

MARTYR MEMORIAL CHURCH, AMBOHIPOTSY.

[See page 269.]

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

THE STORY OF
THE FOUNDING AND PRESERVATION
OF
The Martyr Church of Madagascar.

BY THE LATE
REV. WM. ELLIS.



"THE NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS
PRAISE THEE."—p. 152.

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* By an error, this word has been misspelt as *Madona* at the foot of the engraving on page 36.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

MADAGASCAR AS IT WAS.

Brief notice of the country and people—Radáma and his army at Tamatave—Abolition of the slave trade—Incipient civilisation among the Hovas—Resources of the country—General condition of the people—Sanguinary character of the Malagasy laws—Administration of justice—The tangéna, or poison ordeal—Mental faculties of the people—Defective morals of the community—Idolatries of Madagascar—Worship and sacrifices.

TOWARDS the close of the thirteenth century, Marco Paolo, the celebrated Venetian traveller, made known to Europe the existence of a large African island, which he called Magaster, but which is now known as Madagascar. This is not the native name of the island. The inhabitants themselves, according to their former insular ideas of the world, called their country *Iázo ambány lánitra*, "This beneath the sky; or *Ny anivóny ny riuka*, "The (all) in the centre of the sea;" and inscribed this latter designation on the tomb of Radáma, the first sovereign whose authority extended over the greater part of the country. This splendid island, one of the largest in the world, which is separated from the eastern coast of Southern Africa by the Mozambique Chan-

nel, is 900 miles long and 300 broad, and has been estimated to contain more than 2,000,000 acres of land.

The central regions of Madagascar are at least 6,000 feet above the sea, while some of the single mountains rise to double that elevation. The lower ranges of the country are fertile, richly wooded, and well watered; the mountain streams occasionally forming extensive lakes, and the pent-up waters near the coast frequently spreading out into marshy swamps, which render the surrounding country at certain seasons of the year highly insalubrious to natives of other parts, as well as to foreigners. Iron is abundant, and other metals exist in the country. Valuable gums are found in the forests, which also yield serviceable timber. The geographical position, extent, climate, and other natural advantages of the country, seem admirably suited to stimulate the enterprise of its inhabitants to render it, by their intelligence and industry, the cherished home of a civilised and prosperous people.

According to the census of a former government, calculated from a return of the number of houses in the country, the population of Madagascar was stated to be four and a half millions. This could only have been an approximate estimate: according to later observation and inquiry, three millions is probably nearer the existing number of the people. Native traditions describe the country as formerly inhabited by a single homogeneous people, called Vazimba. The present population evidently comprises several

racés. Chief among these are the Malayo-Polynesian from the east, the East African, the Arabs, and the Moors from the north. The Hovas, who have evidently a Polynesian origin, occupy the elevated and central parts of the island. This race, though themselves formerly tributary to the more numerous Sakalávas in the south-west, have, since their alliance with the English, subjugated the other races, established military posts in every province, and now receive acknowledgment and homage, if not tribute, as the rulers over the entire country.

Until the present century Europeans had regarded the Malagasy as untamed savages, and valued their country chiefly as a vast preserve, or hunting-ground for slaves. Shipwrecked mariners had, at different times, been cast upon the shores of Madagascar, and though some of these had found shelter and aid, others had been murdered, or kept as slaves by the chiefs on the coast. The only Europeans who, prior to this period, had penetrated into the interior, had been connected with the traffic in slaves; and the inhabitants, naturally supposing that the revolting vices and rapine of the slave-hunters characterised all white men, beheld the arrival of the latter with alarm and terror, some regarding them as cannibals.

The earliest embassy of friendship to the central regions of Madagascar was sent by the English in 1816 to the first Radáma, ruler of the Hovas, then in the twenty-fourth year of his age. This young prince, the most enlightened ruler ever known in Madagascar, joyfully welcomed the friendly envoy, and treated him

with assiduous kindness when prostrate beneath the dreaded Malagasy fever, under which a number of his companions died. Radáma finally ratified his treaty of amity with the English by the solemn and binding oath of blood.

Dissatisfied, during the following year, with two chiefs on the eastern coast, one of whom had insultingly called him "a beardless boy," Radáma, with his usual prompt action, marched down to the coast with 20,000 men, to call these chiefs to account, and proclaim himself king of Madagascar. He was encamped near Tamatave when the *Phaeton*, having on board his brothers, with the British agent, and presents from the Governor of Mauritius, entered the harbour. On landing, the party from the frigate were received by Radáma's body-guard of 200 men, by whom they were escorted about half a mile from the coast, when, coming suddenly to a small bank, the whole Hova army appeared before them. Radáma was seated in a kind of palanquin borne by slaves; the scantily clothed troops formed a circle around, squatting on their heels, and holding their muskets or spears upright before them. The men rose up as the strangers came in sight, and the king, having advanced and welcomed them, made a signal to the troops, who, firing a salute, enveloped them in a cloud of smoke. Radáma then led his visitors into a house, and, offering them wine, expressed his thanks for the attention paid to his brothers, whom he had sent to Mauritius for education, and for the presents.

On Captain Stanfell expressing a wish to see a por-

tion of his army march past, the king gave the order, and a large number of the men immediately commenced running past, shouting at the top of their voices, "Tsara be Radáma!" (Greatly good Radáma!) which was, probably, their battle cry. After the captain had returned to his ship, several of the officers accompanied the king to his camp, which occupied an open space in the midst of an extensive forest. The tents were formed of branches of trees, roofed with leaves, or of spears fixed in the ground and covered with rofia cloth, or the lambas (large scarfs) of the officers. The men took their meals on the ground, using broad leaves for plates. The rice and other food in the place being in a few days consumed, the Hovas returned to the capital. On the march the king was carried in his palanquin at the head of his forces, attended by his guard and a number of singing women, who fanned him with bunches of feathers fastened to the ends of long elastic wands.

Notwithstanding Radáma's desire to render his government just and humane, the miseries of the people at this period were often painfully visible. As the British agent followed the army to Imérina, he found in the nearest village to the port only a single house standing: fifty dwellings were reduced to ashes, and the rest had been torn down to make rafts for the troops crossing the river. Other villages presented only heaps of ashes, and dead bodies frequently lay unburied in the open roads through the forest. These incidents will show the condition of the people at the time when, as the natives express it, "England was

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the first to hold out the hand of friendship to Madagascar."

The first great fruit of this friendship was the abolition of the slave trade, which was accomplished by a formal treaty between England and Madagascar, in 1817, four months after the English and the Hovas had met for the first time at that port.

There is no reason to suppose that the traffic in slaves in Madagascar was less productive of misery than in other countries. It is estimated that not fewer than 3,000 or 4,000 were annually shipped from Tamatave and other ports on the eastern coast. They were formed into gangs of from 50 to 200, with iron handcuffs on their wrists, and, bound together in companies with cords, were driven like cattle to the ports, whence they were conveyed to Réunion or Mauritius, America or the West Indies. From these miseries the treaty with England delivered the Malagasy. They belong to the past, but one affecting memorial of the sorrows thus produced still survives on the summit of a hill over which the traveller passes on one of the mountain roads leading from the coast to the capital. Here the unhappy captives first came in sight of that dreaded sea across which they were to pass, never to return; while from the same spot, looking back, they often saw for the last time the summits of the mountains on the borders of Ankóva, their own beloved home. This spot is called the "weeping place of the Hovas."

Motives of humanity influenced the English in these efforts to put an end to the slave trade, and many

important benefits were secured by the treaty which destroyed it; but other consequences followed, some of them as afflicting, and for a time as destructive of human life as that had been. The king had a royalty of a dollar on each slave taken from his dominions, and in order to compensate him for this loss other advantages were promised by the English. These included the education in England of a number of native youths, the receiving of others on board our ships to learn seamanship, together with aid to enable the king to arm and train his soldiers after the European plan. Thus aided, he deemed himself superior to any other native ruler, and, impelled by his thirst for conquest, enrolled the able-bodied free men of his dominions in his army, and commenced hostilities against the independent rulers of the several races in the island. These wars lasted for years, and they ended in the defeat of the chieftains, and the nominal subjection of the whole island to Radáma.

The king was not addicted to needless slaughter, but whatever clemency he himself might show, his lieutenants were rarely influenced by humane considerations. Not unfrequently the vanquished, or those decoyed by specious promises to surrender, were disarmed and cruelly murdered, their towns or villages burned, their cattle seized, and their women and children driven home by the Hovas and sold as slaves in the public market; while towns and villages were left in ashes, and vast tracts of country desolated and without inhabitants. Among the flower of the male population of Ankóva, these wars were terribly destruc-

tive. Old men still speak of the numbers of light-coloured, vigorous youth of the province of Ankóva, who in the armies of Radáma and his successor left their homes, never to return.

The Supreme Ruler of the universe can educe good out of evil; and calamitous as the transition from a state of comparative independence and self-government to one of enforced obedience under a military and alien sovereignty may have been at the time, it may ultimately prove to have been the best, if not the only means of bringing the people under one rule, and preparing the way for their becoming a united and prosperous people.

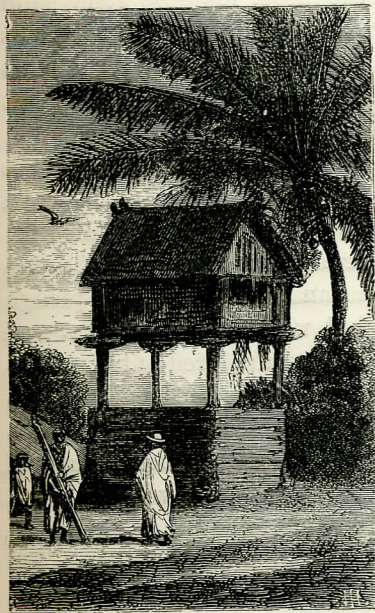
Radáma was in many respects a remarkable man. His natural sagacity, clearness of perception, and vigour of thought often enabled him, intuitively, to comprehend the utility and value of the new objects brought under his notice. The physical strength of Europeans at times greatly astonished him. Witnessing, on one occasion, the comparative ease with which the English smith, while engaged at his work, removed a heavy anvil which neither the king nor his attendants could lift from the ground, he exclaimed, "These would be dangerous people to fight with!" But Radáma estimated the intelligence and skill of the foreigners far higher than their physical strength, their riches, or political power; and while stipulating with the British agent for the means of conquering the country, he earnestly implored aid in the acquisition of knowledge for himself and his people.

Compared with Europeans, the Malagasy were un-

civilised, though in some respects they were greatly in advance of the tribes inhabiting the adjacent coast of Africa, and had already attained some of the important elements of a higher civilisation. Most of the clans had an organised government. They were a nation of agriculturists and herdsmen. The flesh of the ox constituted their chief animal food, and though some of the tribes, such as the Sakalávas, cultivated arrow-root, or a species of pulse, and though fruits were abundant, rice was with most of them the staff of life, and constituted their daily food. Oxen and rice were

also, after the abolition of trade in slaves, their most important articles of export.

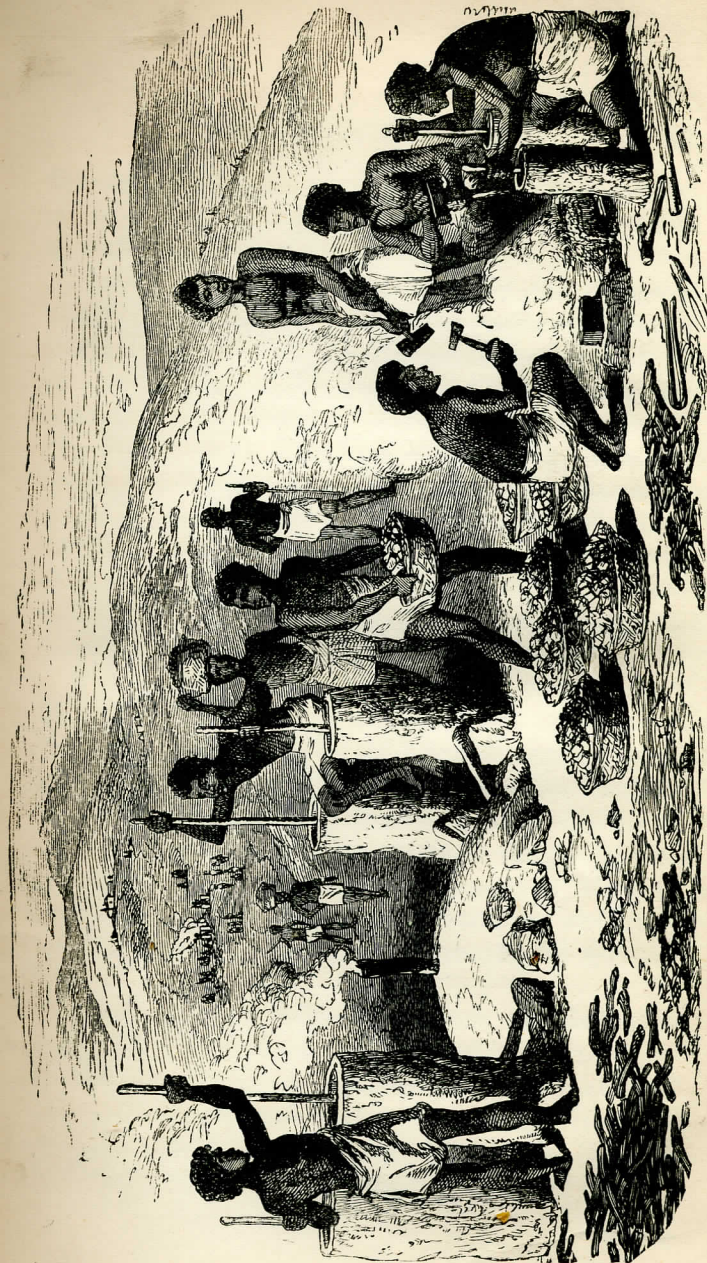
The climate of Madagascar is warm, yet all the inhabitants, above the very poor, are decently, and some of them even richly clothed. Large herds of cattle fed on their plains, or were fattened in their pens or stalls, yet the people never clothed themselves with their skins. Caterpillars of different kinds spin delicately fine or coarse



A NATIVE HOUSE, MADAGASCAR.

silk, which is cleaned, and coloured with native dyes. This silk is spun in simple looms, of Indian or Arabian origin, woven not unfrequently with beautiful and curious patterns into rich and gorgeous dresses for the nobles of both sexes, and for the higher classes in Madagascar generally. Cotton is grown throughout the country, and a species of nettle yields a tenacious fibre resembling hemp, which is also manufactured into strong and durable woven cloth, worn by the farmers and middle classes, wrapped round the body by day, and spread over them as a counterpane by night. The leaflet of the large, majestic rofia palm is slit into threads and woven into cloth, which is used for many purposes, besides furnishing almost the only clothing worn through life by thousands of the slaves.

The native iron is of excellent quality, and the people have long been accustomed, by a rude and simple process of smelting, to render it available for two of the most important purposes of life—the supply of food and the means of defence. No plough is used in the country, but watercourses are cut and the fields dug with spades manufactured out of native iron. The head of the spear, the national weapon, originally the fire-hardened and pointed end of a stick, has now for many generations been made of iron, the use of which is reported to have been introduced by the Hovas, and first employed in their conflicts with the Vazimba, or earlier inhabitants of the country. Sentence of death was sometimes inflicted on military criminals by cutting off their heads with



MALAGASY BLACKSMITHS.

the edge of a spear. Knives, axes, and other articles of iron were in use amongst them before their acquaintance with the English.

Measured by our European standard, the Malagasy might be deemed ignorant and barbarian; but a people whose chief food was rice and beef or poultry, whose clothing was silk, cotton, flaxen, or other woven cloth, who built houses with walls of wood or stone, who fortified their towns and villages with walls and moats, the entrance to which was through stone-built gateways, who possessed iron implements of tillage and weapons of war, could not be considered destitute of the material elements of a higher civilisation, nor unworthy of the highest efforts of Christian philanthropy.

The outward circumstances of the people were, at the period now under review, better than their morals or their religion, and the former had been for some time progressively deteriorating. Their earliest forms of government appear to have been patriarchal and simple, and the social morals of the people who had retained their earlier simple habits of life were superior to those of their successors, to whom increase of riches and power had brought the greatest changes.

The introduction of foreign weapons, especially firearms, stimulated the inhabitants to frequent forays, chiefly for the capture of slaves; and these habits of life had introduced a government of military despotism among several tribes at the time when Radáma became sovereign of the Hovas.

This ruler, favoured by the subsidies from England, soon overran the entire country, and became the acknowledged, if not the actual sovereign of the whole. As such he claimed the country, with its produce, as his property, and the inhabitants as his dependants and servants, holding their lands, however extensive, by virtue of his consent, and only during his pleasure. The inhabitants of the provinces retained their own social and general regulations, but Radáma's word was supreme law throughout the land, and he claimed the power of life and death over the entire population. In the exercise of this authority he associated with himself men of high rank and reputed wisdom, but his own will was always finally supreme.

The national revenue, not then large, was derived from the spoils of war, the produce of the soil, customs dues at the ports, profits on trade, a sort of poll-tax on slaves, a portion of the fines levied by the judges, the property of criminals, the *Hásina* (or acknowledgment made on appearing before the sovereign), and the *fánompoána*, or government service, required from all classes. The most skilful artisans in the country, goldsmiths, silversmiths, manufacturers of lambas, &c., were forced to perform without pay all the work in their respective crafts required by the government; and when, shortly afterwards, the lay members of the mission taught men and youths to work in iron and wood, to construct machinery, tan leather, and other arts, all who learned were required to work for the government, also without wages. Even the women and children whom the

wives of the first missionaries taught needlework became thereby government servants. The demands for unrequited labour to which these attainments subjected their possessor prevented all enthusiasm, and retarded their extension among the people. I was once putting up some bookshelves in my room, assisted by a native servant whom I had hired, when, having marked the length of a shelf on the board, I held out the saw and asked him to cut it off; but he drew back, observing, "I have work enough without wages already, I don't wish to become a carpenter."

In a similar manner service was rendered by the soldiers, who were all free men. When Captain Le Sage visited Antanánarivo in 1816, Radáma's army amounted probably to 20,000 fighting men. These consisted of the ordinary peasantry of the country, led by their local chieftains, under the supreme command of the king. This military force was afterwards largely increased, and armed to a great extent with muskets. The troops received no pay, and only occasionally articles of clothing. In distant expeditions they depended on the provisions they might find, and at home on the fruits of their own exertions and on the labour of their relatives. Cowardice in the face of the enemy, or desertion, was punished with burning alive; sometimes, as a mark of favour, the culprits were shot before they were burned.

If the civilisation or barbarism of a people is shown by its laws and their punishments, the Malagasy would seem to have been barbarian at the time of our early acquaintance with them. The usages of more

enlightened nations existed in the appointment of judges and open courts, in which the accuser and accused, with their witnesses, were confronted. But it was seldom more than a form; the integrity and virtue requisite to its practical value were wanting. Reverence for the sanctity of an oath, respect for truth, and judgment according to evidence, rarely characterised their judicial proceedings.

The simplest forms of justice never attended the use of the *tangéna*, or ordeal of poison. This fearful ordeal, employed to prove the innocence or guilt of persons accused, sometimes of purely imaginary crimes, could be made, by the preparer of the poison, to inflict at once sentence and execution on its unhappy victim. So frequent was the use of this appalling ordeal, that it was supposed one-tenth of the population drank it in the course of their lives—some twice or thrice—and that one-half of those who drank it died. Thus, besides the misery and poverty imposed on survivors, three thousand persons, mostly in the prime of life, perished every year from this monstrous device, which superstition, policy, and greed had inflicted on the people.

Radâma, humane and considerate as he generally was, felt no obligation to respect life when he was offended. A slave one day attending at table had the misfortune to break a dish. The king ordered an officer near him to take the man away, and see that he never committed the offence again. The officer called the man out, returned soon afterwards, and, in answer to the king's inquiry, said he was dead.

Equally summary death was inflicted afterwards by the king's widow, when a female slave, pouring water on the queen's hands, spilled a small quantity on her dress. It needed only a look and a sign from the sovereign, and the poor girl was taken away and put to death.

Nothing among the Malagasy was more repugnant to every humane feeling than the cruelty of their punishments, and the barbarity with which they were inflicted. Fourteen crimes, the chief of which comprised the several varieties of treason, were punished with death, inflicted in almost as many different ways. Some of these punishments were fearfully agonising and protracted, especially burning by a slow fire, flogging to death, starving to death, and crucifixion. The more ordinary methods were spearing, beheading, hurling over a precipice, suffocating in a pit with boiling water, and dashing out the brains, as when sentenced by the *tangéna* to death. No proceeding could be more revolting than the behaviour to culprits before execution, or the treatment of their bodies afterwards. The execution of criminals was a sort of public holiday, to which adults and children repaired; and familiarity with such spectacles contributed much to the inhumanity and hardness of heart so often manifested.

Although the administration of justice was seldom pure, and often regulated by the ability and willingness of the suitor to bribe the judges, the frequency with which the latter were appealed to showed that the people were quarrelsome, and fond of litigation.

Domestic slavery, which has prevailed from a remote period, was, when compared with that of the West Indies or America, comparatively mild, but it was still slavery. The master exercised entire control over the slave and his offspring. He could sever



PUNISHMENT BY NECK-IRON.

all the natural ties of life, and extract for his own benefit, or sell to others, all the labour his slave was able to perform. The male slaves cultivated the ground, and fetched wood from the forest. They were sometimes treated with great cruelty. I once saw a boy about fifteen years of age, with a heavy

iron collar on his neck, working with a number of others carrying firewood. Another slave near the same place had an iron collar round his neck, with pointed iron spikes six or seven inches long fixed in the collar, and standing up by the sides of his head.



PUNISHMENT OF THE PILLORY.

Though the punishments of female slaves were less severe than those of the men, they were at times painful and degrading. I one day entered a house in which a number of female slaves were carrying baskets of cotton, prepared for spinning, and as they

passed along I saw one young girl who had a couple of boards fixed on her shoulders, each of them rather more than two feet long and a foot wide, fastened together by pieces of wood nailed on the under side. A piece had been cut out of each board in the middle, so that, when fixed together, they fitted close to her neck, and the poor girl, while wearing this, had to work with the rest.

The mental faculties of the Malagasy are often active and clear, though necessarily limited in their range of operation. Many are the earnest questioners, gladly welcoming additions to their knowledge and materials for thought. Some cherish a passion for calculation, seeming to be arithmeticians by intuition; but the delight of greater numbers is in *miady vatrotra* (the battle of bargaining), in which they are occasionally clever, and always eager; and although spending much time and labour for but little profit, they are better pleased than with equal gain without disputation.

Whatever may have been the morals of the quiet and peaceable tribes when the English first penetrated the interior of the country, those of the Hovas were very depraved. The moral difference between truth and falsehood was often not perceived. Deception, especially if advantageous, was approved, and at times rewarded as a virtue; and truth, if unfavourable, condemned as a weakness, and a crime to be punished. The advantage to be gained was chiefly considered, and the love of truth for its own sake seemed unknown. The practice of bribery in the

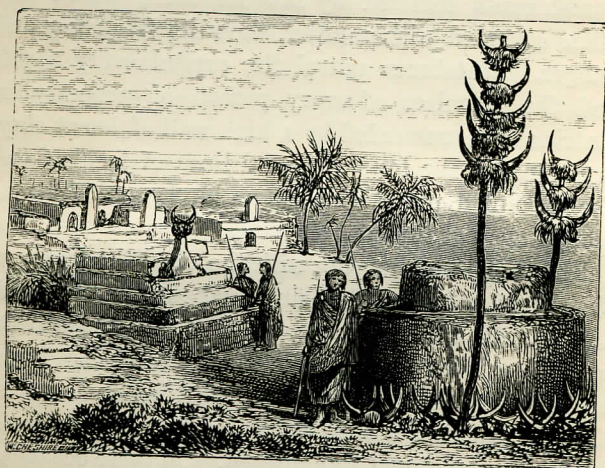
administration of law destroyed the value of evidence, and often gave judicial sanction to perjury. Few felt any obligation to speak the truth when falsehood would serve their purpose better; and the habit became so strong that at times they neither believed each other nor themselves.

Honesty, so nearly allied to truth, was scarcely more regarded; and the number and severity of the punishments inflicted by law for theft, which was often attended with murder, show its frequency and danger. Watchmen patrol the capital every night, and the premises of every person of property in Imérina are surrounded by a high wall of burnt clay, armed along the top by several lines of firmly fixed, sharp-pointed pieces of bone or hard wood, for protection against thieves.

The custom of burying with the dead the treasures they most valued while living, and placing money in the mouth of the corpse, necessitates the careful guarding of the tomb until it is made secure. Funeral observances always ended with feasting, and at the interment of a rich chieftain forty or fifty oxen have been sometimes slaughtered. On these occasions it was customary to fix the bullocks' skulls, with the horns attached, on poles set up near the tomb, round which a low fence of horns was sometimes also fixed. The practice of placing the treasures of the dead in their tombs, and depositing in one grave the bodies of successive generations, probably caused the size and solidity of many of the native sepulchres. The contents of a grave were not considered safe until the

tomb was finished and the entrance walled up. The graves of the poorer classes were often violated for the sake of the grave-clothes, or for the few pieces of silver placed in the mouth of the corpse.

The morals of the people were most clearly seen in their domestic life. Families appeared to live together in peace and good-will, though in outbreaks of passionate rage the Malagasy was at times savagely cruel.



MALAGASY CEMETERY.

Parents, as a rule, were fond of their children, though parental influence was weak, and control rarely exercised. For special military reasons drunkenness had been made a capital crime, and the sobriety of the people at that time contrasted favourably against the intemperance with which foreign commerce has since cursed the inhabitants, especially in the neighbour-

hood of the ports. But the general licentiousness of the people was at the same time most deplorable.

The Malagasy might be described, in a sense, as a religious people. The name of God was in constant use amongst them. "May God bless you," was a frequent acknowledgment of favour, an expression of thanks, or a parting salutation. The term by which God is most frequently expressed signifies Prince of Heaven—literally, "prince of fragrance." Another term also used means the source or cause of possession. But neither of these words was associated in the minds of the people with any idea of the true God as revealed in the Bible. They were used to designate the spirits of departed men, especially those of former sovereigns, or persons of renown. The idols, or other objects of religious fear, were called God, and very naturally some of the great Creator's works. The sun, moon, and stars, the grand phenomena of nature—thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and hail, were said to be God. Also the genii, or demons, supposed to inhabit the invisible world, were thus designated. The ruling sovereign was called the visible God. Anything new which they were unable to comprehend was spoken of in the same manner. I once heard the production of some photographic likenesses which I had taken ascribed to God. There was, in its ordinary use, no moral signification or principle of true religion associated with the word God.

The Malagasy had no idea of the immortality of the soul as revealed in the Scriptures; but their first religious belief, as is the case with most unenlightened

racés, appears to have been in the separate existence of the human spirit after death. The earliest tradition of any worship relates to that which the Vazimba, the supposed aborigines of the central parts of the island, offered to the spirits of the dead. The tombs of this primitive race are most scrupulously preserved, and are still used for religious purposes. They frequently crown the summit of a lofty mountain, where at times the inhabitants of the surrounding villages assembled to offer sacrifices at the tomb to the spirits of the Vazimba.

But there was still a craving after a nearer and more defined object of worship than a disembodied spirit in an invisible world; and the material household god, together with the idols of the individual members of the family, was the next constituted object of trust and worship. The so-called national idols were of comparatively modern origin, being an extension of the principle of household worship, introduced, from political motives, by successive rulers representing themselves as the fathers of the people. There were fifteen of these in Ankóva, two of which were supposed to preside over the entire kingdom.

The primitive worship of the Malagasy was simple and spiritual. The Vazimba neither made images nor associated charms with their religious rites. A plain stone fixed upright at one end of a tomb, or a simple mound of earth and stones raised on the site of a grave, often in the midst of a grove, was their temple and altar. Their worship, the most esteemed in the country, combining homage and invocation, was ac-

companied with sacrifices of oxen, sheep, and poultry, the blood and fat of which were offered on the altar, and the rest eaten by the worshippers. These were the only sacrifices offered in Ankóva. In former times, in the southern part of the country, human sacrifices were offered—not the captive, the slave, or the lowest members of society, but the highest and best, the chiefs or nobles, as most acceptable to the idols supposed to dispense the fruits of the earth, and to give prosperity to the people.

The belief in a sort of fetishism, sorcery, or divination, has been a source of the widest misery and crime, and has often enjoined the iniquitous and deadly *tangéna*, or poison ordeal, which was itself deified and invoked as the trier of innocence or guilt under the name of Raimanamanga, and has probably destroyed more lives and inflicted greater suffering than any other single cause in Madagascar.

But the most direct power over the people was the *sikidy*, or divination, which, in different forms, prevailed throughout the island. The most baneful influence of the diviners was their pretending, by calculations based on the age and position of the moon at the period of birth, to reveal the destiny, or *vintana*, of every newly born infant, thus deciding, whatever its rank or parentage might be, whether its life should be preserved or destroyed. The decisions were believed to be those of God, and though determined by a table of divination which might be worked almost like a game of chess, were received by the people as their fate.

Such were the external aspects of heathenism in Madagascar, and such were some of the objects of its worship, but their name was legion. The whole land was full of idols. Their imagined power was supreme and resistless over every individual, from birth to death, and the effect of their delusions was to darken the mind, deprave the heart, and shroud in hopeless and impenetrable mystery all that would be after death.

The most intelligent and zealous worshipper of the idols invested them with no attribute of virtue or goodness. The great difference which they recognised between their idols and themselves was the possession, by the former, of supernatural power. That power their cowardice made them fear, and their selfishness made them covet.

