judge appeared with the royal proclamation. It was a declaration of war against Christianity and of adherence to the old idolatry on the part of the government. All who refused to worship the national gods were to be reckoned as criminals. Baptism, societies, places

of worship and observance of the Sabbath were declared unlawful and forbidden. One month was given to all who had been baptized, who had joined the church, or had attended worship, or who had allowed their slaves to attend school or to come under Christian influences, to come forward and accuse themselves of these offences. If they did not appear within that time, sentence of death would be pronounced against them. What would be done with them if they did make confession was not explained. Doubtless the queen was without any definite plans, and her proceedings were intended as an experiment the result of which might guide her in her subsequent course.

After the proclamation had been made by the judge two chiefs came forward with an apology for what had been done, offering by way of ceremony an ox and a dollar, and promising that the offence should not be repeated in the future. It does not appear that these chiefs were authorized by the Christians to speak for them. The probability is that they were heathen who, like many others of the people, saw the great benefits to be derived from the spread of Christianity through the land, and who simply wished in any way possible to check the persecuting designs of the queen. As

for the native Christians, there could not have been the slightest intention on their part to abandon their faith, whatever the queen might conclude to do.

The commander-in-chief of the army now came forward and promised to support the government in the severest measures against the Christians who should prove obstinate. The judges agreed to convey the proposal of the two chiefs to the queen, and the multitude retired for the day.

Summoned together the next morning by the firing of cannon, they were astonished to learn not only that Ranavalona refused the petition of the chiefs, but that instead of a month, as before announced, only a week would be given to the Christians to come forward and confess their offences. Those who did not come within that period must die. At the same time a special message was sent to the missionaries forbidding them to give any more religious instruction, although they were allowed to teach secular branches, as heretofore.

The general excitement and alarm which attended these announcements revealed in a surprising manner the degree in which the teachings of the missionaries had been blessed in spreading the gospel among the people. Few families in and

around the capital were not involved in some of their members. The idol worshipers, and especially the priests, were active and exultant. It was a fearful week. Some fell away from their former Christian associates, and plunged into the vices of heathenism again. But the great body of the disciples were firm; they sought divine aid in prayer, and they went forward in the plain path of duty. They came before the judges, and without faltering confessed their faith in Christ, at the same time protesting their loyalty to the government. The prosperity of the queen was one of the objects of their prayers.

One of these confessors was asked by the judges how often he prayed. He answered that he could not tell. For the last three or four years he had passed no day without several seasons of prayer. Being asked further how he prayed, he said that he confessed his sins, asked forgiveness and sought divine help to live without sin and be prepared for eternal happiness. This good man was heard with attention and respect while he spoke fully to the judges of the holy Jesus who had died for sinners.

The nights were spent in prayer by the Christians. At one of these meetings, near the midnight hour, an officer of high rank presented himself and

was welcomed in the praying circle. The unjust accusations against the Christians had decided him to join the injured party, and very soon he resolved that the Christians' God should be his God. At the time he refused to accuse himself, he did not see any wrong requiring confession in attending the meetings. But afterward he suffered for the faith, having proved himself a true follower of Jesus and a friend to his fellow-believers.

When the week had passed, and the people again assembled according to the royal summons, they found the temper of the queen less sanguinary than they had expected. She contented herself with reducing four hundred officers in rank and fining two thousand others. No lives were taken and none were sold into slavery at this time. The purpose of the government to maintain the old forms of worship and utterly to crush out Christianity was reiterated, and the people were assured that only their lives would be sufficient for the next offence.

A week afterward, an order was issued requiring all books to be delivered up to the queen; no one should keep back so much as a leaf. As there were no other books in the island but such as the missionaries had printed and circulated, the order was de-

signed to put a stop to the circulation and reading of the Bible. Few obeyed it literally, and in the distant provinces it was obeyed scarcely at all, so highly was the word of God prized by the persecuted believers of Madagascar. To procure a copy of the Scriptures some walked sixty miles, some a hundred.





CHAPTER V.

PREVALENCE OF THE TRUTH IN MADAGASCAR.

THE deep hold which the gospel had already gained in the minds of this remarkable people was now manifested in many ways. The fact that the queen found no less than twenty-four hundred of her own officers among those judged worthy of punishment was significant. The Christian soldiers were known and distinguished as such in the army. At one time the army was advancing upon the enemy in three divisions, the national idol being borne in the central and largest division. The Christians had been excused from rendering homage to the idol, and were assigned to one of the other divisions, the general telling them that the idol would have his revenge upon them. In the battle the Christians were placed in the most exposed position. But the central division was routed with great loss

and humiliation, while the two other divisions were victorious and took considerable spoil.

These Christian soldiers had an honorable reputation. Their bravery was unquestioned. They were merciful to the vanquished, they were honest and pure in their actions. They held meetings for worship in each others' tents on Sunday and on other days. Many of their heathen companions were converted as a result of their example and labors.

The mission schools were very successful. When the persecution broke out, it is supposed that there were thirty thousand natives who could read translations of portions of the Scriptures, and tracts had been widely distributed. The missionaries did not of choice devote themselves so largely to teaching; they were constrained to do so by the restrictions laid upon their preaching, but the finger of God was in it. The people were thus so well instructed and supplied with Christian literature that they were prepared to stand alone.

The labors of the missionaries had extended to the neighboring villages. Many cast away their charms and burned their idols or brought them to the missionaries. Two large congregations met regularly for worship in the capital. Nearly two hundred

persons had applied for membership in the church. A spirit of inquiry was awakened. Prayer-meetings were commenced and conducted by the natives in their own homes. Places sixty and a hundred miles from the capital shared in the growing religious excitement and in the demand for Christian books, especially Bibles.

A false prophet arose about this time. A priest of one of the government idols, imperfectly instructed in Christianity, proclaimed himself a convert, but declared that God taught him the truth independently of Scripture. In about two years this deluded man had drawn after him about two hundred followers. They sought an interview with the queen, told her that she would be sovereign of the whole world, that the dead would arise and the living would never die, that all evils, wars, trial by tangena, etc. would cease, and all men would live happily. They offered to forfeit their heads if all this was not true.

The queen, offended at their doctrine of the common parentage of all men, ordered the leader and three of his principal followers to be put to death, which was done in the most cruel manner. The rest were condemned to the trial by tangena or sold into slavery, and their property was seized

and divided between the queen and the nobles, to the amount of several thousand dollars. As counterfeit money only appears where there is a considerable circulation of that which is genuine, so the rise and spread of such a delusion proves that true Christianity was widely known and received among the people.

That it was true Christianity, really received in the heart and practiced in the life, appears from the testimony of the heathen judges themselves, who told their accusers that no charge could be sustained against the Christians of any offences other than those against the idols. It was the teaching of the duty of faith in Christ and of following his example that seemed most to offend the queen, who, in her ignorance and jealousy, was led to believe that a foreign ruler was meant by Jesus; and the most plausible ground of accusation she had against the Christians was, that they intended to overthrow her government and betray the country to some foreign power.

Her fear of foreign interference was very great. She frequently held councils with her advisers upon the best means of keeping the hated Europeans away from her borders. Some of the plans proposed were very laughable. One counselor ad-

vised the building of a high wall in the sea all around the island. Another proposed a machine with a great iron plate, against which the cannonballs fired from hostile ships might rebound, striking and sinking the ships from which they had been fired. Still a third plan was to have four pairs of gigantic shears manufactured and planted on the roads leading from the various harbors to the capital. Whenever an unfortunate European came along, the shears were to be clapped together and the daring intruder cut in two.

The missionaries, compelled to cease all public efforts for the conversion of the natives, labored the more diligently in private methods, consoling and advising the Christians, and especially in enlarging the stock of books in the native language. The Old Testament was published complete, and the Pilgrim's Progress was translated, and six copies in manuscript were distributed among the converts. Having completed these works, and finding it impossible to carry on their labors, the government having warned them to leave, the last missionaries sorrowfully parted from their Christian brethren, and set out for the coast in July, 1836.

From this time forward, for twenty years, the Christians of Madagascar remained cut off from

all knowledge of or intercourse with their fellow-believers in other parts of the world, and for five years longer, or while the reign of this cruel queen continued, they were subject to persecuting hate and violence, and their religion was outlawed. The quarter-of-a-century conflict of the powers of darkness with the Church in Madagascar now began, with what success the following pages will show.





CHAPTER VI.

FOUR ERAS OF PERSECUTION.—FIRST ERA, 1835-40.

THE persecutions now directed against the Christians may be divided into four periods, stretching through the twenty-five years from 1835 to 1860. The first began in 1835, about the time the missionaries were forbidden to teach or preach Christianity in any form, and death was threatened to any native who should read the Bible, pray to God, receive baptism or join the Christian Church. This persecution lasted about four years, its violence being felt by but a very few in person, although the whole country suffered under the restrictive and oppressive course of the government toward the Christians. In 1840 the flame of persecuting rage burst out with fresh fierceness, lasting some seven years. After two years of comparative rest and quiet, in 1849 the third assault of the enemy was made, this time

with more bloodthirsty violence than ever. It lasted, however, but three years, and then came an interval in which the London Missionary Society sent out a deputation to inquire into the condition of the Christians, which brought home much valuable information, and greatly affected and interested the Christian public by their story. The fourth and last persecution broke out in 1859, at a time when one of the delegates of the London Society, Rev. William Ellis, was paying a second visit. Madame Ida Pfeiffer, the famous lady-traveler of Germany, was then visiting the island upon the last of her enterprising and hazardous voyages, and she gives us the impressions of an eye-witness of scenes of cruelty from which she herself was glad to escape with her life.

In 1861 persecution ceased and liberty of worship and teaching was restored, and from that time the work of spreading the gospel of Christ has gone forward without hindrance from the government.

The first persecution in Madagascar began in earnest in the year 1835. In that year the missionaries began to leave the island, and in 1836 the last had departed. The names of these founders of the Madagascar Church were Messrs. Freeman,

Cameron, Check and Kitching, who left the capital in June, 1835, and Messrs. Johns and Baker, who remained until July of the next year.

The Christians, now left without their well-known guides and teachers, were compelled to depend on themselves. They could only recognize each other by stealth. Familiar as many were with the word of God, they chose its language as a kind of password. When a Christian wished to know whether it was a fellow-Christian to whom he was speaking, he would ask in the language of Jeremiah (xxxviii. 15): "If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death?" The reply, if from a Christian, would be the next verse: "As the Lord liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life."

They would meet secretly in each other's houses, or would hold their worship like hunted wild beasts on the lonely mountain-tops, keeping watch on any suspicious movements in the regions beneath them. Here they sang their songs and read their precious books, which had been proscribed by the queen, without fear of disturbance. The wild and exceedingly rocky nature of much of the country furnished them with many such places of secure

retreat. Like David, they could say, The strength of the hills is his also.

Woman has played a leading part in the history of Madagascar, and of the planting and persecuting of Christianity there. It was a fierce and un-womanly woman that at this time was using her power as queen to overthrow the truth. It is a noble Christian woman on the same throne who is now by her life and public acts establishing and extending Christianity through the country. And perhaps the brightest and most conspicuous of all the sufferers for the truth on the island were women.

Rafaravavy was a woman of high family, whose husband held an important position in the native army. She was among the early fruits of the missionaries' labor; and having become a sincere believer before the government declared against Christianity, she had given early and ample evidence of her sincerity, having procured one of the largest houses in the capital and opened it for Christian worship. The simplicity of her character and her earnestness brought many to attend the preaching of the gospel.

Even after the public and severe declarations of

the government, this faithful woman continued to hold Sunday evening meetings in her house for prayer, which were attended by a few female friends. On the first of June she was betrayed by three of her slaves. A Christian who heard the accusation warned her of what was coming, so that she had time to hide her Bible before the officers came. Her father, enraged at the conduct of the slaves, put them in irons, but the woman proved how her heathen nature had been transformed into the spirit of her Master by freeing the offenders, sending for them, forgiving them, and by preaching Jesus to them so effectually that two of them became Christians, one of whom afterward died for her faith.

The judge visited Rafaravavy, and demanded the names of those who met with her in worship. On her refusing to give them he reported her case to the queen, who was greatly incensed and broke out with the exclamation, "Is it possible that any one is so daring as to defy me, and that one a woman, too? Go put her to death at once." But the intercession of high officers, which often comes in, in fact, during the persecutions, procured an abatement of the queen's rage, and sentence was deferred.

Expecting soon to be put to a cruel death, this brave woman did not cease to show her interest in the Master's cause. One of the missionaries, Mr. Johns, was just about leaving, and at three o'clock on the morning of his departure she called to bid him farewell. It was an affecting scene. Mrs. Johns says: "I shall never forget the serenity and composure she displayed while she related to me the consolation she enjoyed in pleading the promises and in drawing near to God in prayer."

On the very same day, contrary to her own and her friends' expectations, the queen sent word that she would spare her life, but fined her to the amount of half her property, assuring her that if again guilty nothing could save her life. From this time, being narrowly watched, she sold her great house and bought a small one in the suburbs of the city, to which she removed. There a small company of believers occasionally met for prayer, some coming from Vonizongo, many miles distant. Sometimes, for greater security, they would travel twenty miles to some mountain-side or top, their joyful ardor taking away all sense of weariness while they joined in prayer and praise to God.

A year passed by. The number of persons known to each other as Christians rapidly in-

creased. Mr. Johns, one of the last missionaries to leave, had gone no farther than the neighboring island of Mauritius, from which he wrote to the Christians at the capital, stating his intention to visit the coast of Madagascar. Several of the Christians were deputed to meet him at Tamatave, a port on the east coast. They carried with them several letters, and among others a joint letter from the whole band, in which such remarkable language as the following is used.

“It is thought,” they write, “that we shall certainly forget the word of God, now that we have no teachers. The queen does not know that the best teacher of all, the Holy Spirit, is still with us. We will go forward in the strength of the Lord. If we confess him, he will also confess us when he shall come in the clouds to judge the world. Besides meeting on the mountains, we have three services in the capital during the week. Our meetings are large, through the diligence of the disciples in conversation in season and out of season. All the Christians here are teaching others to read. There are ten with one friend, six with another, four with another, and so the number is quietly increasing. How much does the compassion of the Saviour console us now! We are filled with

wonder at the work of the Holy Spirit. The word is indeed true that says, 'I will send you the Comforter. It is expedient for you that I go away.' Precious to us now is Jesus. He is our rock, our shield, our hope, our life."

Another of these letters spoke of a Christian soldier who had fallen in a recent expedition. When asked if he had any fear, in the language of an advanced and intelligent believer he answered, "Why should I fear to die when Jesus is my friend? He hath loved me with an everlasting love, and I love him because he first loved me. I am persuaded he will not leave me now, and I am full of joy at the thought of leaving this sinful world to be for ever with my Saviour."

The refined Christian sensibilities of these converts, carried with them into the barbarous scenes of heathen warfare, are truly marvelous. It was reported of this soldier that he was never heard to mention the name of the Saviour without tears. When questioned about it, he replied: "How can I do otherwise than feel, when I mention the name of that beloved Saviour who suffered and died on the cross for me?" What a rebuke to the cold-heartedness of the mass of believers in Christian lands!



CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST MARTYR.—DEATH IN MADAGASCAR.

THE bearers of these letters left Rafaravavy and their other friends generally in peace and safety. Before their return new calamities befell them. Two women, one of them related to the Christians, accused ten of the latter to the authorities as accustomed to meet every Sunday for prayer in Rafaravavy's house. It was the hope of getting a share of their property that led these women to make the accusation. One of the ten was at Tamataye, on the sea-coast, in conference with the missionary, Mr. Johns. Another had a very long hard name, and he escaped because the accusers did not know it. Their ignorance is not wonderful when we learn that the name was Rafaralahiandrianisa. The remaining eight were immediately arrested and threatened with death. Rafaravavy was repeatedly questioned by the officers, but not put under arrest.

This noble woman, brave as she was pious, boldly confronted the officers, admitted the fact of holding social worship, but utterly refused to name any of her associates.

The officers plied their arts on those who were already in prison. They falsely told one of them, a young woman named Rasalama, that one of her fellow-prisoners had revealed the names of all the other Christians, and that it would do no good and only make her case worse to refuse to tell. Whereupon she named seven others not before accused, and brought them into the same sad plight. Among these seven was one of the most esteemed and beloved of the converts, the aged Paul, who while a heathen had been distinguished as a conjurer, but who now proved himself not more faithful than judicious and impressive in his confession of Christ. His answer to the judges was elevated and yet conciliatory in tone. He said, "I have certainly prayed to the God who created me, and has supported me, and is himself the source of all good, to make me a good man. I prayed that he would bless the queen, and give her true happiness in this world and in that which is to come. I asked him to bless the officers and judges and all the people, to make them good, so that there might be no more

robbers and liars in the country." Some of the officers were touched by this discreet answer. What harm could there be in that? they asked. And one of them urged, in view of Paul's declarations, "Let us do nothing rashly, lest we advise the queen to shed innocent blood." The chief officer replied: "They pray to Jehovah, to Jesus, to Christ." Another answered, "These may with them be but different names for one God, as we have several names for god." But the chief said: "The queen has forbidden any to pray to Jehovah; and having despised her commandments, they are guilty."

After fourteen days of suspense the mob in the market-place in the capital were let loose upon Rafaravavy, and those especially who desired her conviction for the spoils it would bring them quickly accepted the public permission to seize her property. The first she knew of it was the rush of the rabble into her dwelling, who seized everything within reach, and finally pulled down the house itself and carried it away piecemeal. The mob was followed by four of the royal guard usually assigned to the execution of criminals, who summoned her to follow them, and led her on the very road by which criminals proceeded to the place of execution. She made up her mind fully that

her last hour had come. She moved forward without fear, uttering the prayer of the martyr Stephen by the way. One of the Christians drawing near, she asked him to go with her to the end, so that if she was strengthened to bear a good testimony for Jesus, he might report it for the encouragement of those who were to follow. He answered, "I will not leave you, dear sister. Cleave to Him on whom you have built your hope." Another said: "Fear not, beloved sister. Though there may be affliction here, there is rest in heaven." Thus did these new converts from heathen darkness encourage each other in the trying hour. She was put in irons for the night, the soldier saying to the smith who fastened on the fetters, "Do not make them too fast; she is to be executed at cock-crowing to-morrow."

But during the night the town was visited with a conflagration which, sweeping rapidly through the dry and closely packed wooden and thatched houses, filled every one with dismay. In the morning the burning fragments were still flying through the air and falling in the palace yard. All government work was suspended, and the execution of the condemned Christians was delayed until further orders. "God is indeed the sovereign of life,"

said one of the natives. Others very naturally regarded the fire as a judgment from heaven on account of the persecution ; it was even thought to have had some effect upon the superstitious mind of the queen.

Finally, the queen gave sentence that all who had been seized should be sold into perpetual slavery. But one of the number, a woman named Rasalama, who had been led by false representations to betray some of her associates, and who was deeply afflicted at the thought of the mischief she had done, made herself more obnoxious than the others by her strong expressions, saying that she was astonished that the people of God, who had neither excited rebellion nor stolen property, nor spoken ill of anybody, should be sold into hopeless slavery. She declared that she was not afraid when the officer came to arrest her, but rather rejoiced that she was counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' sake ; that she had a hope in heaven. She continued singing hymns, and was put in heavy, cruel fetters and beaten. She foresaw what was coming. To those who said that Rafaravavy and the others would be put to death, she replied, "No, my life will go for theirs." Early the next morning she was brought out for

execution. As she went along the fatal road she sang hymns of joy ; and passing by the chapel, she said, "There I heard the words of my Saviour."

The place of execution was strewn with the bones of former criminals, but the prospect which it afforded over the wide and cultivated plains, dotted with villages and ricefields and watered by mountain streams, was commanding and beautiful. Yet it was a fairer country than all this to which the spirit of Rasalama was now preparing its flight. As she calmly knelt for prayer the spears of the executioners were thrust through her body, which was left to be food for dogs.

Some of the bystanders called out as the Jews did in contempt and unbelief when Jesus hung on the cross, "Where now is the God she prayed to, that he does not save her?" Others were like the centurion who, seeing the manner of Christ's death, said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." The executioners repeatedly declared that there was some charm in the religion of the white people which took away the fear of death which so haunts the heathen mind. One faithful friend, who beheld her peaceful and happy end, exclaimed, "If I might die so tranquil and happy, I would willingly die for the Saviour too."

Thus, on the fourteenth day of August, 1837, died the first martyr from the membership of the Madagascar church. Thus triumphed divine grace in the person of one of the daughters of heathenism, but a short time acquainted with the transforming, exalting truths of the gospel for which she died. She has her record on earth, not only in the affectionate remembrance of Christ's followers all over the world, but in the beautiful memorial church which, thirty-one years afterward, was built on the very spot where the bloody spears and ravenous dogs did their work. But precious as is this remembrance, infinitely better is her record on high, where her light affliction has long ago wrought out for her a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

On the return of the two brethren who had been at Tamatave, on the coast, they were also seized, their goods confiscated, and themselves, wives and children sold into slavery, with the single privilege that their friends might redeem their wives and children. Paul became the slave of the prime minister, who made him work in the ricefields all day and put him in irons all night. Four other Christian slaves were associated with him, to whom he proved a great source of comfort, often repeat-

ing from memory the glorious forty-sixth Psalm, and leading their minds to the divine and loving Saviour. Two hundred persons were enslaved for Jesus' sake at this time.





CHAPTER VIII.

ESCAPE OF RAFARAVAVY.

RAFARAVAVY remained several months in prison before being publicly sold. But for the high standing of her father with the government, she would in all probability have shared the fate of Rasalama. Her conversation was discreet and edifying, and made a favorable impression on her heathen guards. When asked if she was not sorry that she had brought this trouble on herself, she answered, with spirit, "How can I be sorry for the pardon of my sins and for asking God to bless me and make me happy?"

At length she was sold in open market to the chief military officer, who gave her in charge to a subordinate officer, a distant relative of the slave. He treated her kindly, and her husband, being allowed to come home, paid her a visit of some months. Another praying circle had been formed by these

earnest and courageous Christians, and the ardent Rafaravavy joined the little band. But they were not long unmolested. The leader, Rafaralahy, was deceived in a former teacher and friend whom he introduced as a hopeful convert into the circle. The supposed friend owed Rafaralahy some money, and when asked to pay it went immediately and betrayed him and his associates to the government. Rafaralahy was seized and put in irons. Every effort was made to persuade him to give the names of his associates, but he firmly refused: "I am here; I have done it. Let the queen do as she pleases with me; I will not accuse my friends."

After three days of close confinement he was taken to the same place of execution where, with admiration, he had beheld the martyrdom of Rasalama. On the way he spoke to the officers of the love and mercy of Christ, and of his own happiness in the prospect of soon seeing the Redeemer who had done so much for him. His last moments were spent in supplication for his country and his persecuted brethren, and he fell beneath the bloody spears as tranquilly as Rasalama had done twelve months before. His wife, a timid woman, and her servant were afterward seized and cruelly beaten and threatened, until, overcome with pain, terror and

exhaustion, they gave the names of those who had been accustomed to worship in their house.

While this was going on, Rafaravavy, with two other Christian women, was quietly conversing, in entire ignorance of the fearful occurrence. A slave suddenly entered and handed her a note. Her countenance changed as she read of the death of Rafaralahy and the betrayal of herself and other of her associates. They all determined on instant flight, although at a loss to know in what direction they would find safety. The two women fled to distant parts of the country, but Rafaravavy entered the capital, near which they had been staying. There, after conference and prayer with some Christian friends, and after searching for the aged Paul and others equally implicated, she left the city at midnight.

It was once more a narrow escape from death. The same evening a warrant had been prepared for her death, and in the morning the officers went to her master's house, and not finding her there, to every place which she was known to visit. Her own nephew, an eminent Christian, and the aged Paul had been seized, and with one other were to be put to death, but the execution was delayed so that Rafaravavy might be added to the number. The

death of four such eminent Christians at once would, it was believed, strike terror into the minds of the people and hinder the progress of the gospel.

But Rafaravavy, who mingled much of the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, was not to be found. She made good use of the hours of darkness in putting a long distance between herself and the scene of danger. By the evening of the next day she and her party were forty miles away, at the town of Itanimanina. There they were cordially received by Christian friends, and at the suggestion of an officer of the government who was friendly to Christians, and who told them that their escape had made a great stir in the capital, they retraced their steps, and fled to a forest on the opposite or eastern side of the capital.

Several Christians of high standing had been sold as slaves in consequence of their religion. Their masters were traders. When threatened with death for persisting in Christian worship, they determined to fly.

But before going they carefully packed the goods they had charge of, made out correct accounts of all they had sold, and enclosing the money in the

package with the letter, left it, properly addressed, for their masters. One of these, a high government officer, on opening the package and finding the money, exclaimed, with astonishment, "This is not customary, for slaves when running away to send back their masters' property. These people would make excellent servants, if it were not for their praying."

The fugitives remained three months concealed in this forest. They depended on a friend in the city for their supply of rice, which he carried on his back a distance of forty miles.

Rafaravavy found shelter at night in the houses of kind friends, but before daylight every morning she was obliged to hide in the hollows of the mountain. Her night refuge was discovered, and eight soldiers were sent from the capital to capture this single Christian woman. But it was only to add another to her many marvelous deliverances. Two of the soldiers were close upon the house, unknown to herself or any others inside of it. Rafaravavy had but two minutes' warning. She could only hide herself behind a hanging mat before they entered, told their errand and inquired where she was. She heard every syllable they uttered, and trembled lest her own loud breathing

should betray her place of concealment. After talking some time with the soldiers the master of the house rose to go out. The soldiers, suspecting that he went to inform Rafaravavy of her danger, went out with him, thus giving her time to escape, which, you may be sure, she improved without delay.

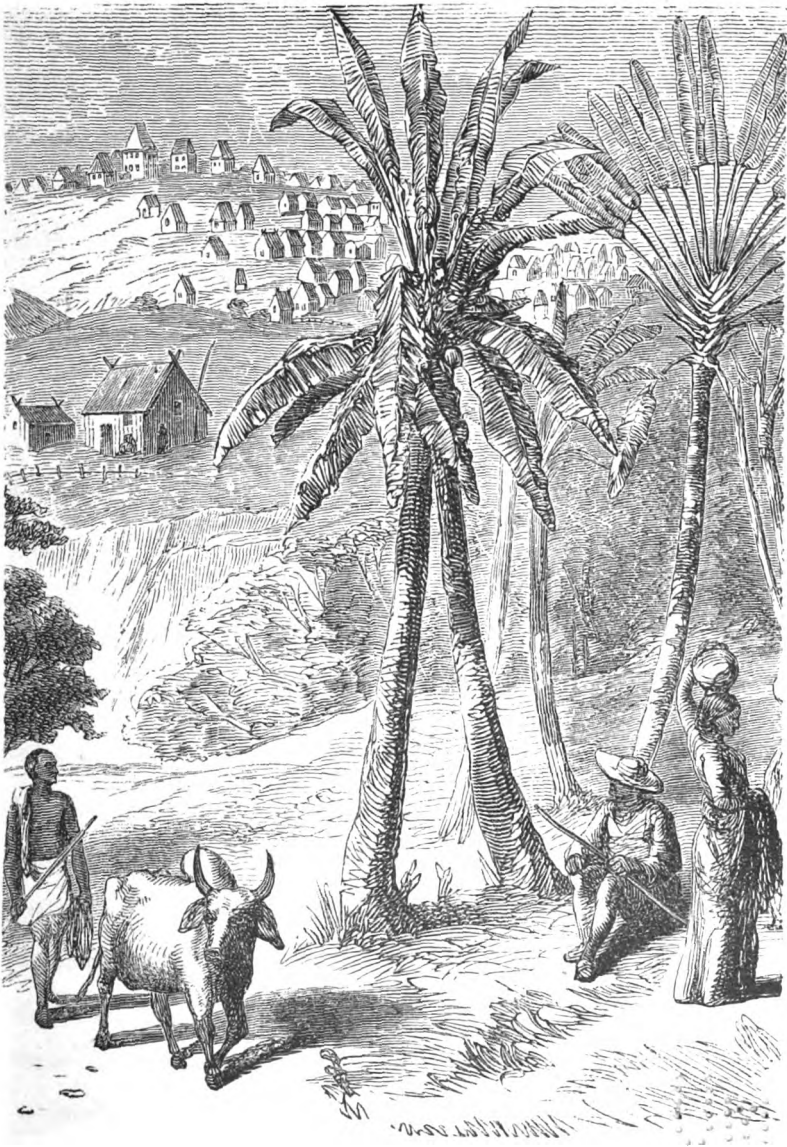
The presence of the soldiers in the district not only made it impossible for the fugitives to find shelter, but brought all who had sheltered them into such danger that they also were compelled to fly from their homes and join those whom they had so kindly protected. Thus for weeks these homeless and hunted wanderers fled from their pursuers, suffering the greatest privation and distress. Sometimes their enemies would be close upon them, and they would be compelled to plunge for concealment into a bog, in which they would sink so deep as to be unable to extricate themselves without help.

At one time Rafaravavy was hid in an empty room with an unfastened door, before which the soldiers who searched the house stood, but the master of the house, a friend of the Christians, diverted their attention from it long enough to allow her to escape.

The rain, which fell in torrents, drenched them. Their bed was the bare ground, amid rocks and boulders. Sometimes they would hide in the tall grass that grew on the top of some ancient burial-mound. Traveling frequently by night, they fell in with brigands and robbers. Once they took refuge in what turned out to be a robbers' cave.

Late one evening, on entering a village, and hearing in one of the houses a loud noise as of persons talking, they quietly passed on to another known as the dwelling of a friend. She met them with silent looks of amazement, and told them that soldiers in search of them were in the village, and a party of them in the very house where they had noticed the noise. In great embarrassment she hid them in a pit and covered its mouth with thorn bushes. There they remained for twenty-four hours, after which they found refuge for several days on a manioc plantation belonging to the same person. Here a party of eight soldiers passed by without discovering them. From this place of refuge they passed to another, also the property of a friend, a few miles distant.

The fugitives had not more cause for gratitude to a protecting Providence than for surprise and rejoicing at the numerous friends and truly pious



Natives, with village in the back ground.

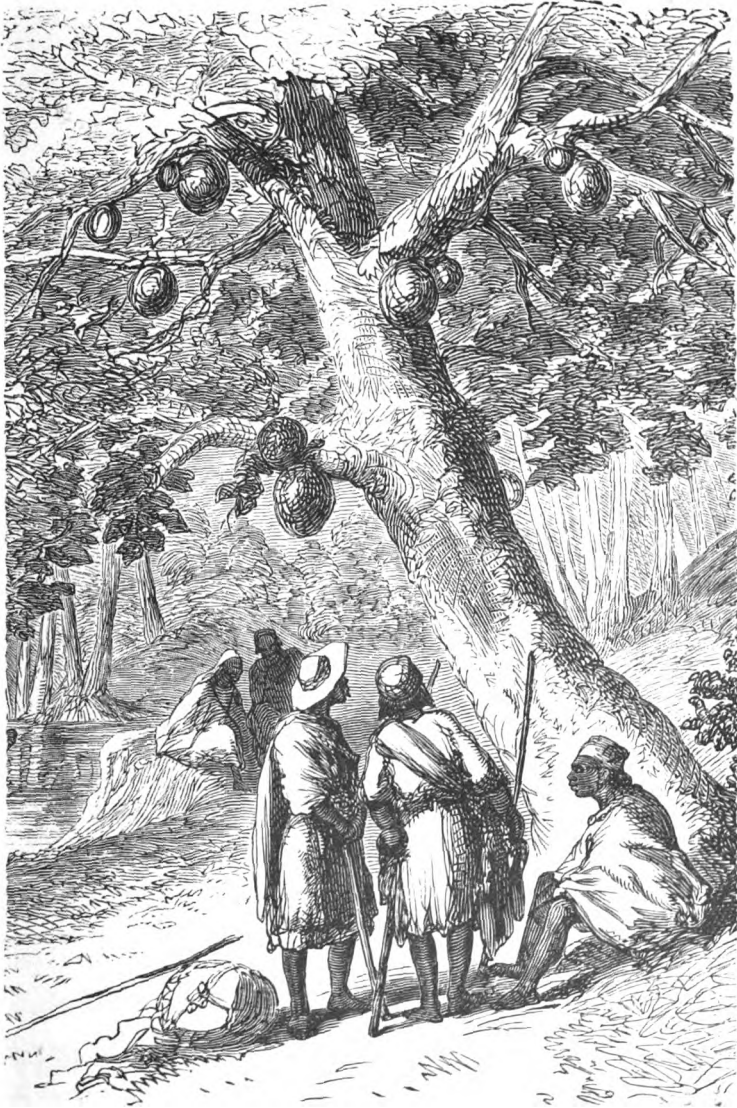
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persons whom they met at great distances from the scene of missionary teaching and labor. The first halting-place they reached on their present flight from their pursuers was nearly fifty miles from the capital, yet they found Christian families who welcomed and sheltered them. And often in their wanderings both east and west of the capital, in lonely dwellings rather than in villages, they would come unexpectedly upon some Christian household never heard of or suspected before, sometimes possessing parts of the Scriptures and able to read them, keeping the Sabbath, sometimes forming with other families scattered over the country side a circle that celebrated Sunday by united Christian worship. To the hunted and famished Christians these households and Sabbath gatherings were surprises as joyful as fountains breaking forth in the midst of the desert. They proved how widely and deeply the influence of the missionaries' teaching had spread and penetrated among this people. That the piety thus diffused was genuine is proved by its fruits. It had created a holy bond of brotherhood among Christians. Without hope of reward—much rather with the certain prospect of loss and danger of death—they befriended one another, they welcomed the fugi-

tives for the faith, and sheltered and fed them with inexhaustible generosity.

It was while sharing the protection of a Christian friend that the fugitives learned that Mr. Johns, the missionary, was at Tamatave on the coast. On hearing this they determined to make the attempt to reach him, and by his aid to escape if possible to some region where love to Jesus and prayer to God and the humble effort to lead a holy life were not regarded as capital crimes. Word was sent to Mr. Johns of their intentions, and he gladly accepted the duty, and arranged with a Christian native the details of their escape. When the messengers returned from the coast and brought back this welcome news, Rafaravavy and four other condemned Christians commenced their extremely perilous journey to Tamatave. For four days and nights they did not venture to enter a house.

Two days' journey brought them to the precipitous pass of Angova, after which they traveled through the country of the beautiful rofia palm and the refreshing traveler's tree. This brought them to the coast, where they skirted the edges of the numerous lakes or walked toilsomely on the yielding sands of the seashore. When near Tama-



The Jack Tree and Fruit.

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tave they were obliged to hide in the jungle, and sent their servants to the Christian friend instead of going themselves, being afraid of meeting with the soldiers, who were numerous in the neighborhood.

Their friend, whom God had raised up for their deliverance, was himself a military officer and a judge, a secret believer in Jesus, who risked his place and his life in befriending the fugitives. The servants were gone two days, which was a period of anxiety as intense as any they had ever experienced. Finally the messengers came back with a smile of triumph in their faces. They had made an appointment with their friend, and before the sun set he had carried the fugitives in a canoe to his own dwelling. Here they were received with marked kindness, and after satisfying their immediate wants they united in joyful worship.

The ship which had been expected soon after arrived. Word was sent to the fugitives to cut off their hair in order to disguise themselves. Near nightfall they were led by their guide again to the jungle. There they further disguised themselves in sailors' clothes. The guards on the landing-place were by some means diverted from observing their movements, and the moment at last

came which was to decide their fate. Almost holding their breath, they moved to the water's edge, entered the boat, pushed from the shore, glided over the waters and reached the ship's side. When all were on deck, the kind captain, rubbing his hands, exclaimed, "It is done." Sails were set, a favoring breeze sprung up, and on the thirteenth of October, 1838, the party had reached the English island of Mauritius.

In about a month the Christian soldier and magistrate, who had aided so materially in their escape, found it necessary that he also should fly. In May, 1839, the whole party arrived in Christian England, where they were welcomed with most affectionate gladness and admiration.

On their way to England, the fugitives stopped a short time at Port Elizabeth, in South Africa. There they met with fellow-converts to Christianity among the Hottentots who gave them a cordial welcome. Their language was quite different; and although they found an interpreter, he knew and cared so little about religion that they could not make him understand their feelings or express them to one another. They were not to be hindered by this, however, but taking their Bibles, they would turn to the same passage in each, and thus

readily converse together. The Hottentots made the escaped Christians understand that they were among friends, although their fathers were cruel and savage, murdering and devouring strangers. But God had had compassion on them, sending them missionaries who taught them about Jesus.

They pointed to Ephesians, second chapter, second verse: "Among whom we all had our conversation in time past," etc. The Madagascar Christians, delighted, turned to the fourteenth and fifteenth verse: "For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition," etc.; also to Gal. iii. 28: "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Another time the Hottentots pointed to John xvi. 33: "In the world we shall have tribulation." The Madagascars replied by turning to Rom. viii. 35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

When about to part, these friends in Christ united in singing a hymn. It was sung in different languages, but the sentiment and the tune were the same. The Hottentots made a little collection among themselves to help pay the expenses of the voyage to England. They went down to the beach

with them, and while waiting for the boat they kneeled down and commended them to God, and parted from them with many tears.

The fugitives reached England in May, 1839, and immediately received an enthusiastic welcome. They traveled through the island and beheld the vast advantages of its Christian civilization. But their hearts reverted fondly to the scenes they had left, and especially to those who were passing through the fiery furnace from which they had escaped. They were presented with a printing-press, which they used to multiply copies of a letter of their own writing to their suffering friends at home. Here are passages from this affecting letter :

“ Although we are thus happy in the enjoyment of many mercies in this land, yet our hearts are full of grief and sighing when we remember you, with whom we often united in prayer and praise, and who are still enduring persecution. Dear friends, we cannot forget you, we are partakers of your sorrows, and sympathize with you in your afflictions. When we heard of your enduring cruel scourgings, we felt as if we also had been scourged with you. When we heard of your being subjected to hard and cruel labor, we felt as if we were under your burdens. When we heard of your

being compelled to leave your houses, and, without any settled abode, wandering about in the wilderness, hiding yourselves in dens and caves of the earth, exposed to the heat of the sun by day and the cold air of the night, we felt as if we were with you in all your journeys and taking a part in all your troubles."

Then they go on to tell their friends that they had sometimes spent a whole day in fasting and prayer on their behalf, and particularly for the queen, that God would change her heart. They say, "We feel no resentment, only pity. We cry to God, if it be his will, to cause us and our persecutors to inherit together eternal life, as Saul and Stephen are now in heaven."

Then they add many words of encouragement: "Be strong, beloved friends, and do not be discouraged; these afflictions will not last long; better days are at hand. If you should not be delivered from them while you continue in this world, in heaven you will be free from them all. And in all your wanderings and afflictions be not discouraged, for God is the Rock of Ages: upon him you can stand firm; he is a pillar: on him you can lean without fear; he is a shield and a stronghold for you, and his word is a lamp to your feet; wait for

him and trust in him, and he will uphold you with the right hand of his righteousness. He shall cover you with his feathers, and under his wings shall you trust. He will gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings ; he will increase your strength, and will guide you even to death."

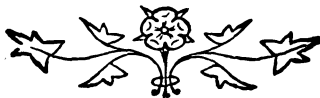
Some curious mistakes, of course, were made by persons so little acquainted with the language and manners of the country. One of the party, being offered a steel pen as a present, supposing from the name "steel" that it had been dishonestly procured, drew back quite shocked and shook his head. The giver was hurt at the refusal ; and when Joseph's mistake was discovered, it was a standing joke against him for some time.

For three years these rescued victims of heathen malignity remained with their Christian friends in England. Not only their heroic endurance and suffering for Christ, but their personal characters, won them universal regard. Rafaravavy especially was distinguished for intelligence, good manners, gentleness, benevolence and sincerity. Their history sounded like a romance of Christian chivalry. Their lives and conduct bore the stamp of practical Christianity. They were living epistles, ministered by the Spirit, demonstrating the

reality of his work upon the people of Madagascar.

In 1842 they returned to Mauritius. They were accompanied by Mrs. Johns, who, on their arrival in Mauritius, formed them into the nucleus of a mission station at Moka, which became a place of refuge for the fugitives from Madagascar.

Mr. Johns kept up affectionate intercourse with the Christians in Madagascar, and made frequent voyages to the coast in the vain effort to render them further aid in their tribulations. Finally his own valuable life was sacrificed in his exertions, and in August, 1843, in the fiftieth year of his age, he sank under fever, fatigue and anxiety, and died.





CHAPTER IX.

END OF THE FIRST AND COMMENCEMENT OF THE SECOND PERSECUTION.

WHILE by the favor of Providence these brave Christian men and women escaped as birds from the snare of the fowler, others were undergoing cruel punishments and privations under the rule of the wicked queen. One woman who had professed Christ was divorced from her husband, driven from her father's house and compelled to drink the tangena, under which she died. Another, accused of attending a prayer-meeting, was beaten again and again, in the vain effort to extort from her the names of her associates. Having undergone the tangena, she escaped with others to uninhabited parts of the island, and was not afterward heard of.

The escape of so many of her victims filled the queen with rage. With horrible ferocity, she gave fresh orders to her soldiers to bind hand and foot



any Christian whom they might find, and without delay or ceremony dig a pit on the spot, cast them into it head foremost, pour boiling water on them till they died, and then fill up the pit and go search for other victims. She would not believe that the Christians had not some secret charm which not only enabled so many to escape, but which gave them power for evil over others.

But the Christians all continued to be true and faithful to each other, and in the midst of the dreadful penalties threatened and the unceasing watch placed upon their actions their number continued to increase. A general sympathy was aroused, even among the heathen, by the barbarity of the queen's order. The quiet but firm endurance of suffering and death by the Christians confounded their persecutors. They were constrained to acknowledge that they were sustained by a power more than human, and many concluded that a religion which took away the fear of death must be founded on the truth.

The queen did not sharpen her vigilance in vain. On the twenty-third of May, 1840, sixteen Christians who had been accused and compelled to fly from their homes for their religion, under encouragement from missionaries and English friends in Madagas-

car and Mauritius, attempted to make their way to Tamatave, and thus escape from the island. They had gone in safety through two of the intervening provinces; but when a short distance north of the Hot Springs, or Ranomafana, they were betrayed by one of their guides, captured and carried back to the capital. While on the return, when within six miles of the city, one of the company, a woman, with the bravery and sagacity which we have already marked in these Madagascar women, slipped behind one of the men and made her escape. A friend, a woman again, provided for her safety, placing her in an unoccupied house, the doors and windows of which were filled with stones.

The remaining captives were brought to the city and closely questioned about their associates, but they refused to name a single one of the two hundred Christians who were probably then living in the capital or the suburbs. The prisoners were then bound and placed under guard, but in the night a young man by the vigorous use of his teeth undid the cords on his wrists, and with freed hands and teeth soon liberated his feet. Opening the window of his prison, and finding the guards asleep on the outside, he passed out unharmed, and made his appearance at the door of a friend's house

in Analakely, and startled the inmates as if with a vision from the dead. Receiving him with gladness after their first burst of astonishment was over, they afterward saw him safely concealed by a military friend among the tents of some new recruits from the country. Thirteen years afterward Mr. Ellis met the man in Madagascar, still unharmed, but in constant peril so long as Ranavalona continued upon the throne.

On the ninth of July a great assembly of people was again called at the capital. From early morning the crowds began to collect on the plain. The prisoners were brought out in sight of the multitude. Toward noon proclamation was made of the queen's displeasure at the continued evidence of an inclination toward Christianity among the people, in spite of all she had done to alter it. As to the sixteen prisoners lately captured, eleven of them were condemned to death, two of them, however, having escaped. The remaining nine would be put to death immediately.

Too weak from long privations to walk, they were tied to poles, and the poles slung across the shoulders of carriers, who bore them to the place of execution. All appeared engaged in prayer, and the faces of some were radiant with a holy

calm. One of them, a brave Christian woman, like those we have already become acquainted with, spoke openly to the soldiers of the Saviour in whom she trusted. On a rugged hill nearly opposite to the palace they fell under the executioner's spear. Paul the aged, the converted conjurer and faithful preacher, was among the victims at this time. This was in the summer of 1840.

These executions only seemed to deepen the impression in favor of Christianity. For a couple of years they were suspended. Omens like the bursting of a cannon on this occasion were interpreted as boding evil to the persecutors. The people became less willing to inform against the Christians. The noble bearing, the love and confidence toward Christ, and the tender interest in the salvation of their persecutors and executioners shown by the Christians, were the most convincing proofs that could be given to the natives of the truth of the religion for which they died. The executions stopped the mouths of the people, but they could not prevent the working of their thoughts. There were deep ponderings and just comparisons made upon the differences between the heathen and the Christian religions. The supporters of idolatry found their influence waning in spite of the atro-

cious course they were pursuing for the accomplishment of their object. But the hindrances to the spread of the gospel were not diminished. The soldiers now in greater numbers sought out the flying Christians, and became more fully acquainted with their hiding-places. Escape became more difficult. Places of meeting became less numerous, more difficult to reach and less numerously attended. The darkest days that had as yet befallen their cause were upon them. No earthly consolation could reach them. Yet even under these circumstances additions were made to their numbers, and their own faith continued steadfast.

Two years passed by without any more executions or violent demonstrations against the Christians. Although the lines cannot be very sharply drawn, it may at all events be convenient to reckon a second stage of persecution as commencing with the 19th of June, 1842. That day, Sunday, witnessed the execution of two converts who had been soldiers, but who were seized while returning from a missionary tour among the Salaklava tribes of the north-west. As usual, they were cruelly treated to induce them to betray their fellow-believers, and as usual in vain. They sent by a friend who fed

them while in prison a whispered message to the brethren, assuring them that whatever they might suffer, they would not betray the names of their associates, and they kept their word. They met their fate with a constancy and cheerfulness that astonished the heathen spectators.

Three months later the rage of the queen against the Christians was rekindled by an act of foolish bravado on the part of some unknown person, who fastened upon the wall of a house in the capital a leaf from the New Testament with the words of Matthew xxiii. 13, underlined as follows: "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

The queen, probably regarding the words as aimed at herself, issued a furious proclamation, requiring the author of the offence to make confession in four days, on penalty of being cut into pieces as small as musket-balls.

No confession was made, and the queen actually caused the arrest of several Christians, two of whose bodies were cut into mincemeat and afterward burned. The only ground of suspicion against these persons was that they were Christians

sufficiently educated to read and write. It is indeed very doubtful whether so foolish and useless an act was done by any Christian at all. It might have been the plot of a shrewd mischief-maker who only wished to bring the Christians into trouble.





CHAPTER X.

THE GOSPEL IN CÆSAR'S HOUSEHOLD.

THE second period of persecution was marked by few other acts of violence. Acts of worship had to be performed in secret. Sunday services were held in places so remote that the worshipers had to start the day before in order to be there in season. But the people who did not join in the services refused to inform against them. The numbers of the Christians continued to increase, and for two years, from 1847 to 1849, the churches had rest, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

For now the light of truth had penetrated the royal household itself. A friend had arisen close beside the throne, who, if he could not entirely change the anti-Christian policy of the queen, could delay its progress and lessen its violence. The

only son of the queen and heir to the throne, at the age of sixteen, became interested in the Christians.

Rakatond-Radama—for that was his name—appeared to be naturally of a sweet and amiable disposition, just the reverse of that of his mother. He seemed to take delight in relieving the oppressed people, and in following his mother's cruelties with such acts of kindness as were in his power to bestow. He hated the shedding of blood and labored to reverse his mother's ever-ready sentence of death upon her unfortunate subjects. He was always ready to listen to the stories of the sufferers, and strictly forbade his slaves turning any applicant away on the plea that his master was sleeping or at his meals. People would often come to him at the middle of the night with petitions for their relatives who were to be executed early the next morning. And so anxious was he for their rescue, that if he failed in his appeal for mercy he would meet the victims on the road to execution, cut their cords and set them free. It was very strange that such a character could spring from such an origin. And it was stranger still, if possible, that a strong affection could subsist between such a mother and such a son, and that the son, while opposing and thwarting the queen's pol-

icy, excused her bloody deeds by every conceivable argument. Most sons would have gone a step farther, and have imbibed the prejudices and imitated the views which he thus tenderly strove to palliate.

It is related of this prince Rakatond that he has taken pains to visit the scenes of severe compulsory labor which the queen frequently imposed upon her subjects for the benefit of some one of her favorites, where hundreds would be engaged for months in hewing timber and dragging it for thirty miles, in cutting stone and similar exhausting work, for which they never got the slightest reward of any kind. Arranging matters so as to seem to by pass by accidentally, he would make inquiry into the condition of the people; and if, as was generally the case, they were insufficiently provided with food, and compelled to live on herbs and roots, he would see that oxen were killed and the meat distributed, with rice, among the famished laborers from the stores of the nobleman for whom the job was being done.

The survivors of a crew of shipwrecked sailors were sent from the coast to the capital, to be sold, according to custom, as slaves. The prince met them about a day's journey from the capital, and noticed one of the party limping along painfully

after the rest without shoes, when he leaped down, drew off his own shoes and gave them to the sailor.

Another time, seeing a prisoner driven brutally with blows and pushed toward the capital, until he was utterly exhausted, the prince reproved the guards for their severity, alighted from his sedan-chair and put the prisoner, who was a European, into his place.

One of Madame Ida Pfeiffer's bearers who had stolen an ox was detected and sentenced to immediate death. A friend of the lady-traveler and of the prince hunted up the latter with some difficulty, secured his mediation when the culprit had but half an hour to live. The prince proceeded at once to the prison, opened the captive's door and pointed him the way homeward. Madame Pfeiffer declares that many days did not elapse without his saving life or performing some generous action. He would often give away his last dollar, distribute all his stores of rice and other provisions, and seemed doubly pleased when the persons thus aided knew not the benefactor to whom they were indebted. How much is due in these admirable traits of the prince's character and conduct to the general influence of Christian teaching among the people cannot be fully disclosed. A naturally genial and

kindly disposition led him to look favorably upon a religion of peace on earth and good-will to men. About this time, 1847, there had arisen a mighty preacher among the Christians, whose name was Ramaka, called Rasalasala—the bold one—by his admiring associates. In spite of the severe penalties threatened by the queen, the fame of this preacher spread abroad, and multitudes gathered to hear him. He was the first popular preacher in the Madagascar church, and he “drew” select as well as large congregations. Prince Rakatond, son of the queen, daring all the possible evil consequences, went to hear him, and was deeply and favorably impressed.

He even went a long step farther. He engaged Christian teachers to come to his house every evening when he was not otherwise engaged, to pray and explain the Scriptures to him. At the same time, he often attended Sabbath worship. He interfered in behalf of a number of Christians sentenced to death so effectually that only one perished, while five were sold into slavery, two escaped and the rest remained in chains. The grateful Christians wrote to the missionaries about their new friend. “Thanks to the prudent mediation of the prince, the things reported by the spies

proceed no further. The prince," they say, "comes regularly with us in the woods on Sunday for worship, and often takes some of us home to explain to him the word of truth." It is very strange, yet true, that, in spite of all the interest he took and the valuable services he rendered, he never gave conclusive evidence either now or in the after part of his career of a real change of heart.

Another powerful friend was at this time raised up for the Christians in the person of Prince Ramonja, the cousin of Prince Rakatond. He was older than the queen's son, but a man of like gentle spirit, strongly attached to his royal cousin, and like him a great favorite with the queen. He not only allied himself with the Christians, but allowed them to meet for worship in his own house.

A nephew of the prime minister, also, at this period declared himself a Christian. He had been sent to one of the meetings of the Christians to take down the names of those present and report them to the government. Instead of doing this, he informed the Christians of the object of his visit and dismissed them to their homes. When asked by his uncle for the list, he answered, "There is none." His uncle accused him of being a Christian, and told him he must lose his head as a con-

sequence. The young man calmly replied, "I am a Christian, and if you will you can put me to death, but pray I must." The uncle, however, failed to put his threat into execution, and Christian boldness triumphed.

Restrictions and hindrances, however, were not removed. Those who had previously been condemned were kept in chains under a guard of soldiers, but their friends and others had free access to them, and the prisoners made abundant use of their opportunities to converse, pray and praise with these visitors. They read and explained the Scriptures, and in fact were preachers in bonds, so that their "bonds in Christ were manifest in all the palace and in all other places." This preaching was blessed to the conversion of numbers. Even some of the soldiers on guard over them were converted to Christ. Gradually their chains were loosed and their limbs were freed.

Besides preaching the word, these prisoners employed themselves in patching up the few well-worn Bibles and other books remaining among the Christians. The famine of the written word was keenly felt. Most of the educated Christians employed themselves in copying out, so far as their materials would allow, portions of Scripture and

other books. Mr. Ellis brought home with him from Madagascar no more affecting memorials of the persecution than some of those fragments of Scripture, worn, soiled by the dust of the earth in which they had been buried, or by the smoke of the thatch where they had been hidden, rent, but with the torn edges most carefully drawn together and sewed with fibres of bark, or with the margins protected by pieces of stronger paper.





CHAPTER XI.

THE RAINBOW OVER THE FLAMES.—THIRD PERSECUTION.

BUT all the favor of the great could not secure the Christians long against the rage of the queen. The two years of security and tranquil progress came suddenly to an end. One of the princes known to be favorable to the Christians, Prince Ramonja, was the first object of attack. On the nineteenth of February, 1849, two of his houses which had been used as places of worship were destroyed and the materials carried off as spoil. Eleven Christians were seized and put in chains. A kabar or public meeting was called at Andahalo. These kabars, as they are called in the language of Madagascar, meaning "business," were often the occasion of great suffering in themselves. Not only the men, but women, children and all, were required to attend a kabar at

some point or other. Sometimes it was held in a distant place, so that the people must travel several days to reach it. Nor were the laws and orders read to them at once, but were often postponed from day to day, so that the multitude would be kept weeks away from their homes. Being poorly supplied with provisions and money, many would die of hunger, or live miserably on roots and herbs. The queen seemed to plan the destruction of her people by just such means as these, as well as by the cruel orders and edicts she announced.

At the *kabar*, on the nineteenth of February, 1849, the queen addressed a message of inquiry to the Christians, the substance of which was: "I have killed some, I have made some slaves till death, I have put some in long and heavy fetters; how is it that you do not give up praying?"