While I was residing at the capital eighteen criminals were beheaded in one day, and on another day fifteen fell beneath the executioner's spear. Observing to an intelligent officer that the thought of those days filled me with horror, he remarked, "Those were days of *power*. Every heart in Antanánarivo felt that power, and was filled with fear." This remark probably expressed the native idea of the supernatural power belonging to the objects of their worship—a power to fill the heart with fear, a power to kill.

The knowledge of divination is said to have been imparted to the Malagasy by one of their renowned idols,* and wherever the *sikidy* was employed, the

* This idol was supposed to reside in a cavern in the rocky part of a lofty mountain thirty miles from the capital. In the part wher

diviners must be paid. The preparers and the administerers of the deadly *tangéna* received money for their work. When the parties who drank the poison were pronounced guilty, and barbarously murdered, and even when their wives and children were sold into slavery, all their property was confiscated. Half belonged to the king, the remainder being the perquisite of the executioners, while all the expenses of the trial were exacted from the family or relatives.

This brief notice of the social and moral condition of the people, and of the superstitions and idolatries of the country, will enable us to form a more correct opinion than would otherwise be possible of the encouragements, as well as of the appalling antagonism by which Christianity was confronted on its entrance into Madagascar. It will also show the combined and organised forces which so fiercely disputed every step in its advance, and enable us more clearly to comprehend the marvellous victory which God, by the gospel, has achieved among the people, and which ranks among the most remarkable triumphs of Christianity in this nineteenth century.

his altars were fixed there is a reverberatory echo, in which probably originated the belief of audible answers being returned to those who visited the cavern and saluted the idol. Radáma I., visiting this spot on one occasion, saluted the idol, and was answered by a low, solemn voice. The king then offered his *hásina*, or present of money, when, a hand being slowly moved forward to receive it, he seized the hand, exclaiming, "This is no god. This is a man!" and gave instant orders to his attendants to drag out the impostor.

CHAPTER II.

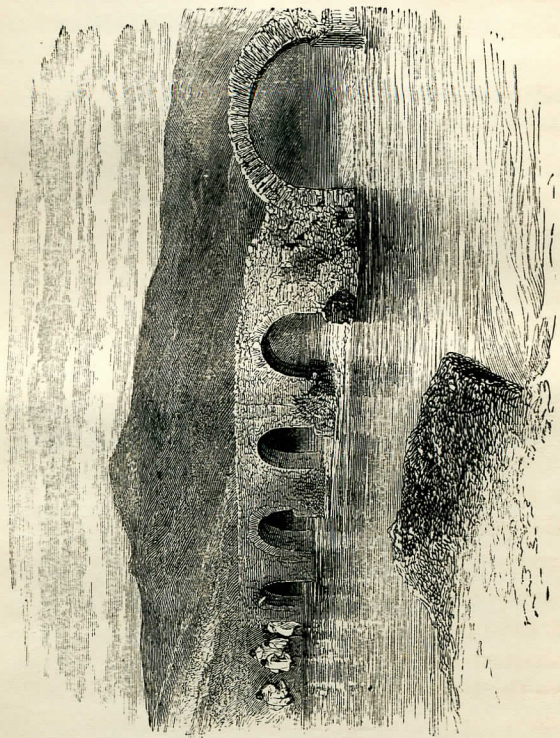
SOWING PRECIOUS SEED.

Arrival of the first missionaries—Fearful ravages of illness and death—Renewal of the mission under the auspices of Radáma—Radáma's letter to the Missionary Society—The native language reduced to writing—Arrival of missionary artisans—Commencement of public Christian worship—Wide extension of education—Arrival of the first printing-press—Review of the first ten years of the mission—Death of Radáma—Assassination of his family and friends—Ránaválona placed on the throne.

TOWARDS the close of the last century the recognition of the duty of Christians to communicate the knowledge of Christ to the heathen nations was revived by the Divine Spirit in the Churches of our own country, and attention was soon afterwards directed to Madagascar.

In 1814 the Rev. J. Le Brun was sent to Mauritius with a view to commencing a mission in Madagascar or in Mauritius, as Divine Providence might open his way. He remained in the latter island, and devoted a long and benevolent life to the spiritual welfare of the slave population. In Mr. Le Brun a number of unhappy slaves from Madagascar found a kind and faithful friend, whose concern for their countrymen terminated only with his life. Sir Robert Farquhar, Governor of Mauritius, recommended the directors of the London Missionary Society to send missionaries to Madagascar, with assurances of all the encouragement he could give.

Two years after the first intercourse of the English



BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER MADONA. BUILT BY RADAMA II.

with the Hovas, the mission appointed by the Society reached the shores of Madagascar. Encouraged by an experimental visit in August, 1818, Messrs. Jones and Bevan proceeded soon afterwards with their wives and children to the port of Tamatave, and were welcomed with joyous salutations by the chiefs and youths who had, during the former visit, been their scholars.

But this attempt to settle among the people proved fearfully disastrous. The season was the most unhealthy of the year, clouds and rain darkened the heavens and deluged the earth, while a fatal malaria spread over the long-desired and seemingly inviting shore. Mrs. Jones and Mr. and Mrs. Bevan, with two children, landed in the country only to sicken, suffer, and die. It was in the hearts of these missionaries to labour for the Malagasy, and thus to consecrate their lives to their Divine Lord; and the sacrifice was doubtless accepted, though to offer it was all that was allowed to them.

Bereaved, afflicted, and alone, the surviving missionary removed to Mauritius, devoting his attention, as returning health allowed, to preparation for resuming his appointed work. In the autumn of 1820 he embarked under favourable auspices, in company with the British agent, for Madagascar. On reaching Antanánarivo, the capital, Mr. Hastie was received in great state by the king, who cordially welcomed Mr. Jones, his missionary companion. The treaty for the abolition of the slave trade, by the judicious efforts of Mr. Hastie, was re-enacted, much to the satisfaction

of the peaceable and respectable portions of the community.

Radáma had been made acquainted with the remarkable effects of the operations of the London Missionary Society in the South Seas, and no sooner had the British flag been hoisted at the palace to announce the ratification of the treaty than the king sent a message to Mr. Jones, encouraging him to remain in the capital, with a promise of countenance and protection for any other missionaries who might come to his aid.

Before the end of the year the missionary publicly commenced his great work of teaching. It was a truly small beginning, for he had only three scholars. Little did he think how soon the number would be multiplied by thousands. The small company increased daily, and a new school-house being soon required, the foundation of the building was laid by the king himself, who gave this public testimony of his respect for the missionary. In the ensuing year the solitary labourer was cheered by the arrival of Mr. Griffiths, sent from England to his assistance; and when afterwards the wives of the missionaries and an English child arrived, being the first ever seen at the capital, they awakened lively interest and curiosity, especially amongst their own sex, and were treated with much kindness.

The numbers and progress of the scholars increasing, a second school, with sixteen pupils, was opened by Mr. Griffiths, while the missionaries' wives commenced teaching the females needlework. All that

the missionaries were yet able to do was to impart to the children the mere elements of instruction, but the increase of their scholars encouraged them to persevere.

A singular misunderstanding occurred when, on the occasion of their first Christmas at the capital, the missionaries gave the children permission to remain at home for a few days. So great was the change which had taken place in the minds of the parents, many of whom had at first suspected ulterior motives on the part of the missionaries in their endeavours to obtain pupils, that they called a public meeting, and complained of the teachers for withholding instruction from the children. The complaint was made known to the king, who sent to inquire why the teaching was interrupted, adding that if the children had not behaved well they should be corrected. Explanation satisfied the king, and the missionaries in due time resumed their instructions.

When Mr. Hastie was about to return to Mauritius, Radáma announced that he intended to send twenty youths—ten to Mauritius, and ten to England—for education, and invited parents who were willing to send their children to bring them to him. A large number came; and one chief was so eager to send his son that he offered to give three hundred dollars, a large sum in those days. When the king heard of the offer, he asked what the chieftain was really willing to give. He replied that he would give at once half the sum he had mentioned. "Then," said Radáma, "as you are evidently in earnest, your son shall go free. I

will pay his expenses." This proceeding, highly characteristic of the king, reveals in part the secret of his great influence over the people.

After concluding the treaty, the king sent Prince Ratéfy, the husband of his eldest sister, as ambassador to London in 1821. The youths selected to be educated in England accompanied him, and were placed under the care of the London Missionary Society, the English Government defraying the cost of their education. The prince was also a bearer of a letter to the directors of that Society, requesting additional missionaries, and men to teach the people the useful arts of civilised life. In compliance with this request, Mr. Jeffreys and four artisans, competent to teach the people useful arts, were appointed to Madagascar, and sailed in the same ship with the prince and his attendants on their return. The king expressed his gratification at the arrival of the Englishmen, and a third school, under the care of Mr. Jeffreys, was commenced, with twelve pupils.

Education was, however, still pursued under difficulties. The suspicion of some, that the missionaries were not altogether different from the white men who had formerly sought for slaves, was revived during the absence of the king from the capital, excited, it was said, by the return of Prince Ratéfy without the children he had taken with him to England; and a number of parents not only refused to send their children to school, but, in order to prevent their being taken there, actually hid them in underground rice-pits, where several died from suffocation. The

king's mother, in some respects a worthy mother of such a son, caused an order to be published in the market that any one raising false reports should be sold into slavery, and that those who were guilty of suffocating their children in rice-holes should be put to death. This removed, for a time, objection to the attendance at the schools.

The fickleness and suspicion of the natives were among the slightest of the difficulties with which the missionaries had to contend. Unacquainted with the language of the country, they commenced their noble work by teaching the children English, and with such success that, at a public examination of the school in 1822, the first class in the school read in English the whole of the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, translating parts into their own language. But the teachers, necessarily dissatisfied with the limited extent to which they could instruct the youth of the country in a foreign language, had been long engaged in providing the means of more rapidly teaching them through the medium of their own. That language was exclusively oral. It had never existed in a written form, and when commencing its acquisition the missionaries had no philological aids. No Malagasy alphabet, grammar, or vocabulary had yet been written.

They therefore had to attempt the treble task of learning, constructing, and teaching the language at the same time. In prosecuting this work the letters of the English alphabet were used, as far as they were available, to express the sounds of the native

tongue, the French, or rather the Italian, sounds being given to the vowels,* and the Arabic figures used to express the numbers.

For all the purposes of society in a corresponding state to that of Madagascar, the language was sufficient and capable of expressing different shades of meaning with brevity and precision. The king, who was himself learning English from Mr. Hastie, and French from Mons. Robin, his secretary, was much interested in the great work of giving to his own language a written form, and amused at the several changes in the appearance of the words before the best mode of spelling them was determined, though perplexed sometimes by the different sounds attached to the same letter in English; in consequence of which he issued an order that in the Malagasy no letter should have more than one sound. Notwithstanding the unremitted attention of the missionaries, it was two years after their arrival before they finally decided on the Malagasy alphabet, which has ever since remained unchanged by the thousands by whom it has since been used.

Education had now become so popular that an adult school was opened in the palace yard for the officers of the army and their wives, to the number of about three hundred. Besides daily teaching, the children attended at the school on Sunday for cate-

* This was a fatal error on the part of the framers of the written language. The word *Hova*, for instance, should have been written *Háva*. If the reader will have regard to the accented syllables in this volume, and pronounce the vowels *a*, *e*, and *i*, as the Italians do, and the vowel *o* as they pronounce *u*, he will not go far wrong.

chetical instruction and reading the Scriptures, and were also present on that day during worship. Early in 1824, several of the best scholars were, with the king's consent, employed in teaching schools in the adjacent villages; and these were so successful, that, in order to make teaching more effectual by training native masters, the king proposed that three separate schools should be united in one central model and training institution, under the instruction of Messrs. Jones and Griffiths, in a large building adjoining the residence of the latter, and that the wives of the missionaries should continue to teach the females.

The native language was used in the school, and only forty of the most advanced scholars continued the study of English, in which some of them attained a degree of proficiency which enabled them not only to read English books, but to translate several into their own language, which were afterwards printed.

Public worship in the native language was now held every Lord's day in the large school building, and adult natives were invited to attend, but very few accepted the invitation. The spirits of the devoted servants of Christ were often stirred within them as they mingled with the multitudes wholly given to idolatry; and they spoke to them, as opportunity offered, of the living and the true God.

At the same time the increasing number of scholars cheered their teachers. There were two thousand under instruction, and the growing interest which some began to manifest in the teaching of the New Testament respecting the only Saviour of men, in-

spired hopes that from among them the first-fruits of Madagascar might be gathered unto Christ.

The Malagasy children, many of them quick, attentive, and earnest, accustomed freely to express their opinions, often manifested a precocious intelligence and strength of opinion unknown at so early an age in more advanced communities. On such minds the new and wondrous revelations of the Bible could not but make a deep impression. They began to think lightly, and to speak disparagingly, of the idols, and hesitated not to treat without reverence the altars of the Vazimba, or the sacred trees planted around their graves. This behaviour of the children was reported to the king, but he dismissed the complainants, telling them to mind their work, and leave the children to mind their lessons.

Radáma himself had recently shown that the decisions of the *sikidy* were but slightly regarded by him when they opposed his own will. He had a short time before returned from a campaign, and the diviners had declared that he must halt outside the capital for a number of days; but, determined to show them that he would enter when he pleased, he marched straight to his palace without halting. This public act was but one of many in which Radáma had shown that, however he might for state purposes follow the pretended directions of the idols, he was at least sceptical as to their existence or power; and his conduct could not fail to affect very powerfully the minds of his subjects.

Shortly afterwards, when the people of a so-called

sacred village applied to the king for a piece of scarlet cloth for their idol, he replied, "Surely he must be very poor if he cannot obtain a piece of cloth for himself. If he be a god he can provide his own garments."

The Malagasy are passionately fond of music. The children, early taught to sing, were now often heard in the streets of the city, as well as at home, singing the hymns they had been taught in school. The king not unfrequently went to hear them sing, reading to them the first line of the hymn. While the progress of the children greatly encouraged the teachers, it taxed their energies to provide lessons and books that should nourish and extend their growing intelligence.

One great difficulty in teaching had been the want of books. All the Malagasy lessons hitherto attainable had been manuscript copies, prepared by the missionaries and transcribed by the advanced scholars; yet, notwithstanding the willing industry of the best writers, the supply had always been inadequate. Most gladly therefore did the missionaries, in 1826, welcome the arrival of a printing-press, the first ever seen in Madagascar, which promised an easy and adequate supply of books. The king, gratified by the establishment of the press in his dominions, not only directed the missionaries to select six youths to work permanently as printers, but encouraged the people to send their children to the existing schools, and authorised the opening of others.

Death had repeatedly diminished the feeble band of devoted labourers, but others had arrived to occupy

the vacant posts. Messrs. Johns, Cameron, and Cumming, followed by Mr. Freeman and Mr. Canham, arrived to strengthen the mission before the close of the ensuing year.

The public examination of the schools in February, 1828, was the most gratifying ever held. The one small school, with three scholars, had in less than eight years increased to thirty-two schools, in which four thousand youths and children were receiving Christian instruction. The value of these schools, together with the worship of the true God associated with the teaching, was greatly enhanced by their being extended over several districts of the country. Still more important was the fact that there were now large numbers of educated persons amongst the general population; and that, taught by these, numbers of their relatives or companions had learned reading, writing, and arithmetic without ever entering any school.

Although the printer sent out by the Missionary Society died within a month after reaching the capital, the missionaries set up the press, and printed lessons and school books. On the first of January, 1828, they sanctified the day by putting to press the first sheet of the Gospel of Luke, wishing, as they expressed it, "thus to hallow the new year of our missionary labours by this service, in opening the fountain of living waters in the midst of this parched ground."

No native of Madagascar had yet avowed faith in Jesus Christ, or desired publicly to declare his discipleship by receiving baptism. The intelligence, earnest-

ness, and devout feeling manifested by some, inspired the hope that they were not far from the kingdom of God; and as the sovereign's approval was required before any one could thus unite with the Christians, Mr. Jones explained the subject to the king, endeavouring to ascertain his views. Soon afterwards, Radama sent an official message, to say that if any persons wished to be baptised, or married, they were at liberty to act according to their own judgment.

In order to extend the knowledge of the youths who had left school, as well as that of the more advanced scholars, a course of lectures was delivered. The first was on the being and perfections of God. Many of the youths wrote down the leading ideas presented, and others proved the retentiveness of their memories by correct recitals of the great truths of revelation thus exhibited.

Such were some of the results of the first ten years of the Christian mission in Madagascar. Christianity had been presented in the simplest form to minds in the most unsophisticated state. It had been taught to the young. Its effects had been experimental and preparatory. So far as its highest object, the conversion of the soul, was concerned, it had been barren of results; but as illustrating the harmony of Divine providence with the purposes of Divine mercy, it had been most conclusive. The light of Divine truth had pierced a state of society enveloped in an atmosphere of moral darkness, intensified and polluted by monstrous forms of depravity and crime, as well as confused by sorceries, divinations, and abominable

idolatries, and it had opened to itself an avenue to thousands of young and expanding minds. Its own inherent vitality and its Divine origin constituted its protection. It was now approaching a severe and protracted ordeal, in which, with greater suffering, it should achieve triumphs far more glorious.

The constitution of Radáma, though vigorous, had never been robust, and it had been injured by the fatigue and exposure of camp life, as well as by attacks of fever; but more especially by intemperance, irregularity of life, and indulgences destructive to health. He was ill for many months during the last year of his life, seldom being able to attend to public business. He was seen only by his officers, latterly only by two intimate friends and his attendants; and he died on the 27th of June, 1828, at the early age of thirty-six years. The officers acquainted with the fact were unprepared for prompt action, and his death was kept secret. Every morning he was reported to be better, and the band played every afternoon in the palace yard, as usual, to prevent suspicion. This delay in mustering his friends and proclaiming his successor was their ruin.

In the mean time a young officer had informed Ránávalona, one of his wives, of his decease. She sent secretly for two of her own partisans, and proposed to give them the highest offices in the army, and great rewards, if they would place her on the throne. They all knew that this could only be accomplished by the instant and copious shedding of blood considered most sacred; for Radáma, having no son living, had nomi-

nated Prince Rakótobé (the eldest son of his own sister and her husband Prince Ratéfy) to be his successor. The young prince, then in his eighteenth year, was popular, and the nation regarded him with affection and hope as their future sovereign. He was the first scholar sent to the first school, in 1820, and he continued the friend, and occasionally the pupil, of the missionaries till his death. There was reason to believe that his mind had been enlightened by the teaching of the Scriptures, and brought under the influence of the love and faith which saves the soul.

The two officers to whom the proposal had been made agreed to attempt, at whatever cost of life, to secure the throne for the queen. They gained over to their purpose some of the priests and judges, and then collected the troops in the capital under their command. Two days after the announcement of the death of the king, a kabáry was held, for administering beforehand the oath of fidelity to whomsoever the king might be pleased to appoint as his successor. In the mean time the young prince was seized at night, hurried away to an adjacent village, and removed afterwards to a greater distance, where, by the side of a newly made grave, after granting his request for a few minutes to commend his spirit to God in prayer, they thrust their spears through his body, covered up his corpse in the grave, and returned to the capital.

On the morning of the 1st of August the two divisions of the troops under the command of the officers engaged by the queen were led into the courtyard of the palace, where the officers, judges, priests, and

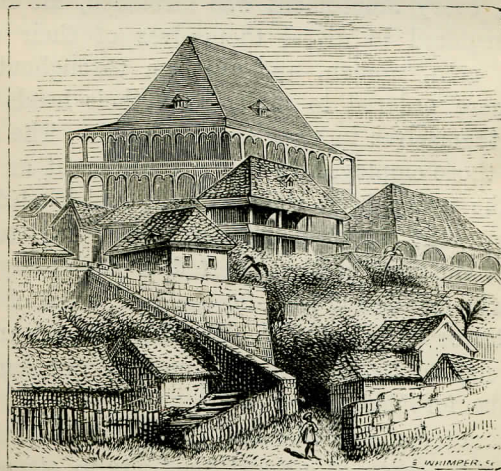
others assembled. To all these it was announced that the *idols* had named Ránaváloná as successor to Radáma, and their allegiance was claimed. Four officers of the late king's body-guard replied that Radáma had named Prince Rakótobé and Rakétaka (Radáma's own daughter) as his successors. They had scarcely spoken before the spears of the soldiers around laid them dying on the ground. This act appeared to decide the question; and, amidst the roar of cannon and the shouts within the palace yard, Ránaváloná was proclaimed queen.

It was officially announced that Radáma had "retired," and that Ránaváloná was his successor. Another and superior building was added to the tombs of former kings in the palace yard, and on the 13th of August the remains of the late sovereign were deposited in their last resting-place.

Considering the early age at which Radáma was called to the throne, his reign, though short, had been rich in benefits to his country. His abolition of the slave trade saved his people from insecurity and hopeless captivity, and closed one of the great slave markets of the world; the relations of friendship into which he entered with England, and the opening his ports to the commerce of civilised nations, inaugurated a new era in the history of Madagascar; the introduction of letters, and a written language, together with the extension of education and the employment of the printing-press, were benefits the worth and influence of which are only now beginning to be fully perceived.

Radáma's abolition of infanticide, and his frequent

exposure of the craft of the priests and jugglery of the diviners, saved the lives of multitudes of infants, and weakened the power of superstition. But, greatest of all, the introduction, during his reign, of Christianity into the country, his protection of its ministers, though personally resisting its claims, has proved a lasting and incalculable blessing to his countrymen. He had been raised up by the Supreme Ruler of the world at a peculiar period of his country's progress to introduce great changes, and to prepare the way for others greater still. His work was done, and his place was occupied by those who were to urge the nation along the dark, impious, and fearfully retrograde course on which it was now about to enter.



A ROYAL RESIDENCE, ANTANANARIVO.

CHAPTER III.

BLOSSOMS AND FIRST-FRUIT.

Destruction of Radáma's family—Drafting of scholars into the army—Appeal of the queen to the idols—Printing of the New Testament—Disapproval of Christian fellowship by the government—Formation of the first Christian Church—Government prohibition of baptism and Church fellowship—Slaves forbidden to read—Conversion and death of a young slave—Refusal of Christian soldiers to acknowledge the idols—Result of fourteen years' educational labour—The idols rejected—Disastrous end of the teacher of a new religion.

AFTER the royal funeral, a season of national mourning was appointed. The ordinary occupations of life ceased, every amusement was forbidden, all classes were required to divest themselves of their ornaments, men, women, and children throughout the land were ordered to make bald their heads and clothe themselves in rags and sackcloth. The men, except those employed in the rice-fields, sat or slept away the weary days. The women, bald-headed and wailing, went, by order of the government, to the place of the tomb of the departed, to weep every day, some with unaffected grief for the dead, most of them from terror of the living. Teaching and learning, being classed by the government with amusements, were also forbidden.

The government, released from public business, seized this season of general inactivity to strengthen their position and arrange their plans. Notwith-

standing the booming of the artillery, the shouting of the troops, and the sworn oath of thousands, the occupant of the throne, to which a passage had been opened by the murder of its rightful heir, felt no safety so long as a single male member of the family of the late king remained alive; and only one female member of the family was allowed to live.

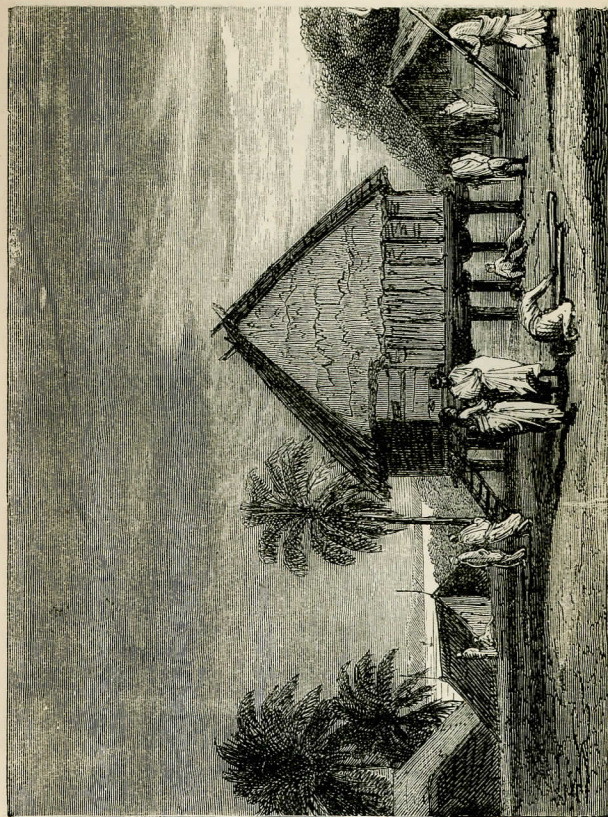
One of Radáma's cousins escaped to the Comoro Islands. The noble and high-spirited mother of the king was sent to an unhealthy part of the country, where she suffered a lingering and agonising death from starvation in prison. Radáma's eldest sister, and her husband, Prince Ratéfy, both died by the hand of the executioner. The king's brothers and his uncle were starved to death in prison, and suffered such agony, that when no longer able to speak, by looks and gestures they most affectingly, but vainly, implored their guards to put them to death. Radáma's early companions, faithful and trusted men, were shot, their only crime that of having been true to their sovereign. Such a commencement of the new reign augured ill for Madagascar. It filled the minds of the people with dismay, while it darkened the prospects of the missionaries and their friends.

Forbidden to teach or preach, the missionaries engaged earnestly in the preparation of elementary and other books, and especially in translating the New Testament, a work already commenced. In the mean time Mr. Baker, an intelligent missionary printer, having arrived, application was made for

such a number of youths to assist in printing, and also in transcribing, as Radáma had granted to aid the missionaries in the work. The government having decided that transcribing and printing were neither learning nor teaching, the aid was given, and a large supply of books provided.

After a cessation of six months, the government ordered a limited number of schools to be opened in villages in which no idol was kept; but the teaching in these newly opened schools had scarcely commenced, when seven hundred of the teachers and senior scholars were drawn for the army. This proceeding confirmed the suspicions of many as to the purpose for which the government collected the children in the schools, so that the numbers in attendance became one half less than in former years. The next public act of the government was to discontinue the treaty with England, and inform the British agent that the queen did not feel herself bound by the treaty with Radáma, and could not receive him as the agent of the British Government; that she declined receiving the equivalent for loss in giving up the slave trade, but did not intend to revive the traffic. The presence of the British agent had been a restraint from which they wished, in future, to be free.

At the coronation of the queen, in the presence of many thousands of people, Ránaváloná took two of the idols in her hand, and thus addressed them:—"I have received you from my ancestors. I put my trust in you; therefore support me." The queen



SPECIMENS OF MALAGASY DWELLINGS.

then returned the idols, which were covered with long pieces of gold-embroidered scarlet cloth, to their respective keepers, by whom they were held at the four corners of the platform on which the throne was placed, inspiring with superstitious awe the assembled multitudes. In her coronation speech to the people the queen declared that Radáma had received the crown on condition that she should be his successor, and that she did not change, but would add to what Radáma had done. Many who heard this, and remembered by what means she reached the throne, must have felt that truth received little regard from the queen in her words to gods or men.

In October, 1829, a fleet of six French ships entered the harbour of Tamatave, and opened fire on the battery, from which the Hova forces were driven, and the French moved on to the next northern port. Alarmed by the attack of the French, and apprehending its renewal in greater force, active military preparations were urged forward, public homage being at the same time presented to the idols, and great efforts made to revive the confidence of the people in the superstitions of the country. The movements of the government were directed by the pretended orders of divination, and the iniquitous ordeal of the *tangéna* was restored in all its force. A number of civil and military officers were required to drink the poison, and a general purification of the country from any concealed crimes by which it might be polluted was ordered to be made. By this murderous ordeal many hundreds of innocent Malagasy were sacrificed.

The attitude of the French, and the practical value of the efforts of the European artisans, suggesting the desirableness of the good-will of the English, the authorities were induced to show a slight degree of favour towards the missionaries. Mr. Cameron, who was engaged in the construction of machinery and other works, had six hundred youths constantly under his charge, and devoted much attention to their spiritual welfare. The missionaries were allowed full liberty to teach and preach, as well as to carry forward their great work of translating and printing the Scriptures and Christian books. In 1830, besides large numbers of other books, they completed the printing of five thousand copies of the New Testament, besides two thousand single Gospels. Well might the devoted missionaries rejoice in the completion of these works. This was the good seed which should be sown far and wide into many hearts, into which they had by education prepared the way; and where, under the vivifying influence of the Holy Spirit, it should germinate, and bring forth fruit unto everlasting life.

The portions of the Scriptures now provided were read by numbers in Imérina and the distant provinces, where many who had been pupils of the missionaries now resided. These were not the only signs that God was working with His servants. "Conversation on the subject of religion," writes Mr. Baker, "is frequent among the natives, and the preached gospel reaches with impressed force the consciences of some. We have under our superin-

tendence two thousand five hundred children, and with this charge it behoves us to feel our responsibility." The existing place of worship became too small, and a second and larger chapel was erected at Ambátonakánga, in the northern suburbs. A suitable room was also engaged in a central part of the capital, where English and native preachers proclaimed the gospel to the people.

In the mean time a number of the natives, intelligent and earnest seekers after truth, had received special attention from the missionaries, who rejoiced in the evidence which they gave that they understood the nature and claims of the gospel, and had experienced its transforming power. Permission was given by the queen to her people to be baptised, to commemorate the death of Christ, or to enter into marriage engagements according to the custom of the Europeans. The families of the missionaries, and the lay brethren associated with them, had already been united in Christian fellowship, and on the 29th of May, 1831, the first Sabbath after the queen's permission had been received, twenty of the first converts to Christ in Madagascar were baptised at Ambódinandohálo; and on the following Sabbath, eight individuals, by receiving the same ordinance, at Ambátonakánga, publicly renounced paganism. The disciples at both places united in partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Two of the converts were husband and wife. The man, now past the meridian of life, had possessed great influence among his countrymen as a diviner,

and had been enriched by his art. A young friend had spoken to him on the falsehood and sinfulness of divination, persuading him to make himself acquainted with the true inspiration which God had given unto men, and urging him to visit the missionaries. The new and Divine doctrines which they taught filled his mind with wonder and reverence, and the Divine Spirit impressed the truth deeply on his heart. Shortly afterwards he publicly destroyed his instruments of divination, with the exception of two, which, as proofs of his sincerity, he delivered to the missionaries. He then took his place among the scholars, commencing with the alphabet, and continued there until he could read with correctness that Word which makes wise unto salvation. His wife experienced the same Divine change, and after twelve months of blameless Christian life the missionaries rejoiced to receive them amongst the first publicly admitted to the fold of Christ in Madagascar. At his baptism he received the name of Paul, of whom he had read so much in the New Testament, and he was frequently designated, in reference to his former life, "Paul the diviner."

In a letter to the missionary, another of these early Christians shows how clearly he comprehended the requirements of a disciple of Christ. "I desire," he writes, when applying for baptism, "to devote myself, both soul and body, to Jesus, that I may serve Him in all things according to His will; and I pray God in thus giving myself to Jesus to assist me by His Holy Spirit, that I may love Jesus with all my

heart, my spirit, and my strength—that I may serve Jesus even until I die."

These baptisms stimulated inquiry among others, and much of the time of the missionaries was passed in the soul-gladdening employment of directing the minds of those who sought to take upon themselves the name of the Lord Jesus. The public forsaking of the idols brought some annoyance and reproach upon the Christians, chiefly from their relatives, but this was cheerfully borne; and, impelled by love to the Redeemer, and concern for the souls of others, they held meetings in their own dwellings, for reading the Scriptures, singing, and prayer. By the Divine blessing on these means, the members of the Churches became largely increased.

A law existed, though not often enforced, prohibiting the use of wine in Imérina, and after the first administration of the Lord's Supper a message was received from the queen, stating that it was contrary to law for any native to drink wine; after which water alone was used in this commemoration. After this, orders were sent forbidding the soldiers and the pupils in the schools to receive baptism, and also forbidding those of them who had been admitted to Christian communion to unite again in that ordinance. The Christian soldiers were silent spectators when the ordinance was next celebrated,—viz., on the first Sunday in November, 1831; and after that time no one in the army or in the government schools was allowed to be baptised, or to unite in the communion of the Church.

Although those who had avowed their renunciation of heathenism and adherence to Christ were received to the Lord's Supper, no Church was formed until August in the same year, when a Christian brotherhood was organised among the worshippers at Ambódinandohálo, and shortly after at Ambátónakánga. The members on these occasions gave and received the right hand of fellowship, and agreed to a simple declaration of faith and order, including the chief evangelical doctrines, and declaring the word of Christ to be the sole law of the Church; securing also to the people the admission to, and exclusion from, their fellowship. It was further stated to be the duty of every communicant to seek the edification of the Church, and the extension of the gospel amongst their countrymen. Believing themselves that the Word of God was the only true and safe ground of Christian faith and rule of Christian life, the missionaries were chiefly concerned that their converts should comprehend clearly this great foundation truth, and were content to leave minor questions to be determined by that rule as they might arise.

Thus, by the loving care of the Divine Redeemer, with fervent prayer, as well as with trembling hearts, but in firm and joyous faith, the foundations of the Martyr Church of Madagascar were laid, thirteen years after the messengers of Christ had landed on the shores of that country, and eleven years after the commencement of their labours in the capital.

In the following year the schools, by order of the government, were collected at the capital for public

examination, after which the proficiency of the scholars was commended in an official message from the queen, which also directed them to continue attending the teaching of the missionaries. On this occasion a message was also delivered from the queen, expressing her Majesty's sense of the great value of the mission to the nation. These repeated testimonies in their favour, occurring at the time when the efforts of the missionaries for the spiritual benefit of the people were so encouraging, inspired a hope that the Most High might be influencing the rulers of the land to afford additional facilities for the prosecution of their great work. But all such hopes were fallacious, and only like gleams of sunshine through the darkening clouds which precede the gathering storm.

The missionaries soon learned that the increase of the Christians was offensive to the government; that the endeavours of one devoted Christian to bring others to Christ had, notwithstanding his rank, caused his impeachment, in consequence of which he had been ordered to drink the tangéna, through which ordeal of death God had mercifully preserved him. The missionaries found also that their educational efforts were only valued as they served to supply better qualified officers for the army, in which any Christian tendencies rendered their possessor liable to suspicion, and proved a barrier to his promotion. The prohibition to unite in the commemoration of the Lord's Supper, originally enforced against government pupils and soldiers, was now extended to

the whole native population. Those already admitted to the Church were not allowed to unite in communion, and all others were forbidden to join their fellowship.

Another edict, scarcely less discouraging, was shortly issued. By this, every master was forbidden to allow a slave to read, on pain of forfeiting such slave and being himself reduced to slavery; and every slave was forbidden to learn to read and write under the heaviest penalties. The blessed influence of Christianity had already been the means of bestowing that spiritual liberty wherewith Christ makes free on some who were in bonds to their fellow-men. Among these, one instance was conspicuous. A slave boy had learned to read while attending his young master to the school. The reading of the Scriptures had been the means of his becoming a believer in Christ. He had seen in the missionary printing-office the tract, "The Poor Negro," with a frontispiece representing the negro in the attitude of prayer; and wishing to cultivate the disposition to pray, he gave, when baptised, as his adopted name, "Ra-Poor-Negro." He continued to increase in knowledge of the Scriptures and in usefulness among his own class, which forms a large portion of the population of Madagascar. His death, a short time afterwards, was to all around him as remarkable as the change in his life had been. No one who has not stood by the bed-sides of the dying heathen can form any adequate idea of the darkness, sorrow, and dismay which often attend their last hours. The Malagasy fever seized

this Christian slave, and terminated his life; but his frequent expressions were, "I am going to Jehovah-Jesus; Jesus is fetching me. I do not fear." These words, "I do not fear," were the last he uttered in this world.

The inhabitants of the conquered provinces had shown no attachment to the present government; troops were repeatedly sent, avowedly to reduce the disaffected to obedience, but most frequently to prevent future trouble by destroying those who might become enemies, and to enrich the invaders with the spoils of their country. These troops were to a large extent officered by young men who had been pupils of the missionaries; and not a few in the ranks, as well as large numbers of slaves and camp followers, were Christians, and carried with them their books, especially their New Testaments.

The chief commander of one of these expeditions was a zealous votary of the idols, and before the army left the capital he ordered one of the national idols to be borne aloft through the lines, followed by the priests bearing vessels filled with consecrated water, which, in the presence of thousands of spectators, they sprinkled on the soldiers as a means of security and success.

In this army were a number of Christians who, through their officers, requested permission to be absent from the ceremony, as they could not, without doing violence to their consciences, unite in any act which implied belief in the idols. The general granted their request, but added that Rakélimaláza (the

idol) would have his revenge. The forces were arranged in three divisions, the central and largest body being commanded by the general, in the midst of whose troops the idol was carried to the battle. The Christians were placed in the most exposed position, where it was probable they would be the first to fall. The two outer divisions of the army were victorious, but the central and strongest force, in which the idol was present, was defeated with the loss of about 1,000 men, 400 or 500 of whom were regular disciplined troops. This was a loss unprecedented in the wars between the Hovas and other races, and the division returned with broken ranks, lowered in the estimation of other sections of the army and of the general community.

The conduct of the Christian soldiers in this, as in other campaigns, was truly honourable. Though equally exposed with others, and at times more so, they were always ready at every call. They were also distinguished by their kindness towards the vanquished, as well as by their honesty and moral purity. They availed themselves of opportunities for holding meetings in each other's tents, for reading the Scriptures and prayer. Many of their comrades heard the Word of God at these small camp gatherings for the first time, and afterwards became disciples of the Saviour.

The educational efforts of the mission had now been continued for fourteen years, and the scholars had increased until the number under instruction exceeded 4,000, who were all taught reading, writing, and

arithmetic. It was estimated that from 10,000 to 15,000 Malagasy youths had passed through the mission schools during the period under review; and if each of these only taught one relative or friend to read, the number of readers would amount to 30,000. To supply these readers, large portions of the Bible had been translated, and printed in the native language. 2,500 tracts had also been printed; and these, besides school books, had been distributed amongst the people.

How wonderful had been the course of Divine Providence in relation to the extension of the kingdom of Christ in this part of the world! The missionaries would have preferred more preaching and less teaching, but by no other means could so large a number have been enabled to derive from the Word of God spiritual nourishment for the coming season of trial and suffering.

The missionaries had made frequent visits to the adjacent villages, preaching to the heathen; and numbers cast away their charms and burned their idols. Others came to the missionaries for further instruction, bringing the rejected idols as evidence of their sincerity. Among these was one belonging to several families. This idol had been a source of wealth to its possessor by the sale of small pieces of wood, which, having been hung about the idol, were afterwards sold as charms against fever and other causes of danger. The central piece of wood which forms this structure is surrounded by shorter pieces, and by hollow silver ornaments, called crocodile's teeth, from

their resemblance to the teeth of that animal, the whole being bound together with fine silver chains. These ornaments were occasionally anointed with sacred oil, or other unguents used in the consecration of charms. This object of misplaced trust had belonged to the head man of the village, whose son had disposed of the charms; and such was their imagined power that an ox was often given as the price of one. The missionaries, when preaching in the village, spent some time in the family to which the idol belonged, and when the son visited them afterwards, they gave him a copy of the New Testament, which was made instrumental in his conversion to God; one of the first public evidences of which was the discontinuance of the sale of the charms.

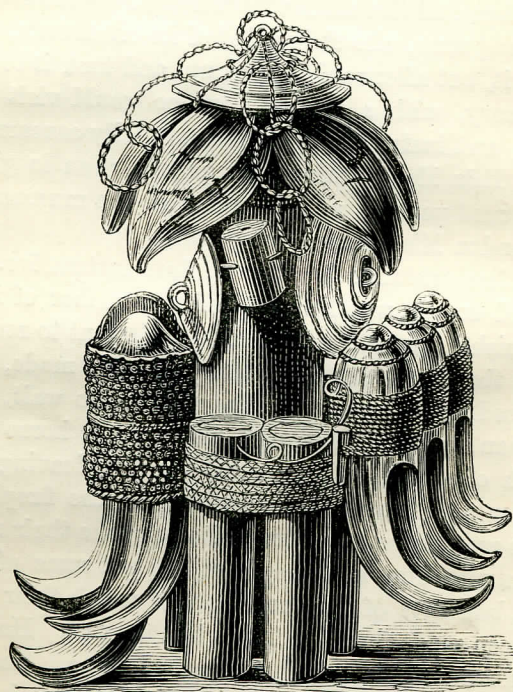
It had never been difficult, since the commencement of the existing government, to obtain accusations against any one favourable to Christianity; and this young officer was accused to the queen of having practised witchcraft, in consequence of which he was required to drink the poison-water, that his guilt or innocence might be proved. His family, anxious to obtain a favourable issue, wished to employ the diviners. But the accused refused to allow of any employment of divination, declaring that it would be sin in him to allow it to be supposed that he believed it entitled to the slightest confidence. He declared that he was innocent, and said, as he was condemned to the ordeal, he committed himself to God. By the result of the ordeal he was pronounced free from the crime which had been laid to his charge, and his

deliverance induced his family to seek Christian instruction, and to unite in Christian worship.

When the young officer was sufficiently recovered from the effects of the tangéna, he visited his family, and was rejoiced to find them seeking to know God. His father and the chief villagers gave up the idol to the young man, who stripped it of its ornaments, and buried it, but afterwards dug it up, and took it to the missionary, with a request that he would visit the village, and instruct the people more fully concerning God. This idol, of which a representation is given on the next page, is now deposited in the museum of the London Missionary Society.

Another instance is scarcely less instructive. A married couple, who had applied to a maker of idols to furnish them with a household god, went to receive it on the appointed day. It was not made, but promised in the evening. They agreed to wait, and the man went to the forest and brought home the branch of a tree, and prepared the idol, leaving the fragments of the wood scattered near the fireplace. In the evening he asked his visitors to take their meal of rice with him, and they saw him put some of the small branches of the bough, out of which their idol had been made, into the fire to boil the rice. Having paid for their new god, they returned home. Shortly afterwards a young Christian, calling at their house, was led to read to the wife that part of the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah,—“With part he roasteth roast, maketh a fire, warmeth himself, and the residue thereof he maketh a god.” The woman was astonished

at the exact description of what she had herself witnessed. The reading of this passage was instrumental in convincing her of the truth of the sacred volume; she abandoned her idol, and afterwards became a true disciple of the Saviour.



MALAGASY IDOL.

Loss of health obliged Mr. Jones to return to England, and three other missionaries had recently been ordered by the government to leave the country,

Those who were left knew that they were only allowed to remain for the sake of the advantages which the government derived from artisans, by whom from one to two thousand youths had been taught useful kinds of skilled labour; but as, towards the close of 1834, the government proposed to enter into fresh engagements with Mr. Cameron, the missionaries were encouraged to hope that they might be allowed to continue their great work. The richest measure of spiritual prosperity yet vouchsafed to the mission marked the close of the year 1834. Nearly two hundred persons had applied for admission to Christian fellowship, and Bible-classes had been formed for the regular perusal of the Scriptures.

In reviewing the state of the mission at this time, the brethren thus wrote:—"We look on with wonder and gladness, and are often prompted to exclaim, 'This is the finger of God!' The difficulty still remains of ascertaining the number under religious impressions. But we have reason to think that several are savingly converted unto God, that many more are perfectly convinced of the folly of idolatry and divination, and that great numbers are awakened to inquiry. The preached Word is listened to attentively, and the Scriptures are earnestly sought and diligently examined. God appears also to manifest His purposes of mercy to this people by raising up an agency of His own from among themselves to carry on His own work, thus supplying the exigencies of His cause by their unexpected instrumentality, and so compensating for our lack of service."

Similar awakenings were at this time experienced in villages and districts distant from the capital, where the worship consisted chiefly of reading the Scriptures and prayer. Applications from these remote places for books, especially for the Scriptures, were frequent and numerous.

The following occurrence was at this time a cause of considerable anxiety and alarm. A priest of one of the government idols, having heard from a native Christian of salvation by Jesus Christ, was deeply impressed, attended the mission chapel, returned to the village where he resided, and earnestly endeavoured to persuade the people to adopt his newly acquired religious views. Regarding him as deranged, they treated his endeavours with levity. He again visited his friends at the capital, who advised him to learn what the Word of God taught before he attempted to teach. The advice did not please him, and he said that God taught him independently of the Scriptures. He now became the itinerant teacher of a new faith, comprising the resurrection from the dead, the general judgment, and the happiness of the world when wars should cease and universal peace prevail. In about two years this man had drawn after him about two hundred followers, and had also associated the worship of his idol with that of the true God. The great danger of the movement arose from his declaring that although he did not teach out of the Book, his religion was the same as that taught by the missionaries. His moral conduct was irreproachable.

In the autumn of 1834 this deluded man sent a second time to the queen, stating that he had an important message to deliver to her. He and his followers were summoned to the capital, and asked what they had to say. They answered that they had a message from God, that the queen would be sovereign of all the world; that the dead would rise, and the living never die; and all would then live peaceably and happily, for there would be an end to the tangéna, divination, murder, wars, and contentions. "God has told us these things, and God cannot lie. We offer," they said, "to forfeit our heads if what we say is false."

In relation to the assertion that all mankind were derived from one source, the officers asked, "Do you mean to say that we and the Mozambiques (whom the Malagasy greatly despise) are from the same parents?" They replied that the queen and all the human race descended from the same parents; and it was supposed this answer helped to seal their doom. Most of the two hundred remained firm to their word, but some withdrew. About midnight, after their statements had been concluded, the queen sent and had the priest and three of his principal followers put to death. They were placed with their heads downwards in a rice-pit, boiling water being then poured on them, and earth afterwards thrown in until the pit was filled up. Seventeen of the men were compelled to take the tangéna, under which eight died; the rest were all sold into slavery, and their property confiscated.

Although this combination of deluded men was destroyed, the event tended to excite suspicion against Christianity and its adherents, and spies were sent to the several places of worship, to report any expressions in the addresses of the preachers which might be construed as injurious to the government. The unwillingness of the Christians to abstain from work on days sacred to the idols also gave offence to the heathen. A young man who had been forced to desist from work on the idol's day, and who was overheard expressing his opinions respecting the objects of their worship, was, on the pretended order of the idol, sentenced to be cut to pieces, or the rice crop would be destroyed. This was reported to the queen, who did not gratify his accusers by his execution, but ordered him to drink the tangéna. He was declared innocent, to the great disappointment of his enemies, and the grateful joy of the Christians. When, a few days afterwards, the young man came to the capital in a palanquin, as was customary on such occasions, a large number of Christians wearing white lambas joined the procession. From a distance the queen beheld the procession, and did not seem pleased when informed that it was a procession of Christians accompanying one of their number who had been declared innocent by the tangéna.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DARKENING GLOOM.

Christian refusal to offer heathen sacrifice—False accusation of preaching sedition—Christian worship declared unlawful—Missionaries forbidden to teach Christianity—Christians required to accuse themselves—Stedfastness of the Christians—Their noble confession before the judges—Midnight meetings for prayer—Translation of the Scriptures and of "Pilgrim's Progress"—Last missionaries leave the country—Accusation against Rafáravávy and her companions.

In the duties of subjects, of members of society, as well as in the social relations of domestic life, the Christians were in general so blameless, that the chief judge bore a noble testimony in their favour when he dismissed their accusers with the declaration that offences against the idols must be carried before the queen, and that no charge could be sustained against the Christians on any other grounds. It was only in relation to the homage demanded for the idols, and the superstitions associated with them, that the adherents to the new faith were found wanting. In reference to these the government and its agents found that the simple and sincere faith of the Christians endowed its possessors with a passive but invincible power—the heretofore unknown power of enlightened conscience armed with truth—before which they were helpless. It was also seen that, sustained by this power, the Christians opposed to the claims of the idols an unfaltering firmness and willingness to suffer, which filled their persecutors

with rage and hate, and urged them to engage the highest earthly powers in their destruction.

The stedfast obedience of the Christians to the requirements of their faith was brought under the notice of the government, and, with criminating additions, made known to the sovereign. One instance may suffice to show the requirements urged on behalf of the idols. A young nobleman, nearly related to a high officer of the State, was appointed guardian of an idol. This young Christian was told by the chief, who had adopted him as his son, that at the approaching national festival the queen would present an ox to the idol, and that he must burn some of the fat as incense before it. His refusal to do this greatly incensed the chief against him, and against the teaching which caused him to refuse the homage required.

The Christians were not ignorant of the crimes laid to their charge, nor of the endeavours made to excite against them the anger of the queen. An unusual seriousness pervaded their public and social gatherings, and seldom had larger or more deeply attentive audiences been seen than those which crowded the places of worship on the Sabbath days at this time. From among the families of the immediate connections of the sovereign to those of the humblest slave, might now be numbered some who were disciples of the Saviour. The large assemblies gathered for worship, the earnestness of the native preachers, and the serious attention of the people, were peculiarly offensive to the priests and their adherents, who carried the reports of their spies to the palace.

About this time the above-named chief went to one of the evening meetings for worship, where an excellent sermon was preached by a Christian slave, from Josh. xxiv. 14, 15. The chief returned, and according to his own interpretation of the sermon framed his accusation. Jehovah, whom they were exhorted to serve, was the first king of the English, and Jesus Christ was the second. By the gods whom the fathers of the Jews had served were meant the queen and her predecessors. On this iniquitous perversion of the words, the loyal Christian teacher was represented as preaching treason to the people.

The informer then went successively to three of the principal officers of the government, and, weeping for effect before one of them, asked for a spear, to destroy himself, that he might not live to see the calamities coming upon his country. Encouraged by a message from the queen, he declared that certain persons in and around the capital were changing the customs of their ancestors, despising divination and the idols of the queen. "They hold," he said, "assemblies in the night, and deliver speeches, without permission from the queen. Beyond this, they urge all present to serve Jehovah and Jesus Christ; and these meetings are carried on by slaves. We cannot see the end of these things. The queen knows, and she alone, what is best to be done; but we fear these people, who have become so friendly with the English, will attempt to transfer the kingdom of the queen to them."

On the following day the chief minister laid this accusation, with his own confirmation of its charges,

before the queen, when, it is said, she burst into tears of grief and rage. She then swore, by the name of the highest spiritual power to whom she could appeal, that she would put a stop to these things with shedding of blood. From that time the most profound silence reigned in the palace; the music was no longer heard; all amusements and dancing were discontinued for about a fortnight; the court appeared as if overtaken by some great calamity, while uncertainty and alarm pervaded all classes of society. An edict was issued requiring the people from the surrounding country, even to a child of a cubit high, to assemble at the capital on Sunday, March 1.

In the mean time, preparatory to the great assembly, a private order was given to write down a list of the houses in which meetings for prayer were held, and the names of all who had been baptised. The next day, when the names of the baptised, and a list of the houses where meetings had been held, were given in, the queen was astonished at their number, appeared exceedingly violent against the Christians, and swore that she would put to death the owners of the houses. Two officers who were present spoke in favour of the Christians, recounting the benefits which the teachers of Christianity had conferred on the country, and stating that the death of the Christians would be a loss to the nation. Other chiefs were consulted about the desirableness of putting some to death in each district, but they expressed their disapproval of such a measure. The queen thanked the officers for their advice, and promised to consider it.

On the Sunday previous to the great assembly the chapel at Ambátonakánga was crowded. A judge who went there in search of his daughter, fearing she might suffer from being seen with the Christians, was surprised at the numbers, and afterwards remarked, "You will never see such an assembly there again." On the same Sunday evening, the queen, passing by the chapel and overhearing the singing of the Christians, observed, "These people will not be quiet until some of them lose their heads." That week the Christians assembled at Ambátonakánga for their usual week-day service: a native Christian preached an impressive sermon from the peculiarly appropriate text, "Save, Lord; we perish." It was the last public discourse ever delivered in that building.

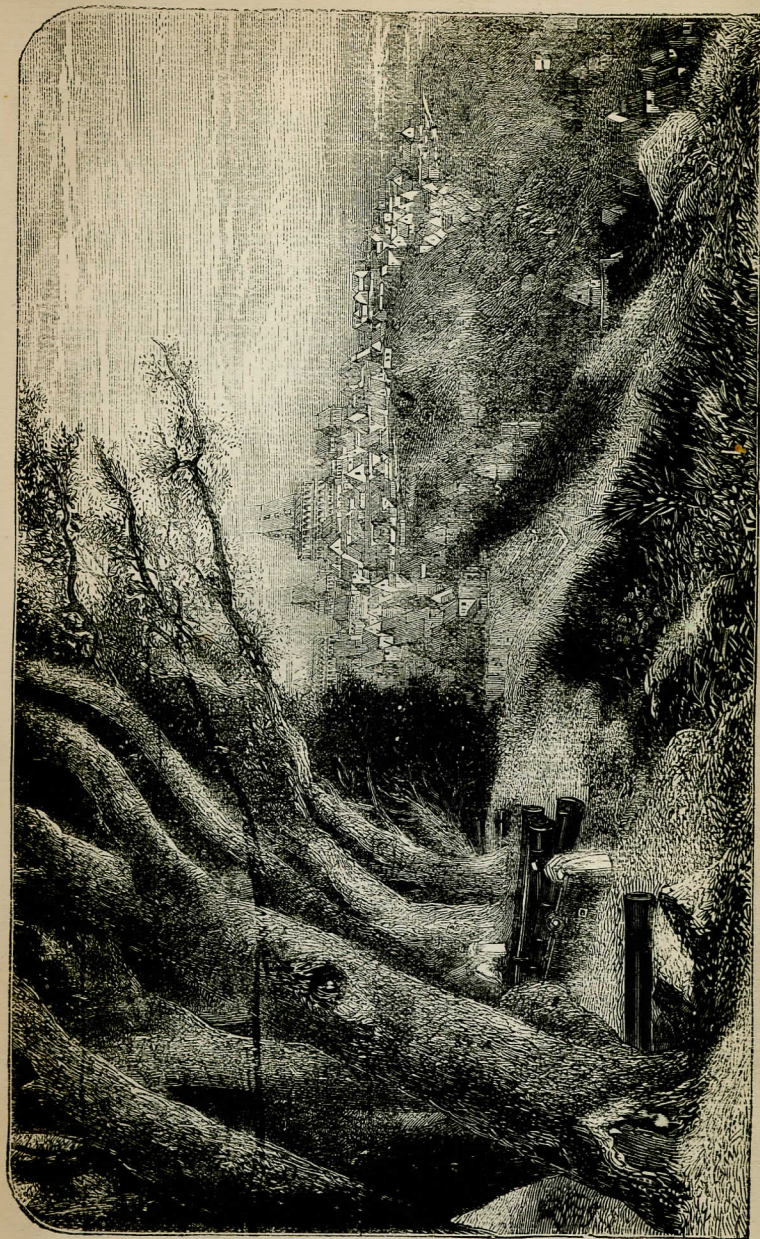
While the Christians were thus employed, the missionaries received a communication from the queen, containing the following important announcement:—"That which has been established by my ancestors I cannot permit to be changed: I am neither ashamed nor afraid to maintain the customs of my ancestors. And with regard to religious worship, whether on the Sunday or not, and the practice of baptism, and the existence of a society—these things cannot be done by my subjects in my country. But if there be knowledge of the arts and sciences, which will be beneficial to my subjects in the country, teach that; for it is good."

In acknowledging the letter the missionaries thus expressed themselves:—"We are exceedingly grieved respecting your word, which says religious worship is

not to be performed by your subjects. For we know and are assured that the Word of God is beneficial to men, and the means of making them wise, and that it renders illustrious and prosperous those kingdoms which obey it; and this teaching of the Word of God, together with teaching the good dispositions and the arts and sciences, are the purposes for which we left our native country.

“We therefore most humbly and earnestly entreat of your Majesty not to suppress our teaching of the Word of God, but that we may still teach it, together with the useful arts and sciences.”

Morning had scarcely dawned on the first of March when the report of cannon, intended to strike awe into the hearts of the people, ushered in the day on which the will and the power of the sovereign of Madagascar to punish the defenceless followers of Christ was to be declared. Fifteen thousand troops were drawn up on the plain of Imáhamásina, and for a mile along the road leading to the place, where it was estimated by some of the missionaries that at least a hundred thousand persons were assembled. The booming of artillery from the high ground overlooking the plain, and the reports of the musketry of the troops, which were continued during the preparatory arrangements for the kabáry, produced among the assembled multitude the most intense and anxious feelings. At length the chief judge, attended by his companions in office, advanced and delivered the message of the sovereign. After expressing the queen's confidence in the idols, and her determination to treat as criminals all who



refused to do them homage, the message proceeded: "As to baptism, societies, places of worship distinct from the schools, and the observances of the Sabbath, how many rulers are there in this land? Is it not I alone that rule? These things are not to be done, they are unlawful in my country, saith Ranaválomanjáka; for they are not the customs of our ancestors, and I do not change their customs, excepting as to those things alone which improve my country.

"Now, then, those of you who have observed baptism, entered into society, and formed separate houses for prayer, I grant you one month to confess having done these things; and if you come not within that period, but wait to be first found out and accused by others, I denounce death against you, for I am not a sovereign that deceives. Mark, then, the time; it is one month from yonder sun of this Sabbath that I give you to confess, and this is the method you are to adopt. The scholars at Ambódinandohálo,* and those at Ambátonakanga, and all other scholars that have not opened separate houses, but at the appointed schools alone have worshipped and learned, these are not condemned, and these are not to confess; but those who have opened other houses, these are to accuse themselves. And those who have been baptised, whether they have worshipped in other houses or not, these must also accuse themselves, and those who have entered into society.

"And you, the civilians and soldiers that have been attending the schools for worship, and especially such

* The large central school, used also as a place of worship.

as have opened other houses for worship, and been baptised, and entered into society, and kept the Sabbath, come and accuse yourselves on these accounts, for I the sovereign do not deceive; but if any come first and accuse you, I denounce death against you, and I do not deceive, saith Ranaválomanjáka.

"And I moreover announce this to you, saith Ranaválomanjáka: Here are your slaves that you have been teaching to write, and who have gone to the houses of prayer, and others who have gone to the schools, and especially that have been baptised: all these must also come and accuse themselves.

"And again, as to your mode of swearing, the answer you are giving, 'It is "true!"' and when you are asked, 'Do you swear it?' the answer is 'True.' I wonder at this. What, indeed, is that word 'True'?

"And then, in your worship, yours is not the custom of our ancestors; you change that, and you are saying, 'Believe,' 'Follow the customs;' and again you say, 'Submit to Him,' 'Fear Him.'

"Remember, it is not about that which is sacred in heaven and earth, that which is held sacred by the twelve sovereigns and all the sacred idols, that you are now accused; but it is that you are doing what is not the custom of our ancestors. That I abhor, saith Ranaválomanjáka."

Two officers from one of the provinces then came forward, and, after the usual expressions of loyalty, declared that the things of which her Majesty disapproved had been done by her subjects in ignorance, not in disobedience. They then enumerated the

friendship reciprocated between Radáma and the English, with the advantages the nation had received from the industry, intelligence, and good conduct of the Christians as subjects. After which they begged the queen to accept an ox and a dollar as a fine or offering for what had been done, and a pledge of its avoidance for the future. These addresses appeared to give very general satisfaction.