Answers were given by the Christians, fully admitting the offence charged, but pleading that reverence for God and for his law made it necessary for them to continue praying. They said, "Our prayers will be a benefit to the queen herself, as well as to the kingdom and to ourselves, for we seek God's blessing upon all." After a week's delay the queen answered by ordering the Christians, as at first, to accuse themselves. The judges

charged with receiving their confessions took a different course, apparently, from that at first intended. They urged upon the people to take the oath which recognized the idols as true gods.

This the Christians refused to do. In reply to the demands of the judges the Madagascar women showed their usual heroism. "I do not pray to wood and stones nor to the mountains," said one. "Unto God alone do I pray, for he is great and without associates or equals." "You wretch!" was the reply; "will you not pray to the spirits of the ancestors and the idols?" "I do not pray to those," was the simple and noble reply. "It is God alone that I serve."

Rainitraho, a noble, a descendant of one of the most distinguished sovereigns of the country, was among these confessors. When asked to take the oath and render homage to the departed spirits of his royal ancestors, he replied that they were kings to be served, but not to be worshiped. His example was so much feared that the officers stopped the examinations, lest all the people in the district would be carried away.

A woman in another district, replying to the summons to the idolatrous ceremony, said, "I believe in God and wish to obey whatever he com-

mands me. I put my trust in Jesus, the Saviour and Redeemer of all who put their trust in him." Another, a beautiful and interesting young woman of good family, whose case created general concern, and whom the queen herself was loth to sacrifice, said, "I cannot serve the idols. God alone will I serve as long as life lasts, for God has given me that higher spiritual life by which I worship him." The officer remonstrated: "Perhaps you are not in your right mind; you may be under the power of a charm. Consider well; do not destroy yourself." But Ranivo disclaimed anything of the kind; and turning to her father, who was standing by, she renewed her confession, and the order to bind her with the others was given.

Sentence was deferred till the next day, the morning of which was ushered in with the firing of cannon. At intervals the firing was continued through the morning while the multitude was gathering at Analakely. The agitated minds of the people were still further stirred when the men and women who had refused to deny their faith were brought forward to suffer the penalty. Strung upon poles, with no clothing but soiled and torn pieces of matting, and with their mouths stuffed full of rags to prevent their speaking of the Saviour

to the people, the company of eighteen condemned Christians, including nobles, common people and slaves, were borne along to the appointed spot. There they were met by the officers, judges and attendants, marching to the sound of military music, with all the pomp of heathen ceremony, in order to make the delivery of the queen's message as impressive as possible. The message was as follows

“I, the queen of Madagascar, declare that no religion whatever, excepting that of your ancestors, shall ever be introduced and practiced in my country; anything besides is totally rejected by me. Had I not ordered the followers of the new religion to make public confession, they would soon overturn the country, and all the people would follow them. I consider them rebels, and I declare to you how I will have them punished as the spirits of my ancestors have revealed to me.”

The sentence was that the four nobles, two of them being man and wife, should be burned alive at Faravohitra, a village near the capital; the other fourteen should be hurled from a precipice a hundred and fifty feet high, west of the palace, and their wives and children should be sold into irredeemable slavery.

Besides these cases, labor in chains for life was inflicted on one hundred and seventeen persons, most of whom were also to be publicly flogged; nearly seventeen hundred were fined for attending Christian worship, and Prince Ramonja was fined one hundred dollars and reduced from his high rank in the army to the position of a common soldier. All other officers in the army or the government service who had attended Christian worship were in like manner reduced to the lowest grade.

As to the queen's own son, the prime minister had remonstrated with her, declaring him to be a Christian. "We are lost," he said, "if your Majesty does not arrest the prince's course." But the queen was immovable: "He is my son, my only son, my beloved son. Let him do what he pleases. If he wishes to be a Christian, let him. He is my beloved son." Thus Providence made use of the unreasoning indulgence of the mother to save a life of such value to the cause as the prince's.

The publication of the sentence was followed by the firing of cannon and the beating of drums, but neither sentence nor noise could destroy the composure of the Christians. They replied to the drums and cannon by singing a hymn of heaven. The nobles were taken under guard to Faravohi-

tra, the highest spot in the neighborhood. As they were carried along they sang of "Going home to God," a simple but expressive and suitable native hymn full of confidence in a blessed immortality. They continued singing till they reached the spot, where they were fastened to stakes planted in a large pile of firewood. The fire was kindled, and as the flames arose their prayers and praises were continued. Repeating the words of Stephen, they said, "Lord Jesus, receive our spirits. Lay not this sin to their charge." At this moment the rain began to fall, the flames were extinguished and a rainbow of immense size, forming a triple arch, stretched across the heavens. To the spectators one end of the arch seemed to rest on the posts to which the martyrs were tied. Once, at least, the flames had to be rekindled. The multitude were struck with terror and amazement; many fled, but according to the testimony of those who remained, the sufferers were finally burned up, having continued to pray as long as they lived. Their death was described by the natives as so soft and gentle that all who witnessed it were astonished.

The remaining fourteen prisoners were then conducted through the deeply agitated crowds to the precipice near the palace, called Ampamarinana.

Still bound at the ankles and wrists, they were hurled over the curved edge of the rock, whence they fell fifty or sixty feet, then striking on a projecting ledge, they bounded off through nearly a hundred feet of clear space and struck upon the jagged and broken fragments of the granite rocks below. One of the victims was heard singing a hymn in the terrible descent to death.

Ranivo, the young woman already spoken of, was kept to the last. Stationed at a spot where the whole fearful scene was in view, it was hoped that she would be terrified at the prospect of such a horrible fate, and would at last save her life by denying her former professions. She was led by the executioner to look over the fearful edge and behold the awful spectacle of the mangled bodies of her friends below. Her relatives entreated her to take the oath and save her life. It was in vain. She begged that she might follow her friends, as she could not do otherwise than they. Her life was, in fact, spared, though she would not yield an inch, and she remained faithful during the whole of her after life.

The next day the fines imposed on many were lowered one half, but even then they were enough to reduce many to abject poverty. The mass of the

people were required to take the oath, and were then dismissed to their homes.

Prince Ramonja was put at hard labor, and instead of his former comfortable clothing was restricted to a light thin garment, little more than a waistband or girdle, and with only this covering was often appointed to night-duty in cold weather. His cousin, Prince Rakatond often visited him, and wept at the sight of his sufferings and sent him food from his own kitchen. Ramonja never recovered from this treatment, but was an invalid the greater part of his life as a consequence. Nothing, however, changed his friendship for the Christians or altered his fearless adherence to his principles.





CHAPTER XII.

CHANGES AT COURT.—MR. ELLIS' VISITS.

ABOUT this time the enemies of Christianity were strengthened by the active interference of a nephew of the queen, who before the birth of her son had, in the absence of any nearer heir, been named at her coronation as her successor to the throne. After the son was born and as he grew up, Ramboasalama, his cousin, never renounced his hopes of becoming king, and regarded Prince Rakatond with jealousy as his rival. When the prince showed his decided leanings toward the Christians, Ramboasalama became naturally more determined and violent, and took the side of the idolaters. It was due in part to his influence at court that the severe measures just recited were taken.

Many of the Christians were compelled to work in granite quarries as convicts under heathen taskmasters. Some were compelled to drag heavy tim-

ber from the forests, the severest labor known in the island. One of the number some years after, in an interview with Mr. Ellis, removed his garment and showed the large scars from the deep wounds made on his shoulders by the heavy, rough stones he and his companions were obliged to carry. They were not allowed to have the shelter, food and clothing which their means would otherwise allow. Their heavy labors were prolonged after the time of sentence had expired. Some of these men who were now thrust into these degraded positions had been officers of the government.

In 1852, Ramboasalama and his party proposed a formal renewal of the sentences already unrighteously protracted. The new commander-in-chief of the army now, however, interfered in behalf of the followers of Jesus. He plead that they had already suffered twice over the punishment assigned to them. "Why should they be sentenced again? The thunder does not strike twice."

The plea prevailed, and the oppressions ceased. The faithful prince Ramonja too had his reward. He came back to his place in the palace, and to that in the prayer-meeting also. He spoke without fear to the queen and his own relations of the gospel of Christ.

At the same time the queen's persistent opposition to Christianity was manifested in many ways. At every military parade orders of the queen were read, requiring from officers and men the utmost diligence in searching and spying out any who might be engaged in reading or worship. Meetings in the capital had to be secret, and chains were still worn by some who had been sentenced to this condition for life, though their chains were considerably lightened. Affecting indeed was the presence at these secret midnight meetings of the condemned Christians, who had stolen cautiously from their places of concealment, and who joined in worship, still wearing their chains.

The influence of the princes Rakatond and Ramonja was still felt, in spite of the opposition of Ramboasalama, in protecting the Christians. Both these princes spent large sums of money in sending them relief. A number of Christians having been captured, Rakatond went in person to the place of their confinement, set them free and told the keeper if called to account for their absence to say that he had released them.

In the remote districts the disciples enjoyed comparative freedom. The work of conversion went forward, and the believers numbered thousands.

Secret meetings were held in seven places in the capital itself, where a church of sixty-eight members united in monthly celebration of the Lord's Supper. In fact, this whole period of persecution was brought to a close by the death of Rainiharo, one of the ministers who had placed Ranavalona on the throne, and had supported her persecuting policy with all his power. His son, altogether a different person, who had attached himself to Prince Rakatond, came into his father's place.

The prince himself was now formally associated with his mother in the government. The rumor which reached England in January, 1853, that the government had been committed to the prince, or that the queen desired to see her son established on the throne during her lifetime, and that arrangements were in progress for her early abdication in his favor, was indeed incorrect; he had been made secretary of state and one of the officers of the palace, and the duty of authorizing the publication of the royal orders was assigned to him.

The reports which reached England, together with the information that the government was desirous of resuming friendly relations with England, which had for some time been interrupted, decided the London Missionary Society, which had planted

the gospel in the island, to send a delegation in order to prepare the way for re-establishing the mission, broken up seventeen or eighteen years before. The deputation, composed of the veteran Rev. William Ellis and the Rev. Mr. Cameron, succeeded in reaching the coast, but were not allowed to visit the capital. A second visit, made in June of the next year, was not more successful, on account of the prevalence of cholera in Mauritius, from which island the deputation had come.

During these visits to the coast, Mr. Ellis had frequent opportunities of conversing with native Christians, all of whom, however, were under more or less constraint and fear. Coming between nine and ten o'clock at night to his house, they would set a watch at the gate in order to prevent surprise. The whole result of impressions left on his mind by these interviews, and from other means of information, was in the highest degree favorable to the piety, attainments and faithfulness of these much-enduring Christians of Madagascar.

Shut out in the early stages of their religious history from the sympathy and guidance of Christendom, and fiercely and murderously persecuted by their own government, their most urgent want was for the word of God, and the prospect which

Mr. Ellis could hold out of an early and ample supply filled them with unutterable joy. The knowledge of the gospel had been spread to remote parts of the island. The evidences of true piety were manifest not only in the brotherly affection with which they aided and protected each other at every personal risk during the persecutions, but by the absence of all feelings of vindictiveness or revenge toward their enemies.

The condition of the island at this time was described by Mr. Ellis as divided between two great and nearly equal parties. One was favorable to education, improvement and Christianity, and the other opposed to all innovation and determined to uphold the superstitions and ancient customs of the country. At the head of the former party was Prince Rakatond and others, holding the highest offices under government. At the head of the other was the heathen cousin and rival of the prince, Ramboasalama, described as a shrewd, ambitious, daring man, of considerable business talent and large property, with whom were leagued the patrons and supporters of idolatry, the classes which got their living by idol worship, priests, idol-keepers, diviners, preparers of the tangena; also the supporters of slavery and forced labor.

In short, it was a party depending for its strength upon the continuance of heathenism and upon the power of all the baser passions of the human heart.

No pains were spared by the chief of this party to keep the prince from gaining a permanent standing in the government. They represented him to the queen as ignorant of government, and as bewitched by the Christians. It was believed that the queen herself shared this latter opinion, and had expressed herself as indignant that the Christians had taken advantage of his youth and inexperience to draw him over to their party. But when a formidable conspiracy was discovered against his life, the queen took the strictest measures to guard him from danger. There seems reason to believe that just before Mr. Ellis left the island, in 1854, she had seriously contemplated retiring from the government, and was making preparations to crown her son sole ruler of the country. It was also said that at this time the only person who dared to bring accusations against the Christians was the rival cousin of the prince, all others being afraid that the prince would remember it against them when he came into power.



CHAPTER XIII.

MR. ELLIS' THIRD VISIT.—CHARACTER OF THE NATIVE CHRISTIANS.

AT length, in 1856, on a third visit, Mr. Ellis succeeded in reaching the capital of the island. Leaving London in March, he reached Tamatave on the twelfth of July. There a message of welcome awaited him from the prince royal and from Prince Ramonja, and all necessary facilities for his journey were furnished by the government. But though he found Christians everywhere, and though he was treated with the utmost respect by the queen's government and with unbounded affection by the Christians, and though of open persecution there was none, it was necessary to use the greatest caution in meeting with or recognizing the Christians. Mr. Ellis himself was the object of suspicions and rumors, making it necessary for him to be very guarded in his movements and intercourse.

It was said that the object of his visit was to stir up the people to a rebellious opposition to the government in the practice of their religion, and that his visit would cause more of the queen's subjects to be put to death. It was reported that Ramboasalama had placed spies in the daytime about the missionary's dwelling, so that many were hindered from visiting him, and many more would have been but for the medical skill which he possessed, and in applying for which many, both Christian and heathen, were brought into communication with him.

In all important particulars it was found that the Christians of Madagascar lived and acted just as true Christians everywhere have done. Their inward experience showed the same faith and love and hope; they felt the same burden and waged the same conflict with sin. They tried to live the same spiritual lives. They burned with the same compassion for perishing souls and with the same zeal for the extension of the kingdom of Christ over the world. Family worship was practiced, secret daily prayer was universal. They prized and sought for the Scriptures. The most common accusation made against them by their enemies was that of praying. Their weekly meetings

for worship, as we know, were kept up at every risk and inconvenience.

The character and outward conduct of these Christians may be known from the testimony of the persecutors themselves. The heathen judges called to sentence them declared that no charge could be sustained against them, except on the ground of their religion. "What is my crime?" said a Christian to the officer who had seized him and was carrying him to prison. "I am not a traitor, I am not a murderer. I have wronged no one." The officer replied, "It is not for any of these things that I must take you, but for praying." In fact, one of the earliest causes of bitter hostility against them was their forsaking and resisting the vices and immoralities of the population generally. The whole fabric of social life was elevated and purified amongst the Christian families, who became shining examples to the heathen community of the blessedness of domestic piety.

One of the first efforts of an uneducated Christian was to learn to read, and the children of all Christian parents were taught to read and many to write, so that education and learning went hand in hand with the spread of Christianity.

Banded together in mutual love, sustaining and

protecting each other in all their trials to the utmost of their ability, these Christians had formed, without hints or guidance from others, an organization for mutual guidance and edification—in fact, a church, which Mr. Ellis describes as according to the plain and simple model propounded in the Scriptures. The martyr church of Madagascar, originated by its own members, was a New-Testament Church, and was therefore prepared to fraternize in form as well as in spirit with the evangelical portion of Christendom. It was not strange, therefore, that the French priests who visited the capital with offers of French aid to the Christians, about the time of Mr. Ellis' visit, made no perceptible impression.





CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE FOURTH PERSECUTION AROSE.

A NEW persecution, the fourth and last experienced by the Christians, was hastened if not provoked by the attempts of a Frenchman named Mr. Lambert to bring about a violent change in the government by deposing the queen. Mr. Lambert, who was doubtless actuated by the kindest motives, attempted first to get the English and French governments to intervene on behalf of the suffering Christians, and to use force if necessary against the government of Ranavalona. Madame Pfeiffer, who entered into Mr. Lambert's plans with enthusiasm, relates that he had a private interview with the emperor Louis Napoleon, acquainted him with the boundless misery of the people of Madagascar, and tried to induce him to come to the assistance of the unhappy country. The interview, however,

was in vain, as was also the attempt to interest the English prime minister, Lord Clarendon.

According to Madame Pfeiffer, Mr. Lambert secured the co-operation of Prince Rakatond in his plan to revolutionize the government by native aid alone. A portion of the nobility and soldiers were also represented as favorable to the plot, which did not aim at any personal harm to the queen, but only her removal from the throne, leaving her all the freedom, wealth and honor which were her due. The twentieth of June, 1857, was the time fixed for carrying out the conspiracy. The conspirators, with Mr. Lambert at their head, were to assemble in the evening. The commander-in-chief of the army was to keep open the palace gates and officers devoted to Prince Rakatond were to be on guard. At two o'clock in the morning the conspirators were to enter the gates, assemble in the courtyard in front of the queen's apartments, and at a given signal loudly to proclaim Prince Rakatond king of Madagascar. The new minister, who had been previously nominated by the prince, would then declare to the queen that the change was in accordance with the will of the nobles, the military and the people; cannon would be fired from the palace, and the people would be

assured of their deliverance from the sanguinary rule of Queen Ranavalona.

But while the chief conspirators were still at the table, at their late dinner, the commander-in-chief sent them word that in consequence of unforeseen obstacles he had found it impossible to fill the palace exclusively with the prince's officers, that he would consequently be unable to keep the gates open to-night, and that they must wait for a more favorable opportunity.

That opportunity did not come; probably the commander-in-chief himself did not care to have it come. The prince, who never ceased to love and revere his mother, wicked as she was, and who therefore was never very zealous for her degradation, withdrew, with all his associates, from the plot. The Christian population generally, although most deeply interested in the overthrow of the persecuting queen, knew nothing of the affair. What would have been the result if they had been generally enlisted, and what course they should have been counseled to take in a movement which, if successful, seemed so likely to prove of the highest benefit to the country, may be matter of dispute. Mr. Ellis and the society which sent him to Madagascar, and Protestants generally, had reason to fear

the French agencies that were mixed up with the plot. Even if Ranavalona were deposed, and all heathen persecution done away, and if Prince Rakatond with the purest intentions should occupy a throne which he owed largely to the interposition of French Catholics, there was no telling what serious hindrances might in time be thrown in the way of the missionary labors among the people.

Accordingly, Mr. Ellis gave discouraging replies to those who consulted him during his visit upon Mr. Lambert's proposals of revolt. He counseled endurance and submission. In the course of nature the queen's rule could not last much longer; and if the prince royal were raised to the throne, their religious liberty would be assured without indebtedness to any foreign aid. He exhorted them to continue, so long as God should allow them to be persecuted, to bear their affliction as they had hitherto so nobly done, to give their enemies no cause to question their loyalty which they had maintained so long, and neither to listen to any proposals nor become parties to any attempt to depose the queen by force, or to place the country under the protection of the French.

At all events, the Christians, as such, had no hand

in the plot, which was a complete failure, and which now became known to every one. The queen could scarcely have been ignorant of it, although she acted toward the conspirators in the same friendly manner as before, and even invited Mr. Lambert to the palace. As to her son, whom she could not but suspect, she gave out, with a singular mixture of affection and cunning, that no one should venture to accuse him or to hint a suspicion of his guilt to her upon pain of death.

But the fact that the Christians, as such, had no hand in the conspiracy did not save them from suffering the wrath of the queen, which soon broke out. A traitor among the Christians, an inferior chief named Ratsimandisa, who had professed conversion, and who afterward declared that it was only for the purpose of getting a knowledge of the Christians and giving the queen a better opportunity of annihilating them, made out a list of seventy, whom he charged with being concerned in the plot. This list he gave to one of the ministers, who turned out to be one of Prince Rakatond's most faithful friends. It soon got into the prince's hands, who had no sooner read it than he tore it in pieces.



CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST PERSECUTION.—BANISHMENT OF EUROPEANS.

THE prince's action certainly saved the lives of many Christians, giving them opportunity to escape. But some victims the queen must have. On the third of July sorrow and fear spread all over the city at the announcement of a *kabar* to be held that morning in the market-place of the capital. Knowing too well from past experience that such an announcement signified persecution, torture and sentence of death, the people ran howling and wailing through the streets as if the town had been attacked by a hostile army. All the entrances were guarded by the troops, and the inhabitants were torn by force from their houses and driven to the market-place.

The mass of the inhabitants, assembled in the open square, waited with trembling and fear to hear the royal will, which, one of the officials announced with a loud voice, as follows :

The queen, said the officer, had long suspected that there were many Christians among her people. Within the last few days she had become certain of the fact, and had heard with horror that several thousands of this sect dwelt in and around the capital. Every one knew how much she hated and detested this sect, and how strictly she had forbidden the practice of their religion. As her commands were so little regarded, she should use every effort to punish the guilty, and should punish them with the greatest severity. Fifteen days were given in which those who wished to get off with their lives might denounce themselves, but all who were denounced by others might be prepared to die a terrible death. Very few persons regarded the queen's command. Little or nothing would be gained by such self-betrayal. A rigid search was made of the houses of those suspected of Christianity. Letters of encouragement written by a missionary at Tamatave unfortunately fell into the hands of the government and gave the clue for the seizure of some, who were tortured in the vain effort to extort from them the names of their associates. Troops were sent to the surrounding villages, and all who harbored or helped the Christians were threatened with death, while re-

wards were promised to those who aided in capturing them. Search was made in every direction. Every house was entered, and every one suspected, man, woman or child, was seized and dragged to prison.

Yet the number of captives was not great. It was calculated that in four days after the kabar those who had been denounced, and who had actually been captured, did not make a total of three hundred persons. So numerous were the fugitives that they would turn on the small detachments of the soldiers employed in the search and actually put them to flight.

In the mean time, Mr. Lambert and some others of the conspirators continued to cherish their plan of dethroning the queen, and so putting a full stop to her barbarities. But the prince was now kept a close prisoner in the palace with his mother, and every one was forbidden to enter the house occupied by the Europeans, who now had reason to feel their situation to be critical. Madame Pfeiffer belonged to the party, and shared in their dangers, but not at all in their hope of overthrowing the queen's government. The palace guard was trebled, and none were admitted of whose loyalty the queen had the least doubt.

As few prisoners were captured, the rage of the queen increased. In her fury she declared that the bowels of the earth must be searched, and the rivers and lakes dragged with nets, so that not one of the traitors should escape his just punishment. But the more she raved, the more cool-headed and cautious were the Christians. A whole village to which the soldiers were despatched migrated in a body, so that when the soldiers arrived they found nothing but empty huts.

After a week, on the ninth of July, another kabar or assembly was summoned, at which the queen announced that all who helped the Christians in their flight, or who did not stop them on the way, should suffer the punishment of death, and promised her special favor to those who delivered them to the authorities or hindered them in their flight. If such persons hereafter were guilty of any crime, they would either be pardoned or their punishment be made much lighter for their services. Such are the weapons with which the kingdom of holiness and truth is assailed in this world.

On the same day a detachment of fifteen hundred soldiers was sent to the region of the Seklaves, who consider themselves an independent tribe, with



Malagasy Soldiers.

instructions to root out a Roman Catholic mission which it appears had gained foothold there. The five priests who carried on the mission were to be captured and put to death. Prince Rakatond, however, managed to send off a messenger in advance of the troops, so that time was given for all to escape.

On the tenth of July an old woman was denounced to the authorities as a Christian. She was seized immediately, and barbarously put to death the next morning. Six Christians were concealed in a hut in a village near the capital. The soldiers, after a fruitless search, were about leaving the hut when one of them heard a cough. The search was renewed, and soon, in a great hole dug in the earth and covered over with straw, the poor victims were discovered. The inhabitants of the village, who had suffered them to remain unmolested instead of betraying them according to the queen's express orders, were bound and dragged to the capital. Through the friendly intervention of high officials, probably Christians themselves, by far the greater number of them made a speedy escape.

Meantime, the proper disposal to be made of Mr. Lambert and the other Europeans now in the

capital who were concerned in the intended revolution was under lively discussion in the palace of the queen. If her natural passion for human blood needed any stimulus, she had it in the grave offence which had been plotted against her authority. The six Europeans, including Madame Pfeiffer, kept close prisoners in their houses, were in no little disquietude about their liberty and their lives. It was unanimously resolved that the whole company deserved death, and the mode of punishment was under discussion, but Prince Rakatond remonstrated with the greatest energy against such a sentence, and warned the queen of the vengeance she would bring upon herself from the European powers.

On the seventeenth of July, after thirteen days' confinement, the whole party, including Madame Pfeiffer, received an abrupt summons to attend a kabar in the courtyard. On obeying the summons they found more than a hundred persons, nobles, judges and officers, sitting in a large half circle on benches, chairs or the ground; behind them stood a number of soldiers. They were made to sit opposite the judges, who were dressed in long robes and who cast dark glances on the prisoners. For a considerable time there was

silence. Everything was ominous of evil. At length one of the ministers or judges arose, and in sepulchral tones and with many high-sounding terms addressed the prisoners to the following effect :

The people (the queen's name being kept in the background) had heard that this party of foreigners were republicans, who had come to Madagascar with the intention of establishing that form of government there ; that they meant to overturn the throne of their beloved ruler, to give the people equal rights with the nobility and to abolish slavery ; also that they had held interviews with the Christians, who were hateful alike to the queen and the people, and had exhorted them to hold fast to their faith and to expect speedy succor. These treasonable proceedings had so exasperated the people against the party that the queen had been compelled to treat them as prisoners in order to protect them. The whole population of the capital was clamoring for their death. This was no more than what the party deserved, but the queen had never yet taken the life of a white person, and in the exercise of her magnanimity she would simply banish them from her territories. Five of them, including Mr. Lambert and Madame Pfeiffer, must leave in an hour ; the sixth, Mr. Laborde,

who had married a native wife, had a whole day to make preparation. Aid would be furnished, so far as necessary, for the removal of all their portable property. Mr. Laborde's estates, houses, etc. would be confiscated.

Glad to escape with their lives, they made hasty preparations for their enforced departure. But as the bearers to be furnished by the government did not make their appearance promptly, they did not get off till the next day.

On the eighteenth of July they left the scene of so much anxiety to themselves and of such frightful miseries to the Christians. That very morning ten of the Christians were put to death. During their passage to the market-place the soldiers continually thrust at them with their spears, and when they arrived at the ground they were nearly stoned to death before their tormentors finally cut off their heads. This dreadful scene was being enacted as the foreigners were passing the market-place, forming a harrowing remembrance of their visit to the island.

The Europeans got away with their lives, but they seemed likely to lose them before reaching the seaport of Tamatave. The journey should have taken but eight days; by the intentional

delays of the escort it was extended to fifty-three. Mr. Lambert and Madame Pfeiffer were suffering from malarious fever, from the effects of which the latter never recovered. It was very dangerous for them to stay long in the marshy regions through which much of the route lay, and it was highly important that they should get rest. But as if with the intention of accomplishing their destruction, the soldiers prolonged their stay in the worst and most comfortless places, remaining in one little squalid village surrounded by morasses eighteen entire days.

The Madagascar fever under which the foreigners were suffering is one to which all unacclimated persons are subject. The symptoms are most distressing, and they cling with extraordinary tenacity to the system. Violent pains are felt in the lower parts of the body, frequent vomitings follow, with total loss of appetite, and such weakness that the sufferer can scarcely lift hand or foot. At last a feeling of entire apathy comes on, from which the sick person cannot rouse himself by the strongest effort of the will, but lies sunk in a kind of trance, indifferent to what is going on around him. This apathy, together with the pains, continue to plague the patient long after the fever has left him.

Although the escort met with a French physician on the way to the shore, the two sufferers were not allowed to see or to consult with him for a moment. The huts in which they were lodged were generally in the most wretched condition. Wind and rain came rushing through the broken roof and the decayed walls, of which at the best there were but three, leaving one side entirely open. Of beds and covering there was almost none. Madame Pfeiffer had lost all the warm clothing she had by thieves on the first day's march, and during the whole fifty-three days she never changed her clothes, being obliged to occupy the same crowded room with the rest of the party. On the twelfth of September the sufferers reached the coast more dead than alive, and counting it almost a miracle that in their feeble state they had escaped with their lives. Happily, they were detained but three days in Tamatave, a vessel being ready to sail for Mauritius, on which they joyfully took passage.

Madame Pfeiffer, as already intimated, never recovered from the effects of this exposure. She lingered in wretched health until the twenty-seventh of October of the following year, when she died in Vienna.



CHAPTER XVI.

END OF THE SUFFERINGS, AND OF THEIR AUTHOR.

DURING the persecution which raged at this time more than two hundred suffered different kinds of punishment, most of them severe. What made it peculiarly distressing was the fact that the greater number of those who suffered death were men of mark, holding high positions among the Christians, devoted, pious, able and useful. The new and barbarous punishment of stoning was now for the first time employed. The queen hoped that this exceedingly cruel mode of death would terrify the people into submission. Fourteen were stoned to death at one place.

Still another grievous and torturing device was that of chaining a company of Christians together by heavy iron fetters around the neck. Thus bound together, the group of seven or more were compelled to wear away their lives. If one died,

the weight of his chains was added to the already heavy burdens of the others. One Christian is mentioned by Mr. Ellis who had worn fetters weighing fifty-six pounds for four and a half years. Of fifty-seven Christians thus chained together and banished to a distant province, more than half died a lingering, agonizing death in their chains.

This was the last assault of the enemy upon the Church of Christ in Madagascar. Three years afterward, in 1860, an attempt was made by the governor of Mananjara, a port on the southern coast, to rekindle the fires of persecution. His intended victims were two eminent Christian officers and thirty soldiers, whom he accused of violating the laws by meeting together for worship. Whether out of a mere whim or from prejudice against the accuser, the latter was compelled to take the tangena as a test of the justice of his accusation. The result was that the accused were declared innocent and the accuser was put to death in place of the Christians.

Whatever was the particular purpose of the queen in this act, it is certain that no further attempts of the kind were made during the remaining months of her reign. Her cruel disposition

was unchanged to the last, but her health began to give way, and her declining energy may fully account for the change in her policy so welcome to her Christian subjects. Some of the sentences against them were only partially executed, and a number who had been sold into slavery regained their freedom.

But the reign of the bloody Ranavalona was rapidly drawing to a close. For thirty-two years, from 1829 to 1861, she was permitted to sway the destinies of this people. She was a genuine heathen ruler, who did her best to crush and expel Christianity from the region under her control. Her heathen rage and her rebellion against the Lord and against his anointed were persistent and furious. She thirsted for her Christian subjects' blood. She filled the land with terror and mourning. No beneficent acts, no efforts for the good of her people, no endeavors after a higher civilization, marked her reign. If it had any policy at all, it was that of perpetuating the heathen customs and religion which had come down as an inheritance of darkness, cruelty and impurity from the past.

The hardness of her heart, like that of Pharaoh, had its important uses in the economy of God's kingdom. It was the grand occasion for testing

the sincerity and quality of the Christian principle which had sprung up from the teaching of the missionaries in the heathen soil of Madagascar. It furnished the most terrible ordeal through which a newly-planted Christianity has passed in our day. It called forth a heroic and victorious form of piety such as the favorable attitude of the world in general toward Christianity is not adapted to produce. From the tangena-bowl, from the rice-pits, from the terrible precipice, from the spear, the stoning, the burning pile, from dreary wanderings in pathless woods, from slavery and crushing toil, came the almost unvarying witness to the sublime reality and power of the new life-principle implanted in the hearts of these poor islanders. The church of Madagascar, in all its weakness, was so mighty through the rock Christ Jesus that the gates of hell could not prevail against it. It is quite without a parallel in the history of modern missions that a church barely planted in heathen soil should undergo a quarter of a century of persecution from the constituted authorities of the country, cut off from all communication and sympathy with the Christian world, and should come out of the trial not only with its spiritual life in full vigor, untarnished by heathen

admixture or conformities, but multiplied several fold in numbers, advanced in all Christian graces and firmly rooted as a popular faith not only among the masses, but among nobles, the military, and even in the royal family itself.

After ten thousand persons had been sentenced to different penalties by the persecuting queen, it was found in 1861, when the persecutions ceased, that the Christian population had increased from two hundred to a thousand. Moreover, all the community had learned to respect the name of Christian as a synonym for the virtues of honesty, fidelity and trustworthiness—virtues hitherto scarcely known to have existed among the people. The soundness of views of the Madagascar Christians is shown in their ascribing the astonishing preservation and growth of the church under such circumstances to the influence of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. As to the means by which the Spirit worked: besides preaching and praying, reading the Scriptures and the conversation of Christians, they spoke of an indescribable feeling of interest in and sympathy with the Christians among the people on beholding the injustice and cruelty inflicted upon them, and the unprecedented be-

havior of the Christians in praying for their persecutors and seeking their conversion.

As the queen's long and terrible reign drew to a close the hearts of the people seemed to fail them, and undefined fears took possession of them and of their queen. Fires were said to be seen on land and voices to be heard in the sky which the diviners were utterly at a loss to interpret. The queen in her fears turned with renewed earnestness to her idols. Her health now began to fail. She sought more healthy localities without effect; charms, medicines, diviners, idols, sought far and near and at every cost, failed to revive or stay her failing life.

The prince, her son, was now advised not to leave the palace. Five hundred soldiers were kept constantly in the palace yard. The military chiefs assembled at the house of the commander-in-chief. All the members of the royal family were gathered in the palace limits just before the queen's death. The precaution was taken in like manner to surround the palaces of the rival prince Ramboasalama and his heathen adherents with troops. On the sixteenth of July, 1861, the queen breathed her last. Additional guards were placed around the palaces of the rivals; and when the queen's

death was announced, they found themselves prisoners, and heard the loyal soldiers and people shouting the name of Radama as the new king. Their hopes of rebellion being thus utterly crushed, they took the oath of allegiance, and Radama II. was crowned king of Madagascar on the following day. And the sun of that day did not set before he had proclaimed universal toleration and equal protection to all the inhabitants in the enjoyment of their religious convictions.

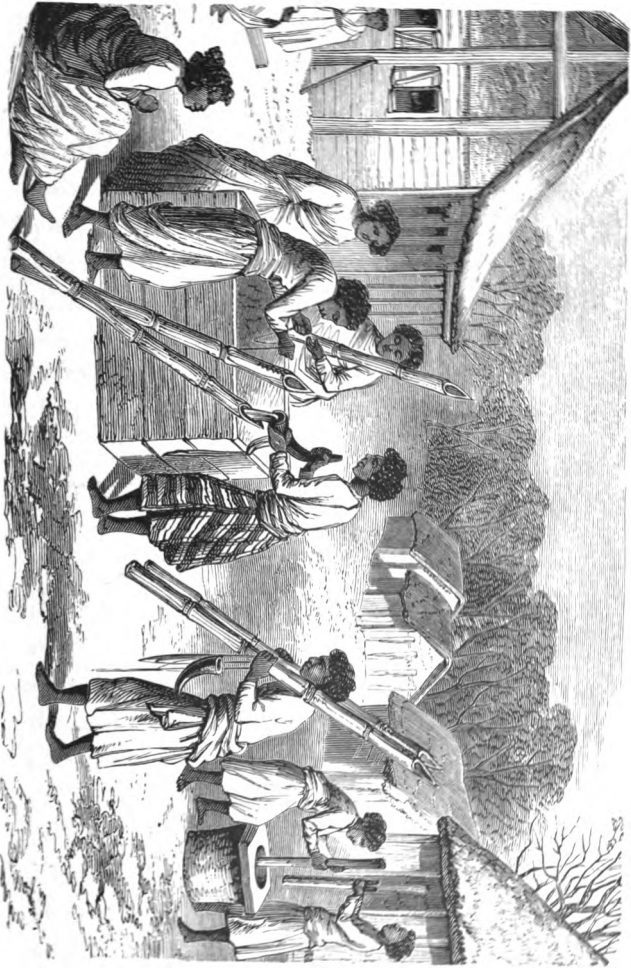




CHAPTER XVII.

THE GREAT DAY OF DELIVERANCE.—ARRIVAL OF MR. ELLIS.

ALL the devilish enginery of Ranavalona against the gospel was swept away in a moment. Officers were sent to open the prison to them that were bound and to proclaim liberty to the captives. They called back the remnant of those who had been condemned to dwell in remote and pestilential districts, released others from the crushing weight of the iron fetters, and set free those who had been sold into slavery. The captive exile hastened to his home; men and women worn and wasted came back to the city and astonished their friends, who had long given them up as dead. Confiscated property was restored to the former owners. The jubilee had come. Those who were not believers, but who had sympathized with the Christians in their difficulties, now rejoiced with them in their deliverance.



Slave Girls at a well, filling bamboos with water and pounding rice.

The idols were banished from the king's residence. Radama answered the boast of the priests that nothing could harm them by sending some Christians to set fire to the house of one of the national gods, and he and his companions looked on while the structure was totally destroyed. When asked to offer a bullock to secure the favor of an idol, he replied, "If the god wants an ox, let him come and ask me for one."

The dreadful ordeal of the tangena for all and every purpose was utterly abolished, and it was ordained that the truth or falsehood of an accusation should be settled by evidence. The practice of exposing infants born on unlucky days was abolished. The king personally interested himself to secure rights and justice to subjects. Prisoners taken in war and doomed to slavery were set free and sent home with presents to their countrymen. All this was enough to inspire hope and enthusiasm. The highest hopes and the fondest anticipations were in fact cherished. As a prince in the court of his cruel mother many had considered Radama a Christian, and he was in fact reported to be a sincere convert. It was a great mistake. The dark side to the glowing picture soon appeared. Like the son of Solomon, Radama

chose young, unwise and gay counselors. Opening his ports to free trade, the land was flooded with foreign rum. Sixty thousand gallons poured in in a week's time, and a whole village would be drunk by noonday. The king himself associated freely with foreigners, and entered into their pleasures with the zest and earnestness which his cheerful disposition and impulsive nature would have led us to expect.

Meantime, the king's favorable inclinations toward the Christian religion were manifest. He early expressed his earnest desire for the return of the missionaries and the extension of the gospel among his people. Word was sent to this effect by the Christians at the capital to the London Missionary Society. In response to the welcome call, Rev. William Ellis, the veteran missionary, was deputed by the society to open communication with the native Christians. He sailed for the island in November, 1861. On reaching Mauritius he found letters from the Christians and an invitation from the king urging him to hasten his visit. Roman Catholic priests had already reached the coast, and had even penetrated to the capital. The Christians gave them no encouragement, but it was high time for the Protestant missionaries to be moving.

Delayed in his movements by the unhealthiness of the season, Mr. Ellis wrote to the king congratulating him on his accession and accepting his kind invitation to visit the capital. Another subject had occupied the missionary's mind, which he now communicated to the king. It was in reference to places in and about the capital where the Christians had suffered martyrdom. As property was changing hands and foreigners were making purchases, Mr. Ellis asked the king not to allow the places made sacred by the sufferings of the Christians to be built upon or sold until he arrived. He thought Christians in Europe might wish to build churches on these sites, and so perpetuate among the Christians and people of Madagascar the memory of the faith and fidelity of those who there had given their lives for Christ's sake and the gospel's. It was an admirable idea, as sagacious as it was beautiful. The king promptly gave his assent in a written reply to Mr. Ellis, and this was the beginning of a movement which has been most happily and successfully carried out, and which has given to the church in Madagascar its most substantial and beautiful houses of worship.

When Mr. Ellis reached the island, in May, 1862, he was received with every possible demon-

stration of welcome. The men who five years before could only see him by stealth within closed doors and in the darkness of night now greeted him in open day, rejoicing to tell him of the marvelous change which had taken place and of the growing feeling in favor of the gospel. On the roadside, as he traveled toward the capital, he was met by delegations of Christians who filled the air with their songs of jubilee. The Sabbath passed upon the journey was spent in worship, the preacher being a native Christian who, when Mr. Ellis last saw him, was an exile flying from place to place with a price upon his head. Now the evening service was just closed when a deputation of high officials from the king and queen arrived, who had been charged to conduct the missionary to the capital, and the deputation, instead of interrupting, asked a continuance of, the services, and listened while another discourse, with prayer, concluded the exercises of the day.

As they drew near the capital, Antananarivo, which from its elevated position was visible from afar, their escort was increased by officers with letters of welcome and messengers whose universal request was for copies of the Bible. Having reached the quarters assigned them in the city, the Chris-

tians flocked in a continual stream to welcome the missionary. The day after his arrival he was conducted to the palace and received by the king and queen. Mr. Ellis bore a letter to these sovereigns from his queen, Victoria, which, with his own assurances of the friendship of Great Britain, was received with ardent satisfaction.

Mr. Ellis found large congregations of native Christians assembled in various places in the capital for worship on Sabbath. Accustomed for twenty-five years to shrink as much as possible from the notice of their persecutors, they had become habituated to meeting in the early dawn. One service would be completed and another commenced by eight o'clock in the morning. These throngs of early worshipers, fearless, joyful and secure, contrasted strongly in Mr. Ellis' mind with the few who used to meet in secret, scarcely daring whisper their prayers and praises in social worship.

No avenue of influence or usefulness seemed now closed against the missionary. The sons of the highest chiefs were placed under his care for instruction in the English language. He read English with the king an hour every day. Radama was building a stone schoolhouse when Mr. Ellis arrived. As soon as it was finished Mr. Ellis was

requested to hold service in the large room every Sunday for the king and his officers, as well as for the public generally. The good missionary treated his royal friend with Christian frankness. On one occasion of state, when the king was receiving the congratulations of the British embassy, including the bishop of Mauritius, for his eminent services to the persecuted Christians and for other humane acts, he turned to Mr. Ellis as if expecting him to speak. Mr. Ellis replied that the king had undoubtedly done much to promote the welfare of the people, for which they were grateful, but added: "There is one great thing wanting—the one thing needful. He has not yet become a Christian himself." The king looked gravely at the speaker, and said, "He knows what is in my heart. He knows that I desire to understand and serve God. I pray to God to enlighten my mind, to teach me what I ought to know."

The king attended the services in his school-house regularly, and was on every occasion a careful listener. Sometimes many officers were present. Some of these became converted. Not so with the king. The society of foreigners had begun to tell upon his habits. Feasting and reveling were frequent in the palace. The king was always the first

to be overcome at these banquets. Mr. Ellis' faithful, earnest and kindly remonstrances were met with acknowledgment and promise of reformation, but that was all. Mr. Ellis did not suffer himself to be discouraged; but remembering Radama's great services to Christianity in the past, and allowing for the unfavorable influences gathering about him, he never ceased laboring and hoping for his conversion. His daily readings with the king and his Sunday services were continued nearly up to the time of the king's death.

The coronation of King Radama, and of his wife as queen, took place on the twenty-third of September. A French Catholic priest named Jouen, who styles himself "the Apostolic Prefect of Madagascar," with his associates, had a private interview with the king previous to the coronation, under the pretext of viewing the crown which he was to use. Without consultation or permission, and depending on their own audacity to carry them through, they sprinkled the crown with holy water, invoked upon it the divine blessing, and then "the prefect," taking it into his hands and approaching Radama, solemnly laid it upon his head, using, according to his own published account, these words: "Sire, I crown you in the name of God.

Reign long for the glory of your name and for the good of your people.”

Whatever may have been expected to flow from this bold step, it had no perceptible effect upon the king's policy toward the French priests. They received no special favors, nor were subjected to any special hindrances. The conduct of these ghostly intruders surprised the Malagasy, and that was the end of it.

On the contrary, marked favor was shown to Mr. Ellis, and every encouragement was given him in his work by the king, insomuch that the old heathen spirit was sometimes visibly stirred in opposition. On one occasion, by express permission of the king, Mr. Ellis visited the sacred city of Ambohimanga, a most enchanting spot, the birth-place and burial-place of the founder of the dynasty, and the seat of one of the national idols, which no foreigner had ever before been allowed to enter. Mr. Ellis went to secure a site for a church, and to preach to the Christians who were found even in this sacred spot of heathenism.

He was afterward accused of having used violence to gain an entrance. Two or three weeks afterward the authorities of the place interfered to suppress the worship of the Christians, threw their

furniture out of the windows and placed a sentry at the door. When the king heard of it, he removed the officers and put others in their place. The plea was that a prevailing drought threatened the growing rice-crops, which was attributed to the anger of the gods at the worship of Christians in the sacred city.

Such trifling interruptions only served to show how powerfully the current was setting in the opposite direction. New congregations were forming, new buildings for worship or instruction were going up, believers and adherents continually multiplied and the light of the gospel was spreading on every side.

Happily, the fires of persecution had so thoroughly tested and trained the gifts and graces of the earlier Christians that there was no lack of suitable men to put in charge of the rapidly-forming congregations. Few mission fields have been known in modern times where the best material for native pastors was so abundant. The hands of the English missionaries were therefore free to provide for the more general interests of the cause, and they could say to the native Christians and pastors that the maintenance of the church in its order and purity, and its extension into the country,

was the work which the Lord had devolved on them, and in which the missionaries would do their best to aid them.

In February, 1863, a temporary chapel was completed in the district of the capital called Ambohipotsy, capable of accommodating six hundred persons. The congregation, commencing with thirteen persons, has since grown to fifteen hundred, with several hundred communicants, and now occupies a beautiful memorial church erected in honor of the martyrs who in 1836 and 1837 were sacrificed on that spot.

In March, Mr. Ellis received word from home that the London Missionary Society not only approved of his plan of memorial churches, but believed that all the necessary funds would be forthcoming. Deeds for the ground were secured without difficulty from the king, and work was commenced with a will upon one of the sites by almost the entire Christian congregation. Some of the very persons now so busily and joyously engaged in digging the foundations, and in carrying away earth, stones and rubbish in baskets on their heads, had probably suffered bonds and imprisonment on the spot for their faith.

In the month of April a chapel was finished on

the eastern side of Antananarivo. Though a hundred feet long and proportionably wide, it was filled on the day of opening. The ground was given by one of the people, and the house, with little assistance from abroad, was built by the congregation.

The king took a lively personal interest in the work. Early in the year he invited about sixty of the chief ministers and leading Christians to a breakfast at his house, where statements were made in regard to their plans of church extension, and the king expressed pleasure at the success of their work hitherto, and encouraged them to go forward in supplying the destitution of the capital.





CHAPTER XVIII.

SUPERSTITION, FOLLY AND SAD END OF THE KING.

AMID all these encouraging indications and great advances, it remained a fact that the king was not personally committed as a Christian and gave no conclusive evidence of a change of heart. His best friends saw with pain that his intemperate habits were fast gaining the upper hand, and that old heathen traits of cruelty and superstition were developing in his character. The French adventurer Lambert was a boon companion, and had even been created duke of Imerina. The dissipated young men whom he kept about his person became notorious under the name of "red eyes" or *mena-maso*, it being pretended that their devotion to the interests of their sovereign, being carried far into the night, had impaired their eyesight.

These young men were not only obnoxious from

their bad habits, but coming from the southern part of the island, were objects of the hatred and jealousy springing from difference of origin and caste. Their ascendancy over the king was unfortunately so great and so injurious that they would in all probability have induced him in the end to become a persecutor of the Christian religion. It is believed that he was actually entertaining this project when he was arrested in his career.

Had he been a true child of God, with mind and character established and steadied by personal consecration to Christ, he would have known how to meet the strange outbreak of heathen sentiment, and of what greatly resembled demoniacal possession which now broke out, in an entirely different spirit and with a different result. But there remained a root of heathenism in the king's own heart—a side of his nature all open to the influence of the old superstitions under which he was born. These superstitions were still powerful throughout the country, and they began to stir the hearts of the people as the king's marked approval and encouragement of Christianity became known. Rumor reached the capital from distant villages of the prevalence of a sort of sickness, attended with a trance, in which the patient had communications,

as he supposed, with the spirit-world, or saw visions and received messages from the king's departed ancestors. The general burden of these visions and communications was the sad apostasy of the king from the ancient faith, and the calamities and judgments which were coming upon the country unless the king put a stop to the worship of the God of the foreigners.

Connected with these visions and trances came rumors of an unheard-of disorder called the dancing mania. It was first heard of in February, 1863, as having broken out in the west or south-west. But it did not long remain a mere rumor, for in a month it had reached the capital and became quite common in the streets. At first parties of two or three were to be seen in the streets, accompanied by musicians and other attendants, dancing in public places, and in a few weeks these had increased to hundreds, so that one could not go out of doors without meeting with these bands of dancers. It spread rapidly as by a sort of infection to remote parts of the central province; in distant hamlets and by solitary cottages the sound of music could be heard.

Christians were rarely affected by this strange disease, if disease it was. The disturbed, excited,

apprehensive heathen mind, trembling at the coming catastrophe of the native religion, was the more natural seat of such nervous disorder, and so it came to be a sign of heathen sympathies, especially in the capital. Those affected belonged largely to the lower classes, and the great majority were young women between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five.

The patients were carefully observed by the medical missionary, Dr. Davidson, who notes that they complained of weights or pains in various parts of the body, accompanied with 'uneasiness. After two or three days they became restless and nervous; and if they heard the sound of music, they would break violently away from all restraint, and joining the music, would dance for hours together with amazing rapidity. They moved the head from side to side, and the hands with a monotonous motion. Their eyes were wild, their whole appearance utterly abstracted, and they uttered no sound but an occasional deep sigh. The music never seemed quick enough. The dancing often became leaping. The endurance of the dancers seemed superhuman; they exhausted the powers of the musicians, though often relieved, until finally they would fall down suddenly as

if dead, or if the music was interrupted, they would suddenly rush off as if seized with some new impulse and continue running until they fell down almost or entirely insensible. The disease was never known to be fatal, except perhaps in a few cases where the patient was restrained from joining in the dancing. The mere physical exercise, however violent, was perfectly harmless.

A favorite resort for these possessed creatures was a sacred stone near the city where many of the Madagascar kings have been crowned. Or they would meet in the evenings among the tombs, and spend half the night dancing by moonlight in these sombre localities.

Many of the dancers professed to have intercourse with the departed, particularly with the persecuting Ranavalona. They disliked above all things hats, probably as a foreign article of dress, and pigs, which were considered unclean by many tribes in Madagascar. They would fly into a rage at the sight of these objects. The whole affection was regarded by the Christians as satanic. Certainly it worked to the disadvantage of the missionaries for the time.

The king's mind became seriously disturbed. The pretended messages from his ancestors were

addressed to him. Sometimes the dancers would burst into the courtyard of the palace in spite of the crossed bayonets which guarded the entrance. At one time, when the king was reading with Mr. Ellis, a number of priests and dancers burst into the room, wheeled madly around the room and cast menacing looks upon the missionary. The king and his attendants after some time cleared the room and barred doors and windows, but the crowd still lingered without, the women dancing and the men armed with stones.

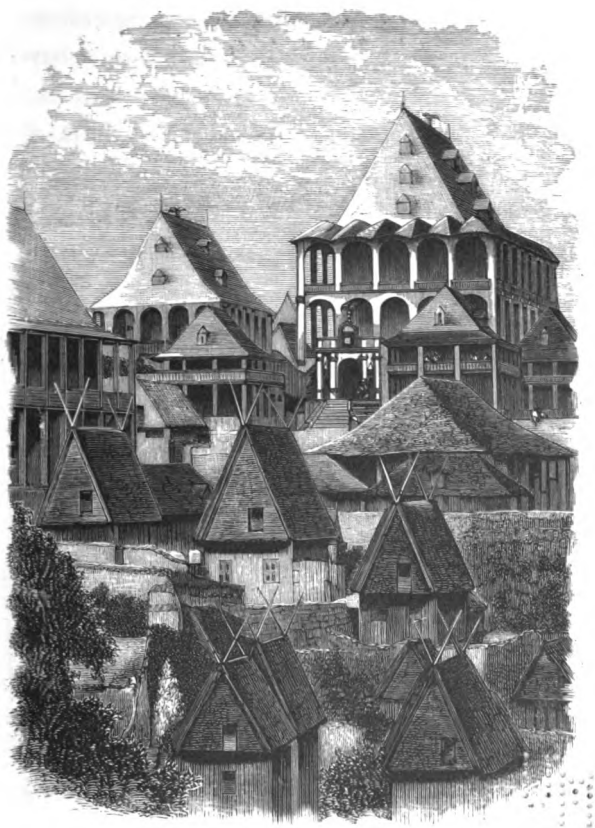
It was very late when Mr. Ellis got home that night, and afterward certain rude charms of charred sticks and pieces of meteoric stones would be laid at his door, frequently in baskets, as a warning for him to leave or suffer the vengeance of his secret enemies.

The king meanwhile showed the power of superstition upon his mind by the fears and depression of spirits which these phenomena brought upon him. He lost his natural cheerfulness and became absent and silent. Mr. Ellis tried to rally him and to turn off his fears with jocose remarks, but in vain. His mind continued to grow dark and unsettled, and in the judgment of Mr. Ellis even gave way. This is his explanation of the

exceedingly strange and inconsistent proclamation at that time issued by the king, in which he authorized all those having disputes or differences to settle their quarrels by force of arms.

On the other hand, it is held that the object of the proclamation was to protect from punishment the intended assailants and murderers of the Christians, and that it was dictated by his dissipated companions, the mena-maso.

The ministers took a day to deliberate on this mad proclamation, and then came to the palace and on their knees besought Radama in the name of the people to withhold the intended decree. But the king obstinately refused to hear their request. Finding remonstrance in vain, they retired. All foreigners now left the capital, and the chief officers of state met at the house of the prime minister for further deliberation. At this council it was determined the king must be compelled to change his course, and that the mena-maso must be seized and punished. A list of thirty-three of these young men was drawn up; ten of them were seized and promptly executed, while the remainder took refuge in a part of the royal palace. Envoys were sent to the king demanding that the decree should be revoked and that the escaped favorites should be



Royal Palace at Antananarivo and houses of nobles.

11

surrendered. Seven times they presented their demands, and seven times they were refused. At last, terrified at the gathering storm, the king yielded in part, consenting to deliver up the favorites on condition that their lives be spared. But it was now too late to talk of terms. The mena-maso were seized and marched away at once to execution.

How far the revolution was expected to go by its projectors we cannot tell. Once started, it probably got beyond their control. The murderers of the king's favorites might well fear to be visited at some day with the king's revenge. At all events, the king's death was speedily determined on. Shortly after cock-crow, on the morning of the twelfth of May, 1863, his chamber door was forced open, and in spite of his own and his wife's entreaties and resistance he was seized, and while he pathetically exclaimed, "I have never shed blood," his mantle was thrown over his head, his sash slipped around his throat and tightened until he fell a lifeless corpse on the floor.