The commander-in-chief of the army then advanced and spoke as follows:—"Respecting those who have received baptism, who have abstained from certain common practices, who have said, 'Follow its laws, do not fight,' who have reviled the holy idols, kept sacred the Sabbath, &c., unless those who are guilty of these crimes come forward by this day month to accuse themselves, we the hundred thousand (meaning the whole of the army) shall destroy them; for they have done these things of their own accord, without asking permission of the sovereign and consulting their officers. Unless, therefore, they come forward by this day month to accuse themselves, we are ready, Ranaválomanjáka, to cut off their heads."

Before the meeting separated the judges agreed to convey the proposal made on behalf of the people to the queen, and the multitudes retired from the ground. Next day the firing of cannon announced that a royal message would be sent; but any hope which the presentation of their appeal might have inspired was destroyed when the officers, at the appointed time, arrived and announced to the anxious and expectant crowds that Ranaválona refused their peace-offering

and their petition. The officers then further announced that, instead of allowing a month, during which they might accuse themselves, the queen now ordered that within one week from that day every class of people—soldiers, citizens, scholars, artisans, and slaves—should separately, as classes, and individually, repair to the appointed authorities, and acknowledge or give in a written statement of the offences they had committed. And further, that there might be no mistake about the consequences of neglect, the queen's message added, "Against those who do not come within that period, I denounce death." The speech closed with the following warning:—"Remember that next Sunday is the last day, and unless you send in your names by that day you die wilfully." Whether or not the queen at this time intended to execute her threat, the government were evidently seeking to impress upon the people the enormity of their crime and its fearful consequences.

A special message was the same day sent to the missionaries, ordering them to refrain from communicating to their scholars religious instruction in any form and at all times; but lessons on chemistry, &c., such as Mr. Cameron was at that time giving to a class of young men, were allowed. Besides the scholars, the twelve senior teachers who had united in Christian worship were required to accuse themselves of having done so; and although they pleaded Radáma's authority, they complied, stating that they "dare not oppose the sun;" to which the queen replied, "It is well that you do not dare to contend with the sun, but

come to confess your guilt, and crave pardon. It remains with me now to choose your punishment, and I will do with you as I will do with the others, for I shall show no partiality among my subjects."

There were few families in or around the capital in which some of its members were not involved in the accusations required, and no adequate conception can be formed of the deep concern and agitated feelings of the people during the remaining days of that fearful week. The utterly unfounded accusation against the Christian teachers, of preaching sedition and inculcating disloyalty, was often reiterated, and plausibly represented by some of the officers as hostility to the queen personally. This offence was also rendered more heinous by being directed against the deified spirits of her ancestors, and her own pretensions as the visible deity on earth. Treason and sacrilege were the highest crimes known—both were included in the charges against the Christians, and were therefore represented as requiring the shedding of blood.

In a state of society like that then, or even now, prevailing at Antanánarivo, an ordinary untroubled exterior does not conceal the strength or depth of the agitation within. All is visible and unrestrained. The missionaries learned more of the life and power of the mighty forces aroused by the results of their divinely appointed work than they had ever conceived of before, or could otherwise ever have understood. The heathen, especially the priests, were now vigilant, active, hopeful, if not joyous, as they seemed to think the day of vengeance from their gods, and the hour

of their triumph was come. The Christians had sources of grief from among their occasional associates, as well as from the proceedings of the government. Some who had at times appeared in their assemblies now consorted with the heathen. Others denied having believed in Christ, or made excuses for their association with His people. These were the chaff among the wheat.

But the great body of the disciples felt no hesitation as to what was their duty, and were only anxious to discharge it. They gave themselves to prayer, and when appearing before the judges, faltered not in their testimony. One exemplary Christian being asked by the judges how many times he had prayed, replied that he could not tell; but for the last three or four years he had passed no single day without praying several times to God. When further asked how he prayed, he answered that he confessed his sins to God and asked forgiveness, imploring God's help that he might live without sinning, and be prepared for eternal happiness. He also asked, he said, the same blessings for his family and friends, for the queen, and all her subjects; and added, "I ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, for we receive nothing from God but through His Son Jesus Christ, who died for sinners." The judges observed that such prayers were very good, but as the queen did not approve of them, they ought not to be offered in her country. This faithful and devoted man, at the same time, spoke much to the judges of the holy Saviour who died for the guilty, and while he did so was treated with attention and respect.

Although prayer had been forbidden, it was never more sincere and earnest than at this time. One faithful company of believers met every midnight in the vestry at Ambátonakánga for prayer, and long afterwards remembered the consolation and strength they had found in those midnight hours when drawing nigh unto God. And God drew nigh unto them. At one of these midnight meetings a queen's officer of high rank presented himself as a friend, and was welcomed; and when asked afterwards why at this perilous time he joined the Christians, he replied that he perceived so much injustice in the kabáry, that he determined to join the injured party, and that after having attended a few times the meetings of the Christians, he resolved that their God should be his God. This noble follower of Christ proved faithful to his Saviour, and a true friend to the Christians, with whom he afterwards suffered.

The Word of God was indeed precious to the Christians in those days. A number of Christian women, whose husbands had gone to the city to give in their accusations, communed with each other, and were sad as they sat together in the house of one of their number. Late in an evening of this week a Christian friend entered the dwelling, and listened to the tale of their sorrow. He endeavoured to cheer them, presenting before them the promises of God's Word, the faithfulness and love of their blessed Lord, and urged upon them prayer; he also read to them the forty-sixth Psalm, prayed with them, and left them trusting and cheerful. These women, one of whom was sold

into slavery on account of her faith, remembered that evening with grateful feelings, and long afterwards declared that they had seldom since, in hours of depression, failed to find consolation and support in reading that psalm and in prayer.

After much distress on account of the cruel and revolting brutalities which it was reported were to be inflicted on the Christians, the day which had been regarded with such strong but opposite feelings arrived; and on the morning of the 9th of March the queen's message was brought by the judges and officers to the assembled people. The offences of the Christians were recited, the punishment due to them declared, especially the exhortations to the people to "Believe in Him," "To follow Him," &c.; adding, in reference to the scholars, "Now for all this evil which you have done in my country, I would have so dealt with you that you should never have had power to do good or evil again, had not the cries and entreaties of the people of Imérina prevented me." On hearing the intercession of the people, the queen accepted their offering and money, and refrained from inflicting punishment; but, said the message, "Your lives alone will be sufficient the next time." And, after enjoining prayer to the objects of national worship, "If any change this mode of worship, I will punish them with death, saith Queen Ránaváloná."

The fear inspired by this threat was deemed sufficient. None were put to death or sold into slavery, but about four hundred officers were reduced in rank, and fines paid for two thousand others. Although

life was not taken, the purpose to extinguish Christianity was firmly determined on. The week after the queen's message had been delivered, every person who had received books was ordered to deliver them up, without retaining even a single leaf, on pain of death. This order was severely felt; few obeyed it literally, and in the distant provinces scarcely at all. The books so given up, being regarded as English property, were returned to the missionaries.

The missionaries still continued privately to impart consolation and encouragement to the Christians, but their opportunities were few, and the peril to the people great. Notwithstanding this, converts continued to increase, and their spiritual improvement was rapid. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was at times privately administered. The endeavours to learn to read were unremitted, and the receiving a copy of portions of the Scriptures afforded unspeakable joy. Some walked sixty, some a hundred miles, to obtain one. Not a few who received parts of the sacred volume found it afterwards, in the lonely forest or the desert mountain, a fountain of living water and a storehouse of bread from heaven.

The stern prohibition against Christian instruction and worship throughout the country on pain of death, and the order to the missionaries not to teach religion in any form, had virtually brought the mission to an end. But one great work, the translation of the Old Testament, was still unfinished, and to its completion the missionaries now directed their undivided energies. Mr. Baker, assisted by the artisans, worked at the

printing of the translation until the whole was finished; and thus, by their last labour, the sorrowing missionaries conferred on the people the greatest boon which, next to the introduction of Christianity itself, Madagascar had received.

The missionary could now neither open the chapel nor preach in his own house. No Christian could visit him without danger, and, except with extreme caution, they seldom entered his door. He could visit none of his flock in their own dwellings without exciting suspicion and exposing them to peril. Under these circumstances the brethren could not but question the duty of remaining; more especially as the government pretended to believe that their teaching of Christianity had only been a cover under which they promoted political purposes. Their most judicious native friends also thought that, for the future interests of the gospel in the country, it would be best that they should retire, at least for a season.

The government would gladly have retained the artisans, especially those who had taught them to work in iron and to construct machinery, but as Christianity was proscribed, they declined the overtures of the government; and with blighted hopes and deepest sorrow, on account of the scattered and exposed condition of the infant Church they had been honoured to gather, Messrs. Freeman, Cameron, Chick, and Kitching left the capital in June, 1835, Messrs. Johns and Baker remaining for a season.

To these two mission families the ensuing year was a period of anxiety and distress rarely equalled, and

perhaps never surpassed in the missionary experience of modern times. The departure of the other missionaries failed to assuage the wrath of the government against the Christians. The servants of those who had left were subjected to the treacherous ordeal of the tangéna, to prove whether or no they were exempt from any malign influence contracted by residing in the houses of the Christian teachers, and two of them died. The infant of another was destroyed by the queen's orders the day after its birth. Sunday was desecrated by compulsory work and by public amusements, while vice, disease, and poverty increased among the people.

During this time Mr. Johns translated into Malagasy that inimitable itinerary of Christian life, "The Pilgrim's Progress." Six copies were transcribed, and distributed in manuscript among the Christians. The peculiar structure of the native language, in which names of persons are generally descriptive of some quality or circumstance connected with parentage, birth, or character, one name often comprising a complete sentence, favoured the transfusion into the translation of much of the spirit, truth, and beauty of the original. A copy of the translation was sent to Mr. Freeman, then in England, where it was printed and forwarded to the Christians. The many graphic delineations of Christian life, as then existing in Madagascar, which that incomparable work contains, caused it to be prized, next to the Scriptures, as their most valued treasure.

Gradually the Christians sought out their fellow-

believers, using the utmost caution before disclosing their own feelings to others. Sometimes a recognition was secured by reference to Jer. xxx. 15—"If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not directly put me to death?" To which the answer would be a naming of the following verse:—"As the Lord liveth, which made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of those men who seek thy life." The Christians ventured afterwards to meet secretly in their own houses or in those of the missionaries, but more frequently they met on the summits of solitary mountains, whence they could survey the rocky hills and brown or grassy plains, and observe the movements of men at a great distance. In such places they would give expression to their pent-up feelings by singing the praises of God their Saviour, and reading His blessed Word, without fear of being disturbed by those hunting for their lives.

The application to teach and to print books being sternly refused, and a fresh persecution having again broken forth, and having received intimation that the government expected them to leave, the two remaining missionaries deemed it their duty to follow their brethren. Leaving with the native Christians about seventy complete Bibles, several boxes of the Psalms, Testaments, hymn-books, &c., the chief part of which was buried for greater security, Messrs. Johns and Baker, the last of the missionaries, sorrowfully parted from their Christian brethren, and set out for the coast, in July, 1836.

Among the disciples was a member of a family of

rank and position, which was remarkable for its zealous devotion to the idols. This distinguished lady, whose name was Rafárávávy, had been awakened to a concern for her soul's salvation by the conversation of a native Christian, and had become a true convert to Christ. Before the suppression of Christianity she had obtained one of the largest houses in the capital, which she appropriated to Christian worship, and her simplicity of character and earnestness induced many to attend the preaching of the gospel.

Notwithstanding the punishment threatened by the queen, Rafárávávy and a few female friends occasionally met in her house to read and pray. Three of her slaves went to the judge and accused her of these practices. A Christian who heard the accusation hastened to inform her of it. She immediately placed her Bible and other books in a place of security, while her father, on hearing what the slaves had done, had them confined in irons. Rafárávávy, however, ordered them to be liberated, sent for them, forgave them, wept over them, and spoke to them of the mercy and forgiveness of God through Christ. Two of them afterwards became Christians, and one of them died for her faith.

The judge demanded the names of her companions, and, on her refusal to give them, reported her offence to the queen, who in great wrath exclaimed, "Is it possible that any one is so daring as to defy me? And that one a woman, too! Go and put her to death at once." Two of the queen's high officers, and a lady

of rank and influence with the queen, pleaded for the life of the accused, on account of services which her father and brother had rendered to the State, and the sentence was deferred.

On the day on which the last of the missionaries were to leave the capital, Rafáráváy, not knowing the hour at which she might be summoned by the executioner, went, at about three o'clock in the morning, to take leave of them. The interview was deeply affecting to both parties. Mrs. Johns afterwards remarked, "I shall never forget the serenity and composure with which she related to me the consolation she found in pleading the promises of God, and drawing near to Him in prayer." It was on the same day that, contrary to all expectation, the queen sent to say that the services of her father had secured her pardon; but that Rafáráváy must pay a fine, and if ever again guilty of a similar offence, life alone would then make atonement for her crime.

In order to avoid frequent interruption and danger, from the constant watch kept over her every movement by the emissaries of the government, Rafáráváy bought a house at Ambátonakánga. There a small company of believers, some even from the district of Vonizóngo, many miles distant, occasionally met at night for prayer. Sometimes they travelled twenty miles to hold, on the top of a mountain, or in the hollows on its sides, their meetings, losing all sense of weariness in the freedom and security with which they could join in praise and prayer to God.

About twelve months after his departure, Mr.

Johns visited the coast, and was gladdened by the arrival of four Christians with intelligence of their brethren in the interior. They reported that the mind of the queen remained the same in regard to Christianity. "It is thought," they said, "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. In the strength of the Lord we will go forward. If we confess Him, He will also confess us, when He shall come in the clouds to judge the world, and to present all that are His, blameless, before the Father for ever. We have opportunities of meeting on the mountains to sing and pray on the Sabbath. We have also services in the capital during the week, after sunset. Our meetings are large, through the diligence of the disciples in conversation, in season and out of season; so that when we examine the state of 'Pilgrim,' we wish to be like him in 'progress.' All the Christians here are teaching others to read. There are ten learning with one friend, six with another, four with another, and the number is increasing. How much does the compassion of the Saviour console us now! We are filled with wonder at the work of the Holy Spirit, for it is He who persuades us to increase thus in love. The Word is indeed true that says, 'I will send unto 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, and our life."

We have seen how, in a campaign to the south, the

heroic faith of the Christian soldiers sustained them when they refused to acknowledge the claims of the national idol carried in their ranks to the battle. In another army that same faith was also sustained by the love of Christ in the heart. A letter to Mr. Johns speaks of the death of a Christian soldier who had fallen in an expedition to the north. "He was a beloved brother, and we frequently found great pleasure in his society. One of our friends, who was with him in his tent when he died, having asked him if he had any fear, he replied, 'Why should I fear to die while 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.'" Some of the companions of this young soldier remarked that they never heard him mention the name of the Saviour without tears. On a missionary noticing the same to him, "How can I do otherwise than feel," said he, "when I mention the name of that beloved Saviour who suffered and died on the cross for me?" With such devout soldiers in the army, we cease to wonder that the military posts in Madagascar became centres of Christian light and blessing to many in the surrounding country.

CHAPTER V.

OUTBURST OF THE STORM.

Arrest of Rafárávávy—Confession of Paul before the judges—A Christian's feelings on the way to execution—Fearful conflagration in the city—Postponement of Rafárávávy's execution—Arrest, examination, and execution of the second martyr—Torture of his wife—Flight of Rafárávávy and her companions—Perils and sufferings—Christian slaves—Safe embarkation of the refugees—Welcomes in England—Their return to Mauritius—Capture, torture, and execution of Christians in the capital.

WHILE the Christian messengers from the afflicted Church at the capital, and the missionary who had come to sympathise with them, were engaged in affectionate conference and prayer, their enemies at the capital were actively endeavouring to secure their condemnation. Two women, one of them related to the Christians, accused ten of the latter of meeting on the Sunday for prayer at the house of Rafárávávy. The chief officer of the queen, to whom the judges carried the accusation, declared with an oath, "Then they shall die! for they despise the queen's law." They were all immediately arrested. Officers were repeatedly sent to Rafárávávy, chiefly to discover her associates, stating on one occasion that the queen knew who her companions were, but wished to give her the opportunity of telling the whole truth.*

This benevolent woman, careful of the lives of her fellow-Christians, answered, "If, as you say, the queen knows as well as I do, why do you ask me

* The usual penalty was diminished when confession was made.

again?" They then brought one of her companions who had confessed that she prayed with her, and when confronted with her, Rafárávávy said, "We have prayed together; we do not deny it;" and when further asked, "Where have you prayed?" she replied, "In our own houses, and in many other places. Wherever we went we endeavoured to remember God, and pray to Him—in the house and out of doors, in the town, in the country, and on the mountains."

The officers then proceeded to the other Christians already in prison, chiefly for the purpose of inducing them to name those not yet accused. They falsely told a young woman whose name was Rásaláma that the others had already given the names of all the Christians, so that it would be of no avail for her to refuse to mention those she knew. Influenced by this specious declaration, Rásaláma mentioned the names of seven who had not before been impeached, including among them Paul the diviner. The seven were immediately apprehended, and the declarations—confessions, as they were called—of the whole were then laid before the queen.

The answer which the aged Paul had given to the judges afforded but little ground for his condemnation. He said, "I have certainly prayed to that 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; that He would bless the officers, judges, and all the people, to make them wise and good, so that

there might be no more brigands and liars." No wonder that some said there was no evil, but good in such praying. When the officers retired to confer on the course they should pursue towards these people, one of their number adduced the statement of Paul on behalf of the Christians, saying, "Let us do nothing rashly, lest we advise the queen to shed innocent blood. What is their guilt?" The chief officer replied, "They pray to Jehovah, to Jesus, to Christ;" and when one reasonable man said, "These may be with them but different names for one God, as we have several names for God," the minister replied, "The queen has forbidden any to pray to Jehovah, and having despised the commandments of the queen, they are guilty."

Fourteen days longer the Christians and their friends were kept in anxiety, then an order was sent to the people in the market to go and seize the property of Rafárávávy. The first intimation which she received of danger was the rush of the rabble into her dwelling, seizing everything therein, pulling down the building, and carrying every part of it away. Meanwhile four of the royal guard, usually employed in the execution of criminals, ordered Rafárávávy to follow them; and when she asked whither they were leading her, the answer was, "The queen knows what to do with you." They led her along the road leading to Ambóhipótsy, where criminals were usually put to death; she therefore concluded that orders had been given for her execution. But the fear of death was removed, and the prayer of Stephen was repeatedly

uttered by the way. In calling those eventful moments to her recollection she afterwards said that she felt as if all relating to earth was ended, and wished her spirit was liberated from her body. One beloved Christian approached near enough for her to speak to him, and she asked him privately to go with her to the end, that if she were strengthened to bear testimony to the presence of Christ in her last moments, it might encourage any who might have to follow. He answered, "I shall not leave you, dear sister. Cleave to Him on whom you have built your hope." Another dear friend had before said, "Fear not, beloved sister; though there may be affliction here, there is rest in heaven."

Shortly afterwards they entered a house belonging to one of the subordinates of the commander-in-chief, where she was bound in strong fetters, called by a name which signifies "causing many tears." As the smith was riveting these on her limbs, one of the soldiers said, "Do not make them too fast, or it will be difficult to take them off. She is to be executed to-morrow at cock-crow,"—the still and quiet hour often chosen for inflicting death on criminals.

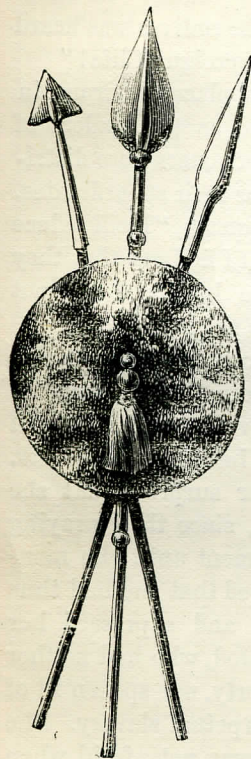
But during the solemn darkness of those midnight hours the city was roused from its slumbers and thrown into the wildest confusion by the bursting out of a fierce conflagration, which swiftly burned down the dry, closely packed wood and thatch houses, and spread the greatest consternation among the people. The morning was dark and windy, clouds drifted across the sky, and innumerable fragments of burning material fell over the palace yard, filling the minds of

the beholders with terror. The officer in charge of the city, on seeing the confusion created by the fire, issued an order to discontinue all government service; and although the executioners had previously received instructions to put their prisoner to death, they now delayed the execution until further orders. In reference to this occurrence one of the natives was heard to remark, "God is indeed the sovereign of life!"

Paul and Rafáráváy were now placed in irons in separate houses, being considered as the leaders of the Christians. The remaining prisoners were distributed amongst the chief officers or their subordinates. Then followed the message of the queen, "I will reduce them to perpetual slavery now. If I find out that they have again assembled in private houses, I will put them to death whenever they are accused."

Among the ten Christians in confinement was Rá-saláma, the Christian woman whom the falsehood of the officers had betrayed into revealing the names of the seven Christians now among her fellow-prisoners. A relative having expressed her surprise that she should have accused her friends, since their praying had been unknown to the government until she mentioned them, she was deeply grieved that she had thus been the cause of their arrest, and expressed her astonishment that the people of God, who had neither excited rebellion, nor stolen property, nor spoken ill of any one, should be reduced to perpetual slavery. She was also heard to say that she was not afraid when the *Tsíialáingia* came to her house, but rather rejoiced that she was counted worthy to suffer for Jesus.

Tsitíaláingia, signifying "hater of lies," is the name of a round-headed silver lance, on which the name of the queen is engraved;* also of the officer by whom it is carried. It is the representative of the power of the queen, and is regarded as endowed with supernatural means of detecting falsehood. It is borne by officers



MALAGASY SPEARS.

* In the accompanying representation of Malagasy spears, that in the centre shows the form of Tsitíaláingia.

sent to arrest persons accused of crimes against the sovereign, and who are then said to be arrested by Tsitíaláingia. The haft as well as the head of the spear or lance is of silver. When the officers bearing this spear reached the house of an accused person, the spear itself was fixed in the doorway, and as long as it remained in that position no one could enter or leave the house.

Rásaláma's words were reported to the commander-in-chief, who commended the informer, and ordered the prisoner, who continued singing hymns, to be put in irons, and while thus suffering to be beaten. "My life shall go for my companions," she said. "You say Ráfaravávy will be put to death;

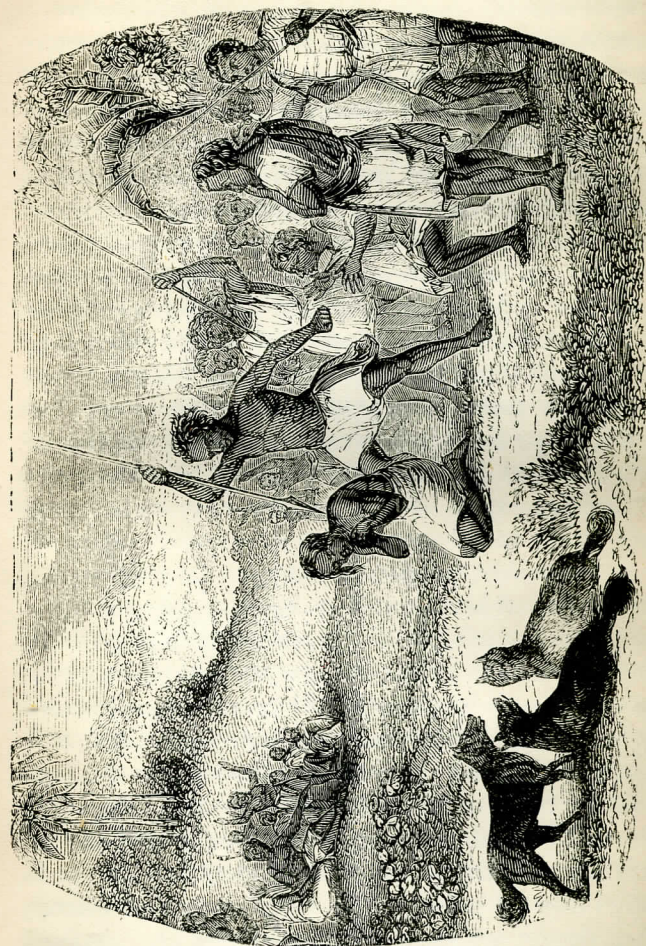
but no, she will not die. I shall be killed instead of her." Her extreme agitation of mind and feebleness of body, produced by the cruel beating and severe sufferings, caused her friends to think that perhaps, for a short season, her mind scarcely retained its balance; but if so, it was perfectly restored afterwards. She was ordered for execution the next morning, and was put in irons, which, being fastened to the feet, hands, knees, and neck, confined the whole body in a position of excruciating pain. In the early morning as she was borne along to the place of execution she sang hymns and expressed her joy in the knowledge of the gospel. On passing the chapel in which she had been baptised, she exclaimed, "There I first heard the words of the Saviour." After being borne a mile farther, she reached the fatal spot, a broad, dry, shallow fosse or ditch, strewn with the bones of previous criminals.

Here, permission being granted her to pray, Rásaláma calmly knelt on the earth, committed her spirit into the hands of her Redeemer, and fell with the executioners' spears buried in her body. Earth and hell had done their worst. Some few of the bystanders, it was reported, cried out, "Where is the God she prayed to, that He does not save her now?" Others were moved to pity for one whom they deemed an innocent sufferer; and the heathen executioners repeatedly declared, "There is some charm in the religion of the white people which takes away the fear of death." Her companions were in prison or concealment, but one faithful friend, who witnessed her calm and peaceful death, when he returned, exclaimed, "If

I might die so tranquil and happy a death, I too would willingly die for the Saviour." So suffered, August 14, 1837, Rásaláma, the first who died for Christ of the Martyr Church of Madagascar, which thus, in its early infancy, received its baptism of blood.

After the death of Rásaláma, the other Christians under arrest, with two who had been absent at Tamatave when accused, were consigned to irredeemable slavery, but their wives and children were allowed to be redeemed by their friends. Two hundred, in all, were enslaved on this occasion. The aged Paul, who had been heavily ironed night and day, and guarded as a felon, became a slave of the chief minister, who sent him to field-work with four other Christian slaves. They were in the rice-fields all day and in irons all night, but had a hut to themselves; and the venerable servant of Christ proved a great source of consolation to his fellow-slaves, often repeating to them the forty-sixth Psalm, and leading their minds to their Divine and loving Saviour.

Rafarávávy, who had now been some months in irons, constantly guarded by soldiers, was sold in the public market to the chief military officer. He placed her in the charge of one of his aides-de-camp, who was a relative, and who treated her kindly, giving her liberty to go and come, so that her work was not neglected. During this period she had the happiness of spending much time with her husband, to whom she was greatly attached. He was a colonel in the army on the west coast, and having heard of her circumstances, he obtained leave of absence for a few months to come to the capital.



THE SPEARING OF THE FIRST MARTYR.

Rafáraláhy, a young man about two-and-twenty years of age, who had accompanied Rafáravávy herself, when it was supposed she was being carried forth to execution, and had witnessed the tranquil death of Rásaláma, had been accustomed to receive a number of the Christians at his house, which was nearly two miles from the capital, for reading and prayer; and Rafáravávy, after her liberation, soon joined this little band of Christians. An apostate from the faith, a former teacher and friend of Rafáraláhy, who had become his debtor for a sum of money, when asked to pay it, accused his friend and benefactor to the queen's minister of holding meetings for religious worship in his house. Rafáraláhy was arrested and put in irons, every effort being made to induce him to reveal the names of his companions. But he simply replied, "I am here; I have done it. Let the queen do as she pleases with me; I will not accuse my friends."

After being confined in heavy irons for three days he was taken out for execution. On the way he spoke to the officers of the love and mercy of Christ, and of his own happiness at the prospect of so soon seeing that Divine Redeemer who had loved him and died to save his soul. Having reached the place of execution, the same spot on which Rásaláma, nearly twelve months before, had suffered, he spent the last moments of his life in supplication for his country and his persecuted brethren, and in commending his soul to his Saviour. As he rose from his knees the executioners were preparing, as was customary, to throw him on the ground, when he said that was needless, he was

prepared to die; and quietly laying himself down, he was instantly put to death, his friends being afterwards allowed to inter his body in the ancestral grave.

Immediately after the execution of Rafáraláhy, his young wife, a quiet, timid woman, whom the Christians regarded as a believer in Christ, and his Christian attendant, were seized, bound, cruelly flogged, and threatened with severer punishment unless they revealed Rafáraláhy's associates. They bore this torture until, overcome with pain, terror, and exhaustion, their power of endurance gave way, and they mentioned the names of those who had been present at the meetings for worship.

On the same day, at a short distance from the capital, in the quiet dwelling of a respectable civilian, three Christian women, all equally ignorant of the death and suffering which had been inflicted on their friends, were conversing with the master of the house, when a slave suddenly entered and gave a note to Rafáravávy, one of the three females. The countenance of the reader changed as she read and declared to her friends that Rafáraláhy had been put to death, and his wife and companion tortured until the names of his companions had been revealed, including her own and the two friends then with her. Instant flight afforded the only possibility of escaping from certain death; and the three Christian women, leaving the house of their friend, travelled in company towards the capital. At the foot of Ambóhipótsy, the place of execution, they stopped, united in prayer, bade each other farewell, and taking different paths, separated,

not expecting to meet again on earth. The two women fled to distant parts of the country, and were not heard of for some time afterwards.