Thus closed the short but eventful reign of Radama II. "So perished a ruler whose accession to the throne but a twelvemonth before was to his own countrymen as the sun rising on the dark and terrible night of his mother's cruel reign—an event

which Europe had awaited not without impatience as the termination to deeds shocking to humanity." In this reign treaties of friendship had been made with France and Great Britain. But the bargain with the French speculator Lambert, which was doubtless one of the chief causes of the uprising against him, was a curiosity among land-grants and royal concessions. Only a besotted young man in his maudlin moments could have been inveigled into such a contract. Its terms are well worth reproducing here. They are as follows :

Chap. I. We authorize J. Lambert to form a company having for its object the working of the mines of Madagascar, the forests and the lands situated on the coast and in the interior. The said company shall have the right of making roads, canals, building-yards, establishments of public utility, of coining money with the king's effigy,—in a word, it shall do all that it may deem calculated to promote the good of the country.

Chap. II., Art. 1. We grant and concede to the company the exclusive privilege of working all the mines of Madagascar, including those already known and those which may hereafter be discovered.

Art. 2. We grant and concede equally to the

said company, as well for itself as for those whom it may admit to take part in it, the privilege of choosing on all the coasts and in the interior of the country any unoccupied lands to be put into cultivation. In consequence, the company shall become proprietors of the lands which it shall have chosen as soon as it shall give us notice of having taken possession of them.

Art. 3. The company shall not pay any duties upon the ore produced, nor upon the profits made upon it.

Art. 4. The produce of the working of the mines of Madagascar and upon cultivation shall enjoy the privilege of free exportation without any duty. The company's property shall not be liable to be burdened with imposts. What shall be brought in for the company shall pay no duty.

Art. 5. We relinquish to this company all the mines of Soatsimanampiovano, so as to put them in condition for the immediate employment of laborers. We also give to the company the house at Soanierana to establish there the headquarters of its administration.

The company on its part engages to assist to the best of its power the king's projects for the amelioration and civilization of the country. A clause

was also added by Lambert engaging to pay the king ten per cent. of the profits.

Just before the king was strangled by the nobles, Lambert had formed his company at Paris, and had received from Louis Napoleon the imperial sanction to the project. According to the details of the plan, the island would have passed almost bodily into the hands of these French speculators. They had selected the following classes of lands to be appropriated under the treaty: 1. All such as from vicinity to the ports are likely to become centres of population. 2. Those situated along the course of navigable rivers. 3. The unoccupied lands nearest to the existing centres of population. 4. The fertile lands in the most healthy localities. 5. In the neighborhood of forests, and where gum and caoutchouc are procurable. 6. Lands suitable for pasturage and rice. 7. Mineral lands, and such as may be presumed to be such.

The imperial authorization to these plans was received May second, 1863. Ten days afterward Radama was strangled, and the government of the new queen, while confirming all existing treaties, at once repudiated these enormous and unwarrantable concessions. All the acts of Radama were de-

clared abrogated and of no force unless re-enacted. In 1865, Mr. Lambert's infamous treaty was publicly burned, and that was the last of a scheme which might have bound Madagascar hand and foot to a selfish, grasping and tyrannical commercial policy, and virtually handed it over to the domination of France.

The French writers and the government itself took the matter in hand. The old feeling of French rights in Madagascar which had existed in more or less strength for more than two centuries was kindled afresh. It was a time, too, when French ambition and French schemes of aggrandizement were at their height. An article prompted by the imperial government, and drawing its facts from official sources, appeared in a leading quarterly journal, the *Revue des deux Mondes*, for October, 1863, in which the French claims were stated and an argument made for rousing the various subject races to rebellion against the Hova government. With aid from France the revolution could be accomplished, and then, it was argued, under the new government, set up by her aid, a better opportunity would offer for France to claim the fulfillment of the Lambert grant, which the Hova government repudiated. Here was a cool proposal to

root up and blot out all the advance made under the Hovas in evangelization and Christianity, and to throw the island a half a century backward into barbarism, to sustain a claim of monstrous unrighteousness, back of which loomed the sinister prospect of a sacrifice of the nationality and independence of the island outright to the greed of France and of her emperor Louis Napoleon for foreign enlargement. The French officials on the island fully expected that a naval force would be sent in 1864 to compel the new government to fulfill the treaty, and gave out that the matter would be considered a cause of war against Madagascar, and but for the good offices of the English consul at Tamatave, the French would have probably attempted reprisals with such force as they had at command, without waiting for instructions from home. Meanwhile, ambassadors were sent from Madagascar to England and France. England already had an understanding with France adverse to interfering in the affairs of the island, and the French government consented to abandon its scheme of conquest, but wrung out of the half-civilized, upward-struggling government of Madagascar a blackmail of one million francs, which was paid almost wholly by the queen herself. . But

it left small love for France in the bosoms of the people. We read of the Lambert treaty being burned in 1865, probably about the time the queen completed her payments.

A few hours after the conspirators offered the vacant throne to his widow she accepted the offer, and under the title of Queen Rasoherina she became the first constitutional ruler of Madagascar.





CHAPTER XIX.

THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL RULER OF MADAGASCAR.

LIKE the powerful English barons who wrested the Magna Charta from the weak king John, so these successful conspirators used their victory to gain from their new ruler the first definite guarantees for civil liberty, and the first germs of a constitution for Madagascar. It is not a little remarkable that a revolution brought about in no small degree by heathen excitement, and perhaps even by satanic influences, should have been so guided by Providence as to result almost wholly to the advantage of civilization and Christianity.

French Catholic writers and politicians, jealous doubtless of English and of Protestant influence in the island, tried to make out the opposite, but the actual persons engaged in the overthrow of

Radama, however their task may have been facilitated by discontent among the heathen priests and population, seem themselves to have been actuated by genuine regard for the welfare of their country. This appears plainly in the character of the document presented to the queen for signature. The following are some of the articles :

Perfect freedom and protection are guaranteed to all foreigners who are obedient to the laws of the land.

Friendly relations are to be maintained with all other nations.

Protection and liberty to worship, teach and promote Christianity are secured to the native Christians.

Thus, for a king aspiring to play the despot, was substituted a constitutional queen bound by laws to her subjects, as truly as they are bound to her.

The queen herself, though a devoted, old-fashioned idolater and respecter of charms and divination, had so much native good sense, and had felt so much the general educating influence of the Christian civilization which had reached the country, that the part of a constitutional ruler was perfectly easy and natural to her. She ruled with justice and mercy, seeking to diminish the

heavy burdens of the people, and avoiding all personal interference with their religious preferences. The only annoyance of which the Christians could complain was their enforced attendance at times, as officers, soldiers or workmen, on government work on the Sabbath day. Even this does not appear to have been intended as persecution, and there were occasions when the queen made special arrangements to accommodate her Christian attendants on that day.

On one such occasion the queen is said to have addressed her servants as follows: "I know that many of you are praying people and like to attend worship, and perhaps you may be afraid that, as I do not pray, I shall be displeased with you for so doing. Not at all. Those who wish to shall go. But remember that I shall expect that you who say you are Christians, and thus profess to be better than other people, will *act* better than other people. I shall expect that you will not lie or cheat or steal or do evil as others, but show by your conduct what a good thing the praying is."

This shrewd speech from the mouth of a heathen, in her public and private life, is a valuable testimony to the high aims and expected fruits of evangelical Christianity as it had been taught and ex-

emplified in Madagascar. During her reign of five years there was complete religious liberty. Queen Victoria of England sent to Queen Rasoherina a personal request that there might be no persecution of the Christians, and an article was inserted in the treaty between the two sovereigns, in the following words: "In accordance with the wish of Queen Victoria, Queen Rasoherina engages that there shall be no more persecution of the Christians in Madagascar."

The engagement was faithfully kept. Much personal kindness was also shown to the missionaries under whose care she placed her adopted children, and whose mighty influence for the temporal good of her people at least she fully appreciated. Her relations with Christian and Protestant countries were also extended by a treaty of commerce with the United States of America.

Meantime, the work of evangelization went rapidly and prosperously forward. With so many strong congregations at the centre, a commencement could now be made of vigorous and organized missionary efforts in the remoter sections. Accordingly, a series of monthly missionary meetings was arranged in each of the city churches by turns. Government authority was obtained, for these Chris-

tian "kabars" were viewed with suspicion by the anti-foreign party. The first one was held on the afternoon of the first Monday in August, 1863, and such was the interest that long before the time of meeting the house was crowded, and, inside and out, at least three thousand persons were present.

In response to the multitudinous prayers thus offered up, cheering news of the progress of the truth in remote parts of the country came to hand. From the extreme south of the island, Christian men made their way to the capital. The gospel penetrated one of the sacred villages of the north, the whole population of which had been votaries of the idols kept in the village, and now regular worship was held in the house of one of the Christians, which had been appropriated for the purpose.

This was just such a case as might have been expected to rouse the heathen prejudices of the queen. But when informed of the fact, she declared without reserve or hesitation that her subjects everywhere had a right to choose for themselves, either to cleave to the idols or to unite with the Christians.

Six villages in the south received native preach-

ers every Sabbath day from the capital. In the province of Vonizongo, to the north-west, three good congregations, with six hundred Christians and one hundred and twenty communicants, were found. This district had suffered severely from persecution, and the vigor and independent vitality of the churches is shown from the fact that no European teacher had been in the district since the expulsion of the missionaries twenty-seven years previously.

The fourth Sunday in August was set apart by the priests and diviners, much to the regret of the Christians, for the coronation of the queen. When her husband was crowned in 1861, no priests or idols appeared as participants. But now they occupied the most honorable positions. One was placed in the palanquin with the queen, and when she ascended the platform, a priest followed, bearing the idol, which was fixed at the right hand, the priest standing immediately behind the queen.

Nevertheless, the queen's speech was judicious and conciliatory throughout. She reiterated in the fullest manner her purpose to secure religious liberty to every class of her subjects, and the priests, with their show of idols, were in a far different position from those who stood by the bloody Ran-

avalona with a similar show of precious rags and bundles.

Not long after, the queen's mother died, and on the occasion of her funeral, the leading Christians were invited to attend, and in the customary distribution of gifts seven oxen were apportioned to the leaders of the congregations as the gift of her Majesty to the Christians. This royal recognition of the Christians put them for the first time on an equality with all other classes in the public estimate.

The following Christmas day was celebrated by the native Christians by early worship at their churches. Then assembling to the number of seven or eight thousand, and preceded by officers of the government who were Christians and by the ministers of the churches, they marched four abreast to the queen's palace, singing as they went. Here they were kindly and respectfully received by the queen and her court, and their addresses, singing and great numbers made an evident impression.

During this eventful and somewhat trying year less hindrance perhaps was felt and a greater degree of prosperity was attained than ever before by the churches. Three missionaries arrived from

England ; three new church buildings were erected, two of them for new congregations ; the third, one of the largest in the capital, had fifteen hundred persons within the walls on the day of opening, besides two or three hundred without. The ordinary attendance was nearly or quite fifteen hundred, and a hundred and eighty-two communicants were added in the year. Schools were opened in connection with four of the city churches. The most necessary books for teaching were printed on the island.





CHAPTER XX.

UNINTERRUPTED AND RAPID PROGRESS.

THE progress of the gospel continued uninterrupted during the entire reign of the queen, which lasted until April, 1868. At the close of the preceding year there were twelve congregations in the capital and eighty-six scattered through the provinces, with five thousand members and twenty-one thousand of a nominal Christian population.

An educated Christian ministry was being raised up. The Christian people themselves gave evidences of growth in knowledge and in all the elements of mature Christian experience. A native officer at Fiaranantsoa and a number of his wives were converted. Although no European had ever been there, and no instructions on the subject had been given by the missionaries, with the light of the gospel alone to guide them, these persons agreed

that their mode of living was wrong, and one of the women being retained as the lawful wife of the officer, the rest were honorably and safely returned to their homes under an escort.

A native Christian literature was founded, and a large edition of the Scriptures was disposed of. A periodical, called "Good Words" (Teny Soa), was started, the first number being issued January 1, 1866. Native lads and young men were trained to do the whole work of composing, printing, binding and other processes required in publishing these and other books, and they did it admirably.

An insatiable thirst for Scripture knowledge possessed the minds of the native Christians. At the close of one of their monster monthly concerts, a special meeting of all the native church officers and leading members was held, the object of which was to get an effective expression of this desire for enlarged acquaintance with the Bible. They had seen the numerous volumes of commentaries in the missionaries' libraries, and they sent a deputation of their number to request the missionaries immediately to translate and publish the whole of Matthew Henry's commentary and of Mr. Barnes' notes. Subsequently, in 1870, the translation of Barnes' notes was ordered by the government, and

a native preacher of education is mentioned whose library contained Henry's commentary and Barnes' notes entire, with other extended commentaries in the English language, of which he made regular use in preparing his sermons.

The domestic habits of the Christians became more and more conformed to the purity of the gospel. Christian marriage was recognized in addition to the civil forms necessary, and a register of marriages was begun. Divorce for frivolous causes, so universal under heathenism, was frowned upon, and a regulation on the subject was adopted at a meeting of representatives from the city churches in June, 1869, which it was stated on authority met the entire approval of the prime minister and was considered by him as good, and as not in conflict with any of the laws of the land.

A higher tone of sentiment upon marriage began to show itself in the community outside of the church, divorce and polygamy decreased, and licentious customs and practices, which used to be indulged in without shame or concealment, were outlawed and disappeared from public notice.

As fast as churches could be built and opened they were filled with attentive and grateful congregations. The people themselves took such mat-

ters in hand, unwilling to be dependent upon the missionaries and the Christian people of Europe. Churches in the rural districts would first raise all they could among themselves, and then call upon their friends in the capital for additional aid. An instance is given by Mr. Ellis of such an effort made by the Christians of Ilafy, a village in the north. After stating the amount of their own contributions they commenced their appeal for aid by a summary of facts of which the following is a translation :

“What the Christians of Ilafy suffered during the time of darkness :

“Four Christians were hunted, seized and put to death.

“Three Christians died in fetters.

“Three Christians died from the tangena, or poison.

“Four Christians took the poison, but survived.

“Twenty-five Christians continued steadfast to the end of the persecution.

“Twenty-eight Christians at Ilafy at that time.

“Two hundred and sixty added to the Christians since the light (liberty) came to the land.”

Thus more than one-third of the little band suffered martyrdom, and nearly one-fourth actu-

ally gave their lives for the gospel. Of course their appeal was successful. They completed one of the best-furnished village chapels in the country.

The contributions of the natives were truly liberal in proportion to their means. A dollar there was equivalent to between five and ten here. In the centre of the capital one of the churches gave four hundred and sixty dollars for their land, which at that time was a new and wonderful event amongst such a people. A subscription of a few dollars from an officer of middle rank is equal to his whole ordinary money expenditure for as many weeks.

But their liberality was shown in the cheerfulness and zeal with which all classes contributed of the work of their hands in these church erection enterprises. Mr. Sibree, the architect of the memorial churches, was delighted, he says, on inspecting the foundations of the new metropolitan church, to see people of high position down in the trenches, working away harder than the paid laborers, for they felt it to be a labor of love. He mentions another instance of the kind, where the whole building was divided amongst the people, and all put their hands to it. Officers of high military rank were laying the bricks, their wives, some of

them ladies of the court, bringing them materials and mixing the mortar. And when the church was dedicated, there was a joy in the hearts of the members with which no stranger intermeddled.

Not long afterward, on a Saturday night, the spot was visited by a whirlwind and a waterspout which left the little church in ruins. The congregation, which assembled on the following morning for worship, were overwhelmed with dismay; men and women sat down on the spot and cried. But before they dispersed they resolved to build a larger and better church than before. The next day they arranged the division of the work, the missionary engaging to provide only one-sixth part of the cost.

These cases are introduced as illustrations simply of what was going on all around the capital on a similar scale.

In like manner the people provided in freewill-offerings the entire amount paid to the native pastors. The church at Analakely, in the limits of the capital, expressed their sentiments on the subject in the following language: "We feel that preparing a sermon is a work requiring time and attention and thought, and those who do this work ought to have time for preparation. Yet some of those who preach to us are poor and cannot well

afford to give up a day or two of their time. We ought to help them and give them money to buy food while they are studying the Scriptures and preparing to give us the word of life."

Accordingly, it was decided that *sixpence*—twelve cents—should be given to every preacher at every service, a sum that appears trifling, but it would keep a man in provisions for a whole day in Madagascar.

The missionary spirit has always been a prominent feature in the Christian character of the natives. Only as a leaven working from within outwardly has the Madagascar church maintained and extended itself. Shut out from the sympathy and support of Christendom, it lived because it was aggressive and home missionary in its very essence. Under persecution its example was mighty, and the character and habits and modes of influence then attained have remained with the Madagascar church ever since. Religion has been spread in that island, from the first, mainly through the personal teaching and efforts of individual Christians, and by the not less powerful influence of their holy lives and changed dispositions. The heathen have said: "We knew such a one; he used to be cruel, false, dishonest; now he is kind

and loving, speaking the truth, acting uprightly. This must be a powerful thing which has made such a change.”

But in 1867 the formal work of home missions was inaugurated by one of the older churches. A young man of suitable qualifications was set apart as a missionary to a tribe living several days' journey north of the capital. The young man, though well educated, was a slave. His freedom was purchased with the help of friends in England, and he removed with wife and children for the scene of his labors, the congregation which sent him agreeing to pay him sixty dollars a year and to provide him with a house. He was prospered abundantly in his work; the heathen population were kind and friendly, and a house of worship was speedily built.

There had already existed in this northern tribe the nucleus of a Christian society, which probably owed its origin to the personal efforts of scattered Christians, who, wherever they went, in their humble but effective way preached the word. The Christian officers and soldiers of the army, “devout soldiers,” whose calling brought them into contact with natives in every part of the kingdom, seemed never to forget their allegiance to the Captain of their

salvation. Their regular practice on these distant errands was to call their families and dependants and inferior officers around them, and to commence religious worship. The people of the neighborhood would be drawn into these gatherings, and thus little communities of Christians would spring up in multitudes of scattered places, open for the more systematic efforts of the home missionary. In many instances the lieutenant-governor of a port or district has been the pastor or chief preacher of a congregation thus gathered.





CHAPTER XXI.

THE QUEEN'S PROGRESS AND DEATH.

THE Christian consistency and zeal of the people and their evangelistic activity did not want for special trial and difficulty even in this favored era of the church's history. The occasion referred to was "the royal progress" or journey of state made by the queen in the year 1867 to the eastern coast.

In this journey her Majesty was attended not only by her chosen body-guard and by six thousand troops, with their camp followers, but, in accordance with an ancient and oppressive custom already described, the attendance of twelve or fifteen thousand others from other sections of the country was required to swell her train and increase the grandeur of the royal show.

The preparing of tents and equipments for so vast a company, to say nothing of provisions—a

work which tasks the energy and wisdom of the most civilized people of the world in their military operations—occupied the people at the capital for nearly three months; and considering the rough and uncultivated state of much of the country to be traversed, and remembering the dreadful experiences of famine, starvation and death which had attended these reckless shows of royalty in the past, one might have expected all classes to be absorbed in anxiety for the bodily interests of the vast hosts.

But now a new anxiety was felt, unheard of and impossible in Madagascar before. The Christian people who were included in these orders were concerned for their spiritual welfare in the new associations and irregular modes of life they would be called to encounter. They wished to take some of the missionaries along with them, but the government did not favor it. For a week before the time of their departure prayer-meetings were held in their behalf, and on the Sunday preceding a united prayer-meeting of all the churches in the capital commended them to the divine care on their trying journey.

The court set out on the twentieth of June. The queen carried diviners, idols and idol-keepers

with her on her journey. She kept them within the enclosure or palisade which surrounded her tent wherever it was pitched for the night. But it was said that she did not travel on Sundays, and whenever she did stop, week-days or Sundays, the Christians improved the opportunity to hold meetings for worship, generally in the open air. Large numbers attended these meetings who at home never entered a place of worship. Men of high standing in the court or the army, hitherto unknown as preachers, now came forward, and with astonishing boldness, earnestness and feeling commended the Lord Jesus to their dying fellow-men.

Their heathen countrymen, who had never before heard the words of salvation, gathered around them to hear and drink in the good news from heaven. The longer they stayed, the larger grew these meetings, and the attention and interest manifested by these heathen reacted healthfully upon the watchfulness and consistency of the Christians. Consequently, when the queen returned in October and the Christians got back to their homes, it was found that only a few had been carried away from their moorings. In many cases there was a decided improvement in the tone of their piety. The native preachers showed increased fervor and effi-

ciency. A number of those first awakened in these trying scenes were afterward added to the church.

The whole affair much resembled what was frequently seen during the war of the rebellion in our own country. The dangerous scenes and associations of military life, instead of weakening or destroying the spiritual life of our Christian soldiers, frequently roused and developed it to a degree which has left permanent and happy results upon the piety of our country. The wonted wickedness and profanity of the camp was often replaced by genuine and powerful revivals, the fruits of which continue to adorn our churches to this day. If this triumph of evangelical principles over great obstacles at home was a proof of its superhuman power and origin, it is at least equally so in Madagascar.

Thus rapidly and in the form of a widespread but quiet revival the truth continued to advance under this nominally heathen queen. She gave Christianity a fair chance, while heathenism had all the advantage it could derive from her example. Only that, in fact, kept it alive.

The queen herself, whose health had begun to fail, gave some evidence before she died of a mind disposed to look elsewhere than to her old idols

and diviners for direction and comfort. She declined to obey one of the last directions of the diviners. It is said that on one occasion her adopted son brought to her a picture of the Virgin Mary which had been given him, with one or two brief prayers that might be offered to her. Looking at it for a while, she said, "No, no, my boy, these will not do; whenever you pray make all your prayers to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Early in 1868 her health gave way, and it was evident that a change must soon take place in the government of the island, and plots of a revolution and the establishment of a new dynasty were entertained. The queen sought relief in a change of air and scenery, but as the inevitable end drew near the loyal officers besought her to return to the capital. But the idol had promised her recovery, and she would not act without its express permission. The prime minister asked the chief idol-keeper to use his influence with the idol that it might recommend the queen's return. It is said the keeper replied that he could not force the god. The minister shrewdly replied that it was true, but might he not influence his keepers? This hint took, and the priests brought the mean little bundle of rags and sticks which they called Helima-

laza to the queen with the message that her Majesty must return to Antananarivo, the capital.

The poor dying queen refused to be made the sport of their lying diviner, and stayed where she was until news of the actual outbreak of the rebellion reached her. She then consented to be borne to the capital, where she expired on the first day of April, 1868.

It must be said to her everlasting honor that, heathen as she lived and probably died, she was faithful to the very last to all her pledges of toleration and protection to the Christians. In all probability there will never again be a heathen ruler on the throne of Madagascar. It will be well if all nominally Christian rulers who succeed Rasoherina leave behind them as good a reputation for faithfulness to all their public engagements.





CHAPTER XXII.

CHRISTIAN RANAVALONA.

THE rebellious movements attending the last illness and death of the queen were promptly and completely suppressed, and the youngest sister of the late ruler was elevated to her place under the name of Ranavalona II. Whatever fearful memories may have been called up by the name, they remained only memories. The new Ranavalona has been as distinguished for Christian excellence and personal consecration in her high sphere as her infamous predecessor was for the opposite. Not only was her natural disposition marked by amiability, but it soon gave evidence of the transforming power of divine grace. Ranavalona II. was the first Christian ruler of Madagascar.

On the morning of her accession to the throne she sent word to the missionaries that their privileges would be preserved. The prime minister

wrote them a letter containing similar assurances. He and other leading men of intelligence felt that the follies of idolatry and divination were too inconsistent with the real interests of the nation to suffer them any longer to occupy a position superior to that of Christianity at the court. Hence all idols and idolatrous trappings were excluded from the ceremonies of coronation, which took place September 3, 1868.

In fact, it was a decidedly Christian ceremony. In place of the symbols of heathenism, a handsome Bible lay on a table, with the laws of Madagascar close beside it, at the right hand of the queen. On the four sides of the canopy under which she sat were inscribed the four mottoes: "Glory to God;" "Peace on Earth;" "Good-will to Man;" "God be with Us."

The queen's address, which had been previously printed at the mission-press for distribution among the people, was equally remarkable for outspoken Christian sentiment. Not only did she promise a just and merciful rule, but she quoted the language of Scripture as embodying her ideas upon the benefits of good government and of obedience to the laws. The passages are: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is a light," and,

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.” Referring to the question of religion, she showed, perhaps unconsciously, the entire revolution which had taken place in the national policy by assuring the people that it was now “the praying” which would not be compulsory. It was the turn now of the idolaters to congratulate themselves that they would be tolerated in Madagascar.

The prime minister followed in a most energetic and well-received speech, which was in some parts very much like a sermon on the second of the texts quoted by the queen. And all these Christian demonstrations followed only seven years after the death of Ranavalona I.

Everywhere the changed policy of the government was manifest. One of the first acts of the new reign, of course, was to dispose of the conspirators who had aimed to overthrow the present dynasty. The guilt of a large number was established beyond question. The queen was anxious to avoid all bloodshed, and wished no lives sacrificed in connection with any circumstances attending her accession. Once and again she called an assembly of the people to deliberate and advise with her as to the degree of punishment to be inflicted. A majority was for putting them to death

The English residents made strenuous efforts to prevent bloodshed. In a letter which they addressed to the prime minister they quoted some Scripture passages, among others this, from James: "He shall have judgment without mercy who hath showed no mercy." This verse powerfully affected the mind of the minister; he could get no sleep, but paced the room, repeating, "These foreigners bring their Scriptures to *curse* me." The result was that he gave his advice against inflicting the death penalty, and the queen's merciful policy prevailed. Various periods of imprisonment were inflicted instead.

It is but fair to say that some Christians of influence were involved in the plot, which was purely political.

The policy or rather principles of the queen had been clearly indicated long before her coronation. When the priests and idol-keepers came as such to acknowledge her sovereignty with the customary presents, she declined to receive them, saying that they could not be recognized as priests, but only as private citizens. The astrologers and diviners were also notified that they no longer held any official position. The idol of Rasoherina was removed from the palace.

An order was early issued requiring all government work to cease on Sunday. Some months afterward a proclamation was issued closing all Sunday markets. The prime minister sent for some of the native preachers, and instituted divine services in the court of the palace. These services, consisting of prayer and converse with the queen and her officers, are kept up to the present time.

Christianity now entered upon that triumphant and uninterrupted career of success which it has ever since enjoyed in Madagascar. All the places of worship were crowded. Respectable families came in companies to attend the Sabbath services. Officers came attended by their subordinates. The most influential and the most humble classes in society were alike drawn to the house of God. Places of worship were enlarged and meetings multiplied without reaching the increasing demands.

There was indeed at this time hardly a family of influence or respectability some at least of whose members were not professed Christians, while many of the preachers themselves were men of rank and nearly connected with the royal family. Almost all the intelligent young men of the

country were more or less under Christian influence and instruction.