Rafáravávy entered the city, and after conference and prayer with four of her friends, and sending in search of Paul and others involved in equal peril, they five left the city at midnight. How imminent had been their danger they did not know until afterwards. A warrant for the death of Rafáravávy had been prepared the same evening, and the next morning the officers to whom it was confided had gone to the house of her master, where she resided, and to every other house which she was known to visit, in order to seize and convey her to execution. Paul, and a nephew of Rafáravávy, an eminent Christian, were afterwards arrested and put in irons; but the government delayed putting them to death, in hopes of finding Rafáravávy and her friend, and of striking greater terror into the minds of the people by executing at one time four of the Christian leaders.

Leaving the city under the darkness of midnight the fugitives travelled towards the west, and continuing their journey by the least frequented roads, they reached in the evening of the following day Itanimanina, more than forty miles from the capital, where the cordial welcome of friends added to the grateful joy which their preservation inspired. They had not long shared the protection and hospitality thus afforded, when a friend in the service of the government arrived to invite some of the Christians to seek shelter with him in a forest to the eastward of Am-

bátománga, on the opposite side of the capital. From him they learned that their escape had caused a great stir in the capital, and that soldiers had been sent out in every direction to search for them. Three of the fugitives, David, his wife, and Joseph, returned with their friend to seek shelter in the forest. Finding when they reached the city that David's wife had not been accused, she remained there with her friends, while her husband and his companion proceeded to the forest. These distinguished Christians had been sold into slavery on account of their faith, and were employed by their masters as traders. They had spent the last hours before their flight in packing up the goods belonging to their masters, making out clear accounts of all they had sold, putting the money in the package, and leaving it properly addressed for their masters. One of these, on opening the package and finding the property and money, was astonished, and said, "It is not customary for slaves when they run away to send back their masters' property. These people would make excellent servants if it were not for their praying."

By moving about from place to place for security, the Christians remained here for about three months, occasionally suffering for want of food, as their friend carried most of the rice on which they subsisted on his back from the capital, a distance of forty miles. Their companion, Simeon, who was concealed for many weeks in a sort of stage or place for cooking utensils, built over the fireplace, in a native house near the city, afterwards shared their safety in the forest, and their suffering from scarcity of food.

With the kind friends who had opened their doors to the Christian fugitives, Rafáravávy found shelter for several weeks, sleeping under their roof at night, but retiring for concealment before daylight every morning to the hollows of an adjacent mountain. Venturing to return one evening before dark, she was discovered, and her hiding-place reported to the chief minister at the capital, who sent eight soldiers to apprehend her. So unconscious was their victim, that two of the soldiers were within a minute or two of entering the house before its inmates had the slightest intimation of their approach, and Rafáravávy had only time to conceal herself behind a mat before they entered, stated their business, and inquired where she was. Every syllable they uttered she heard, and trembled lest her loud breathing should betray her. After a lengthened conversation the owner of the house went out, and the men, supposing he had gone to inform Rafáravávy, followed him, and thus allowed time for their victim to escape.

The fact of affording shelter to the Christian fugitives involved their protectors in equal peril; and the arrival of the soldiers in the district rendering their own dwelling no longer safe, they also became homeless wanderers with their friends. The perils through which they passed, through the weary and anxious weeks while hiding for their lives, rendered their privations and sufferings most distressing. Sometimes they found that the soldiers had gone before them, leaving orders with the head men of the village to apprehend any women not belonging to that part of

the country who might come amongst them. At other times the soldiers would be following along the same road, or would come upon them suddenly, causing them to run into the bush, or to seek concealment by plunging into some bog which might be near, in which at times they sank so deep as to be unable to extricate themselves without help. Sometimes the soldiers would halt for the night in a village, beyond which the Christians dared not proceed until the early morning, or, as they expressed it, before the light enabled one to "see the colour of the cattle." At one time Rafaráváy was concealed in an empty room with an unfastened door, before which, while the soldiers who searched the house were standing, the master of the house, a friend of the Christians, succeeded in diverting their attention for a few moments in another direction, and thus the Christian escaped.

At times they were drenched by the falling sheets of tropical rain on the barren mountains over which they travelled in order to avoid being seen. Sometimes they slept among the large stones and boulders by the side of rivers, or lay concealed among the tall grass on the flat top of some ancient sepulchre. As they frequently travelled by night, they met with brigands and robbers, and on one occasion discovered that they had taken shelter in one of their caverns. Their preservation amidst dangers so imminent, during the three months in which they were wanderers in the country west of Antanánarívo, impressed them deeply with a sense of the protection of their heavenly Father, and inspired hopes of ultimate deliverance.

Not less remarkable and cheering was the evidence, which this season of exposure and danger revealed, of the extent and value of the influence which the Christian mission at the capital had spread over the country—the fruit of the past, the seed of the future. Except when inspecting the schools established by the government, the missionaries had seldom travelled beyond the suburbs. The first halting-place of the Christians who fled from the city, at the period now under review, was nearly fifty miles distant, yet they found Christian families who welcomed and sheltered them. And often during their wanderings over the western portion of Ankóva, as well as during their subsequent journey to the eastern coast, they found Christian residents where none were known or expected, and more frequently in outlying houses than in the villages. Some of these Christians possessed portions of the Scriptures, and were able to read them. At one place these books of the Christians were preserved in a box, and buried in the ground. Even at the solitary houses it was found that the Sabbath was kept; and in some instances members of families more or less related to each other, but residing several miles apart, came together on the Sunday to unite in Christian worship. To the hunted Christians such gatherings were indeed like fountains in the desert, and from one to another they went as from strength to strength.

Equally cheering was the holy bond of brotherhood which united the Christians, thus scattered among the heathen, to each other in mutual confidence and love,

alike in joy and in sorrow. Nor was the spontaneous affection with which they welcomed, sheltered, and helped on their way the brethren fleeing for their lives, less noble and generous. Late one evening, on entering a village, and hearing in one of the houses a great noise as of many persons talking, the fugitives passed quietly on to the house of a female friend, who was struck dumb by their appearance, but at length told them that soldiers were seeking them in every direction, that a party of them were at that time in the village, and in the very house in which they had heard the noise as they passed. "And where," asked this true friend in their hour of need, "shall I hide you to-night and to-morrow morning?" She afterwards concealed them in a pit near her house, the mouth of which was covered with thorn bushes. They remained there a night and a day, and then removed to a plantation of manioc, belonging also to their friend, where they found shelter for several days and nights. One day they saw, from this place of concealment, the accuser of Rafáraláhy and eight soldiers pass close by in search of them, but they remained undiscovered. After continuing here ten or twelve days, they left their protector and friend, to proceed to the residence of another friend a few miles distant.

Another friend who had been deeply anxious, knowing how many were hunting for their lives, burst into tears of joy on their arrival at his dwelling, and provided for their safety. While sharing the hospitality and protection of this generous Christian family, they heard that Mr. Johns was at Tamatave; and as this

offered a prospect of escape, they returned to the capital, which they reached in three days. Here, with the advice of friends, Rafáravávy and her companion Razáfy (Sarah) remained in concealment, while the husband of the latter, with another Christian, set out for the eastern coast, in order to confer with Mr. Johns, if still there, on the possibility of their escaping from the country. Acting on the advice of Christians at Antananarívo, Mr. Johns had remained at Tamatave. He welcomed his Christian brethren, and, with a valuable friend, arranged their escape from the island. This friend placed the messenger from Rafáravávy in a place of safety at a distance from Tamatave, and sent his fellow-Christian back with letters to the fugitives to hasten to the village on the coast where their companion was concealed.

Notwithstanding all the aid their friend could give, those concealed in the forest suffered so much from exposure, sickness, and hunger, that they made their way back by short stages to the capital, where they obtained food and shelter. When the messenger from the coast returned with a letter to the Christians, advising them to attempt to reach Tamatave, Rafáravávy, Razáfy, and three others left their companions, and, accompanied by two friends as servants, commenced their last, and in some respects most dangerous journey. They did not venture, for four days and nights, to enter any house. Some of them were recognised on the road. Their steps at other times were so closely followed by travellers along the same road, as to force upon them the impression that they were

either known or suspected, and were liable to be apprehended, if not actually put to death.

Two days' journey brought them to the precipitous Angóva pass, after which they travelled through the rugged forest, the country of the beautiful rofia palm and the traveller's tree. On reaching the coast, their money being insufficient to hire a canoe and proceed by water, they travelled along the margin of the sea or the lakes, and walked along the soft sandy beach, until they approached the port of Tamatave, where, concealing themselves in the jungle, they sent the servants with a note to their friend. They knew that in the neighbourhood of the port the soldiers were constantly passing, and the two days thus spent were among the most intensely anxious and exhausting they had ever known, for they had been three days without food. Their trust was in God, and they were not disappointed. When the messengers returned, the smile on their countenances revealed their success. Their friend was waiting for them, and would come in a canoe for them after dark.

The sun had not set when they proceeded to the appointed rendezvous. Shortly afterwards their friend came, and conveyed them in his canoe safely to his dwelling. They breathed more freely when they found themselves within protecting walls and beneath a sheltering roof; but felt scarcely assured of the reality of their position and treatment, so different from those which had marked every waking hour of the time since they left the capital. The friend whom God had here raised up for their protection was a military officer as well as a local judge, secretly also a believer



THE TRAVELLER'S TREE (*Urania speciosa*), SHOWING

in Christ ; and he incurred equal risk with the fugitives by the shelter and help which he now rendered them. He received them with sincere kindness, set food before them, and they united together in reading God's Word and in rendering praise to their Divine Protector. He informed them that, in consequence of arrangements with Mr. Johns, he expected a ship, and directed that they should hold themselves in readiness to come at any time he might send for them. When the ship arrived, and had taken in her cargo, their friend sent a confidential messenger to tell them to cut their hair, and follow the guide to the port. The darkness of night was descending when they left the house and proceeded to the jungle near the sea, where their guide left them, while he informed those who were to take them to the ship. Friends soon came with a suit of sailors' clothes for each, which they put on in the bush, while another friend went to the landing-place to divert the attention of the guards.

The moment had now arrived when life or death seemed to depend upon the slightest movement. Noiselessly, and with almost suppressed breath, they proceeded to the water's edge, entered the boat, pushed off from the shore, passed over the rippling waters of the bay, and reached the ship. As soon as the last of the Christians was safely on the deck, the captain, rubbing his hands, addressed to them the welcome and assuring words of their own language, "Efa kabáry" (finished is the business). The Christians, as soon as they could realise their actual safety, asked permission to offer a song of praise to God for their deliver-

ance, which being granted, the sailors and the captain stood by, while, grouped together on the deck, the Christians thus gave expression to their devout and grateful feelings. The cool fresh breeze from the land in the early morning wafted the ship out of harbour, and they reached Mauritius on October 14, 1838.

In about a month this little party was followed by the generous Christian friend who had arranged for their escape, and who afterwards found that neither his own life nor that of his nephew was safe in Madagascar, in consequence of the aid he had rendered to the Christians. The rescued Christians afterwards proceeded, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, to England, and were affectionately welcomed by the directors of the London Missionary Society, as well as by the friends of missions at a large and deeply interesting meeting in Exeter Hall, in May, 1839.

These Malagasy Christians secured the respect and esteem of all those in our own country who witnessed their consistent spirit and deportment. Rafáravávy and Razáfy deeply interested those of their own sex who, during their short stay in England, made their acquaintance. Both had been in comfortable circumstances in their own country. Rafáravávy inherited property, with which she served God, and her husband was a colonel in the army. Razáfy's husband was a respected civilian. Both were distinguished, especially the former, by intelligence, urbanity, gentleness of demeanour, benevolence, and sincerity of character. All these qualities, purified and elevated by the fear and love of God, when associated with the imprisonment, torture, privation, and danger which these Chris-

tian women had suffered on account of their faith, made a deep impression on the minds of their friends, and is cherished still.

The refugees returned to Mauritius early in 1842, accompanied by Mrs. Johns, who purchased a house there, in which she resided until her death. Since then the place has been a home for Malagasy Christians, as well as a missionary station, where Simeon, the last survivor of the refugees, still resides, labouring faithfully for the benefit of his countrymen.

Although a number of the Christians who were seized after the public execution of Rafáraláhy had been sold into permanent slavery, all these did not escape death. Raváhiny, a young woman of considerable personal attractions, whom her husband had already divorced on account of her having become a Christian, was, at the time referred to, sold into slavery for life. Her father had for the same reason denied her the shelter of his roof. Her relations, all heathen, feeling indignant at her abandonment of the religion of her country, and disgraced by her present servile condition, endeavoured to compass her death. They applied to the chief officer of the queen to receive her among his slaves or his concubines, which required that she should be previously tried by the tangéna, to ascertain whether she practised witchcraft or used charms, which they pretended were possessed by the Christians. Though strongly opposed to the ordeal on account of the treachery exercised in its administration, she was forced to drink the poison, and perished under its effects—the third victim of the Martyr Church of Madagascar to the hatred of the idolaters.

Shortly after this three Christian females, two of them wives of the companions of Rafáravávy, were accused of meeting together for prayer. The officer sent in the evening to apprehend them found two of them reading the Scriptures. One of them escaped, and while the man was beating the other, whom he had secured, her Bible fell from her dress. She was then taken to his house, and again beaten by six men, to force her to reveal the names of her companions. This savage treatment failing to secure their object, the noble-spirited woman was taken next morning before the chief officer of the queen, and on refusing to give information about those who had associated with her in reading and prayer, was ordered to be flogged until she did so. She bore the anguish and laceration of her body with unfaltering fidelity to her fellow-Christians, until, faint with pain and loss of blood, she swooned at the feet of her brutal torturers. After her recovery she was sold into slavery, and was ordered to take the tangéna; but she saved her life by escaping before it had been administered. The other Christians accused at the same time fled to the uninhabited parts of the country, and were not afterwards heard of.

The escape of the victims seemed to increase the rage of their persecutors, and orders were issued by the queen to the soldiers to bind hand and foot any whom they might find, to dig a pit on the spot, hurl them head foremost into the pit, and to pour boiling water upon them until they ceased to live. They were then to fill up the pit with earth, and continue their search for others. The reason assigned for this re-

volting barbarity in destroying the Christians wherever they might be seized, was the pretence that they could not have escaped so often had they not possessed some powerful charm, which might be exercised for evil to others, and which rendered it dangerous to bring them to the capital even for trial.

We have seen, in the instance above related, that the reception of Christianity, in the judgment of the heathen, severed the closest ties of social life, causing the husband to repudiate his wife and the father to expel his daughter from his house. On the other hand, Christianity exalted friendship to something far above the interchange of the ordinary courtesies and attentions of social life, making it a reality and a bond, than which no earthly tie was stronger or more lasting. Many of the Christians belonged to different clans, dwelt in different parts of the country, or occupied different ranks in society; but the possession of a common faith, the trust in one Saviour, the hope of one heaven, made their interest in each other here a proof of vital union unknown in the country before. When Rafáravávy and her companions travelled forty or fifty miles from home before seeking help or rest, they were received, sheltered, and provided for as if they had been the dearest relatives.

The number of Christians spread over the country was increased by those whom the growing severity of persecution forced to fly from their homes in the city, to seek shelter and food at a distance, or perish. All were deeply affected by the barbarous orders given to those sent out to seek and destroy them. "We have heard," was their remark, in a letter sent to one of the

missionaries about this time, "of the orders of the queen respecting us, and the manner in which we are to be put to death if discovered. We still confide in the compassion of the Saviour. Can you do anything to rescue us? We often think of the death awaiting us. 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'"

In another letter they observe, "We state to you our condition, that, *if possible*, you may do something to relieve us. We say 'if possible,' for our Saviour himself employed this expression in His prayer to His Father—'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me!'" The brief postscript to this letter was, "Please send us some books; and *farewell till death*."

These are not the only occasions on which we may observe how the Christians habitually felt that every parting might be "till death." The three women, after praying together at the foot of Ambóhipótsy before they separated, said, "Now we enter the city, then to the place of execution, where all will end with us in this world." The affecting language of David to Jonathan, when flying from Saul, "There is but a step between me and death," did but express the Christians' constant sense of the price at which they held their faith. Nothing confounded their persecutors more than this passive strength of the believers under suffering and death. The heathen knew of nothing stronger than the fear of death. They saw the Christians calmly meeting it rather than renounce Christ. And when the executioners declared that the new religion made those who received it not afraid of death, many concluded that the foundation of that faith was, as the Christians testified, divine and true.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE WILD TEMPEST.

Attempt of the Christians to reach the coast—Their capture on the road—Remarkable escape of two prisoners—Execution of the rest—Influence of public executions on the people—Cheerful death of Christians at Vonizongo—Savage execution of Raháro and his friends—Death of Rev. David Johns—The Prince Royal's friendship to the Christians—Kindness of Prince Ramónja—Severe persecution in 1849—Noble confession of the Christians—Vast number punished—Martyrdom of the confessors.

At the hour of midnight, when the refugees who came to England were leaving the capital, Rafáravávy, disguised as a slave, went to the prison to take a last farewell of a beloved nephew who had been six months in chains. She found him sleeping in his fetters, and fearing her voice might betray her to his keepers, she silently pressed his manacled hand, and quietly departed. The young man, who was under condemnation as one of the leaders among the Christians, was deeply affected when made acquainted with this visit, the proof of the affection of one whom he never expected to meet again in this world. Others also, including Paul, were in prison, and some in concealment. Paul and his companion, being afterwards declared innocent by the tangéna, were set at liberty, but the former, on hearing that it was intended to put him to death secretly, fled and concealed himself.

Near the close of 1839, Joshua, an intelligent and

eminently devoted minister among the Christians, was with eight companions discovered praying, and being threatened with the tangéna, fled, and joined those in concealment, some of whom had been in peril for the last two years, and whose number now amounted to sixteen. Mr. Baker and other friends in Mauritius generously sent money for their support. Mr. Griffiths also being at that time at the capital in the capacity of a trader, and Dr. Powell, who had recently come to the capital, likewise assisted them. The latter, proceeding in the early part of the following year to Tamatave, offered to aid these Christians to escape from the country, if they could reach the coast. Their number now made safety increasingly difficult; and having, more than once, very narrowly escaped detection, it appeared to the Christians that their only prospect of life depended on their being able to escape from the country.

On the 23rd of May, 1840, these sixteen Christians left their places of concealment, and under the direction of two guides chosen by their friends, commenced their journey to Tamatave. They travelled safely till they reached Ránomafána, when, in consequence of the misplaced confidence of one of the guides in a relative, to whom he had communicated the object of the journey, they were captured, imprisoned for a fortnight, and then conducted to the capital for trial. When within six miles of the city, one of their number, a young woman, made her escape. Finding a female friend, she was placed for safety in an unoccupied house, the doors and windows of which were filled up

with stones. There she remained undiscovered until the guards had given up their search and resumed their journey, then, loosening her hair, she fled for her life northward, until she reached the house of a Christian, where she received welcome and shelter.

The rest of the captives, five weeks after the commencement of their flight, were brought to the foot of the capital, and lodged near a village called Fálariavo (a thousand joys). If the captors thought of the import of the name, it was cruel mockery to detain in a place so designated these toil-worn captives on their way to sentence and execution. But if, during the same night, faith revealed to any of the Christians visions of glory at all resembling that which the martyr Stephen saw, how appropriate the designation of this, their last resting-place on their last journey.

The next morning the captives were brought into the capital, bound hand and foot with cords, and subjected to close examination, each one separately, during several days, to discover the names of other Christians, but all were true to their friends; and although there were probably more than two hundred Christians in the capital or the suburbs, none were mentioned. The guides implicated Mr. Griffiths; but the Christians, unmoved by promises or threats, preserved by their silence the lives of their brethren.

The prisoners were then placed under guards in several houses until the sentence of the queen should be declared. A young man and a young woman, each bound separately with cords, were confined in the same house, with a soldier to guard them. At mid-

night, while the guards slept, the young man began to work with his teeth at the cords on his wrists, and ultimately freed his hands. He soon removed the cords from his feet. Then he examined the cords that bound the hands and feet of his fellow-prisoner, but found, alas, that although she was not, like the captives of ancient times, chained to the guard, yet the soldier in charge lay, while sleeping, upon the cord which bound her limbs. The young man then opened the window of his prison-house, and finding that the guards outside were sleeping, he passed out and ran to Análakély, where, knocking at the door of a friend's house, he greatly alarmed the inmates, who started back in astonishment when they saw him, but recognising his voice, admitted and embraced him with joy. A military friend afterwards concealed him amongst the tents of some recruits recently arrived from the country. During the course of my visit to Madagascar in 1853, I frequently met with the young man who had experienced this remarkable deliverance, and thus recorded my impression of the first interview.

"While we were in the house of a foreigner, a Christian, whom we had expected to see, entered the place where we were sitting. After looking earnestly at each of us for a few moments, and almost mechanically giving us his hand, there came over his whole countenance such an expression as I had never before witnessed in any human being. It was not ecstasy, it was not terror, and yet apparently a blending of both, marked by an intensity of feeling

but rarely witnessed. During the whole interview, which took place under circumstances of secrecy and great danger, there was a strange uneasiness, mingled with evident satisfaction, which could only be witnessed in positions eminently perilous, and which it would be difficult to describe."

Mr. Jones, the senior missionary to Madagascar, as well as Captain Campbell, an English officer from Mauritius, were in the capital at the time when the Christian party were brought back. They had heard with sorrow of the capture, and did all in their power to alleviate their sufferings.

On the morning of the 9th of July the firing of cannons announced that a kabáry was to be held at Imáhamásina, where the troops under arms and a vast concourse of people began to assemble early. Guns continued firing from the battery on the edge of the mountain overlooking the plain during the day; and towards noon the commander-in-chief, on reaching the place to which the prisoners had been already taken, proclaimed before the multitude the sentence passed by the queen:—

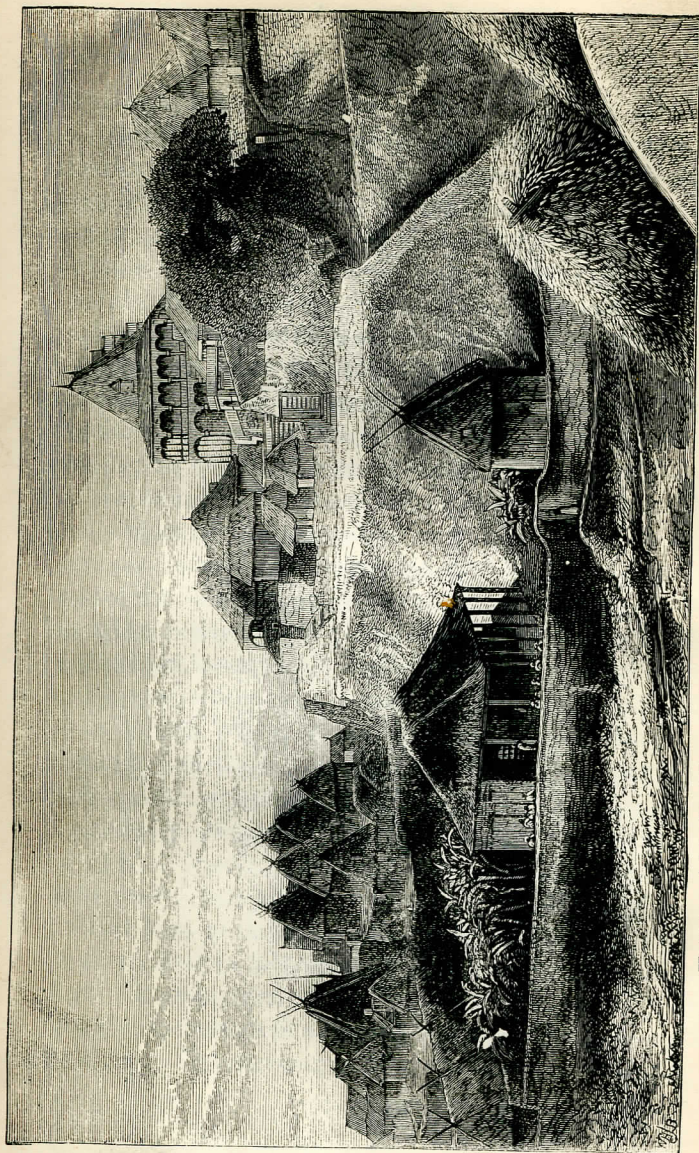
"With respect to the people who pray and read the books of the foreigners, I have, says the queen, admonished them several times, yet they persevere to oppose my will. Some have been put to death, others reduced to perpetual slavery, others fined, and others reduced in rank, for praying and worshipping the God of the white people. But they continue to pray in spite of all I do; and not only that, but some have endeavoured to escape from the country.

Sixteen of them were found and caught to the north of Andévoráto. Eleven are condemned to be put to death. Two out of the eleven have escaped. Nine are now to be conveyed to the place of execution. These part with me, and so I part with them. They forsake me, and I forsake them. Take them, and present them before the house of the white man." *

They were nine in number, and being, from want of food, too weak to walk, they were tied to poles, and thus carried on men's shoulders. Joshua, the native preacher, seemed to recognise his former teacher as the procession of death halted, according to the orders of the queen, before Mr. Griffiths' house. All appeared to be engaged in prayer. A hallowed serenity, almost an expression of hopeful joy, irradiated the countenances of some. One young woman, in whom many were interested, spoke to the soldiers and executioners of the blessedness of hope in Christ, as she was borne along the road, for the distance of a mile from where sentence had been pronounced, through the city to the place of execution, a rugged hill nearly opposite the palace, named, by another remarkable coincidence, Ambóhizánahary (the village of God). There, in the attitude of prayer, these nine martyrs fell beneath the spears of the executioners.

The head of the venerable Paul the diviner, and that of Joshua the preacher, were struck off, and fixed on poles near the spot, to warn others of the penalty that awaited all who forsook the idols of the country. The bursting of the cannon which was fired

* Mr. Griffiths.



House occupied by Mr. Ellis.

VIEW IN ANTANANARIVO.

House of the Prime Minister.

as a signal for the execution, and the wounding of the gunner, was looked upon by many as an omen of evil to the persecutors.

The great body of the spectators were unusually quiet, for the people, if not friendly, were becoming less willing to inform against the Christians. Some occasionally succoured them, and not a few regarded with instinctive condemnation the cruelty and injustice with which they were treated.

A message from the queen was sent by Tsitaliaingia to Mr. Griffiths, who was accused of abetting the flight of the Christians, stating that because he was an Englishman she did not subject him to the penalties that would have been inflicted on a Malagasy, but ordering him to pay a fine for his head, a fee to the accusers, and another fine to the government—altogether about £30. He was also ordered to leave the capital in a fortnight, to depart from the country, and not to return. He finally left, not without peril, on the 1st of September, 1840.

Although the government seemed to regard Christianity as a source of insecurity and danger, the removal of the Christians did not bring strength to the government or peace to the people. The oppression and greed of many in power rendered portions of the population desperate, and tended both to fill the prisons with criminals and the uninhabited parts of the country with bands of armed robbers. At the time when the Christians suffered, some hundreds of people had been accused of different offences, and were awaiting trial.

After the execution of the Christians, little was said about Christianity, but much was thought. To have spoken favourably of those who had been put to death would have been treason; but many pitied, and no one blamed them. The unfaltering faith and blameless lives of the believers; the blessed hope which brightened their future, and which no present sufferings could overcloud or destroy; the love and truth which marked their course, were patent to all and acknowledged by many. The good confession some had witnessed, their meek, uncomplaining submission, and the hopeful prayer which occupied their last moments, contrasted with the parade of power put forth in connection with their execution, sank into many hearts, and were already producing deep ponderings as to the cause of the difference between Christianity and heathenism. God was by this means as much unfolding the nature of His kingdom, and preparing the hearts of His people for its reception, as by the most active efforts of the preachers of His Word. At the same time, the votaries of idolatry, by the manifestations of its character in their treatment of the Christians, were causing it to loosen its hold upon the people, and thus removing one great impediment to their acceptance of the gospel.

The lives already sacrificed, and the severe bondage inflicted on the Christians, failed to appease the anger of their persecutors, whose endeavours to destroy them continually increased. The soldiers in search of them were so numerous, and had become so well acquainted with their hiding-places, that concealment

became daily more difficult. Those who fled to the desert or forest were in danger of starvation, or of being carried off by the bands of robbers which infested the country.

We do not wonder that although the faith of the Christians did not fail, they were bowed down by their affliction. Their places of meeting were less numerous and more difficult of access, and fewer of the Christians were able to attend them. These were the darkest days that had overtaken them. They were destitute of all earthly consolation; and nothing, during the entire progress of the gospel among them, shows more clearly the presence and care of the Divine Saviour, than the steadfastness of their faith, and the actual additions which, even under these circumstances, were made to their numbers.

The Christians in Vonizongo, a district in the west, having heard that some of the Sakaláva chiefs to the north-west were willing to receive Christian teachers, sent two of their number to visit them. On their return, these men were captured by the guards on the frontier, and were sent to the capital for trial. There they were cruelly treated, to induce them to name their companions. But to a Christian friend, who brought them food while they were in prison, they managed to whisper a message of affection to their fellow-believers, and give the assurance that, whatever they might suffer, they would not reveal the names of their friends; and they kept their word.

On their trial these devoted men declared to the judges that they went into the Sakaláva country of

their own free will, to try to soften, by the teaching of the Word of God, the hearts of the people who stole their cattle and committed violence in the country; that they prayed and read the Book, but all was done in loyalty to the queen and for the good of the country. They were sentenced to die, and sent back to their own village to be executed.

Both men had been soldiers, and manifested not only holy confidence in God, but cheerful courage in death. They were executed in the public market on Sunday, 19th June, 1842. When led forth to execution they took affectionate leave of their friends, saying, "Farewell, beloved friends; God will cause us this day to meet with Him in paradise." The heathen spectators were struck with awe and astonishment at the manner in which they met their death. Their fellow-believers spoke of them as only having ascended to heaven before their companions. The heads of these first martyrs of Vonizóngo were severed from their bodies and fixed on poles in a public place; but the sequel seemed to show that the ghastly skulls served rather to perpetuate in the minds of the people the constancy of the Christians than to deter others from receiving their faith.