The missionaries, as may be imagined, rejoiced with trembling. It was now the fashion to go to church. To profess Christianity was popular. Prosperity so great, so unbounded, so sudden, brought trials almost as severe as those of adversity, though very different from them. Grace from above was constantly sought, and all the care which men so overwhelmed with work could exercise was used by the missionaries in discriminating between the merely outward and the genuine cases of conversion. Meanwhile, their predominant feeling was one of great joy. They were sure that there must be an unprecedented amount of real faith in the gospel, even if they allowed for some mixture of insincerity.

Remote provinces felt the influence of this great religious movement. The government encouraged, as it had formerly opposed, the communication of the gospel to distant tribes. Messengers and letters from the Betsileo country, between two and three hundred miles to the south, were answered by a visit from two of the missionaries, Messrs. Fry and Jukes, who spent two months of the summer of 1868 in visiting the country. They

found chapels already built, congregations gathered and churches organized. Towns with thousands of inhabitants were found willing to receive Christian teaching; in others the people were already meeting for worship on the Sabbath-day, and idolatry was in a state of general decay. The whole ground seemed ready for the seed of gospel truth.

Two years afterward the same country was visited by one of the party, Mr. Jukes, and his journal, which has been published in pamphlet form, gives an interesting view of this pioneer work, and of the reception of the missionary by the lately savage and heathen community.

The spirit of religious inquiry which he found prevailing, even in places where there were no Christians, was remarkable. His palanquin was frequently stopped on the road that he might reply to some question about "the custom of the praying followed by Christians." He was asked such questions as these: "Who was Jesus?" "What did he do?" and often he was requested to "tell about the good Man who died to substitute the guilty." All this was done with evident sincerity and seriousness.

In the great forest region called Tanala, adjoining the Betsileo country on the east, Mr. Jukes found

an altogether different tribe from the Betsileo, superior to them in courage and independence. Here ruled a princess tall, stout and masculine in appearance, one of the most famous women in Madagascar, yet as gentle and humble as a little child. Brave, true and of high governing abilities, she had embraced Christianity, and at fifty years of age she was beginning to learn to read.

Fianarantsoa, in South Betsileo, has for its governor a nursing father of the Madagascar church. He is a man of sterling character, appointed for his goodness as much as for any other qualities—in fact, the right man in the right place. While faithfully serving his queen, his great desire plainly is to advance the kingdom of Christ among the Betsileo. He frequently preaches both in town and country, takes a general oversight of all the churches in that part of the province of which he is governor, has sent teachers to many of the villages, and does all in his power, both by a consistent example and Christian activity, to promote the real and spiritual welfare of the nation.

Here the church grew fivefold in one year (from four hundred to two thousand), and an old wooden shed was exchanged for a substantial brick chapel, with others in course of erection.

Among the Hovas, the governing people, scattered through this region, the thirst for Scripture knowledge was most intense, so that the missionary had need to be of iron rather than of flesh and blood to endure the pressure. The demand for the reading-lessons printed by the mission was far beyond the supply. Every day, almost every half hour in the day, people applied for these lessons, and the stock which had been reserved for remoter regions was speedily distributed among these importunate applicants.





CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MEMORIAL CHURCHES.

AS already recorded in our pages, Mr. Ellis had conceived the idea of securing the sites consecrated by the blood of the martyrs and occupying them with handsome memorial churches. King Radama II. made over to him the ground, and Christians in England generously responded to his appeal, pledging more money than he had stated to be necessary. An architect, Mr. James Sibree, Jr., was sent from England in 1863, and he not only carried the plan to a happy completion, but he has written and published a full and valuable narration of his connection with the work, besides giving an extended and valuable account of the island and its people, which has been of great service in composing this volume.

From his statements we learn that a careful survey was made of the four spots in the city of Antananarivo which were to be occupied with these

memorial buildings. The first was Ampamarinana, or the open area on the summit of the rock from the edge of which the fourteen martyrs were hurled in 1849. This spot is in the heart of the city, and commands a grand and extensive view of the city and country westward.

The second memorable locality was Ambohimpotsy, at the southern and almost the highest point in the city. Here Rasalama, the first martyr, was speared to death in 1837.

The third site was Ambatonakanga, very convenient of access and in the midst of a large population. The place is interesting, as the first building for Christian worship in Madagascar was erected here, and served during the times of persecution as a prison for the sufferers. Many died there; others were taken thence to the place of execution.

The fourth was the most affecting and precious of all. The hill Faravohitra was the scene of the burning of the four noblemen and the woman in the fearful persecution of 1849. Here the rainbow hung out its banner of peace and love, one end of the arch springing in the view of the people from the burning pile. Here, in digging the foundations of the church, the laborers came upon the

very spot where the woman was burned, and dug up undoubted memorials of the bloody scene, just as the remnants of human bodies were dug up in the public square at Madrid not long since, the relics of the dreadful public burnings of Protestants, the autos-da-fe of the Inquisition in that city.

Without any special intention on the part of the builders, the first stone of the church afterward built on this site was laid exactly under the spot where these ghastly and sorrowful relics were found.

It was decided that the first of these churches should be built at Ambatonakanga, the site of the chapel that had been used as a prison. The ground had to be cleared of large quantities of rock lying loose and protruding through the soil. Thousands of blasts were made and hundreds of tons of stones were broken up. The supply of suitable building-stone thus furnished lasted for months.

The architect, considering, among other things, the unskilled character of the workmen at his command, chose for the building a plain Norman style, with bold and simple rather than elaborate mouldings and details. A double row of stone columns divided the interior into nave and aisles, the main

timbers of the roof being visible below the ceilings. The uniformly warm climate made it necessary to put lattice-work instead of glass in every other window, so as to secure a constant draught of cool air through the building. It was designed to accommodate a thousand persons.

The architect's difficulties in carrying out these simple plans were so great as to try his courage and patience to the utmost. Ignorant of the language, he found it very hard to get any precise information. The government had a monopoly of lime, and the country round for thirty or forty miles had to be searched for the needed supply.

The workmen were entirely ignorant of the careful, accurate kind of work required in the great structures of civilized countries. A rude stone masonry was not uncommon. Tombs and gateways of some pretensions and one or two stone houses for the late king had been built. The bridges over a number of rivers near the capital were also built of stone by Radama II. In their journey for lime the missionaries passed over several of these stone bridges, of which Mr. Sibree gives an interesting account.

They cross the river Ikiopa, one of them spanning it when two or three hundred feet wide.

The arches are of no uniform size, and they accommodate a footway, not a carriage-road, only five feet broad. The road goes up and down, following the wavy line of the arches, and requiring considerable care in climbing up and down the rough stone-work. One arch had quite given way and a canoe had been laid across the opening. The piers are large and heavy, in some cases being as wide as the archway. The main road to the west of the island passes over this rude and yet not discreditable piece of work.

Farther up the stream, at Tanjombato, is another bridge, of much superior workmanship. It consists of ten arches, the masonry of the greater part being well put together and the finish of the whole quite superior. But the piers seem to have been built on loose masses of rock and stone, so that they could not withstand the undermining influences of the floods, and some of them, as a consequence, now lie in ruins in the river. The pathway over this bridge was perfectly level and smooth.

There are several other bridges in this direction, all built by Radama II. before he became king, during the lifetime of his mother, Ranaivalona I. Radama and his young associates at this time showed great interest in improving the means of

communication in the neighborhood of the capital. Considering that the whole work was done by the natives, and that their only guides were such pictures of bridges as they had found in English books, these structures were wonderful proofs of the industrial aptitudes of the Madagascar people.

But these aptitudes required training, and the large building on which the workmen were now engaged with Mr. Sibree required the exercise of an art of which they had yet to learn the "A, B, C." This Mr. Sibree had, in fact, to teach them. They had no idea of the necessity of having everything square and level and smooth. It was very difficult to get even the more intelligent to understand the use of the level and the plumb-line. The architect had to watch every course of stone, lest it should overlap the one underneath three or four inches; and if not skilled in doing their work, they were as sharp as any civilized man in slighting it. To save trouble they would put in bad material so slyly that only constant inspection would detect it.

Thus the architect had his hands and eyes full. Besides being architect, he also found himself compelled to act as contractor, builder, clerk and foreman. He was much hampered too by the fixed

traditional modes of working, which the natives persisted in practicing as obstinately as if they were under the control of a trades-union. Every man quarried his own blocks, dressed them and then built them into the walls, and for a long time division of labor could not be introduced. If one of the workmen left, no one would touch the part of the wall where he had labored, though he might be gone for weeks. Ugly gaps would thus be left in the walling, and there was nothing to be done but to wait for the return of the idlers. Only twenty or thirty men could be got at any one time. Much as the natives love money, they love their ease more, and so the work frequently stood still altogether.

Food was abundant and living cheap. No one was, therefore, obliged to work long at any occupation. As soon as a man had earned a few dollars he would go off and attend to household affairs. In fact, as there was little or no division of labor in the community, it was expected that every man would give personal attention to so much farm-work as was necessary to support his family.

Whenever a marriage, a birth or a funeral occurred among the family connexions, each man took a holiday, and these occurred so often that

the architect began to think that everybody in the capital was related to everybody else. Then the government or some superior would call off the workmen at their pleasure to do some enforced and unpaid work. Mr. Sibree had hardly commenced his church when the prime minister and the commander-in-chief each began to put up a new house. One morning when he went down to the church there was not a man at work. The officers had made a clean sweep, taking his foreman along; it was months before he got him back again. The queen, too, was building a new palace, and all the skilled workmen in the country were required to be in attendance, although perhaps not a tenth part of them could actually have been at work at any one time. It was at some risk to themselves that either masons or carpenters dared be seen working for their own benefit when public buildings were going up.

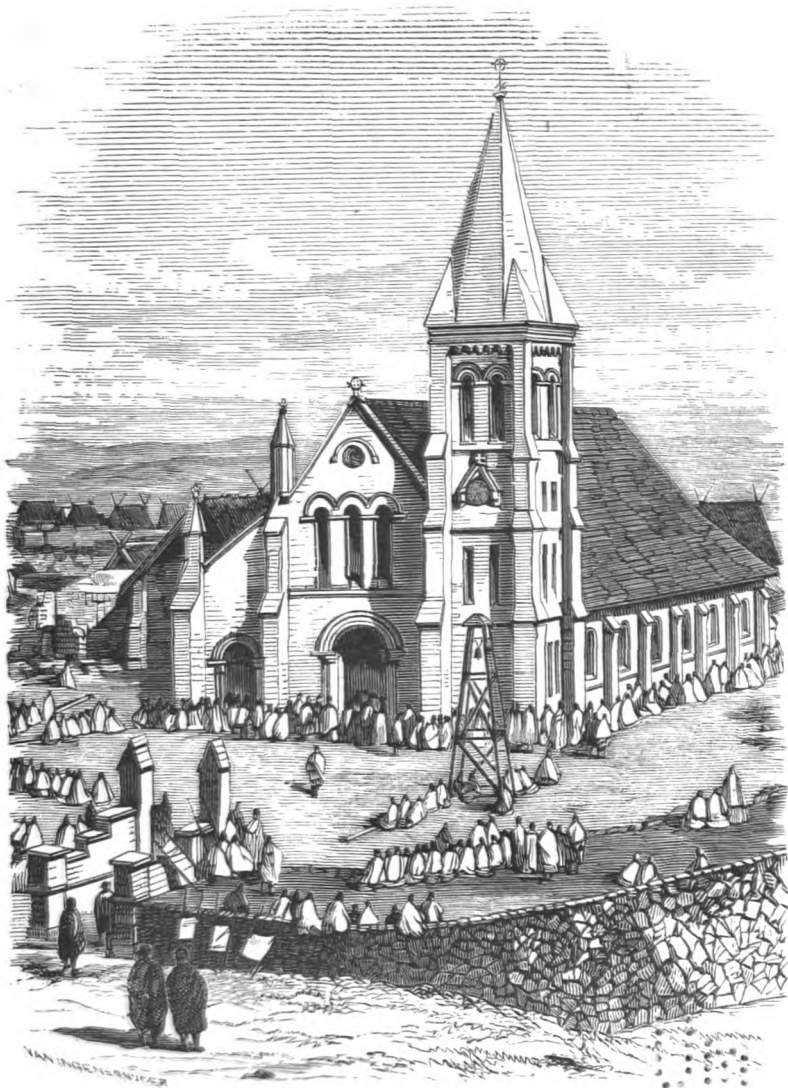
Then the men were liable to be called off on military duty. At one time, in 1866, when there were fears of a French invasion, there was constant drilling and marching for several weeks. Hardly a stone was laid at this time for two months.

Not only was the lime scarce and brought from

a distance, but sometimes when it was obtained it was good for nothing from adulteration with white clay. Timber had to be dragged for many miles from the forests, and often it cost more than in England. Fortunately, they bought a large house which supplied them with a large amount of excellent timber for roofs, doors and window-frames.

The tower and spire, eighty feet in height from the ground, was a vast undertaking for the untutored natives. As it arose gradually above the rest of the building, crowds stopped to gaze and admire and guess at its meaning. Some thought the belfry windows were cannon-ports, and that the English on the island were providing a place of safety in case of disturbance. Others imagined that some scheme for gaining political power was connected with the building. Others unbelievably shook their heads, and said if it was ever finished they would become Christians.

The workmen were with difficulty persuaded to continue on the tower as it gained in height. Wives and children would come and beg to have them sent down from such fearful heights. Yet no accident occurred, and the scaffolding was taken down in safety. No wonder when the capstone was at last laid, in August, 1866, that the native



Ambatonakanga Memorial Church.

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foreman, who was a deacon of the church, proposed that then and there, on the scaffold at the very top, they should unite in giving thanks for the safe and happy completion of the work. All took off their hats, while the good deacon led in prayer. It was market day, and numbers of the people passing looked up in wonder at the little group of worshippers at the top of the spire.

Their thankfulness was deepened by the fact that two men had been killed by falls from the scaffolding of the queen's new palace but a few months before, while not the slightest injury had been experienced by their workmen. Had it been otherwise, the church in all probability would never have been completed.

It was very slow work. The digging was commenced in April, 1863. The first stone of the foundation was laid in January, 1864, by the prime minister of Queen Rasoherina. The top stone of the spire completing the mason work was laid with thanksgiving and prayer more than two years and a half afterward, August 31, 1866. The building was finally completed and dedicated January 22, 1867, nearly four years after breaking ground for the foundation.

Simplicity in detail and general effectiveness of

impression were the aims of the architect, in which he seems to have been entirely successful. The finest Protestant churches on heathen soil are undoubtedly those of Madagascar. With clock on the tower, and rising in fair proportions and of durable materials over the mass of native dwellings, upon the most commanding and memorable sites in the metropolis, they are every way powerful witnesses—silent but perpetual teachers of the victorious nature of the religion of Jesus.

For more than a year before completing this church at Ambatonakanga the architect and part of his force had been busy upon the second of these memorial structures at Ambohipotsy. This was the spot consecrated by the death of the first martyr, Rasalama, almost the highest ground in the city and commanding a view of one of the grandest and most charming landscapes in Madagascar, or perhaps anywhere else.

Here the difficulties were much lessened. The workmen were beginning to show their English training. An assistant had also been sent out to Mr. Sibree, who had gained in experience of the native character and native ways. He indulged himself, accordingly, in a more elaborate design than before. Besides nave and aisles, he provided



A Madagascar Dwelling.

11

for a transept giving the shape of the cross to the whole. The very commanding situation made a little more style desirable. The church is a landmark for an immense distance all around the capital. It strikes the eye of the traveler on the vast plains to the east, west and south of the city long before any other object can be distinguished. Its proportions and general appearance are commanding and beautiful. The enterprise of the architect was rewarded by a gratifying measure of success.

On the seventeenth of November, 1868, it was opened for public worship. The new queen, Ranavalona II., and her court showed their interest in the work by sending word previously that they intended to be present at the opening. A seat was provided for the queen, and she was admitted to the building before any of the congregation had entered. After the crowd had entered and the national anthem had been sung, the prime minister made an address in which he urged the people to become Christians. He met a common objection among the natives. "By becoming Christians," he said, "you are not worshiping the ancestors of the white people, but the God who created us all and Christ who died to take away our guilt."

The services then proceeded in the usual way,

the Bible in use having been lent by the queen in place of the old and worn copy which she had seen lying on the pulpit. A nephew of the prime minister offered prayer. The queen was saluted by the congregation as they retired.

The whole scene was memorable. The people contemplated the large and, for Madagascar, truly magnificent building with astonishment. Only a little more than seven years before, the persecuting reign of the first Ranavalona had come to an end. Thirty-one years ago the first Christian martyr had yielded up her life on this now beautiful spot. Those terrible scenes have passed away. The triumphs of the wicked seem long, but the solid and durable and stately buildings erected on the very field of those triumphs already have made that quarter century of persecution seem a very brief period, and they promise to bear witness to many future generations of the grander, and as we may trust final, triumph of Christianity in the once dark island.





CHAPTER XXIV.

CONVERSION OF THE QUEEN AND PRIME MINISTER.

THE queen continued to give the best evidence of a personal interest in the religion of Jesus. Twice every Sunday services were held in the palace by native preachers in the presence of the queen, the prime minister, many officers, the children of nobles and the attendants of the court. The Madagascar New Year, which was celebrated January twenty-first, 1869, and which had formerly been the occasion of idolatrous ceremonies, now was made a Christian festival. The native preachers engaged in prayer, and the queen's address contained the words, "I have brought my kingdom to lean upon God, and I expect you, one and all, to be wise and just, and to walk in the ways of God."

It was not surprising that exactly a month afterward the greatest public event in the progress of

Christianity in Madagascar—the revolution, in fact, which made the government a Christian instead of a neutral or a heathen one—took place. On the twenty-first of February, the queen and the prime minister were publicly baptized by Andriambelo, one of the native preachers. All the high officers and nobles of the country, the chief men of the people and the preachers of the city churches were present by invitation, and were greatly moved by the spectacle. The queen and the prime minister shared in the deep and general emotion. Tears of wonder and joy were shed at such a scene in the courtyard of a palace whence but a few years before had issued the bloodiest edicts against the Christians, urged on by the fury of another Ranavalona, and carried into execution perhaps by some of the very officers, or by the fathers or brothers of the very officers, now gathered to witness the public renunciation of all idolatry and the avowing of faith in Jesus Christ and association with his followers by the sovereign and prime minister of the kingdom.

It is worthy of notice that no direct influence was exerted by the missionaries to bring about this result. Some of them were entirely ignorant that the step was contemplated until all had been ar-

ranged. The whole service was conducted by native pastors. None but native preachers had conducted the services at the palace already spoken of. Thus not only would the French priests have no plea for admission to the palace, and for opportunity to exert their influence upon the court, but the general impression upon the native population in favor of Christianity would be far more effective and satisfactory.

The queen and prime minister passed through a regular examination, as any of their subjects would have done, before being admitted to baptism. This was conducted by native preachers, and was declared by them to be satisfactory. In the conversation it came out that the queen owed her first serious impressions to the faithfulness of a native Christian to her soul when she was a mere child. It was during the reign of the first Ranavalona, when fear closed the lips of very many Christians, making them especially cautious of speaking of their religion to any of the royal family, that Andriantoiamba, one of the four noblemen who were afterward burned for their religion, ventured to speak to the girl about the Saviour and the salvation of her soul. That was her first introduction to the knowledge of the true God. Little did the

future martyr comprehend the great blessing to the island which was to spring from the small seed he was then planting.

The prime minister also gave the native preachers an interesting account of his own experience. During the same period of tribulation he received a copy of the Scriptures from one of the last of the martyrs, and he used to keep it hid within the courtyard, in a part of the enclosure where the queen kept her fighting bulls.

Thus the precious sheaves were already being gathered in joy from seed sown in tears and blood.

The day after her baptism the queen gave a feast to the assembly which had witnessed the ceremony, when she and the prime minister expressed the joy they felt at the solemn transaction. From that time the native preachers report their progress in scriptural knowledge and Christian attainments as highly satisfactory. On the sixth of June, nearly four months after the baptism, they joined in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and thus fully identified themselves with the people of God.

They had been united in marriage two days before the baptism. Thus they set a much-needed example to the whole people of the sanctity of

domestic ties and of the proper relations between man and woman.

With this example of public and seemingly sincere profession of Christianity on the part of their highest rulers, there appeared naturally enough, among the Madagascar people, a fresh and mighty development of the already deep interest in religious things. There was much of mere sympathy, much of mere conformity to what had become fashionable, and had gained power and standing with the great; but as the conversion of the queen and her husband was so clearly free from mere human interposition, and bore such convincing marks of evangelical simplicity and reality, so the religious movement, which now began anew, had all the appearance of a genuine work of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, the conversion of these high personages may be viewed simply as incidents, leading incidents, in the general revival which now visited this thrice-blessed field. The interest and inquiry which appeared are described by Rev. Mr. Ellis as contemporaneous indeed, but not immediately connected, with those baptisms. Not only in the country around the capital, but in remote parts of the provinces, men's minds were exercised on the subject of religion. Inquirers came in numbers to

the abodes of the missionaries. Bible classes and other religious meetings were thronged. Among these crowds appeared the most unlikely persons—gray-haired idolaters, astrologers and diviners—whose lives had been devoted to maintaining the cruel superstitions of the country.

Following the example of the queen, almost all the higher officers of the government came forward as candidates for baptism. More than a hundred of them were under instruction at the same time. Among them were the chief of the idol-keepers, the astrologer of Queen Rasoherina, several members of the queen's household, and others in high positions, many of them in the declining years of life.

Congregations multiplied at a rate utterly surpassing all means of accommodation. One hundred new or greatly enlarged chapels and churches were needed at once, one-third of which would be required to accommodate from eight to twelve hundred persons each. It was useless to speak of fully-qualified teachers in numbers sufficient to meet the demands of those seeking light. The missionaries made use of the best native aid that could be commanded, and pressed forward their measures for training up competent native pastors. Thirty-four

regular students were under instruction during the early part of the year.

The average attendance at all places of worship was thirty-seven thousand—an increase of about sixteen thousand in the year. The number of communicants was about seven thousand, at one hundred and fifty stations.

Great help was afforded in these circumstances by the presence of three English Friends, who had been sent out as missionaries by their society, and whose truly evangelical and catholic spirit endeared them to their brethren of the London Society, with whom they worked in the most entire harmony.

On the twentieth of July the corner-stone of a chapel, designed for her own use and that of her family and court, was laid by the queen in the courtyard of the palace. Mr. William Pool, who had been sent out to aid Mr. Sibree at the request of the government, had undertaken its erection. The ceremonies commenced at an early hour of the day, the queen being at her place a little after eight o'clock. The missionaries were present by special invitation. The queen's guard kept order amid the great throng of people who were afterward admitted.

After prayer by the native preacher, the prime minister read the following document :

“By the power of God and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, Ranavalomanjaka, queen of Madagascar, founded this house of prayer on the thirteenth Adimizana (twentieth July), in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1869, as a house of prayer for the service of God, King of kings and Lord of lords, according to the word in the sacred Scriptures, by Jesus Christ the Lord, who died for the sins of all men, and rose again for the justification and salvation of all who believe in and love him.

“For these reasons this stone house, founded by me as a house of prayer, cannot be destroyed by any one, whoever may be king of this my land, for ever and for ever, but if he shall destroy this house of prayer to God which I have founded, then is he not king of my land, Madagascar.

“Wherefore I have signed my name, with my hand and the seal of the kingdom.

“RANAVALOMANJAKA,

“*Queen of Madagascar.*”

“This word is genuine, and the signature by the hand of Ranavalomanjaka is genuine.

“RAINILAIARIVONY,

“*Prime Minister and Commander-in-chief of Madagascar.*”

Mr. William Pool, of the London Missionary Society, made the designs of this house of prayer.

The document was well written, and signed in a good bold hand by the queen. After it had been read it was deposited in a bottle in the corner-stone, which was laid by the queen in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Prayer was then offered, and a thousand printed copies of the document were distributed among the people.

The old native prejudices in regard to witchcraft made them unwilling to have a bottle placed in the corner-stone of the first memorial church. But the queen's own act in regard to the corner-stone of the chapel royal shows that she did not share in the remnants of these superstitious feelings. Orders were given to the architect to engrave the whole statement in gilded letters upon two large stone tablets forming part of the surbase of the building. Prayer was offered by a native pastor, and the services were concluded by the customary acts of homage and offer of tribute—a silver dollar—to the queen.



CHAPTER XXV.

DESTRUCTION OF THE IDOLS.

ALL this time the idols continued to exist. They had their keepers, priests and followers. The towns in which they belonged, the enclosures which they occupied, were held sacred. Idolatry was still a living fact by the side of the advancing religion of the Bible. The priests and keepers indeed had no recognition from the government. They no longer had the power of life and death, as formerly, over their countrymen. They were no longer above all the laws of the land. They could no longer claim the titles of nobles nor carry the scarlet umbrella, the badge of royalty.

The new queen had changed all that. She had taken away all these vast powers, all these dignities. The priests were made liable to government service, in the army and elsewhere, like any other

subjects. They were notified that they must take their places with the rest as common citizens.

Still, the idols were unmolested. The priests probably might have continued to keep and to worship them, and to maintain their influence to the best of their ability among the people, if they could quietly have borne their own altered and less exalted position. That, however, was too much for human nature in Madagascar or anywhere else. Besides, so long as the queen continued to tolerate the idols and idol-worship, they continued to hope that her conversion to Christianity might turn out to be a mere notion or whim. By and by they might think, "Our queen will get tired of these foreign customs and practices. The old native feelings will revive, and she will come back to the customs of her ancestors."

Influenced probably by these feelings, the people of the sacred village of Ambohimambola, where the Kelimalaza, the greatest of all the idols, was kept, paid a visit to the queen on the eighth of September, 1869, and urged her to return to the worship of her ancestors' great idol. They also claimed their ancient privileges as keepers of Kelimalaza. The keepers said that though the queen did not use her idols they were still in their keep-

ing, and therefore they ought not to be required to do public work with the rest of the people. They added, in the way of warning, that if the queen did not return to the worship of her ancestors, the idol had "medicine that killed"—*i. e.*, poison.

The queen regarded these remonstrances as treasonable, and as likely to work upon the remaining idolatrous prejudices of the people in a way to give trouble. Her answer, however, was not one that was prompted by reasons of state, but such as would come naturally from the first impulses of a Christian ruler. "The idols," said the queen, "have never been mine. My purpose is to trust in God, and to lead my kingdom to do the same. You will soon hear my word about the idols."

The remonstrants did not wait for her reply, but concluded that it was best for them to hasten back to their village. The queen immediately called a council, reiterated her determination to uphold the religion of Jesus and asked the advice of her officers. No doubt the idols would have been destroyed sooner or later, probably at the completion of the chapel royal, but the crisis had been hastened by the disloyal and insolent attitude of the priests, and something must plainly be done now.

One of the officers said that the best course

would be to burn them. The assembly approved the suggestion, and a party of officers was despatched on horseback to the village to put it into execution. So prompt was the decision, and so carefully did all perform their parts, that the queen's messengers reached the idol-village before the priests and keepers got home to tell the failure of their errand. The officers rode their horses into the sacred enclosure, where such animals had never before been allowed.

The people could not be persuaded to come near the officers when they learned their errand. One man carried some charms into the idol-house, which he said would prevent the officers from discovering the god. This did not in the least hinder them from entering and bringing out the rough chest, made out of the trunk of a tree, which contained the once dreaded object of worship, now seen to be a mere bundle of sticks and silk rags, scarcely good-looking enough to be the toy of a poor child who would be satisfied with a rag baby. When all the silly trappings had been brought out, the chief officer asked of the priests, "To whom does this idol belong? Is it yours, or is it the queen's?" "The queen's," was the necessary reply of the priests. "Then saith the queen, If this is

mine, I shall burn my idols, for my kingdom rests upon God. My ancestors through lack of knowledge trusted in idol-worship, but my trust is in God."

The keepers were then ordered to bring fuel, but every one of them refused. The attendants of the officers then brought the wood, and amid the frantic terror of the keepers, who had declared that the idol was too sacred and powerful to be harmed, the match was applied, and soon the famous ancient national idol in whose name all the great island had been filled with terror and deluged with blood was a little heap of ashes.

Orders were sent to treat the other national idols the same way, and the next day a general iconoclasm commenced; officers were scattered all over Imerina engaged in the work of destruction. The idols were utterly abolished. Christianity had been forbidden by public proclamation on the first of March, 1835, by the first Ranavalona; idolatry was abolished on the ninth of September, 1869, by the second. The suppression of Christianity filled the land with mourning; the overthrow of idolatry was accepted with joy by the entire mass of the people.

Some, indeed, were found who expressed fear that

their rice-crops would be destroyed by the hail now that the gods who had protected them were gone, but these were few in number, and their fears were lost amid the general rejoicing of the emancipated people. The heads of the people told the queen that, as she was burning her idols, they would burn theirs. Basketsfull of rubbish were thus consumed—rubbish which had been very sacred in the eyes of the natives who stood round the fires scarcely daring to believe it possible that their cherished household gods could thus be destroyed.

On the eighth of September, the very day of the council which determined upon the destruction of the idols, the prime minister wrote a letter to Rev. William Ellis which deserves a place here. Some of the earlier paragraphs are omitted. The prime minister says:

“Truly rejoicing is it to behold the deportment of the people at Antanauarivo on the Sabbath day. Scarcely is any one to be seen in the streets until the close of the public worship, because the great majority of the people assemble in the houses of prayer. No public work is done on that joyful day.

“And this, my friend, is another fresh cause of rejoicing here. On the same day that I write this

letter to you the queen sent for the officers and the heads (of the people) to come within the court of the palace, and when they were assembled, the queen said, 'I shall not lean upon nor trust again in the idols, for they are blocks of wood, but upon God and Jesus Christ do I now lean and trust. And as for the idols (viz., the national idols), I shall burn them, or cause them to be burned, for they do no good whatever; they are all deceit and falsehood.'

"And when the people heard this, they expressed their pleasure, and asked the queen if she would summon a kabar or general assembly, to cause all the idols of the people to be burned.

"The queen answered, and said, 'That would please me; I have no desire that there should be idols any more in my kingdom. Nevertheless, I do not force or compel you, my people.'

"Then agreed or consented the people there before the queen to the burning of all the national idols in Madagascar, and the queen, consenting, rejoiced. And on the same day the queen sent officers to burn all the idols of the queen which are called Rakelimalaza, Rafantaka, Ramanjakatsiroa, Ramahavaly, etc., etc. And they were all burned, and some of the people also burned theirs.

“ And astonished to the utmost were the keepers of the idols when they saw the idols in the flames, for they had said that the idols were too sacred and powerful to be affected by the burning.

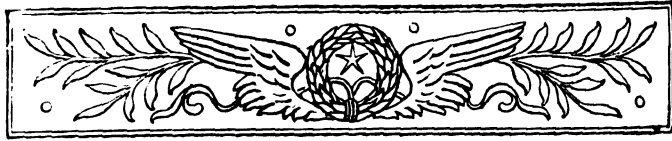
“ That was a new thing here; therefore we sincerely thank God, for he has manifested his power here in Madagascar. And (we thank God also) because he has given to the queen a true heart to put away the root of belief in things that are nothing.

“ I rejoiced when I heard that you (the Christians in England) prayed unto God for me. For that I thank you indeed, greatly. May the blessing of God be with you!

“ I visit you and your family, and my desire for you is that God may bless you. Saith your true friend,

“ RAINIALAIARIVONY, *Prime Minister.*”





CHAPTER XXVI.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IDOLS.—RELIGIOUS BELIEF OF THE NATIVES.

WHAT were these idols of Madagascar, the objects of so much superstitious dread, the causes of such prolonged and cruel persecution? Mr. Ellis saw them brought out on a public occasion, and tells us how insignificant they were in form and appearance. Nothing can be expected to look very dignified when hanging from the end of a fishing-pole, yet this was exactly the way in which these terrible, death-dealing, awe-inspiring objects were carried. They were not, in fact, worthy of any better mode of conveyance, as they were composed chiefly of dirty pieces of silver chain, small silver balls, pieces of coral, silver ornaments representing crocodiles' teeth, with strips of scarlet cloth; among them was an article of red woolen material resembling the cap of liberty. Others were tied up in small baskets or bags, and

were possibly only charms or emblems of the idols. On these miserable, shabby toys the safety and welfare of the nation were supposed to depend, and for refusing to worship them many of the best citizens of the land had been subjected to banishment, slavery, torture and death.

The principal idols were ten or twelve in number, three or four of these being reckoned the chief. Rakelimalaza is the name of the one supposed to be the guardian of the sovereign and the kingdom. "Little but renowned" is the meaning of the name. Next in importance is the god of medicine, Ramahalaly. This idol was brought out in seasons of prevailing sickness and in time of war. Holy water was sprinkled by its keepers and guardians, which was regarded very much as the Romanists regard it among themselves. It is remarkable that this idol is looked upon as the patron or protector of serpents, just as Esculapius, the Grecian and Roman god of medicine, had a serpent for his principal emblem, and as the healing power of the Egyptian deities seems to have been connected with the same reptile. We seem here to have a perversion of the grand idea of Christianity, the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head. The name of this Madagascar idol is, however, sug-

gestive of a great religious truth: "One who is able to answer." It helped the missionaries to direct the worshipers to the true Hearer and Answerer of prayer.

Another idol of note was Ranakandriana, supposed to inhabit a cave near the summit of a mountain about thirty miles north-west of the capital. It was believed that he could reply audibly to those saluting him. The echoes from the surrounding rocks may have given rise to the superstition. The priests knew how to turn this circumstance to their own profit, adding certain private arrangements of their own to help out the cheat.

King Radama I. visited the famous locality and put their contrivances to the test. Entering the cavern, he saluted the divinity supposed to inhabit it. A low and solemn voice answered his greeting. He then offered to present a small sum of money; but seeing a hand gently moving forward in the gloom to receive the gift, he seized it and exclaimed: "This is no god—this is a human being!" He immediately gave orders to his followers to drag out the impostor. This was done, to the great satisfaction of the king, but no doubt the

priests continued for a long time to find dupes among the people.

It is remarkable that these national idols had no temples and no regular forms and seasons for worship. The towns where they were kept were considered sacred; the houses in them were required to be built of wood instead of the ordinary clay, and foreigners were forbidden to enter them. A house in the centre of the town or village is appropriated to the idol, which is kept in a box. Instead of the people visiting the idol in cases where its aid is believed to be important, it is carried around to the people by its keepers. Very rarely sacrifices were offered to these idols, but here, as in so many other heathen systems, the necessity of blood to make atonement for sin was plainly felt. And as, in the Jewish ritual, the inner fat of the victim was offered with the blood, blood and fat used to figure in various ways among the religious rites of Madagascar. Everything of the kind, however, was of the nature of a freewill-offering, mostly in fulfillment of vows made on condition that the requests of the worshiper should be granted and some favor conferred upon him by the idol.

Connected with these religious beliefs and practices is another deserving of mention, called *fadi-*

tra. A *faditra* is something appointed by the diviners to be thrown away as devoted or accursed. It may be money, or ashes, or fruit, or an animal. Whatever it may be, the evils which are to be avoided are recited over it, in the belief that they will be carried away with the destruction of the devoted object. If ashes are the *faditra*, they are blown away by the wind; if money, it is thrown into deep water; if fruit, it is dashed to pieces on the ground; if an animal, it is placed on the shoulders of a man and borne to a distant place, the bearer at the same time imprecating upon the victim the evils which he wishes to avert. Here is a practice which bears a striking resemblance to the sending away of the scapegoat to the wilderness as a symbol of the bearing away of the sins of the Jewish people on the day of atonement.

In the form of words sometimes used in connection with this practice there is distinct reference to the idea of substitution. In using a *faditra* for a sick man the following language is employed: "This is exchanged for the life of the sick man, is exchanged that it may be exchanged, is substituted that it may be substituted; this is devoted a hundred times, a thousand times, to avert all the evil from the sick person."

Nothing is easier or more natural than to present Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God and the divine Faiditra, taking away the sins of the world.

The original idol of Madagascar, from which it is believed the whole system of national idolatry originated, is probably the *sampy* or household god. This being found in almost every house, it is supposed that peculiar circumstances connected with one or another in the history of the family to which it belonged gave it prominence and publicity, and led to its adoption as a national object of worship. The *sampy* is often merely a piece of wood, or stone, or grass, or equally worthless object, kept in a straw basket plaited in the form of a small bottle and hung from the north wall of the house, the bedstead being always in that part of the dwelling. Sometimes the *sampy* is a small figure of silver rudely resembling a bullock—sometimes it is a single glass bead or some other ornament.

Idolatry in Madagascar extended to the worship of ancestors. They believed in a life beyond the grave. They prayed to the spirits of the departed, and kept their tombs with great care and reverence. Departed sovereigns were regarded as demigods, and until the spread of Christianity it was

customary for the reigning sovereign to address prayers to the early kings on all important occasions. It was supposed by the opposers of Christianity in the island that Jehovah and Christ were names of early rulers or illustrious ancestors of the Europeans, whom the missionaries were teaching the people to put in place of the ancestors of their lawful rulers. It is to this blind and ignorant suspicion that much of the bitterness of Queen Ranavalona toward the Christians is to be traced. She was jealous of the claims of these foreign worthies, and could not endure the dishonor she felt to be thus cast upon the famous line of potentates to which she belonged, and which had made the kingdom great and powerful.

Amid all this darkness and superstition the Madagascans never altogether lost the idea of one true god, whom they acknowledged to be superior to all idols. One of the names for this supreme being meant "creating prince," and doubtless the great essential truth conveyed by this title has come down from the earliest times, one of those fragments of the original revelation which are scattered among the rubbish of heathenism all over the world.

Not only separate terms, but complete sentences, are found circulating among the people of Madagascar, in the form of proverbs, embodying the most important religious and moral truth. Some of these proverbs have been translated. In reference to the omniscience of God they say, "Do not consider the secret valley, for God is overhead." Again they say, "God beholds from on high and sees that which is concealed." And again they say plainly, "There is nothing unknown to God." The following sound like extracts from the Book of Proverbs or Ecclesiastes :

The willfulness of man can be borne by the Creator, for God alone bears rule.

God hates evil, God is not to be blamed, the Creator is not to be censured.

Though men wait not for God, yet will I wait for him.

Better be guilty with men than guilty before God.

There is no retribution [perhaps in this life is meant]. Still the past returns.

These proverbs, with others of the sort, are not overlooked by the missionaries ; as Paul used the saying of a heathen poet to give point to his address at Athens, so do the English teachers show how the native sayings justify and illustrate the

teachings of Christianity. When the first of the memorial chapels was dedicated, in 1867, the missionary who preached the sermon took for his text the words of Paul at Athens: "Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." He showed the people that their heathen ancestors had some knowledge of God, and quoting their own proverbs, proved as it were out of their own mouths that God was the Creator, that he knew all things, and that he was the Rewarder of both good and evil. The people listened with astonishment to this treatment of their every-day sayings, while the preacher proceeded to show how defective this knowledge by itself was, how it was corrupted by the intermingling of foolish and superstitious notions, and how the gospel of Christ alone could make them wise unto salvation.

In fact, while these sayings referred plainly enough to sin, divine anger and punishment, none of them spoke of pardon or eternal life.

No definite knowledge of the appearance of the great national idols was obtained until, in 1869, by direction of Queen Ranavalona II., they were brought out of their secret shrines and publicly burned. The shrine itself was nothing but the trunk of a small tree hollowed out and fitted with



A Madagascar Idol.

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a cover. Divested of its wrappings, which were of scarlet silk in two pieces, each a yard long and three inches wide, the idol was nothing but a plain piece of wood an inch or two in length and as large round as one's finger. In fact, a common clothes-pin would have made two or three such idols. A small quantity of sand tied in cloth was the material of the royal idol. Another chief idol consisted of three sticks, the largest six inches long, fastened together with a silver chain.

Mr. Ellis gives a drawing of a Madagascar idol which was probably one of the most elaborate.





CHAPTER XXVII.

CULMINATION OF THE EVANGELISTIC MOVEMENT.

WITH the summary overthrow of the idols the last vestige of doubt as to the permanent policy of the nation disappeared, and nothing now remained to keep alive the superstitious fears of the people. Deities who were so little able to protect the objects in which the very essence of their being and their power was lodged could no longer be regarded with dread by their worshipers. Christianity did not in the least mean subjection to a foreign power. The government itself had set the example, and it seemed as if at once the whole population of the island became nominally Christian, and desired to become really such in heart and life. From the queen to the lowest slave one feeling pervaded all ranks of society.

The old centres of instruction, the churches in and about the capital, were crowded to a degree

unimagined in more civilized communities. A church which in England could hold about eight hundred people was many times crowded with three thousand at half-past eight in the morning. In the country round, as yet but scantily supplied with teachers or buildings, new congregations were constantly springing up and holding meetings, although without any one to guide them, and even without a single person among them able to read the word of God. Almost every village and every tribe was anxious to have a chapel of its own.

In many places, indeed, to the great regret of the missionaries, a strong pressure was brought to bear upon the people to induce them to attend service. In some places they were told that the tables had been turned, and that now those who did not become Christians would lose their heads. But this attempt to frighten them into religion was without authority. The queen burned only the idols which were national property, leaving the people entirely free to burn their own or continue worshipping them.

The mighty religious movement, therefore, was substantially an outbreak of the free national life, led by the Providence and Spirit of God, and

in the very week of the image-burning the churches of the metropolis took such steps as they could to meet the sudden and marvelous demand for Christian teaching.

Money was raised among the native church officers and evangelists were immediately sent out, but the work was of such proportions as almost to dismay and confound the churches. The missionaries wrote home the most urgent letters for help, declaring that they were too much distracted by the number of claims pressing upon them to do satisfactorily the little which they could undertake. The province of Imerina alone, in which the idol villages belonged, contained a million of people all open to receive the new religion.

Appeals were not only made by the natives to the missionaries, but the delegations from villages and towns pressed their spiritual necessities upon the prime minister in person. What great cause for thankfulness that the sagacity of a statesman united itself with the zeal of a Christian in this high officer! Instead of assuming the government and direction of this vast national movement, and so bringing to pass a crude and oppressive union of Church and State, with all the great evils that would follow in its train, he counseled with the mis-

sionaries as to the best method for the churches to pursue, in endeavoring successfully to meet the demands of the people for the gospel.

The missionaries suggested the formation of a Madagascar missionary society, but the minister did not relish the idea. He thought it best to appeal to each church separately to raise money and teachers. The queen, he said, would not interfere in the choice of teachers or of the districts to which they should be sent. They must simply have her sanction, so as to be free from all claims for public service. She would also give them letters to the head-people of the places to which they might be appointed, securing to them safety and a respectful hearing.

In accordance with the prime minister's wishes, it was decided that each of the older churches should be urged to choose as many men as it could support. Accordingly each drew up a list of places needing teachers and a list of men suitable to go. The total number of villages thus named was one hundred and fifty, and for the greater number of these men were found willing to go, so remarkable was the self-sustaining energy of this movement. The lists were approved by the prime minister in a meeting of pastors and deacons which he attended.

Help was also promised from the church in the palace.

Thus there could be no government interference, and no assignment of government funds for the work. The State would not be entangled with the Church, and no constraint or authority would be exercised, directly or indirectly, by the State over any man's conscience. Nevertheless, the whole advantage of such governmental influence would be enjoyed in the simple evangelical channel of the Christian sympathies and contributions of the royal congregation in the palace yard.

The result of the whole was that each church exerted itself nobly, and that native teachers were sent out in all directions. One church which had resolved to send out four or five men speedily sent out twenty. The same congregation—Ambohispotsy, in the memorial chapel on the site of the first martyrdom, at the south of the city—raised five hundred dollars for carrying on the work. The Analakely church, in the north-west of the capital, adopted the weekly mode of giving, raised one hundred dollars in three months and supported eleven evangelists. The church at Ankadibevava, near the eastern gate, raised five hundred dollars in the year, and with the aid of donations from the

palace church sent out twenty-one evangelists to fifty-three stations.

In England the London Missionary Society was completely at a loss how best to meet such an unexpected, such a blessed expansion of duties and opportunities. The history of the society had furnished no parallel to these circumstances. Great assemblies for prayer and thanksgiving were held in London in January, 1870, in view of the responsibilities of the situation.

Sixteen missionaries were called for, at an annual expense of over thirty thousand dollars, besides about the same sum necessary to carry them to the island and furnish them with homes. Special contributions to the amount of nearly ten thousand dollars were reported in January, and the assistance of the Bible and tract societies was also sought for the supply of a suitable literature. Four missionaries, with their wives, were ready to sail in March, and four others in April.

Meanwhile, the missionaries on the island continued to report in the same strain of encouragement and with the same urgent calls for aid. In November, 1869, Rev. George Cousins wrote of a recent visit to the sacred city Ambohimanga. This was long a stronghold of idolatry; it was the birth-

place of the founder of the reigning family and their burial-place; it also boasted of the presence of one of the national idols, and was thronged with priests, diviners and idol-keepers. Not only were foreigners shut out, but even natives not living there were obliged to procure a pass before entering.

The gospel, however, could not be shut out, and in 1865 a congregation of fifty persons was gathered for worship. But in November, 1869, Mr. Cousins wrote that there were three congregations, one of eight hundred persons, one of nine hundred or nine hundred and fifty, and one of over one thousand. Even then, no foreigner was allowed to live in the city, and all this enormous growth had been under native Christian influence.

Perhaps the single statement made in the annual report of the mission for 1869, that the nominal adherents of the mission in that time had increased from thirty-seven thousand to one hundred and fifty-three thousand, will give as good an idea of the expansion of the work as anything that can be said. As for the numbers ready to receive Christian teaching, all the accessible population of the island might be reckoned under that head. Meanwhile, it is proof of the care exercised by the

church-officers in the matters of admission to church privileges that the membership, instead of being rapidly swelled by multitudes acting under impulse and swept in without thought, has grown from seven thousand three hundred only to ten thousand in the same period.

Earnest attention had been given from the first to the education of the natives in all the necessary elements of learning. Normal schools and congregational schools were in full operation. The girls were taught needlework as well as other branches, and female teachers were trained and set to work among their countrywomen. The printing-press was in constant use, averaging from twelve to sixteen hours' work out of the twenty-four. The natives make good printers, and twenty-five native hands were engaged in printing and binding last year at the mission house, which is fireproof. The monthly magazine "*Good Words*" circulates upward of two thousand paid copies a month. Of fifteen thousand lesson-books printed early in 1870, ten thousand were sold in a fortnight. An edition of ten thousand of the Gospel of Mark was expected to be sold in a month.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROMAN CATHOLIC AND OTHER MISSIONS.

THE missionary zeal of the papal Church has carried its agents to almost every corner of the globe. Long before any Protestant nation was known to the people of Madagascar—in fact, before the Protestant Reformation—the Portuguese and French had made settlements on the island, and had introduced Romish priests among the people of the frontier.

Their earliest enterprises soon came to naught, but about 1650 the French again attempted to settle on the island and to plant their religion among the natives. A bishop, with several priests and assistants, labored for a number of years on the east coast. Impatient at the slow progress of the work, Father Stephen attempted to apply the truly popish plan of converting heretics by force. He commanded one of the most intelligent and

friendly of the chiefs to put away his wives, and threatened him with the vengeance of the French if he refused. The chief asked a few days' delay, and used the time in retreating with his followers to a safe place in the interior.

Father Stephen followed him up with the obstinacy of a fanatic, repeated his commands, and snatching the household gods of the chief, he contemptuously dashed them to the ground. The monk lost his life for his senseless zeal. The French revenged his death by a devastating war upon the province, in which neither age nor sex was spared. The most active leader of these avenging forces was also a monk. It was not strange, indeed, that a Church which was persecuting and dragooning the Waldenses and Huguenots at that very hour in Europe should sanction, by the presence of one of her ministers, the wholesale slaughter of these remote islanders. But the result was that the mission was broken up and the natives were embittered against the name of France and against Roman Catholicism, perhaps for ever.

Over a century and a half of unbroken darkness succeeded these ill-managed attempts to introduce Christianity, and in October, 1820, the first of the long and wonderfully successful line

of English missionaries set foot in the capital of Madagascar.

Meanwhile, Romish priests were forbidden to settle in the capital. Two Jesuits, however, managed to enter it in disguise, and joined in the plot, already described, to dethrone Ranavalona I. They were banished from the country, barely escaping with their lives. It was only after the great and fearful contest with heathenism had been won, and the martyrdoms had ceased, and Christianity of a pure scriptural type had been thoroughly planted in the country, that the Romanists returned and other societies pressed in to reap the abundant harvest.

When Radama II. succeeded to the throne of the persecuting queen, all prohibitions against foreigners were removed, and so prompt were Romanists to take advantage of this grant that they were in the capital some time before Mr. Ellis could reach it; and in 1862, before the intended reinforcements of Protestant missionaries could reach their destination, a numerous body of Jesuit fathers, lay brothers and sisters of mercy were established at the capital. They even circulated the report that the king had been converted to their faith, and that the whole body of the

native Christians had put themselves under the guidance of the priests. They have since built two churches there; they also established smaller stations in some of the villages, and worked a sort of farm on the estate of the French consul, M. Laborde.

Their labors have been zealous and energetic. The sisters of mercy have attended in their excellent capacity as nurses even upon sick members of the Protestant missions. All that Romanism could do in the way of outward attractions has been tried upon the untutored natives. But the results have been meagre and disappointing. Neither the people generally nor persons of high standing have in any considerable numbers been brought under their teaching. Many of the daughters of government officers have attended the sisters' school to learn embroidery, but when that is done they leave it.

The truth is, jealousy of French influence, suspicion of French political intrigue, and reminiscences of French methods of conversion with fire and sword, are an insurmountable barrier in their way. Even if the impression left by the violent proceedings of two centuries ago had been forgotten, the connection of the two Jesuits with the

attempted revolution of 1857 would be sufficient to arouse anew the fears and hostility of the natives.

French policy has been a standing menace to the independence of the island from the date of those violent proceedings in the seventeenth century already described. It aimed not only at colonizing, but at annexing, the island. The attempts at subduing the people by force of arms having failed, intrigue was tried. The plot of 1857 to dethrone Queen Ranavalona was partially a French movement. As late as in 1866 there was an alarm in regard to the designs of the French, and military preparations were hurriedly made. All these things would necessarily put French teachers at a serious disadvantage in any attempts at converting the natives.

But without doubt the grand defence of the natives against the influence of Romanism, with its semi-pagan shows and with its ready accommodation to human weakness, was their thorough grounding in evangelical truth and their acquaintance with the Bible. The head of the mission, Father Jouen, in a letter to the pope, explained the situation with very trifling overstatement when he said, "The whole Christianity of the people consists in reading the Bible." The

religion which he taught treats the Bible as a sealed book and forbids it to the common people. How can that be Christianity to the Madagascans, whose faith clings to the written word, whose eagerness for the Scripture has been most extraordinary, and whose martyr experiences have been linked to that word by the most precious and imperishable ties? So long as a tattered vestige remains of the old Bibles that were borne away in hurried flights, or hidden in the folds of the dress, or buried in holes and out-of-the-way places to escape the spies of the persecuting queen, so long will popery have an insurmountable obstacle to success among the people of Madagascar.

The religion which is learned from the New Testament is simple and averse to those shows and ceremonies which form the staple of Romanism. The Madagascar Christians, accustomed to a scriptural worship, find it difficult to regard the Romish ritual as in any way a religious service at all. Now and then one will pause to look in when passing at the door of the Roman Catholic chapel; and seeing the bowings and ceremonies at the altar, with a puzzled expression he says, "What fools these Frenchmen are! We never saw Englishmen at such stupid work as this." And many natives

have learned to use the words and arguments of the Bible with skill in reply to the arguments of the priests.

There is a vein of common sense in the native character which comes to their aid against ceremonies and rites which would be attractive to people of a different organization. Even the unfortunate king Radama II., disposed as he was to encourage French speculators and colonists, was quite unmanageable in the hands of the priests. In response to urgent invitations he and his wife attended service in their chapel on Christmas day, 1862, but that was as far as the priests ever got him, instead of converting him, as they pretended they had done.

The present queen was also urged by the priests to attend service at a new church they had just finished. They even claimed that under treaty with France she was bound to show them as much favor as she showed the English. After many excuses the court concluded to attend on Thursday, March 25, 1869. But though a throne had been arranged for the sovereign, and everything in the way of decorations and music that could charm the senses had been prepared, the visit was brief and formal in the extreme. Advancing halfway

up the aisle, the queen received the usual homage and turned to leave. The disappointed officials seized her hand and besought her to stay. The prime minister replied that she had simply come to have her authority recognized. "I see," said the French commissioner, "that there is no love, only hatred, to France." The minister rejoined that the queen's religious preferences were not regulated by treaties with foreign countries, and the court left after a stay of not over two minutes.

Soon after Mr. Ellis' arrival in 1862, when the French priests and nuns who had preceded him were writing home flattering reports of their success, a number of nobles put their sons under his instruction. Radama's queen soon after imitated their example and gave into Mr. Ellis' charge an adopted son. The disappointed Romanists made such an ado that the matter was taken up by the diplomatists, both French and English. The result was that the young prince was suddenly removed from Mr. Ellis' care and sent to the Roman Catholic school.

When, three years after, the queen Rasoherina was compelled to pay the French indemnity, she was so incensed, in common with her entire people, at the injustice of the whole proceeding, that she

removed her child from the French school and placed him under the care of a native Christian instructor. The native preacher Ratsilaingia, a veteran Christian who had suffered the loss of almost all things for his religion, was put at the head of the school for children of the royal family and members of the government. The queen furnished the school with New Testaments, hymn-books and school-books. Reading the Scriptures and regular worship formed part of the regular instruction.

It was at this time that the Jesuit Father Jouen wrote to the Romish official publication "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," those glowing reports which excited hope of the speedy conversion of Madagascar to Romanism. He said that the king Radama not only permitted, but, so far as in him lay, *commanded*, them to go, preach and instruct wherever it might seem to them good. Happily, he wrote, "the Christians formed by the Methodist missionaries (so much he knows of them!), and whose whole Christianity consists in reading the Bible, do not appear, at least up to this time, to have prejudices against Catholicity, and we have good grounds to hope they will soon see the enormous difference which exists between the cold and

erroneous teachings of Protestantism and the immense resources which the holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church offers to them." Ten years have since passed away, and the reader knows in what sense the natives do know the difference.