Three months after these events Antanánarivo witnessed a fearful illustration of the blind and sanguinary wrath of the queen against the Christians. Some unknown person affixed, during the night, on the wall of a house in the capital, a paper—a leaf of the New Testament—with Matt. xxiii. 13 underlined: "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." When the queen was told what had been done, she was extremely angry, and issued a proclamation requiring the person who had been guilty of the offence to accuse himself within four days, declaring that if the offender did not confess within that time, and was afterwards discovered, he should be cut into pieces as small as musket-balls.

No one having confessed at the expiration of the appointed time, Raháro, a Christian, who had been baptised, and had been one of the head teachers in the government schools, together with several others, was arrested. Raháro was ordered to take the *tangéna*, under which he died. Two Christians who endeavoured to save him from the ordeal were put to death, and their bodies were cut into small pieces and afterwards burned. No evidence whatever was produced to show that these young men or any of the Christians were connected with the affixing of the obnoxious paper. There were many excellent writers in the capital who were neither Christians themselves nor friendly to those who were; and it is scarcely possible, considering the probable consequences of so daring an act, that any Christian should have been guilty of it.

In the following year Madagascar lost one of its most sincere and devoted friends in the death of the Rev. David Johns, a laborious and self-denying missionary, who cheerfully consecrated his life to the spiritual welfare of the Malagasy. When driven from

Imérina, Mr. Johns made several voyages to the western coast of the island, seeking to secure shelter or the means of escape for the Christians, and to spread the gospel among the people. While thus employed he died, in the fiftieth year of his age, at Nosibé, in August, 1843. Besides ordinary missionary labours, Mr. Johns wrote some of the native hymns, which the Christians still delight to sing, and translated "The Pilgrim's Progress" into their language—a book which, next to the Scriptures, proved a source of instruction and unspeakable consolation to them during the long night of persecution and suffering. These efforts on their behalf, together with his own affectionate, unselfish spirit, endeared him to the Malagasy, amongst whom his memory is still fragrant.

God did not leave His people in this season of their weakness without encouragement. They were not so much harassed at this time by impeachments or arrests, and were astonished as well as cheered by continued accessions from the heathen. Their great want was a supply of the Word of God, for which they most earnestly applied. Speaking of their Sabbaths, they wrote, "We always go to some hill or valley far away. We leave home on the Saturday, and on Sunday meet together and offer our worship to the Lord. But it is only the men who can thus go to a distance, and this makes us feel on account of the sorrow of those who cannot go. Still we do not faint. Hitherto we have been safe, for God has hidden us under the shadow of His wings; and though many hear us and see us, they say, 'These people pray,' and do not inform against us, but compassionate us."

In the course of God's providence light often appears in the midst of deepest darkness; and at this time light and hope from an unexpected quarter arose in the midst of desolation. An officer who had business at the palace was occasionally accompanied by his nephew, a Christian. The young visitor was noticed by Rakótond-radáma,* the prince royal, then in his sixteenth year, only son of the queen, and heir to the throne, who soon entered into conversation with him.

Emboldened by the frank and genial bearing of the prince, the young man after a time spoke of the faith of the Christians, and the prince became deeply interested in the subject. About the same time a Christian, who had been one of the earliest converts, became distinguished as a fearless and faithful preacher of the gospel, even while the severest penalties were threatened by the queen. The spirits of the disciples were revived, their activity renewed, large audiences were gathered, and many publicly avowed themselves disciples. At the palace the visitor spoke of these meetings, and at his suggestion the prince attended one of them, was deeply impressed, and repeated his attendance. After a time the earnestness of Ramáka—or, as the Christians called him, Rasálasála (the bold one)—and the effects of it on his mind were such that he declared himself desirous of being more fully instructed.

As the prince had a separate establishment of his own, he arranged for Christian teachers to go to his

* The name of the prince is a compound word, Rakóto signifying *young*, or the young one; Radáma the name of his reputed father. The name signified young Radáma, or Radáma the youth.

house every evening, when he was not otherwise engaged, to pray and to explain the Scriptures to him. During the same period he often attended the meetings for public worship on the Sunday. From his earliest years the prince had manifested an instinctive horror at the reckless shedding of blood and destruction of life. The sufferings of the Christians had also excited his compassion, predisposing him to befriend them, and to regard with favour their more humane and merciful faith.

Before the close of the year in which the prince had associated himself with the Christians an accusation was brought to the government against them, with a list of one hundred names of persons who had disobeyed the queen's law by attending meetings for prayer. The list was given to the prime minister, who, discovering among the accused his own aide-de-camp and relative, destroyed the list, and only twenty-one were proceeded against.

On behalf of these accused Christians the prince pleaded with his mother so effectually that none were sentenced to death. Nine were ordered to drink the tangéna, under which one died; five were sold into slavery, two escaped, and the rest remained in chains. Severe and iniquitous as this punishment was, the Christians were filled with thankfulness that the lives of so many had been spared. In their letters at that time they ask the missionaries to thank God for giving them such a friend as the prince had proved, and to implore on his behalf Divine protection and blessing.

Among the intimate friends of the prince, and one

of the companions of his youth, was Prince Ramónja, his cousin (the son of his mother's eldest sister) and the brother of Rambóasalama, his rival to the throne. Prince Ramónja was a man of gentle spirit, strongly attached to the prince, and a great favourite with the queen. By the conversation of the teachers he was induced to unite with the Christians, and was, for a number of years, one of their most powerful and devoted friends.

About this time the prime minister sent a nephew, to whom he was much attached, to the Christian meeting, with instructions to write down the names of all who might be present. The young officer went, but told the Christians the object of his visit, and advised them all to return immediately to their homes. When, on his return, his uncle asked for the list, he replied, "There is none." "Have you disobeyed my orders," said the uncle. "You must lose your head, for you also are a Christian." The young man quietly replied, "I am a Christian, and if you will you can put me to death; but I must pray." After a pause, natural affection triumphed, and the uncle said, "No, no, you shall not die." Thus again, by the holy courage of this young man, were the Christians delivered.

To the effect of this discovery by the prime minister, together with the influence of the prince with his mother, may be ascribed, in part at least, the leniency shown to the Christians, and the welcome accessions to their numbers. The believers who had been put in chains were kept in their own houses, under

guards of soldiers, but their friends and others had free access to them. With these the prisoners conversed, and prayed, and read the Holy Scriptures, explaining and enforcing their saving truths. The Christians declared that sweet were their bonds when so employed, and God blessed these sermons delivered by preachers in chains. Numbers received the word in love and faith; and some, even among the soldiers appointed to guard the prisoners, were converted to Christ. Gradually, by the tacit consent of the authorities, the chains of the prisoners were loosened, and finally ceased to be fastened on their limbs. Writing of this period (1847-48), the Christians observe, "The Lord hath taken away our chains;" and add, "This great power in favour of the gospel fills the minds of the people with astonishment."

Besides preaching the Word, much of the employment of the imprisoned Christians was in repairing such copies of the Bible and other books as remained in their possession. Scarcely any want was more keenly felt amongst them than that of books. Most of the educated Christians employed themselves in copying out, so far as their materials would allow, portions of Scripture, and other books. The eyes of some were seriously injured by close application to this work in their places of concealment. I brought home no memorials of the persecutions in Madagascar more deeply affecting than some of these fragments of Scripture, worn, rent, fragile, and soiled by the dust of the earth or the smoke in the thatch, at times when they had been concealed, yet most carefully

mended, by the rent pages being drawn together with fibres of bark, or having the margins of the leaves covered over with stronger paper.

This welcome season of rest, refreshment, and strength, confirming their faith that God was working with them, was but a preparation for severer trials. After about two years of comparative calm and progress, the heaviest storm of persecution yet endured burst upon the Church. On the 19th of February, 1849, two houses belonging to Prince Ramónja, which had been used as places of worship, were demolished, and the materials carried off as spoil, while eleven Christians were seized and put in chains. At a kabáry, called at Andohálo, the substance of the message from the queen was, "I have killed some, I have made some slaves till death, I have put some in long and heavy fetters, and still you continue doing that practice (praying). How is it that you cannot give up that?" The answers of the Christians were briefly this, "Reverence for God and His law prevents our giving up praying."

A week afterwards the Christians, throughout the province, were ordered to accuse themselves at the appointed place in each district. "I give these praying people time to accuse themselves," said the queen's message, "but it is not for their sakes that I give them time, but for the sake of Imérina; and were it not so, I would put them all to death, for they do the things which I hate."

At Vonizóngo, when the judge urged the people to take the oath which recognised the idols, one noble

female Christian, Rabódománga by name, stood forth and said, "I do not pray to wood and stones. Unto God alone do I pray, for He is great. He cannot have associates" (other gods). One of the officers said, "You wretch! will you not pray to the spirits of the ancestors and to the idols?" The heroic woman answered, "I do not pray to these: it is God alone that I serve."

The proposals of the judges at this time show that the commissioners were not so much concerned about the people accusing themselves, as they were to induce them to take the oath. The Christians regarded the oath as invoking the idols, and therefore refused.

Ráiniráho, a noble, a descendant of one of the most distinguished sovereigns of the country, made answer, "God has given none to be worshipped on earth, nor under heaven, except the name of Jesus Christ." "Fellow!" exclaimed the officer, "will you not worship the departed kings, and the idols which raised them up?" To which the steadfast confessor replied, "I cannot worship any of them; they were kings given to be served, but not to be worshipped. God alone is to be worshipped, and to Him alone I pray." This faithful Christian sealed his testimony to Christ with his blood in the flames. After his answers, one of the officers from the capital interfered, saying, "Let us stop the examinations, lest all the people declare as these have done." The advice was adopted, and no others at Vonizóngo were then required to take the oath.

At Análakély, the first Christian to whom the

officer proposed the oath, answered, "I shall not pray to stone and wood. Steps are made with stone, and houses built with wood, and idols are only cuttings of these. Why should I worship them? Unto God alone should men offer prayer and worship."

In reference to the charge that the Christians were not loyal subjects because they condemned quarrelling and fighting, one of them replied, "If our enemies say the Malagasy will not fight, it is not the Christians they speak of, for against the enemies of the queen and her country the Christians will fight. As for the idols of stone and wood, God has not given them to be prayed unto, for they are things without life. But God is the Lord of heaven and earth, and of all things; and for these reasons I do not pray to things without life."

Another of these Christians, on being questioned, said, "I believe in God, for He alone can do all things for me, and I wish to obey whatever He commands; but as to swearing by the queen, or by one's father or brother, a lie is a lie still, whether you swear to it or not. I believe in God, and put my trust in Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of all that believe in Him."

Ranivo, an interesting and beautiful young woman of good family, about whom much interest was felt, and whom the queen herself wished to save, when questioned, said, "I cannot serve the idols: God alone will I serve as long as my life shall last, for God has given me life and spirit—a higher spiritual life to worship Him; and for that reason I worship God."

"You are not right in your mind, or are ill," said the examining officer, "or you are under some charm; and you should consider well lest the queen should not like you, and you should destroy yourself for no purpose."

"I am not deranged," she replied, "nor am I suffering from any illness." Then addressing her father, who was present, "You indeed love me, O father, but God has given me a spirit to worship Him, and I should be filled with dread if I were to cease to pray to Him; therefore I shall not cease to worship Him, lest I should die everlasting death." "Bind her!" said the officer; and she was bound as the others.

Of two, when asked where they had preached and who were their companions, one said, "I preached in my own house;" and they both said, "It would be sin against God to betray our friends; we cannot do that." The officers then left, saying as they went, "These are stubborn and obstinate people."

The trials were now ended, and the multitude separated until the morrow, when sentence was to be pronounced. The captives spent this their last night on earth in chains in their respective prisons, guarded by soldiers. Their communings with their own spirits, and with their Divine Lord, on the eternity they were so soon to enter, it would be profane to make the subject of conjecture. Their brethren in Christ, whose limbs were still unbound, met together an hour after midnight to pray for them. At break of day the firing of cannon agitated the hearts of

thousands, and while the firing of the guns continued at intervals through the morning, the multitudes gathered at Análakély.

All the preachers, teachers, readers of the Scriptures, and worshippers of God were conducted to the plain, and each class of offenders were placed by themselves. But the sight which most deeply penetrated every heart, and stirred the inmost feelings, was that of the true, steadfast confessors who had refused to bow down and worship the idols of Ranaválomanjaka. Outwardly there was everything to repel, or to awaken pity. Each Christian man and woman was fastened with cords to two poles, their bodies wrapped in torn and soiled pieces of matting, in token of their degradation, their mouths filled with rag, to prevent their speaking of the Saviour; yet these eighteen—the noble, the civilian, the slave—all equal now, children of God going to glory—formed, as they were borne along—the young and faithful Ranívo walking alone at the end of the illustrious line—the noblest procession which the sun of Madagascar had ever shone upon.

On reaching the appointed spot they were placed on the ground, the soldiers encircling them with their spears fixed in the earth. Then, accompanied by their escort, and marching to the sound of military music, with all the solemn pomp belonging to their rank and duties, the officers and judges, with their attendants, arrived, and delivered the message of the queen, which began as follows:—

"I, the queen of Madagascar, say that no religion

whatever, excepting that of Andrianampónimérina and Radáma, and the customs of your ancestors, shall be ever introduced and practised in this my country; anything else is totally rejected by me. Had I not ordered the followers of the new religion to inculcate themselves, they would soon overturn the country, and all the people would follow them. I consider them rebels; therefore I tell you how I will punish them, as the spirits of Andrianampónimérina and Radáma have revealed to me."

The sentences of the queen upon the offenders were divided into classes, according to their rank or their crimes. The four nobles, two of whom were husband and wife, were sentenced to be burned alive at Faravóhitra, at the northern end of the mountain on which the city is built. The fourteen others of inferior rank were sentenced to be hurled from the edge of Ampamarinana, a rock to the west of the palace, and their wives and children to be sold into slavery.

The remaining sentences included labour in chains for life, inflicted on one hundred and seventeen persons, with public flogging on one hundred and five of their number. Fines, equivalent to one-half of their value if sold into slavery, were imposed on sixty-four. A fine of three oxen and three dollars was inflicted on one thousand six hundred and forty-three persons, for attending Christian worship. Prince Ramónja, holding high rank in the army, was, for the same offence, fined one hundred dollars, and reduced to the rank of a common soldier. One of the officers of the palace was deprived of his rank and fined fifty dollars; all

other officers in the army or the civil service of government were reduced to the lowest grade. The total number of those on whom one or other of the sentences was pronounced on this occasion amounted, at the lowest computation, to one thousand nine hundred and three, but by some accounts it is nearer three thousand.

The transactions on the plain of judgment were ended. Liberty and life at the price of apostasy had been offered, and by some few, occasionally associated with the Christians, it had been accepted; but by the great body of the accused, amounting to between two and three thousand, it had been deliberately declined. Sentence against the followers of Christ had been pronounced, and as in general the punishment immediately follows the passing of the sentence, nothing now remained but its infliction.

When the sentences had been pronounced, "cannon were fired at intervals during the forenoon, and when all were finished, the soldiers struck up their music, beating the great drums and the little drums, to agitate and terrify the prisoners." But the Christians condemned to die began singing one of their native hymns, commencing,—

"A'ry misy tány sóa,
Máhafináritra indrindra."

(There is a beauteous land,
Making most blessed.)

Then the soldiers took up the four nobles and carried them from the plain up the hill-side to Faravóhitra,

to a place on the highest part of the hill. As they were carried along they commenced singing another of their own simple and expressive hymns, the first verse of which begins—

“Hóđ' izaháy Zánaháry.”

(Grant us, Saviour, royal blessings,
Now that to our home we go.)

The last verse, which might have been written for that hour, is—

“And when earth no longer keeps us,
When shall end life's little day,
Bear us to the upper heaven,
Father, in Thy house to stay;
Joy unspeakable our portion
There, for ever and for aye.”

Enemies and friends would alike understand the feeling and significance of this hymn. It was the expression of the assurance of their hope, full of immortality, and it was a triumphant answer to the slander of one of the most implacable of their persecutors, who had declared that when they sung this and similar hymns they were singing lies, for they were as much afraid of death as others.

Thus they sang until they reached the spot where one large pile of firewood was built up; they were then fastened to stakes a little above the wood. When the pile was kindled, and the flames were rising, the martyrs prayed and praised the Lord. Among the utterances then heard by those around them were these,—“Lord Jesus, receive our spirits—lay not this

sin to their charge;” and, as if visions of the future triumphs of the Lord were given to their departing spirits, one was heard to exclaim, “His name, His praise, shall endure for ever and ever.”

Once, if not more than once, the falling rain extinguished the fire, which was rekindled; and to one of the sufferers the pains of maternity were added to those of the flames. While their spirits were thus enduring and praying, a large and triple rainbow—the sign of God's promise and faithfulness—stretched across the heavens, one end seeming to rest upon the spot whence the martyrs' spirits were departing. Some of the spectators, to whom the phenomenon appeared supernatural, fled in terror. One friend, who faithfully remained to the end, records of the Christians, “They prayed as long as they had any life. Then they died; but softly, gently. Indeed, gentle was the going forth of their life, and astonished were all the people around that beheld the burning of them there.”

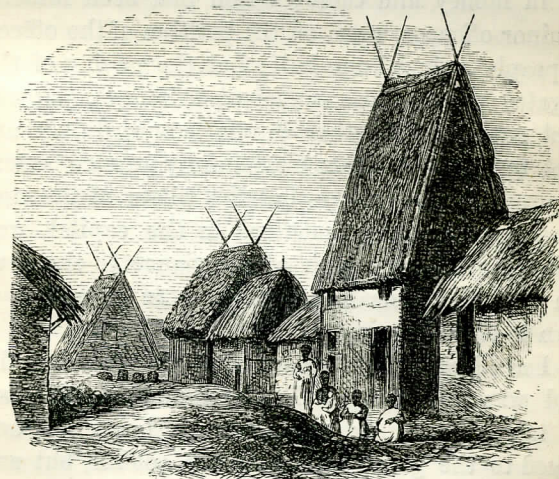
The criminals of highest rank, in whose veins the blood of kings was supposed to flow, had thus been sent away to die. In the same order and manner in which they had been brought to receive judgment, the remaining fourteen confessors were now taken along the public roads, through the agitated and deeply affected crowds in the city, to Ampamarinana, the Tarpeian rock of Madagascar. Here, on the top of a lofty precipice, at the edge of the western crest of the mountain on which the city is built, the matting wrapped round their bodies was removed, but their

arms remained pinioned, and their ankles were bound with cords. Thus bound they were taken, one by one, to the edge of the precipice, and either pushed, or laid down and rolled, or kicked over the downward curving edge, whence they fell fifty or sixty feet, when, striking a projecting ledge, they bounded off and fell amongst jagged and broken fragments of granite lying at the base of the precipice, one hundred and fifty feet below the edge from which they had been hurled. Life was generally extinct. One distinguished Christian, when the matting in which he was wrapped had been removed, is said to have asked permission to stand and view once more the scene before him. His request was granted, and after looking at each familiar object, he remained silent a few minutes, as if in prayer; then, forced over the precipice, he was heard singing a Christian hymn as his body descended to be crushed and broken in death.

Ranivo, belonging to the tribe or clan from which the reigning family trace their descent, and whom the queen, anxious to save, had ordered to be placed so that she might see the other Christians thrown from the fearful height, was then led by the executioner to the edge of the rock, and directed to look down upon the mangled bodies of her friends. Her relatives entreated her to take the oath, save her own life, and please her sovereign. But the noble-hearted girl said she would follow her martyred friends, as she could not take the oath. A member of her own family expostulated, but failed to shake her purpose. The executioner then struck her on the face, and drew her

back, saying, "She is insane, take her away to her parents."

The mangled and scarcely lifeless bodies of those thrown from the precipice were then dragged along to the spot where the nobles were burnt, and consumed in one vast pile, the lurid flames of which, with whatever feelings they might be regarded from the windows of the palace or the dwellings of the high officers, were intended to spread awe and terror among the inhabitants of the numerous peopled villages around from which they were visible.



A STREET IN MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIERY CLOUD.

Severity of Prince Ramónja's punishment—Convict labour of Christian officers—Kindness of the princes to the Christians—Numbers of the Christians—Visits of Mr. Ellis to Madagascar—Correspondence with Christians at the capital—Midnight meetings with Christians—Want of the Scriptures—Third visit to Madagascar—Arrival at the capital—Reception by the government—The Prince Royal and Prince Ramónja—Conferences with the Christians—Their past sufferings—Departure of Mr. Ellis—Accusation against the Christians—The last persecution—Barbarity of the executions—Illness and death of the queen.

THE day after the execution of the Christians, the fines in money and cattle, which had been inflicted for minor offences, were, on the petition of the officers and people, reduced one half; but the paying of this mitigated penalty was sufficient to reduce many to abject poverty. Whether it was supposed that any latent tendency towards Christianity existed among the people is not known, but the whole of the non-Christian community, gathered in the capital, were required to take the oath of allegiance to the sovereign and the idols before they were permitted to return to their homes.

It has already been stated that the heaviest fine levied was imposed on Prince Ramónja. He was also treated with extreme severity, being not only reduced to the grade of a common soldier, but subjected to unusual hardships. He had been accustomed to wear as comfortable clothing as the highest

in the land, but was now allowed only the common light thin lamba, little more than a waistband or girdle, and, with only this covering, was frequently appointed to night duty, at a time of the year when a thick woollen dress would have been acceptable to Europeans.

The prince royal, his friend, often went to visit him, and wept at the sight of his sufferings. The prince also sent him food from his own kitchen, but Ramónja had it included among the rations served out to the party to which he belonged, and it was shared by all in common. The effects of the treatment which this benevolent and kind-hearted prince experienced at this time remained through the remainder of his life, during the greater part of which he was an invalid. But under all his own sufferings he remained the faithful friend, the wise counsellor, and the fearless advocate of the Christians.

The prince royal himself was at this time powerless, for he had been accused by the prime minister to the queen of reading the Bible and attending the meetings of the Christians for the worship of God. But the queen, who was not ignorant of the fact, is said to have replied, "Oh, Rakóto is young, he does not know what is proper, and he is my only son."

It has been already stated that Rambóasaláma, Ramónja's brother, was the rival of the prince royal in his claim to the throne. This arose from the queen, at the time of her coronation, not being then herself a mother, having declared that her nephew, who was then standing by her side, should be her

successor. Although this declaration was not repeated after her own son was born, her nephew never relinquished his claim; and after the prince royal had shown some leaning towards the Christians, the hostility of Rambóasaláma became more determined and violent. He also became the chief supporter of the idols, and was one cause of the extreme severity with which the Christians were treated.

A large number of the Christian officers who had been deprived of their commissions were, as an additional punishment, sent as convicts under heathen taskmasters, to quarry, dress, and carry granite stones, and construct a large stone building. They were not allowed to have the habitation, food, and clothing which their means would have enabled them to provide. Their labour, which was excessive and severe, was continued after the period when their first sentence expired. They were then sentenced to drag large heavy logs of timber from the forest—the severest labour known in Madagascar. In 1852, Rambóasaláma and the heathen party proposed that they should be again sentenced to the same severe labour, but the prince royal and some of the officers opposed him, and they were released. It was when pleading the cause of these Christian officers that the new commander-in-chief, who had succeeded his father in that office, remonstrated before the queen with the officers of the government, saying, “They have suffered twice over the punishment to which they were sentenced. Why should they be sentenced again? The thunderbolt does not strike twice.” Their friends

prevailed, and they escaped the repetition of the misery and toil.

During my first visit to Madagascar I saw a number of these men, and was deeply affected by the narrative of their sufferings and privations. Two of them, represented in the accompanying plate, were officers who had endured this punishment. The one in the striped silk lamba had also suffered in an earlier persecution. The taskmasters seemed to have treated them with great cruelty. The tall man with his hat in his hand, a gentle-spirited and most estimable Christian, once removed his lamba, and showed me the large scars of the deeply-cut wounds on his shoulders, produced by the heavy rough stones they were obliged to carry.

Prince Ramónja, whose health suffered greatly, was, after a time, released from his severe punishment, and again became an officer of the palace. The Christians speak of him at this time as "a wise and faithful friend, who truly loves the Lord Christ Jesus." To him they had recourse when in difficulty for counsel, as well as, in times of danger, for protection. He not only attended their meetings, but, notwithstanding the reproaches of his family, spoke without fear to the queen and his own relations of the gospel of Christ. The queen's regard for her sister, his mother, saved him from suffering on that account.

There was no denunciation at this time of the queen's determination to extinguish Christianity; but every fortnight, when the soldiers were mustered at



NATIVE FARMER, AND DEARER OR SERVANT.

HOVA OFFICERS.

parade in the capital, an order from the queen was read, enjoining the utmost vigilance in searching the houses and villages to detect any engaged in reading or worship. Under these circumstances, the friendship and encouragement of the prince and of Ramónja must have been of unspeakable value. Both these princes spent large sums of money in sending succour to the Christians. Rakóto also on one occasion went to the place where a number of recently captured Christians were confined, set them free, and ordered their keeper, if called to account, to say that he had released them.

The gospel was still proscribed at the capital, but the disciples enjoyed comparative freedom in the provinces, continuing still to increase in number in the country districts. Their secret meetings in the city were more numerous attended, and these gatherings were rendered deeply affecting by the occasional presence of some who ventured to come secretly from their places of concealment, and of others who, notwithstanding their having been sentenced to chains for life, were sometimes able to join in the midnight worship of their brethren, wearing their chains. These were not massive rings and bars of iron, such as those by which the Christians were bound together, but lighter iron chains, reaching from an iron band fastened round the neck to the wrists of the same person, and from a band round the waist to rings fastened on the ankles.

The believers throughout the country amounted at this time to thousands, and there were, notwithstand-

ing the orders to the soldiers, seven houses in the capital in which those within reach met regularly for worship, besides a faithful Church of sixty-eight members, who once every month united in commemorating the dying love of Christ their Lord.

After the death of Ráiniháro, one of the ministers who had placed Ránaválona on the throne, and who had been a powerful and cruel persecutor of the Christians, his son, an intelligent, energetic man, who had attached himself to the prince, was appointed to his father's office. At the same time the prince was nominally associated with his mother in the official acts of the government, and was made secretary of state, as well as one of the officers of the palace. On him also now devolved the duty of authorising the publication of the orders of the queen. The government at this time became anxious to resume friendly relations with England, which had been for some years interrupted.

Connected with the prominent position which the prince now held, accounts reached Mauritius that the queen was anxious to see her son established on the throne during her lifetime, and that arrangements were in progress for her abdication in his favour at no distant period. These accounts were sent early in 1853 to the London Missionary Society; and in order to obtain more reliable information before preparing to resume their mission, Mr. Cameron and I were solicited to visit the country, in order to ascertain the actual state of things.

On reaching Tamatave, we were cordially wel-

comed by the authorities, and found that there had been neither persecution nor change in the government, though the friendship and influence of the prince were highly favourable to the Christians. We wrote to the queen, asking permission to visit the capital, and received a courteous reply, stating that they had very much business on hand, and could not receive us, and that we had better return, lest we should take the fever through delay.

We obtained considerable information respecting the general state of the people, though we saw but few of the Christians, and had scarcely an opportunity of conversing with them. We learned that the Christians were increasing, and greatly needed books, which we were unable to supply. Some came long distances for them, and almost wept when they found that we had none to give. The government was reported to be chiefly under the guidance of Prince Rambóasaláma, who, we heard, was plotting to secure the throne against his cousin, the queen's son.

Early in June of the following year I again crossed over to Tamatave, but was detained in quarantine, on account of the cholera which prevailed in Mauritius at the time of my departure. So fearful were the government of that alarming disease, that all goods landed at this time were exposed to wind and sun for forty days, all the coin received was buried in the sand for an equal period, and no article whatever was allowed to be sent to the capital. This fear of infection prevented my being allowed to proceed beyond the coast, but I was again cordially welcomed by the authorities at the port.

The letters I received at this time, from the Christians at the capital, furnished much information relating to the persecuted believers. Some of the Christians at Tamatave could speak a little English, and this helped us to understand each other, and I learned much from them respecting their past trials and present position. Among these were Andriambélo and others of their preachers. I was deeply impressed with the gentleness of the demeanour of the first-named preacher, his varied intelligence, great activity, and unremitting endeavours to strengthen the faith of his brethren, as well as to urge upon all to whom he could safely speak the claims of the gospel, and the blessings attending its reception. Sincerity and earnest devotedness to Christ appeared to be the distinguishing features of his character.

I was told that spies were employed to take down the names of persons suspected of Christianity who might visit me by day; but on three or four evenings every week a number of Christians, sometimes nearly twenty, came to my house between nine and ten o'clock, having appointed some of their number to watch at the gate, in order to prevent surprise. Sometimes they inquired about the privileges and the proceedings of Christians in England. More frequently their questions related to the Word of God, or their own course in times of difficulty. We always associated the reading and explanation of the Scriptures with prayer, and sometimes singing; and though they bent their heads down, and only sang their native hymns in an undertone or whisper to

English tunes, I was at times alarmed lest some unfriendly passer-by should hear.

Some of my companions were officers, who had been sent to labour as convicts, as already mentioned. The back, shoulders, and arms of some of those who visited me still showed the marks of the wounds and bruises received while they wrought at this work. Notwithstanding this degradation and severe suffering, I never heard an expression of vindictive feeling towards those who had afflicted them, or a desire for revenge, but of thankfulness that God had supported them through their trials, and of sympathy with those whose sufferings had been severer than their own.