He also gives what purports to be a letter of King Radama himself, but not only is its style utterly unlike that of the king, but it is wanting in such an important and simple thing as a signature.

We have already related the absurd and impudent trick which the priests played upon the unsuspecting king on the evening before his coronation, and which gave rise to the story that he had been crowned at that time by the emissaries of the pope. A somewhat similar performance of these persevering tricksters upon his royal successor is narrated in the official "Annals."

Queen Rasoherina is believed to have died, as she lived, a heathen. As her end drew near, the French consul, M. Laborde, paid her a visit. She seemed to be in her last extremity, but according to the French story, had recovered to full consciousness. "M. Laborde suggested to her some pious considerations suitable to the great act which was about to be accomplished. She answered by

raising her eyes and her arms to heaven. And then, as if he were about to magnetize her, he called for a vessel of water, dipped his hands into it and washed Rasoherina's forehead, while pronouncing the sacramental words. None of those present," continued the Annals, "had the least suspicion that this pious stratagem was made use of to regenerate [!] a soul. Thus was baptized the sovereign of Madagascar, on Friday the twenty-ninth of March, 1868, at five o'clock in the morning, by virtue of the precious blood the feast of which is celebrated on that day. Three days later, on Monday, she went to heaven, as we confidently trust, to exchange her title as queen for that of patroness of the great African island."

Further extracts from these Annals reveal to us the spirit which these Romish emissaries cherished toward Mr. Ellis. They say that, "fanatical and envious preacher that he is, he preferred plunging Madagascar into barbarism to sharing with Catholics the honor of civilizing it." He is further caricatured as "the man with the long nose." He is called "the designing plotter," "wretched fanatic," "the author of the disgraceful revolution," "the evil genius which directs all the disorder," "the individual whose atrocious conduct I cannot

put upon paper," "who exercises a sort of magnetism over the king," and "is at this moment raising the slaves and urging them to assassinate the French." He seems even to be alluded to in the following bitter style: "We have had a hand-to-hand fight with the devil, who would fain have us flee before his face."

Much of this mendacious and evil-tempered writing is doubtless to be traced to the chagrin felt at the distribution of the Scriptures among the natives, arming them against the wiles and unfitting them utterly for the methods of the Catholic priests.

It is well indeed that Protestantism has taken such a deep hold upon the people of this populous country, and that English jealousy of French political aggrandizement, poor as the motives of statesmen often are, has held that nation in check, or we might have witnessed a repetition of the cruel and oppressive and high-handed proceedings which have disgraced the name of France and of popery together in the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

Judgment from Heaven has fallen upon that most ambitious and powerful of Catholic kingdoms. In carrying out her last unrighteous schemes of aggression she has met the most over-

whelming defeat recorded in the pages of history. We can scarcely doubt for a moment that we see in her fearful experiences of evil and of foreign war, the disclosure of the divine anger against just such acts of intrigue, oppression and violence as she had been so often guilty of before, and as she was ready to visit upon Madagascar whenever an opportunity might occur.

It must not, however, be too speedily inferred, from the decline of French influence, that the Madagascar Christians are free from all the perils of a Romanizing system. Sensible natives may yet have occasion to wonder at the follies of some English worshipers no less than the French, and Anglicanism, or High Church ritualism, not being burdened by national prejudices, may yet make progress among the natives, and prove a halfway house to the now scorned Romanism of the French priests and sisters.





CHAPTER XXIX.

ENGLISH EPISCOPALIANS IN MADAGASCAR.

THE more evangelical part of the Church of England regard with sincere joy and Christian sympathy the successes of other denominations upon the field of foreign missions. Their organization, the Church Missionary Society, never allows its own operations to interfere with those of other societies. It is from the High-Church wing that such interferences come, and generally through their organ, the "S. P. G.," or "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel." The former society, the organ of the Low Churchmen, planted a mission in the north-east of the island in 1864, which after eighteen months of arduous but unsuccessful labor was transferred to a more southerly point on the eastern coast of the island.

This was done in November, 1866, since which time the mission has been conducted by Messrs. Campbell and Maundrell, in an entirely heathen

country, with an encouraging measure of success. In their journeys to the interior they have found the field open on every hand, and especially prepared in places which the influences of the earlier missions of the Congregationalists had reached. In one such place, Fianarantsoa, they were enthusiastically welcomed. During the week of Mr. Campbell's stay he was incessantly engaged in conversing with the people from morning to evening. Before he was dressed in the morning they were waiting at the gate for admission; in the afternoon he held alternately a Bible class and a singing class, after which he was followed by crowds to the market-place, where he preached the gospel.

Sometimes the natives ran in terror from the first foreigner they had ever seen. In one case the entire population of a village fled away at his approach, but the sound of their own familiar tongue quieted their fears and opened the way to their confidence. The whole territory was open, and offered a rich reward to faithful missionary labor.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a venerable institution chartered in 1701, and now the foreign missionary organ of the High-Church party in the Church of England, established a mis-

sion at the port of Tamatave in 1864. In three years' time they had succeeded in building a church in this town, and another at Foule Point, forty miles farther north. Besides congregations in these two places, they had three others at as many villages.

This mission has had to contend with the deadly coast-fever, one missionary being obliged to leave his work for many months from this cause, and finally to desist altogether and return home. Another, Mr. Hey, died at sea while on his way from Mauritius, whither he had gone to procure medical aid for his sick wife.

While these missionaries doubtless take pains to acquaint their hearers with Bible truth, they lay great stress upon forms and ceremonies; and while the friends and supporters of other great missionary societies measure their success by the converting and sanctifying effects of the gospel upon the natives, the friends of this High-Church society are "cheered" when they receive news of the successful performance of showy services in the native churches. The following account of the celebration of Christmas eve, 1868, in the church at Tamatave, is given in the report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel for 1869.

“How cheering,” says the report, “is such a description as the following, given by Mr. Holding, of services at Tamatave on Christmas eve and Christmas day! He writes:

“I shall never forget the happy yet solemn service we had here on Christmas eve. The church was beautifully decorated with palm-branches and various tropical flowers, such as many a connoisseur in England would have given much for, and such as many a loving heart in England would have welcomed most heartily to have had to decorate the majestic stone churches at home. Every color, in its gorgeous splendor, was there, making a very paradise of God’s own dwelling-place—making the sanctuary of God the beauty of holiness.

“The scroll ‘Kraisty teraka anio’ (Christ was born to-day), presented by Miss Rokeby, looked fine indeed. The altar-screen was of light blue, studded with *fleur-de-lis*; a corona was suspended over the choir, and lights were dispersed amid the green leaves round the church walls. All these last were the gift of one of our native Christians who is a tinker. They were painted nicely and looked well.

“At 10.30 P.M. the bell rang for prayers, and soon the church was filled. The surpliced choir

left the mission schoolhouse, singing as a processional 'Avia ry mpeno' (Oh come, all ye faithful), to the same good old English tune. As soon as we entered the porch the entire body of the congregation rose up and joined the strain, and sung heartily as the choristers and priest marched up the aisle. Just before the sermon the choir sung 'Olena hiaudry ondry' (While shepherds watched). Then a sermon—a most eloquent sermon—was preached by Mr. Andrianado, on the subject of the shepherds watching by night. Another hymn was sung—Keble's evening hymn, 'Inpamonjy masoaudronay' (Sun of my soul). Then I addressed the congregation, after the bell had sounded midnight past and our vigil over, on the birth of our blessed Redeemer.

“After the blessing the congregation rose, and the choir left the church singing the *Nunc Dimittis*. It was a lovely moonlight night, and the poor people felt the full influence of all accessories, and went home comforted, realizing something more of the first advent of the Saviour than they had ever done before.

“On Christmas day, had the church been twice the size, it would have been filled. Many of our people who had come from the country to attend

the services on that day could not get in. It was painful to see them standing at every window and door, joining in the service, kneeling on the grass, and sitting round the church under the broiling sun for two hours and a half. We had a larger number of communicants than ever we had before, and the offertory was nearly treble the usual weekly sum. You see we have the weekly offertory."

Not only is pre-eminence given to the trifling and unessential parts of public worship; all the orders of the clergy are regarded as necessary to the very humblest beginnings of church work. The natives of Madagascar cannot be converted after the High-Church fashion at all without a bishop. Madagascar—the whole island—must be made a diocese, and the excellent Christian workmen who, thirty years before, had laid the foundations of one of the most wonderful gospel enterprises that the world had ever seen, and the multitude of natives who had won the crowns and palms of martyrdom, were to be included in this diocese along with the unconverted heathen, and treated as if they were all alike destitute of true religion.

It was not only for the more rapid conversion of the natives or the better ordering of their two churches and handful of converts. A bishop of

Madagascar would be nothing less than a claim to spiritual authority and precedence over the entire island. It would be an assumption that no proper missionary work had yet been done there.

Something of the same sort was attempted in the Sandwich Islands in the year 1862, when the High Church or "Anglo-Catholic" zealots in England sent out a bishop and staff of assistants to reconvert the Christian population from their sound evangelical faith to Ritualism and semi-popery.

These men undertook the superhuman task of proving that the past labors and successes of the American missionaries were a failure, and even that the people were worse off through the influence of the mission. They wrote defamatory articles for the newspapers of England and America, they addressed public meetings in the same contemptuous and arrogant strain, they raised money for carrying on their mission on the plea that the islanders were too wretchedly poor to build their own churches at a time when single churches of natives were contributing over a thousand dollars a year to the work of the American Board, and when in a single month one of the churches raised one thousand seven hundred and thirty dollars toward building a new edifice.

They failed utterly, however, and Bishop Staley and his staff had to return home. Yet the enterprise of the Madagascar bishopric was undertaken in the face of these facts. And not only was it in opposition to the wishes and protests of the London Missionary Society, but the Church Missionary Society, the organ of the moderate Episcopalians of England, took a firm stand against the project. In the most brotherly and Christian spirit they recognized the rights of the Congregationalists' society, and of the converts gathered in by them. They recounted the marvelous success of the London society. They plead for the observance of that wise rule observed by almost all the societies which forbids trespassing on each other's fields, and they declined to countenance or engage in a scheme which would introduce among the young converts of Madagascar the baneful controversies which had rent the Church at home. All the evangelical missionary societies of England took similar ground.

But in vain. The original movers of the scheme pressed it without hesitation upon the authorities. A clergyman, Rev. Robert H. Baynes, was nominated for the bishopric, and recommended by the archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter of the eighth

of November, 1870, to Earl Granville, who held the appointing power under the queen. Here, however, they met with a check. For nearly three weeks no reply was received from the foreign secretary, and when it came it was nothing more than a chilling request for information which he regarded as necessary to aid him in coming to a decision. The questions which he asked were—(1.) How many British clergymen are there now in Madagascar? (2.) How many lay members of the Church of England? (3.) Could not the jurisdiction of the bishop of Mauritius be as well extended over the island of Madagascar?

To these brief inquiries the archbishop replied at length. At the date of his reply, as he was constrained to admit, there was not a single missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on the island, and the three agents of the Church Missionary Society (Low Church) now there would have nothing to do with the proposed bishop. Hence his constituency would have to be sent out with him. The number of lay members in the diocese would be perhaps four hundred, but, again, it was rather the uncertain number of heathen to be converted in the future for whom this chief shepherd was to be appointed. As to

the sufficiency of the jurisdiction of the bishop of Mauritius, no very decided opinion was given, the archbishop preferring rather to quote the opinions of that bishop as lately communicated by himself.

While Earl Granville was considering with his accustomed deliberateness the archbishop's reply, and while a lively discussion was going on in the various English journals upon the proposed inroad of bigoted High Churchism upon the evangelical fold, Mr. Baynes, the nominee for the position, wrote a letter to the archbishop withdrawing his name. The letter was forwarded to Earl Granville, whereupon the earl wrote to the archbishop that under the circumstances it would be "neither desirable nor expedient to proceed to the creation of the proposed bishopric, or to move her Majesty to grant a license for the consecration of a bishop whose advent in the island would be calculated to produce schism in the Anglican community, and, therefore, have an injurious effect on the conversion of the heathen inhabitants to Christianity."

The reply, dated January eleventh, put an end to the movement for the time being, at least, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has been obliged to content itself with Christmas celebra-

tions in the broiling sun of midsummer in the southern hemisphere, and with similar ritualistic machinery in the hands of ordinary clergymen for accomplishing its work.

The abandonment of the ungenerous undertaking has called attention to the general subject of the boundaries of mission fields, and the public has been reminded of the fact that several years ago the London Missionary Society, the same which evangelized Madagascar, gave up a considerable strip of missionary ground in Western India, along with a number of churches in the Tinnevely district, because it had been agreed that the Church of England should hold the field where their efforts had been crowned with such marvelous success.

The bishop of Calcutta, one of the most important of the English prelates in the colonial part of the empire, took the opportunity in a recent official address to announce his approval of the course matters had taken, and he held up the failure of Bishop Staley on the Sandwich Islands as a warning against the appointment of such officials in advance of the actual demands of the country.

In his whole letter, professedly designed to

furnish the government with information upon the religious condition of the island, the archbishop avoided all mention of the London Missionary Society and all reference to its wonderful work.





CHAPTER XXX.

QUAKER MISSIONARIES.—REAL HELPERS.

NUITE opposite to all this offensive parade of arrogance, exclusivism and formality has been the attitude of the Friends (or Quakers) of England and America, toward the original mission. At first they sent contributions in aid of the educational work among the natives. A school was erected and supplied with fittings through their generous aid, all of which was rendered through the London society. In 1867 the society of Friends in England sent one of their most esteemed ministers, Mr. Sewell. Mr. and Mrs. Street, of the same body of Christians in America, having come to England in the hope of finding some way to Madagascar, joined Mr. Sewell, and reached Madagascar in June. They came, not to organize a new mission, but to co-operate with the laborers on the ground, and especially to help on the cause of education. They came well

supplied with books, maps, etc., and were welcomed with pleasure by the missionaries. A recent death in the educational staff of the mission made their appearance all the more timely.

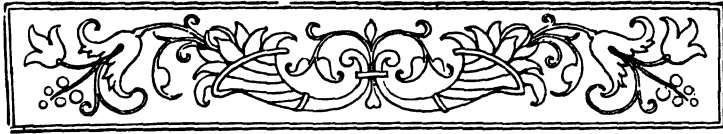
Their excellent spirit may be seen in the following extract given by Mr. Ellis from one of Mr. Sewell's letters to his friends at home. He says, "I was particularly interested when one of my young missionary friends read from the Bible the ten commandments. Some of the congregation were so intent that they stood with their mouths and eyes wide open. My heart quite ached in its longings to sound the glad tidings on the heathen ear." Not long after their arrival they sent full accounts of the religious aspect of the country to their friends in England, fully confirming all that had been previously reported as to the genuine and thorough character of the Christian work done and the movement then going on. They declared "that the native services were so simple and scriptural in character that no good Friend need scruple to take part in them." In fact, it may be regarded as one of the many overwhelming proofs of the depth and genuineness of the work of grace in Madagascar that it brought these brethren of such widely different views into the

most cordial and active sympathy with the missionaries. Not only did Mr. Sewell do excellent service in preparing school-books and promoting the educational interests of the people, but he was influenced by the urgent needs of the rapidly multiplying congregations to become the virtual pastor of two of the native churches.

In 1869 another lady was added to their number who designed especially to take part in the work of education.

The Friends of England and America have done themselves great honor by this work, of mingled generosity and charity. It forms a happy contrast with the trivial formalities and the unpardonable arrogance of the English High Churchmen.





CHAPTER XXXI.

LATEST PHASES OF THE MOVEMENT.

AS we bring our narrative to a close we have no adverse news to report, and not a single serious shadow to put upon the picture. The revolution moves grandly forward, and a Christian, intelligent and prosperous people, destined to play a great and we trust beneficent part in all that quarter of the globe, is rising upon the ruins of the ancient heathenism, ignorance and isolation.

In remote sections of the country, it is true, and among the subjugated tribes, threats are frequently made by inferior officials of violence on the part of the government to compel a universal acceptance of Christianity. When on a tour through the Betsileo country, Mr. Jukes was requested by the chief man of a village to preach to the people and tell them that if they did not pray they should be put in chains.

Fear and a desire to follow the new custom of the queen seemed to have been the ruling motive which, especially in remote villages, led many "to pray." The chief person of each village was called pastor, no matter how profound his ignorance or how unsuitable his private life. In several instances Mr. Jukes found individuals unbaptized, without any knowledge of the gospel, and many of them living in sin, who had formed themselves into churches and regularly partook of the Lord's Supper, in imitation of what they had seen the Christians do at Fianarantsoa, without the slightest notion of the meaning of the ordinance.

The missionaries are using every means in their power to disseminate right views, and to convince the people that they are perfectly free in the matter of religion; and in this they are seconded by the government. In December, 1870, the prime minister publicly referred to the rumor that he and the queen wished to govern and command the churches, and emphatically disclaimed any such intention. No one, he said, should be allowed on account of his rank or position to rule the church. "If any one presumes upon his position or power," said he, "if he be my own son, turn him out."

These words were uttered at a meeting of a

newly-formed congregational union, held December 14th, which the prime minister attended, not, as he said, in any official capacity, but as a deputation from the church in the palace to consult with them on the best means of educating and evangelizing the people. No less than two thousand representatives of town and country churches composed this vast council.

The building in which they met was a new one of brick which had only been two months dedicated. It is a large and substantial church, with galleries measuring ninety-three by forty-five feet on the inside. Its acoustic properties are excellent; the vestry and class-rooms can be connected with the main room by wide folding-doors; a harmonium leads the singing. The queen was present and took part in the services of dedication, thanking the missionaries for coming to teach her people. The first discourse to the throng of two thousand natives was preached by a native, the senior student in the theological seminary, and he acquitted himself well.

After a sermon by one of the missionaries the congregation was dismissed, but only to be replaced almost immediately by an eager crowd who wished to be present at the evening service,

although more than three hours had yet to intervene. The sermon on that occasion was preached by Ravoninahitriniarivo, nephew of the prime minister. His text was: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

Among the events of the year (1870) the completion and dedication of the children's memorial church should be mentioned. For this object nearly fifteen thousand dollars were raised by the children of England. As already mentioned, the site chosen was Faravohitra, the scene of the burning of five native Christians during the reign of the cruel Ranavalona I.

The church was three years in building, but at last, on the fifteenth of September, it was formally opened for divine service. The queen and court were in attendance, and a very cordial message from her Majesty was read by one of her attendants. Sermons and addresses were delivered by both native and foreign preachers, the whole day being spent in these services. Although the exercises did not commence till nine o'clock, the people began to assemble as early as four o'clock in the morning.

The demand for a religious literature and for educational apparatus has amounted to overwhelming importunity. As early as August, 1869, a

missionary wrote: "We have just received the edition of twenty thousand hymn-books printed for us by the Religious Tract Society, and part of the edition of twenty thousand Testaments, also a portion of two hundred thousand volumes of various parts of the Bible which the magnificent liberality of the Bible Society has secured for us. Notwithstanding this large number, in anticipation of our further wants we have, as you know, recently written again to that society, urging them to send us another edition of fifty thousand Testaments as early as possible next year."

In the fall of 1870 the arrival of another portion of the edition of the New Testament in Madagascan created great excitement. A missionary writes:

"The people came not only from the capital and surrounding places, but from distant parts of the country, bringing their money with them, and begging most earnestly to be allowed to buy a Testament, but were obliged to go without. It has been both pleasant and painful to us who have been eyewitnesses of the excitement—pleasant to see such a thirst among the people for the word of life, but most painful to have to send, and in some cases even to drive, them away

without it, so unwilling were they to go without obtaining the treasure they were seeking."

The educational movement of the year 1870 exceeded that of all preceding years in interest and importance. The people generally had never before been so anxious to receive instruction. But the rulers, in particular, had begun to feel the necessity of their own enlightenment if they would worthily and successfully administer the affairs of the nation and maintain their places at the head of a rapidly-advancing people. Accordingly, a school of twenty-six scholars, mostly adults, was established in the palace, where one of the missionaries taught the elementary branches, Scripture history and the English language. All the scholars were regular, attentive and well behaved. A class of seventeen was also taught at the house of one of the principal officers, in which the queen took the deepest interest.

During the year 1870 the schools increased in number from one hundred and forty to three hundred and fifty-nine, and the number of scholars from five thousand two hundred and seventy to fifteen thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, just threefold.

In the same period the number of native preach-

ers had more than doubled, rising from nine hundred and thirty-five in 1869 to nineteen hundred and eighty-six in 1870. Of course there must be a vast variety of material in an army of workers gathered at such short notice out of the bosom of an ignorant and lately heathen community. But the demands of the work were too pressing, and the best that could be had was put to use, with abundant cause of thankfulness that so large a proportion of truly valuable and effective material could be found. Some of them are very intelligent and even well-educated men, having extensive theological works in English in their libraries and using them regularly in their preparation. Others, with a scanty amount of intellectual training, know their Bibles well. Still others, doubtless, in so large a company, are quite destitute of needful preparation, and perhaps influenced by questionable motives in seeking a position so popular and respected among their countrymen. But, says one of the missionaries writing on this subject, there are scores—nay, hundreds—of these preachers who on Sabbath-day and week-day will toil three, five, ten or twenty miles, and even more than that, over weary roads, under this fierce blazing sun, to preach Christ's gospel in the villages. Oh but, perhaps

they are paid for it? Yes, some of them are. If a man has far to go, and is known to be very poor, he will probably get twopence for his time and mental labor in composing his sermon, and for the time and physical labor which he must expend to deliver it.

“When I remember that these are no incidents, but the continuous, unwearied, self-denying labors of the preachers, I think that these should outweigh in the scale of moral significance all our gratuitous assumptions as to their motives, all the evils that we may discover or fancy in the character of individuals.”

A theological seminary has for some years been in full operation, with two instructors and two or more classes. Great care is exercised in admitting or retaining students. The course of training is exact and thorough, embracing grammar, sacred history, exegesis, theology and preaching. The session of 1869-70 was opened by the request of the queen at the palace. The queen was present, and the prime minister, occupying the chair, delivered a stirring address to the students and officers of the church. The queen herself added a few words, thanking the missionaries for the good they were doing to her people, and urging the young

men to make the most of the great advantages they were receiving.

The Medical Missionary Society of Edinburgh has also established a dispensary and a hospital in the capital, in connection with which a class of native students in medicine receives regular instruction. A complete apparatus for instruction in anatomy and surgery has been given by friends in Scotland, and the missionary physician, who wisely combines religious instruction with medical aid and advice, is engaged in translating valuable medical works into the native tongue.

The annual report of the mission, received by the London Missionary Society, June, 1871, showed a total of 13 stations and 621 out-stations, with 25 native pastors against 20 in 1869; 1986 native preachers against 935 the previous year; 20,951 church-members against 10,546; 231,759 in the congregations against 153,007; 359 schools against 142, and 15,837 scholars against 5270; and £3611 against £1950 voluntary contributions in 1869.

But it is impossible for figures to convey to us the greatness, the rapidity, the beneficent effects of the work of grace which has been going forward in Madagascar. Perhaps it will put the matter in its true light to say that if Christianity

had advanced in other parts of the world at the same surprising rate, four or five years would have sufficed to convert the whole human family to the same evangelical religion which has been so happily established in Madagascar.

The general benefits conferred upon the island in manners, customs, laws, morals and public policy are well described by Rev. R. Toy, one of the missionaries :

“ Wherever Christianity has taken deep root in the heart of a nation it has always been followed by an advance in the material, social and political state of the people, proving itself the true precursor of civilization. Madagascar forms no exception to this rule. For ages before the introduction of Christianity the people seem to have deteriorated rather than otherwise. And after the gospel had been preached among them, so long as idolatry was recognized as the religion of the government, the real progress made by the nation was slow. The government was most despotic in its character, regarding the people as so many goods and chattels made for the sole disposal of the sovereign. Polygamy was universally practiced, and the morals of the people were of the worst description.

“The buildings, with one or two exceptions, were of a very poor character, and none either of brick or stone were allowed within the city. They were built mostly in the same style, with the fronts always facing the west. A few houses were covered with shingle, but the large majority were thatched with bulrushes. All the rooms, if possessing more than one, were on the ground-floor, the up-stair loft being used either as lumber-room or place for cooking, or both. They were not unfrequently huddled together in groups, without any semblance of order, and sometimes with barely passing room between. The natural consequence was that fires were of common occurrence, and occasionally they extended over large areas, destroying everything in their way. Yet no sooner were the ashes and charred remains removed than new ones of the same material, and crowded together in the same way, were erected in their places, to meet with a similar fate at no very distant period.

“Now, however, that Christianity has got hold of the people and the government, all this is quite altered. It is required by the government that all new buildings erected be covered with tiles or shingles, and all who choose may put up houses of either brick or clay or stone, the queen, prime

minister and other officers setting the people the example. The royal chapel, as already mentioned, is built of stone and roofed with slate. The great palace built by the persecuting queen is in process of reconstruction. The large and lofty wooden posts which supported its triple balcony are now being replaced, under the superintendence and according to the plans of Mr. Cameron, by massive stone columns in three orders, with a large square tower at each corner.

“The prime minister is contemplating building a fine brick house, and a beautiful stone wall has already been carried round his premises. New brick houses of considerable architectural pretensions are springing up in all directions, designed somewhat after the style of the best of the mission houses, but varied according to native taste, while gateways of dressed stone are replacing in different parts of the town the old-fashioned and often rickety wooden ones which previously existed. A desire for really good houses is becoming general, and in a very few years' time the Antananarivo of 1862 will be scarcely recognizable.

“A great change also is taking place in the ideas of the people in reference to the *fanompoana*, or service rendered to the State, which among the

Malagasy answers instead of taxes. The system of paying for services rendered is being recognized. Food is given by the queen regularly to the builders of the royal chapel; the new regiment of soldiers called 'Maranitra' receive rice and clothing, while some of the officers have expressed their determination to pay for the erection of their new houses. A system of enforced service which has been in existence for ages cannot be suddenly changed for one of taxation entirely new to the country, but there are very many signs which prove that its days are numbered.

“New laws have been promulgated, and these are a great improvement upon those which previously existed, while, for the first time in the history of Madagascar, they have been printed and distributed throughout the country. The prime minister is studying English history and English laws, in order that he may be better able to bring the people under a good government and advance the nation in civilization.

“The people themselves are becoming more cleanly in their habits and more decent in their clothing. Children of the higher ranks no longer are kept stark naked, as was the case a few years ago. Polygamy is rapidly decreasing, and a faithful wife is

no longer compelled to pass the whole of her future life hopelessly bound to a polygamic and profligate husband. Intoxicating drinks are forbidden by law throughout Imerina, and their sale on the coast is as far as possible discouraged. Though obliged by treaty with England to allow of their importation into the country, by the traders paying in kind ten per cent. customs' dues, the officers in charge are commanded to empty into the sea the rum thus falling to the queen. Sunday, as a day of rest, is observed throughout the kingdom; no markets can be held, and no foreign vessels take in their cargoes on that day. Antananarivo, on Sundays, presents an aspect of calm and quietness, such as perhaps cannot be met with in any other capital of equal size in the world. Thus religion and civilization are going hand in hand, and a moral revolution is being quietly yet rapidly carried on which is bidding fair to raise the Malagasy into a most respectable position among the enlightened nations of the earth."

THE END.

FEB 6 1919