Again I found that the great want was the Word of God. I had brought a number of New Testaments, bound together or in separate portions, as well as copies of the Psalms and other religious books; but as the officers of the custom-house had strict orders to seize all books which there was any attempt to introduce into the country, my great difficulty was to get them on shore from the ship, as the captain was unfriendly. I could only conceal them in my pockets, or tied under my dress. In this way I managed generally to take eighteen Testaments and other books at a time. But my heart sometimes beat a little quicker when the bow of the boat touched the shore, and I had to jump down on the beach amidst three or four custom-house officers, lest a copy should get loose and fall on the ground before them. I generally spoke to them and passed on, breathing more freely when I

had entered my house, locked my door, and deposited my treasures in the innermost room. By this means I was able to introduce about one thousand five hundred copies of portions of the Scriptures and other books among the Christians, some of whom had only a few chapters in manuscript, or three or four leaves of a printed book, soiled, and torn, and mended, until the original was the smallest part left.

All the evidence I received tended to show that although in some instances the knowledge of the disciples might be very limited, and although in other instances there had been defection in maintaining the moral purity which the gospel requires, such instances were exceptional, and comparatively rare; and that the great body of the Christians strove, by watchfulness and prayer, to sustain a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

At the time of my visit these Christians had been seventeen or eighteen years without foreign teachers, or any experienced counsellor or guide, surrounded by many adversaries and peculiar difficulties. Their extreme and constant danger, as well as the absence of all earthly encouragement and help, seemed to have bound them together in a holy brotherhood of love, strong and lasting. I was surprised and delighted to find that their organization, for purposes of mutual edification and the spiritual benefit of others, had been according to the plain and simple model propounded in the holy Scriptures, which, so far as their means admitted and their necessities required, had been adopted; and whatever distinctive

form their ecclesiastical polity, if such a term be applicable, may in any future age assume, all that can be said of the Martyr Church of Madagascar in its earlier years is, that it has been built by its own members—guided, we trust, by God's Spirit—upon the few solid and imperishable principles set forth in the New Testament.

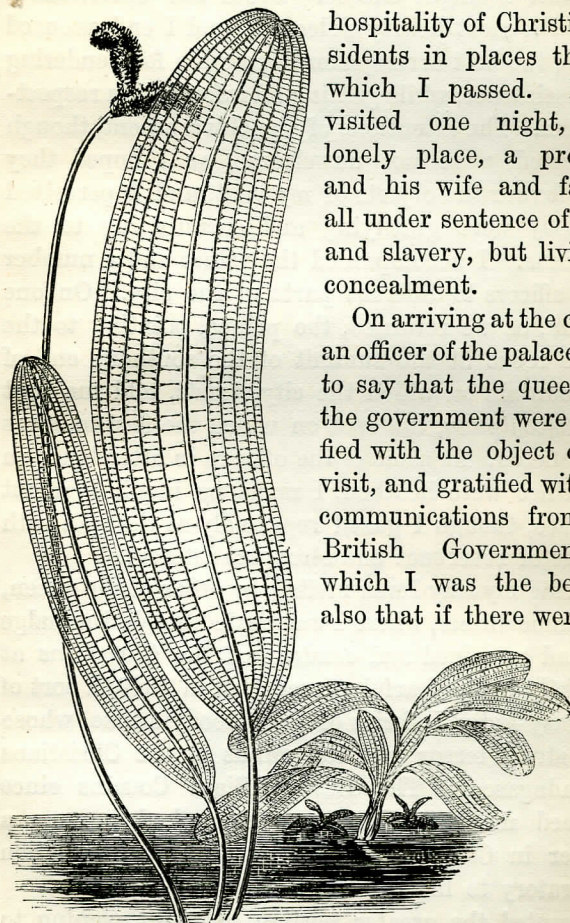
In July, 1856, I again visited Madagascar, when I received letters from the prince royal and from Prince Ramónja, expressing their pleasure at the prospect of seeing me, and urging me not to delay my journey to the capital.

I had already become acquainted with the coast in the neighbourhood of Tamatave; but the country inland exhibited not only new, rich, and charming scenery, but made me acquainted with a number of most rare and beautiful plants, the existence of many of which had, by a French botanist, been previously made known in Europe, but of which no living plant had been yet seen there. Such plants were abundant; amongst them the *Angræcum sesquipedale* and the *Ouvirandra fenestralis*, or lace-leaf plant. The latter grew in the shallow waters which I frequently passed. Living specimens of both these rare and remarkable plants, as well as others, I was able to bring to England, and to deposit the *Ouvirandra* at Kew, as also in the Edinburgh and Dublin public gardens.

Letters of cheerful greeting from the Christians reached me during my journey. I had the pleasure of spending the night sometimes with a Christian traveller or with a number of Christians and

preachers from the capital—grave and dignified men, who were the bearers of messages and presents—and of receiving the hospitality of Christian residents in places through which I passed. I also visited one night, in a lonely place, a preacher and his wife and family, all under sentence of death and slavery, but living in concealment.

On arriving at the capital an officer of the palace came to say that the queen and the government were satisfied with the object of my visit, and gratified with the communications from the British Government of which I was the bearer; also that if there were any

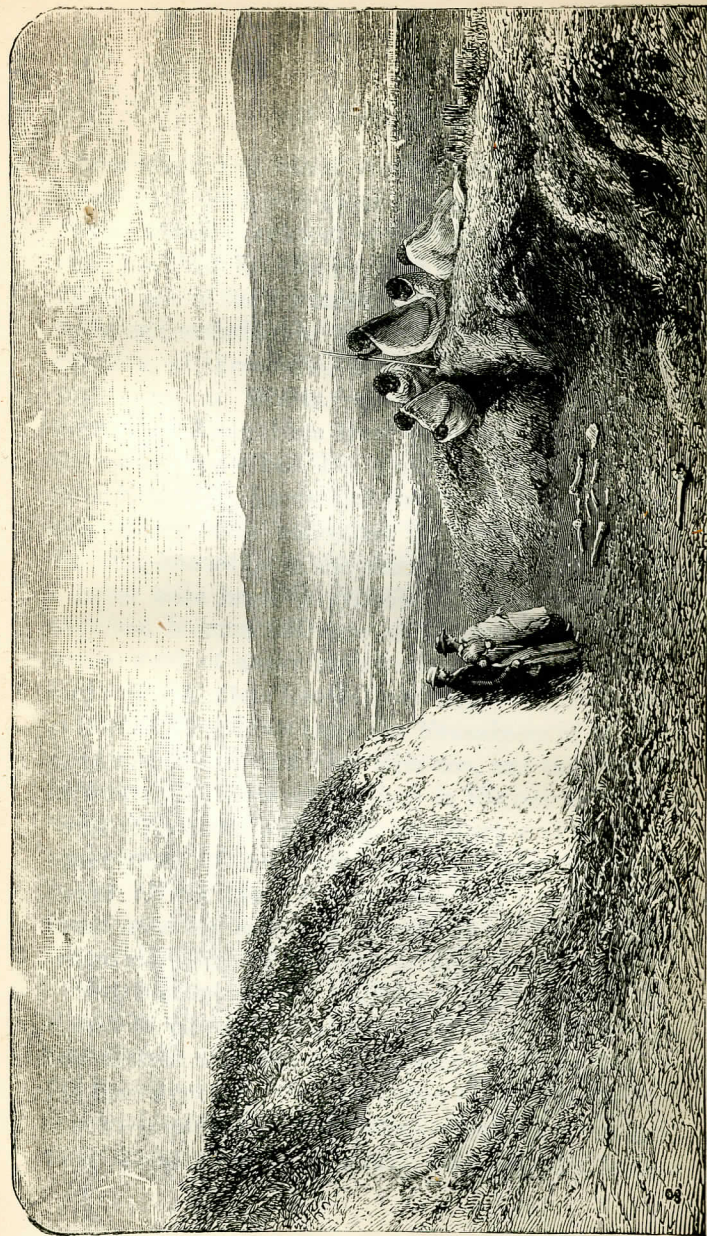


THE LACE-LEAF PLANT (*Ouvirandra fenestralis*).

places in the neighbourhood that I wished to see, they were appointed by the queen to accompany me at any time that I might choose. From the Christians I received a most hearty welcome; and I endeavoured to make the best arrangements possible for rendering them assistance, while gaining all information respecting them. The attentions of the Government, though unexpected, were not unwelcome, as I hoped they might favour the objects of my visit, and I perceived that they were gratifying and encouraging to the Christians. I accompanied the prince and a number of his officers to different parts of the city. On one occasion, as we returned, the prince, pointing to the granite rocks at the summit of the southern end of the mountain on which the city stands, told me that was *Ambóhipótsy*, the spot on which the first martyrs had suffered. As some of the officers in attendance on the prince were heathen, I made no inquiries about the place, though I gazed repeatedly at the spot with feelings of reverence and strongest interest.

During my stay I was invited, by order of the queen, to a public dinner, where I was seated beside the judge who had examined and condemned the Christians at *Análakély* in the fearful persecution in 1849, a sort of Malagasy Judge Jefferies of that bloody assize, whose name struck terror into the minds of the Christians of Madagascar. The Rev. William Cousins since informed me that this same man had become a believer in Christ, and had been under instruction preparatory to his receiving Christian baptism.

I devoted the greater portion of every evening to



AMBÓHIPÓTSY, THE PLACE OF THE FIRST MARTYRDOM.

conversation and social worship with the Christians. Sometimes those who came consisted almost entirely of the widows, orphans, and other relatives of those who had died for Christ; and deeply affecting were the recitals of their remembrance of the steadfastness, faith, and suffering, as well as of the tenderness and affection, of those who, to save life, had fled to the mountains or forests, wandering in unfrequented parts, or hiding from their pursuers in caverns of the earth. Some had thus parted, never to meet again in this world. Some had fled to distant provinces, and others were concealed in pits dug inside the dwelling-houses or in the plantations of their friends. I never once heard a syllable of regret uttered that they had become followers of Christ at such a cost, nor a word of anger or hate towards their persecutors; but I often heard them say, "If those who persecute us did but know the blessedness of the love of Christ, they would love Him too, and save instead of destroying those who believe in His name." With these Christians and their preachers and leaders I spent some of the most instructive and impressive hours of my life. I sometimes felt a solemn awe come over my spirit as I conversed with men with whom the Spirit of God was so evidently present.

The human victims sacrificed, the numbers consigned to chains and slavery, together with at least two thousand sentenced to lesser penalties, had for the time appeased the government, while the greater circumspection of the Christians themselves rendered their discovery more difficult. The powerful friends

they had found in the princes of the royal family and the new commander-in-chief of the army also favoured their security. Prince Rambóasaláma was the recognised head of the heathen party. He possessed the advantages of wealth, and was besides an energetic and unscrupulous man. The queen's order to the soldiers to seek and arrest the Christians, still read at parade every fortnight, rendered the utmost caution necessary in all our intercourse.

I had so managed as to send forward a few books from Mauritius, and I had a small supply with me, which were received with the liveliest gratitude. It was also my privilege, acting on behalf of my friends in England, to relieve, in a slight degree, the wants of the most necessitous and distressed. Besides the information I was able to give them respecting the deep interest felt by numbers in England, and the prayers offered on their behalf, I assured them that if by the Holy Spirit's aid they remained faithful to their own profession and to their Divine Lord, the Christians in England believed that their present trials would, as had been found in other countries, issue ultimately in their own deliverance and in the triumph of the gospel in Madagascar.

Sometimes they expressed their own views and feelings in reference to their sufferings: more frequently they were silent. On one occasion, when I had been speaking on the sympathies and hopes cherished in England respecting them, one or two answered, "We feel too much; our hearts are too full to speak." Then one proposed that we should pray, and all knelt

down, while in simple but earnest language he poured forth the emotions of their hearts in supplication and thanksgiving to God. More than once, prayer seemed to be the most natural and satisfactory manner in which to express their thoughts and feelings on our first meeting, and we never parted without prayer.

I presented a number of inquiries to them, in writing, respecting their proceedings in relation to meetings for worship, the administration of the ordinances, and the instructions of the Word of God which they found most effectual in bringing the heathen to Christ and building up the converts in faith and holiness. I inquired also as to the social life of the Christians when living together or among the heathen, and to all these inquiries I received truly satisfactory answers. They said that when all living in one house were Christians they united in prayer once a day; that secret daily prayer was universal; and that as many as could with safety attended their weekly assemblies for nightly worship; that one of the first endeavours of an uneducated Christian was to learn to read, and that the children of all Christian parents were taught to read, and many to write. I could obtain no list of the names or numbers of the Christians. They said they had never ventured to make out any list, either of places of worship or of the names of the Christians, lest in the event of their own impeachment and capture, or on a forcible entrance being made into their houses to search for books, it should be discovered, and bring trouble on them all.

On my asking if I could safely attend one of these

meetings, they replied it would give them all great pleasure, but it could not be done safely, as some sick person or servant of one of the officers might come to my house for medicine, and my absence would excite suspicion, lead to inquiry as to the cause, and might involve others in trouble.

In the message of permission for my visit to the capital, a month had been specified as the period of its duration; and though, as already stated, I had been treated with kindness and hospitality, it was evident that my prolonged residence in the country, under existing circumstances, would not have been agreeable to those in authority, and might have been prejudicial to the interests of those whom I most wished to serve. I therefore prepared for my departure at the appointed time, with feelings of thankfulness for having seen and learned so much, and not without hope that my visit might eventually prove of service to my friends. Having been detained some weeks at Tamatave, waiting for a ship, I finally left Madagascar on the 17th of November, and reached my native land in March, 1857.

Little change in the circumstances of the Christians took place after my departure until the return of M. Lambert, a French gentleman, who reached Antananarivo about two months after my arrival in England. That gentleman, on leaving Madagascar in 1856, had proceeded to France and to England, to solicit from the Emperor and the English minister the aid of troops to dethrone the queen of Madagascar, as a means of delivering her people from the miseries

of her rule. Having failed in this, he returned to the island, and, associating himself with other foreigners, proposed to deprive the queen of power, and instal the prince royal in her place. But the prince and his friends held aloof from the project. However, it was still thought the plan might succeed; but about a month after the first movements, the queen became acquainted with the intentions of the conspirators, as well as that the French had given help to the Christians. M. Lambert and his companions were consequently, at a few hours' notice, sent under a guard to the coast, and put on board the first ship sailing from the port.

A month before the foreigners were sent out of the country, a chief who had been educated by the first missionaries, and had been associated with the Christians as one of themselves, treacherously made out a list of seventy names of the Christians, charging them with being implicated in the above treasonable plot. This list he carried to one of the officers of the queen, who, previous to laying it before the sovereign, gave it to the prince royal. As soon as he had read the list, the prince tore it in pieces, and ordered information to be immediately given to the Christians of their impending danger.

In the mean time it became known to the queen that numbers were in the habit of meeting for worship, and that they were encouraged by the French. The inhabitants were immediately ordered to attend a kabáry, and the portentous firing of cannon on the 3rd of July, 1857, announced that a message from the

queen would be delivered. Thousands assembled, and the avenues to the place were guarded by troops. The bearer of the royal message announced that the queen had heard that there were many Christians in and around the capital. These were ordered within fifteen days to accuse themselves, on pain of death. But few reported themselves. Soldiers were then sent out to search for Christians, and a few were captured and tortured, in order to extort the names of their companions. The queen was greatly enraged. Additional troops were sent in pursuit of the Christians, and the inhabitants of the villages, in which they might be harboured, were threatened with death if they concealed or succoured them, but promised rewards if they captured or reported any.

Six Christians were concealed at a village two or three miles from the capital, and the soldiers, having searched the house in which they were hidden, in a pit covered over with straw, were leaving the building, when some one within was heard to cough. The soldiers renewed their search, discovered the Christians, and bound them prisoners. The officer then ordered the inhabitants of the village to be also bound and taken to the capital, for having afforded shelter and concealment to their friends.

The queen was highly incensed against these villagers, as well as the Christians, and declared that every village should be searched, all the pits examined, and even the swamps or rivers dragged with nets, rather than the Christians should remain in the land. So great was the terror of the people, that the

inhabitants of whole villages fled. A number of soldiers were sent to arrest Christians at a village ten miles from Antanánarivo; but when the troops arrived not a single inhabitant was in the place.

During this season of extreme distress and danger Prince Ramónja and the commander-in-chief were deeply moved on behalf of the Christians, and, whenever it was possible, aided their escape. Maternal instinct on the part of the queen, the only restraining element in her cruel nature, protected the prince royal, and enabled him, during this period, to save many lives.

One of the disciples, when told by the officer who discovered him that he must take him prisoner, asked, "What is my crime? 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." To this the Christian leader replied, "If that is what I am charged with, it is true. I have done that. I do not refuse to go with you."

This was the charge on which most, if not all, were arrested, and it included reading the Scriptures and singing hymns, or the several acts of Christian worship. I heard of no instance in which any one, when accused, denied the charge, or refused to meet the consequences. More than two hundred suffered different kinds of punishment, most of them severe. The greater number of those who suffered death were men of mark, distinguished among the Christians for their position, piety, devotedness, ability, and useful-

ness. Fourteen were stoned to death at Fiadánana, more than a mile distant from Ambóhipótsy, as were also others afterwards. Fifty-seven, if not a larger number, were chained together by the neck with heavy iron fetters, and banished to distant parts, where more than half of them died a lingering, agonizing death in their chains.* Fifty took the poison, of which eight died. Sixteen, amongst a large number reduced to slavery, were redeemed, at heavy cost to their friends; and six devoted, leading men, who had been condemned to death, escaped, and remained in concealment for four years and six months, often suffering from want of food.

The barbarous, brutalising mode of inflicting death by stoning was a new kind of punishment, devised, it is supposed, as the most terrific that could be adopted, in the hope of its being successful where other methods had failed. The heads of those stoned at Fiadánana were severed from their bodies, in some instances shortening the suffering by terminating life: the heads were then fixed on poles. Those whose friendly eyes had watched, as near as safety would allow, the last moments of the departed, guided afterwards the footsteps of friends, who repaired to

* An iron ring was passed through an aperture at one end of a heavy iron bar, nearly three feet long, and the ring was then riveted on the neck of the Christian: a heavy iron ring was also riveted on each ankle. A second ring was passed through an aperture at the other end of the bar and riveted on the neck of another Christian, and in this manner seven or more were chained together. The fetters which I brought home, and which had been worn four and a half years by one Christian, weighed fifty-six pounds.



SECRET READING OF THE SCRIPTURES TO A CHRISTIAN IN FETTERS.

the spot during the hours of the night, to drive off the hungry dogs, and to bear away the bruised and mangled remains of the martyrs who had that day sealed their faith with their blood. These remains, regarded with hallowed affection, were received by loving hands, and consigned in secret to their final resting-place.

The wholesale slaughter of 1857, less than twelve months after my departure from the capital, although the one most deeply felt by the Christians, in consequence of the number and the character of those put to death, was, by the merciful providence of God, the last which the Martyr Church of Madagascar was called to sustain. Only one other attempt was made, and that proved disastrous to its authors alone.

The first who died on account of their connection with Christianity suffered in 1835, soon after the departure of the early missionaries. The last who laid down their lives for Christ suffered in 1857. But notwithstanding the fearful destruction of life during this protracted period, two-thirds of the duration of a generation, the faith of the Christians was stronger, and their love of the Saviour not less, than when the first martyrs died for the name of the Lord Jesus. But far more remarkable is the fact that during all these years of oppression and suffering, the number and the influence of the Christians had continued steadily to increase.

After the expulsion of the French, little intercourse was allowed even at the ports, and no foreigner was allowed to advance beyond the coast into the country.

It was some time before the Christians ventured to write, and communications from them during this period were few. In one of their letters addressed to me in 1861, the writer, speaking of the native Christians, states, "And in respect to those who are in concealment and those who are in bonds, it is Rakóto and Ramónja who have taken on themselves the charge of concealing and protecting them, and giving them their daily bread. And those of their companions who have any property, give for this according to their ability; and those of their brethren who are in distress or want, though not in bonds or concealment, are looked after and cared for by these two princes, sometimes receiving from them clothes, rice, and even money. We know that such liberality presses hard at times upon their means, but they cannot abandon their own afflicted brethren, *for they are to them as their own flesh.*"

So long as the strength of the queen allowed her to attend to proceedings amongst the people, Rambóasaláma's friends were ready to enforce her orders against the Christians, and but little improvement in their condition was allowed. She was said to have been very cruel in her treatment of her people generally. But now, as her strength began to fail, her severity against the Christians was relaxed. From this time the queen became ill, and her disease increased. The skill of the diviners, the succour of the idols, the medicines or charms ordered by the sikidy, all failed to revive or stay the failing life.

The prince was counselled not to leave the palace.

The other members of the royal family were also collected within its precincts, and the commander-in-chief augmented the troops in the court of the palace to five hundred men.

On the 16th of July the queen died. After fourteen days had been spent in the observance of the usual ceremonies, the body was taken with great pomp to Ambóhimánga, and there buried.

Ránaválona was the wife given to Radáma by his father, with the expression of his will that a child of his, of whom she should be the mother, should be his successor. But she was neither the wife of his choice nor the mother of his children, her only child having been born twelve months after his death. It has been said, even of this queen of Madagascar, that she was not incapable of acts of personal kindness. But her position as a queen called into exercise her fiercest passions and her indomitable will; both being fostered and intensified by the superstitions of her country, by which she was declared to be the visible god, invested with absolute rule and resistless power. In the overruling providence of God she became the instrument of testing, purifying, and strengthening in her country that divinely implanted faith which the chief energies of her life were employed to destroy.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BURST OF SUNSHINE.

The end of the persecutions—Radáma II. proclaimed king—Proclamation of religious liberty—The exiles and Christians in fetters recalled—The claims of the idols disregarded—The use of the tangéna and sorcery abolished—Humane and generous disposition of the king—His want of better counsellors—Increase of intemperance in the country—First movement towards the erection of the memorial churches—Arrival of Mr. Ellis in Madagascar—Interview with the king and queen—Visits from the relatives of the martyrs—The places of martyrdom—Return of the exiles.

PERSECUTION on account of religion had now ended in Madagascar; freedom and security were in prospect; and not more welcome to weary and suffering watchers through the night could be the breaking up of darkness and the dawn of day, than in that land were the events which we now have to record.

We have seen that on the night before the queen's decease the commander-in-chief left the prince royal in the Silver Palace, with a guard of five hundred men. It has also been stated that there was a powerful claimant who intended to dispute the right to the throne with the prince. Rambóasaláma had declared himself ready to acknowledge the rightful heir, but the collecting by himself and his friends of their armed retainers did not inspire confidence in his sincerity. The prime minister of the late queen and the chief judge of the kingdom favoured this prince, but during the night before the queen's death the commander-in-

chief not only surrounded the royal palace with troops, but also the palaces of the rival prince and his adherents; and when, early next morning, it was announced that the queen had ceased to breathe, Rambóasaláma and his friends, instead of being able to proceed and claim the throne, found that the troops and populace were shouting for Radáma, and throwing up their caps for joy, while they themselves were prisoners.

Rambóasaláma and all the members of the royal family then took the oath of allegiance to the prince royal, who was proclaimed king, with the title of Radáma II.

The king's humane and generous disposition, as well towards natives as foreigners, led all parties to expect great and favourable changes. These expectations were in some instances realised, but in others painfully disappointed. One of his earliest proclamations gave to every man his liberty to follow such religious worship as he judged best, and every man was declared free to teach or preach his own religion. At the same time, every man was required to obey the laws of his country. This proclamation relieved the heathen from all fear of the king's enforcing Christianity upon them.

The condition of the banished ones received the early attention of the king, who sent promptly and recalled all who were in exile or concealment on account of their religion. Messengers were also sent to bring back to their homes the emaciated, feeble, and dying Christians, who had been banished in heavy fetters. The king restored also, as far as practicable, the lands and other property of those

whose possessions had been forfeited for refusing to worship the idols of the country.

One day, while I was with the king, a Christian widow who had survived the torture of fetters in the last persecution, whose husband had been stoned to death, and whose property had been divided as spoil amongst the officers by whom the Christians were condemned, came to complain that her plot of land—her only means of support—had been appropriated by a rich and powerful chief, who refused to restore it. The king listened patiently, inquired if it was so, and when the widow's statement was confirmed, he sent to the chief to know why the land had not been restored, directing the officer to say that it was no crime to pray to God, but a thing to be rewarded rather than punished, and that it was suffering enough to the woman that her husband had been killed. At the same time the king ordered the chief to restore the land, or to give another piece equally valuable.

Radâma had long lost all faith in the idols. On one occasion, when the priests had been boasting of their power, and that nothing could harm them, the king sent some Christians to set fire to the house of Ramâhavâly, one of the national idols, and watched with his companions, from the front of his dwelling, the ascending flames of the burning idol-house. This occurrence also greatly weakened the hold of idolatry upon the young men of the period.

Although leaving the people free to employ priests, and to present offerings, he declined to afford them

the sanction of his own example, either by gifts or homage. When the priests on one occasion reminded him of the benefit his ancestors had derived from the idols, and said the present of a bullock would secure the favour of the god, he replied that he doubted whether the god would derive any benefit from the gift, adding, "If the god wants an ox, let him come and ask me for one."

The king also prohibited the use of the tangéna for every purpose. He also abolished the practice of sorcery, or the calculating of destinies, by which so many infants had been destroyed; and ordered that in trials before judges the innocence or guilt of parties accused should only be decided according to evidence publicly brought forward at the trial.

The king's treatment of the Sâkalâva chiefs, and others taken in war and held in slavery, whom he sent home to their own country with presents, and with the bones of their countrymen who had died in Imérina, bound the hearts of those races to him by the strongest ties; and had his conduct in other respects been as wise and as considerate as it was in his treatment of these conquered people, he might have attached to himself and have reigned over a community coextensive with the entire country, united by affection and confidence to their sovereign.

What the young king most wanted to enable him to realize the advantages of his elevation, and prove a blessing to his people, was a more just sense of his responsibilities, and more true and able counsellors.

The king was told of the advantages of free trade,

and ordered the ports to be opened to the ships of all nations, abolishing at the same time all custom-house duties. The first evil resulting from this was the inundation of the land with ardent spirits, sixty thousand gallons of rum from Mauritius having been imported in one week. Retail houses for the sale of intoxicating drink sprang up in all the chief villages, and a vast amount of intemperance, with its attendant miseries, ensued. This act also created great dissatisfaction among a large number of officers, whose salaries, having previously been paid out of the custom-house dues, ceased with their abolition.

Among the first foreigners who proceeded to the capital, after the opening of the ports, were M. Lambert, with some Catholic priests. Others soon followed. The benevolent and cheerful disposition of the young king made him fond of the company of foreigners, whose convivialities conduced to the more frequent indulgence in those habits which his best friends deplored; while his impulsive nature, unrestrained passions, and love of pleasure, seemed to be strengthened by the means of indulgence now at his command, rather than restrained by a sense of the obligations with which his position was associated. Unhappily for him, the companions who, as political adherents, exercised the greatest influence over him, seldom expressed dissatisfaction with his personal conduct, while others sought the accomplishment of their own purposes by encouraging those excesses into which he was too easily led.

Information of the accession of the king, and of

his desire that the missionaries should resume their labours, was sent by the Christians in the capital to the London Missionary Society. In consequence of this, the Society invited me to go out again and arrange for re-establishing the mission which, as soon as practicable, they were anxious to send to this important field, to which Divine Providence had now opened the way.

It had occurred to me, when reflecting on the places where the martyrs had suffered, that it would be a means of great benefit to the Christians of this generation, in which the martyrs had died, and perhaps of greater value to succeeding generations, if these spots could be consecrated to the service of the true God, by the erection on them of substantial churches for His worship; and as I heard that foreigners at the capital were purchasing land in different places, it appeared to me that it might be too late to secure them when I should arrive, as they might then have been previously disposed of.

I therefore wrote to the king from Mauritius, congratulating him on his accession to the throne, and stating that, if agreeable to him, I wished him not to allow the places where the Christians had been put to death to be sold or built upon until I should arrive. In due time a letter came from Radâma, stating that he approved of my proposal, that the pieces of ground were vacant, and should neither be sold nor built upon until I came. This communication—which was the first movement towards the building of the memorial churches—a work which has already

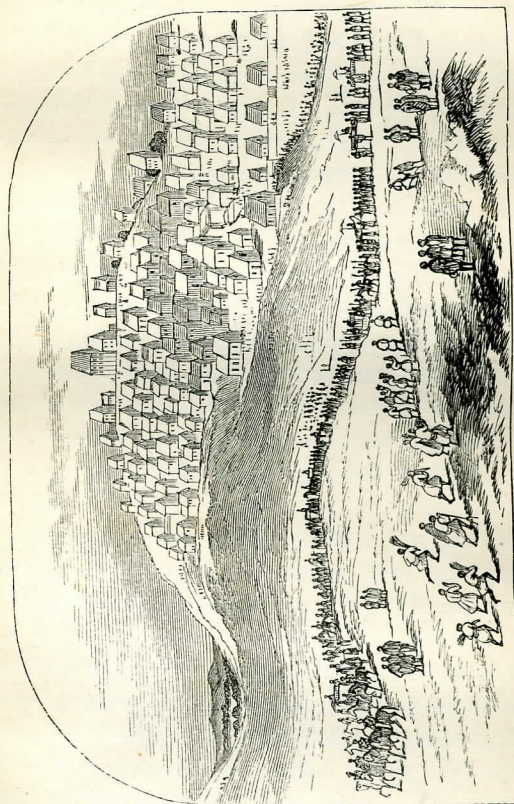
produced a far more important effect upon the minds of the people than I ever expected to live to see—being thus successful, greatly encouraged me.

As early as it was safe to attempt to travel through the fever districts of Madagascar, I prepared for the voyage, and arrived at Tamatave in May, 1862. On entering the harbour the flag of Radáma, floating over the battery, was the first symbol which greeted me of the great change in the state of the country.

Our party, though large when we set out for the capital, was considerably augmented by our meeting on the road officers sent with letters of welcome, and messengers with the one universal request that if I had any Bibles I would promise one of them to the applicant, or writer of the letter. I knew they were Christians who made this request, and gladly promised copies, adding that a larger supply, with the expected missionaries, would soon arrive.

The inland mountain city of “the town of the thousand,” as the name Antanánarívo implies, had long been visible before we reached the small village of Ambóhipo. Here we halted for a time, and on reaching the base of the mountain commenced the ascent to the city. Passing through the ancient stone gateway of Ankádibeváva, we crossed the summit of the hill, and descended on the western side, halting at the edge of a wide hollow, or ravine, in the yard of the house appropriated for my residence. Here the officers gave me possession, and then went to inform the king of my arrival.

For some hours the Christians came in one con-



ANTANANARIVO, THE CAPITAL OF MADAGASCAR.
A ROYAL PROCESSION LEAVING THE CITY.

tinued stream to bid me welcome; among them Ramáka, an energetic man of middle age, he who had been a zealous preacher and faithful witness for God during the time of the persecution. He had been subjected to the tangéna, and had passed some years in prison, bound so tightly that his flesh had been deeply cut by the cords. Later in the evening a number of the native preachers came, expressing their wish that we should unite in acknowledging the Divine goodness in allowing us to meet under circumstances so full of enjoyment and of promise.

Next day an officer came to conduct me to the palace, where the king and queen received, with evident satisfaction, the communications which I was able to make relative to the friendship of the English Government, and the intention of the London Missionary Society to send religious teachers to Madagascar.

During the remainder of this day my house was literally thronged with visitors. The relatives of some of them had been stoned to death, others had died in the heavy fetters in which they had been banished to different parts of the country. They said that from forty to sixty had suffered this punishment. With some of these men and their families I had held frequent intercourse in 1856. Other survivors of that last cruel persecution also came. The details which they gave of the capture, condemnation, torture, and suffering of the departed was most harrowing, as they described the cruel manner in which they were stoned to death, or in which the massive irons were riveted

on their persons, or the hunger and sickness they endured before released from their misery by death.

There was an indescribable appearance of shrinking from the contemplation of such suffering, especially on the part of the women, whose manner was generally subdued and silent; but, at the same time, there was an irrepressible sense of the intensity of that suffering in the expression of their countenances, which seemed in an astonishing manner to change and to indicate calmness, if not joy, so soon as they spoke of the steadfastness of the sufferers, or made any allusion to their present condition. Among these visitors was the widow of a noble-hearted man who had suffered death in the same persecution.

I had received a number of valuable communications from the deceased husband of this widow; and when I showed the survivors his signature to the last letter I received from him, written not long before he suffered, they were deeply affected. They remained with us to family worship, and I have seldom noticed more tenderness of feeling in singing than they evinced on that occasion. My own deep interest in this aged widow was not diminished when I afterwards heard that she had desired to secure the mangled body of her martyred husband for burial, and had, through the efforts of her friends, obtained the head, which had been carefully preserved in a box in her own room until it could be safely buried among the graves of his family. We almost shudder at a state of society in which so ghastly an object could alleviate distress or be cherished as a treasure; yet I met with few more

sensible, benevolent, and considerate Christians than this honoured martyr's widow.

When formerly in the capital I had only been able to look from a distance at the spots where the martyrs suffered. I now took an early opportunity of visiting Ambóhipótsy, the place where the first martyrs were put to death. It is situated on the northern declivity of the hill, a rugged and dreary region, long used as a place for public executions. Parts of the rude earthworks, or fortifications, by which this end of the city was defended, still remain near a path leading to the cultivated plain below. The most perfect of these is part of a ditch, about four or more feet in width, and somewhat more in depth. A little beyond, where the path crosses the ditch, the first martyrs suffered death in 1836-37. A number of human bones lying near the spot were pointed out to me as marking the place where the Christians suffered, and that possibly some might be the bones of martyrs.

My companions, some of whom had witnessed the executions, said that a number of Christians had been put to death here. A few rude low mounds marked the spots where by special indulgence the friends of a criminal had been allowed to bury the body. The lower end of a cross, on which a renowned Sakaláva warrior taken in battle had been crucified, was still standing near the fosse. On a subsequent occasion I took a photograph of this spot where the first martyrs suffered.* A Christian congregation now meets for

* See engraving from this photograph, page 171.

worship in the memorial church erected on the high ground a little to the north of the fosse.

In the early part of one memorable day I visited the upper portion of the Tarpeian rock of Antanánarivo. It is a precipitous part of the western side of the massive hill on which the city is built. A narrow path runs north and south along the western edge, which, for about two yards from the outer extremity of the path, is rounded off, forming a sort of projecting curve. From this the rock bends inwards for a depth of about fifty feet, where it rests upon a lower stratum. This ledge, which projects further out than the upper one, also curves inwards for a second depth of about fifty feet. Below this, broken masses of rock are heaped up for about the same depth, so that, viewed in profile, the precipice exhibits two successive rounded ledges of rock, with a mass of broken fragments of stone at the base, the whole at least a hundred and fifty or sixty feet below the upper edge.

On reaching the ground below I was struck with the appalling aspect of the place. Large blocks and rugged fragments of granite of different sizes lay confusedly heaped up at the base of the precipice, and must have fearfully broken and mangled the bodies falling from the upper edge. An involuntary shudder passed over me as I looked up from ledge to ledge, or gazed on the masses of granite lying at the foot of the precipice; but it appeared to me more fearfully appalling to look down from the upper edge, than upwards from the rocks below. And this was the place at which thirteen

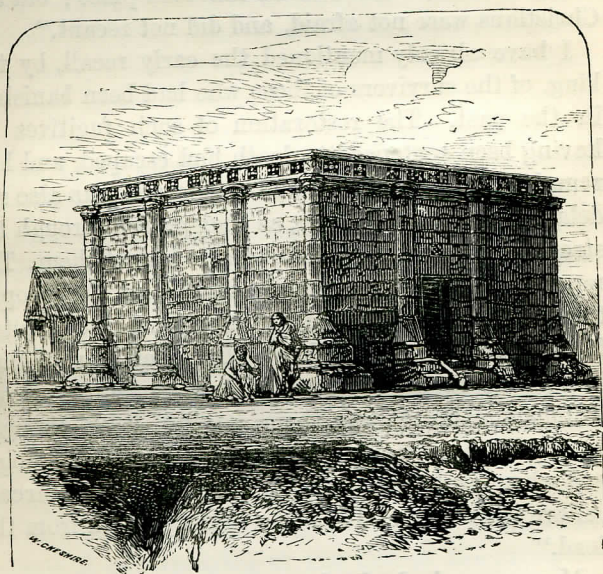
men and women were hurled down the rock—their only crime being their refusal to abjure the name of Christ, and to swear by the idols of the country.

One of the high officers of the palace, as he told me in conversation afterwards, had said to his companions on that day, "Let us go and see how these Christians behave. They are said not to be afraid to die." And when I asked what effect the executions produced on his mind, he said he could not describe it. "We were near," he said, "and saw all that took place; but the Christians were not afraid, and did not recant."

I have already mentioned the early recall, by the king, of the survivors of those who had been banished in the past. The restoration of such fugitives as having been sentenced to death had escaped, and had remained for years exiles and wanderers, was also not delayed. On their return, as they passed through the streets, their countrymen crowded to look at them. The report of their return greatly astonished the people, then assembled in great numbers at the capital. Most of the Christians knew that they were living, but others supposed they had long since been dead. Numbers came to see them, saying, "We thought you had long ago been buried or eaten by the dogs, and when we heard you were here, we could scarcely believe it was you. It is like coming again from the dead."

Messengers had also been sent for the survivors of those Christians who had been bound in heavy fetters. On my arrival I found some of them—feeble,

wasted, bedridden sufferers ; yet to them and to their friends this return was indeed a jubilee, though a jubilee kept with tears, and with touching memories of the absent ones. To some it was only coming back to their Christian home and friends to die ; but to others it was still to live and to rejoice in the free course of the gospel in their country.



TOMB OF A MALAGASY NOBLE.

CHAPTER IX.

DEEP ROOTED, NOT DESTROYED.

The king not a Christian—Sabbath services—Influences favouring the reception of the gospel—Family religion—Statistics of the progressive increase of the Christians during the successive persecutions—Astonishing results—Description of Malagasy idols—Proposed building of the Martyr Memorial Churches—Hearty approval of the scheme in England—Scarcity of the Scriptures during the Persecutions.

At the time of my arrival, Radáma was employed in erecting a stone house for a school, and as soon as the building was finished, he sent word that he wished me to hold religious worship in the large room every Sunday afternoon for himself and the officers, or any others who might choose to attend. The king also sent his secretary to ask me to go and read English with him as often as I could conveniently. As he seemed earnest in his desire both to read and to speak English, I agreed to go to him for one hour every afternoon, which I continued to do until within a short time of his death.

I knew that the services which the king had rendered to the Christians, as well as the help he had afforded them when all other influence was against them, had been of unspeakable value, and I did not wonder that the believers themselves should regard him and speak of him as a Christian.

Nor did I much wonder, considering their circumstances and his conduct towards them, that they

should have written of Radáma to their friends in England as being a Christian; but I had too much reason to believe that, whatever he might become, he was not a Christian at the time, and with all my efforts to serve him, I did not leave him in doubt about my own opinion on that subject. On one occasion, when the members of the British embassy, including the Bishop of Mauritius, referred, in the presence of the king and queen, to his abolishing so many evil usages, of his having saved so many lives, and having proved such a friend to the Christians, the king looked at me as if he wished me to speak. I said, before the queen and all his own officers as well as the foreign visitors, that he had undoubtedly done much to promote the welfare of his people, for which they were grateful, but, I added, "There is one great thing wanting—the one thing needful. The king has not yet become a Christian himself." He looked gravely towards me, and said with some emphasis, "He [Mr. Ellis] knows what is in my heart. He knows that I desire to understand and serve God. I desire—I pray to God to enlighten my mind—to teach me what I ought to know."

Until the influx of foreigners which the coronation brought to the capital, the attendance of the king and his companions at my readings and Sunday services was marked by strict propriety; but after that period I was often depressed by evidences of the evil influences to which he appeared to be surrendering himself. A large French piano was placed in the schoolroom, and music, singing, and dancing were

substituted for the lessons. I had selected the Bible as the book which the king and I should read together, and he always came to the room in which we met as soon as I arrived. I could not, however, conceal from myself that his habits were changing, and I learned that music and dancing were often followed by feasting and drinking, and that the host, in these revels, was always the first to lose self-command under the influence of the latter.

I spoke kindly to the king, but earnestly and very plainly of his degrading vice, and of the consequences, both to soul and body, of his permitting those habits to gain the mastery over him. He acknowledged the truth of my remarks, and promised to exercise watchfulness for the future, but only to be overcome again. Considering how he had been brought up, the lightness and pliancy of his natural character, his passion for music, and his love of gaiety and pleasure of every kind—considering also how much good he had been the instrument of securing for others, I hoped to the last that the Holy Spirit might change his heart, and that he might become a partaker of those spiritual blessings which he had been the means of preserving to so many of his people.

But my chief attention was given to the Christians. Besides the congregation at Análakély, with whom I had spent my first Sabbath, there were two other important places of worship, Ambátonakánga and Ampáribé, and I attended the chief forenoon service every Sunday in rotation at each of these three places.

Like the inhabitants of all warm climates, the

Malagasy are early risers, and I was surprised, on the morning of the first Sabbath which I spent at the capital, to hear that the members of the Christian families in the immediate neighbourhood of my own residence—men, women, and children, all dressed in their clean Sunday attire—had left their homes in the early morning before it was light, and proceeded to their Sabbath worship, which at that time commenced at daybreak, if not before.

Prince Ramónja's son, who had undertaken to guide me to the place of worship on the first Sunday which I spent amongst them, reached my house before eight o'clock, and said that by the time we should arrive at the place of meeting, three quarters of a mile distant, the first congregation would have left, and the second would be gathered. I afterwards inquired the reasons for meeting so early then, when there was no danger in their being seen, and when the whole day was appropriated to social and public worship. They said it was not from any fear of discovery that they now assembled so early; but they had been so long—twenty-five years—accustomed only to feel at ease and safe in their Sabbath worship under the shelter of darkness, that it still seemed most natural to them; and also that they liked the cool, calm, early dawn better than the later portions of the day for their Sabbath services.

The habits of the Malagasy do not favour evening meetings. The family usually meet for their most important meal after dark, by the light of lamps or fires. The whole family is then gathered together,

and, except on extraordinary occasions, it is not customary for the members of respectable families to leave home after then. Nor is it either pleasant or safe to do so. The rough, undressed stones which cover the roads or pathways which, after a fashion, may be said to be paved, are with difficulty traversed by shoeless feet, while total darkness on nights when there is no moon follows within half an hour after sunset, and continues to within half an hour of break of day. None, either of the broader streets, or of the numerous narrow, intricate, and winding paths, are lighted. Where, however, the houses of Christians are within the same enclosure, or are near together, their inhabitants meet in the evening. When Christianity was proscribed, the darkness favoured the meetings of the Christians without detection; but since freedom of worship has been allowed, they have, as a rule, ceased to meet for worship in the evening.

In our early meetings my inquiries chiefly related to the circumstances and proceedings of the Christians during the *mázina*, or darkness, as they frequently designated the supremacy of heathenism; and as to what they thought must chiefly be ascribed the astonishing increase in their numbers which had taken place during that long and suffering period. In general they replied promptly that it could only be ascribed to the influence of the Holy Spirit on their hearts. But, on being asked further, they would add that other causes combined in producing the change, such as preaching, praying, reading the Scriptures, or the conversation of Christians; or an indescribable

feeling of interest in the Christians, or sympathy with them in the injustice and cruelty which they suffered, impressed some with a feeling that there must be something important connected with Christianity. The patient and uncommon conduct of the Christians under such trials—not cursing their persecutors, but praying for them; not seeking to be revenged, but to convert—affected, they said, the minds of many.

Parental discipline, or training of children, appeared to be a thing unknown among the heathen, and simply as *discipline* it was but little practised among the Christians. But a habit of taking them to the house of God from their earliest years, training them to the most respectful attention during seasons of family prayer, urging a reverential regard for the Bible, as well as an affectionate and kind inculcation of its great truths, were, I believe, universally practised among the Christians.

Few more affecting spectacles have ever come under my observation than a Malagasy family at worship; after reading the Scriptures, the father and mother kneeling by the seats they had occupied, and the children, down to the youngest able to walk, bending their foreheads to the ground on the matted floor, while the father offered up their united thanksgivings and petitions to the great Parent of all. As a rule the mothers appear fond of their children, and much of the religious principle and feeling which exists among the younger members of Christian families is to be ascribed, under God, to the affectionate teaching and prayers of the Christian mothers.

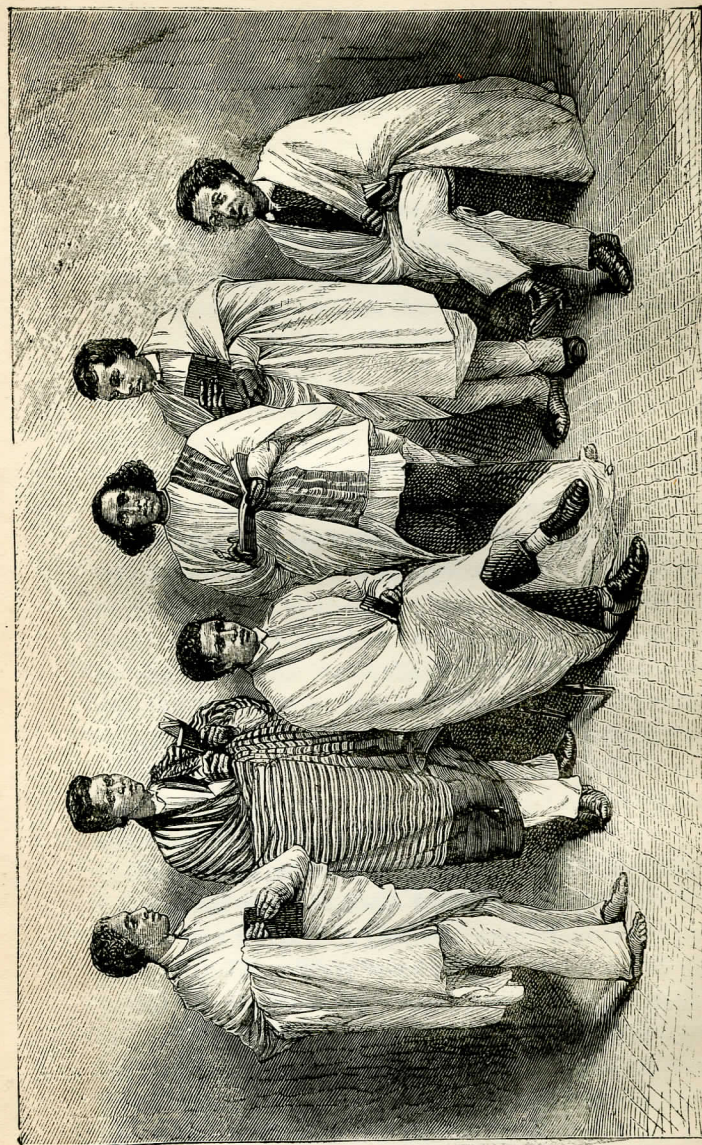
I early sought information as to the actual amount of the increase which had been made to their numbers during the years of persecution. They had stated, in most of their communications, that their numbers were augmenting; and now, as persecution had ceased, I was anxious to learn what was the state of the Church, in regard to numbers, as compared with its position when Christianity was forbidden in the country. They told me that there were about five thousand Christians in the capital, and two thousand more in the suburbs, without reference to the believers scattered over the outlying parts of the country. Of these, about nine hundred had been admitted to the communion at the capital. I did not obtain any specific number of the communicants in the suburbs; they probably amounted to two or three hundred.

In 1835–36, when the early missionaries were driven from the country, it is supposed that the congregations at that date did not amount to more than from one to two thousand. Two hundred had then applied for admission to Christian communion. The stern, determined repression of Christianity continued throughout twenty-six years. Persecution in a chronic form marked all those years; seldom, if ever, did one year pass without some of the Christians suffering. Besides the persecution of 1845, in which the influence of the prince with his mother saved more than twenty of the Christians from the consequences of the accusations brought against them, the Christians had endured four general and severe persecutions.

In 1835, when the missionaries were forbidden to

teach or preach, death was threatened to any native who should read the Bible, pray to God, receive baptism, or join the communion of the Christians; and although no life was taken, yet two thousand five hundred suffered different punishments in this persecution. In 1845, the capture of the fugitives attempting to escape from the country brought severe persecution, when large numbers suffered. In 1849, the four nobles were burned alive, thirteen martyrs were hurled down the precipice, and two or three thousand were otherwise punished; and in 1857, when the names of seventy Christians were handed in to the government as being implicated in a treasonable plot, thirteen were stoned to death, and more than fifty fastened together in heavy fetters, under which half the number died.

In these four great persecutions, besides those who suffered at other times, more than 10,000 persons were sentenced to different kinds of penalties; yet what had been the result? After death had been threatened to every one who should avow the hated faith; after encouraging informers, after scouring the country with troops, and recommending vigilance in Christian-hunting as a test of loyalty and a means of promotion; after employing divination, and invoking the gods, as a means of arousing the fanaticism of the heathen against the defenceless Christians—what had been the result? The Christians had increased in the land from about one thousand, when persecution commenced, to seven thousand when it ended; the communicants, from two hundred, had increased to



Rāinmahāzo
(chief mason).

Rātsilāngia
(the native pastor).

Andiāmpingia
(the queen's goldsmith).

one thousand. Such, by God's grace and power, was the fruit of six and twenty years of persecution!

During these years the Christians had been destitute of all human guidance and all human aid. No European teacher or preacher had gone in and out amongst them. But God had been their helper, and the Holy Spirit, who, as the Christians said, was the best Teacher, had been with them; and these were the marvellous results.

In the pageants and ceremonies of the king's coronation, which took place in September, 1862, there was no official recognition of the idols; no priest walked in the royal procession, no idols were borne near the sovereign's person, as had been the case before, and was afterwards. But in the apportioning of the ground to the different parties who were expected to be present, spaces were marked off, near the gallery occupied by the court and the embassies, for the missionaries and the Protestants, for the priests and the Catholics, for the idols and their keepers, or their priests; and in passing along a narrow part of the road, I unexpectedly found myself in the very midst of the national idols and their bearers.

These idols or objects of worship had very little to recommend them in their form or appearance. They were about thirteen in number, carried on tall slender rods or poles. They were chiefly composed of dirty pieces of silver chain, small silver balls, pieces of coral, silver ornaments representing crocodiles' teeth, with strips of scarlet cloth, and in one instance something which looked like a red woollen cap resembling

a cap of liberty. Others were tied up in small baskets or bags, and were probably only charms or emblems of the idols. Such were the objects of worship, or their representatives, on which the safety and welfare of the nation were supposed to depend, and for refusing to worship which many of the most intelligent and worthy among the people had been subjected to banishment, slavery, torture, and death.

I have already adverted to my early visits to the places in which the martyrs suffered. Being confirmed in my opinion of their eligibility for the purpose I had contemplated, and having been assured by the king that they should be appropriated to that sacred use, I wrote to the directors of the London Missionary Society, stating that one great want at that moment was places of public worship.

I said the proposal for building memorial churches in the situations specified had pleased the king, and had greatly encouraged the Christians, adding, that so far as I could judge, the cost of them would not be less than £10,000. "The Christians here," I stated in my letter, "will do all they can, although twenty-six years of spoliation and suffering have greatly reduced their means. Labour for building the churches can be obtained here or at Mauritius, but help will be required from England. The present state of feeling in relation to Madagascar favours the attempt to achieve this important work now, rather than at any future time. Will England give to Madagascar these memorial churches, and thus associate the conflicts and triumphs of the infant Church

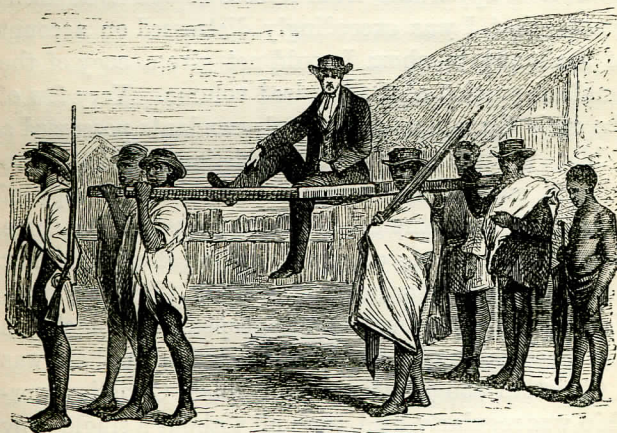
with the remembrance of the source from which, through Divine mercy, Madagascar received the blessings of salvation, and thus perpetuate the feelings of sympathy and of love which bind the Christians of Madagascar to their brethren in England?"

The directors of the Society submitted this important case to the generous consideration of the Christian public, with their own earnest recommendation. The result was most encouraging. Before the next annual meeting of the Society, the fund for the erection of memorial churches in Madagascar exceeded £6,500, and ultimately reached the munificent sum of £13,000.

I had taken with me to Madagascar a few copies of the Scriptures, but the knowledge that I had some in my possession brought upon me such an extraordinary number of applicants, from remote as well as adjacent places, that I was exceedingly distressed on account of the many to whom I could not give a copy of the smallest portion of the inspired volume. Very few of the early Christians or their descendants possessed a Bible; a large number of Christian families were without even a Testament; a portion had a copy of the Psalms or of the Gospels bound separately; some few had both these; others had copies of even smaller portions of the Word of God. Many Christian families, several preachers of the gospel, and sometimes the inhabitants of a whole village in which there was a Christian congregation, or in which Christian worship was regularly held, were all without a single copy of the New Testament. The visit of an itinerant

teacher or preacher, with a copy of the New Testament, caused unusual joy in such villages. During the persecution a number of Christians committed portions of the Scriptures to memory, which they were accustomed to recite at their meetings, and teach to others.

It appears marvellous that, during the years in which no public religious teaching and no reading of the Scriptures had been allowed, and when the very knowledge of Divine truth depended often entirely upon oral instruction, the Christians should not only have maintained their own spiritual life in the strength and energy in which it had existed, but that, under circumstances so unfavourable, their faith should have spread so extensively throughout the country.



MODE OF TRAVELLING IN MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER X.

UPWARD GROWTH.

Welcome of the missionaries from England—Organisation of native churches—Titles given for sites of memorial churches—Uneasiness in the capital—Pretended supernatural messages to the king—The dancing sickness—Revolution—Death of the king—Accession of Rasohérina—Germs of constitutional government—Training of native preachers—The first missionary prayer-meeting—The medical department of the mission—The sacred city of Ambóhimánga—Rumours respecting Radáma—Review of the events of the year—The Christians in Betsileo—Historical statistics of Iláfy—Scenes of the martyrs' suffering.

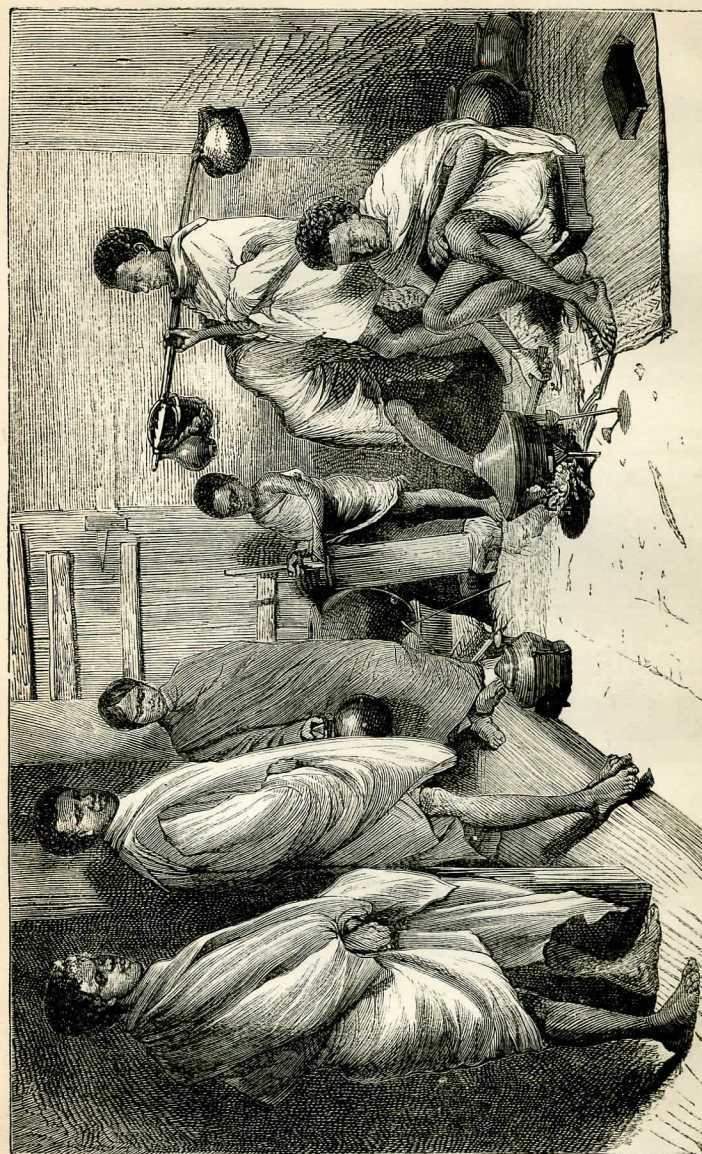
On the 30th of August, 1862, I had the pleasure of welcoming to Antanánarívo the missionaries sent out by the London Society, Mr. and Mrs. Toy and Dr. and Mrs. Davidson, who were followed a few days afterwards by three other brethren. The missionaries were welcomed by the members of the English embassy as they entered the city, and the Christians were greatly rejoiced. When they waited on the king and queen at the palace, and presented the handsome copy of the English Bible sent by the British and Foreign Bible Society, they received a cordial welcome from their majesties, who expressed themselves pleased with the arrival of the wives of the missionaries, as indicating intended residence amongst them, and not a visit.

I had secured the dwelling-houses on the premises formerly occupied by Mr. Griffiths for the temporary accommodation of the newly-arrived missionaries, hoping they would be more suitably accommodated

before the ground was needed for the training school. The greatest difficulty arose from there being only one kitchen, and that, as usual, separate from the dwelling-house. It was larger, however, than my own kitchen, which, though not very promising in appearance, seldom gave me cause to complain of the cooking. It was, however, much crowded by its inmates, among whom was generally a little boy brightening up the charcoal fire with a piston in a wooden cylinder, the usual Malagasy bellows.

The next Sunday, being the first Sunday in the month, I went, accompanied by the missionaries, to the chapel at Ampáribé. The house was filled with people, and the native minister was concluding the usual morning service when we entered. The members of the three Churches in the capital had arranged that their first public association with the newly-arrived missionaries should be a united communion. They desired thus to express their sense of the Divine mercy by partaking together of the symbols of the dying love of Christ, and in the celebration of this ordinance to unite with them in renewing the solemn consecration of themselves to God.

When the non-communicating members of the ordinary congregation had retired, the members of the other two Churches entered, and the communicants, amounting to between seven and eight hundred, sat down—the men on one side and the women on the other. After singing and reading, the elements were distributed by one of the native ministers of the Church and myself, an address was given by a native



Washerman. Deaver. Water-carrier. Bellows-blower. Market-boy. Cook.

INTERIOR OF MR. ELLIS'S KITCHEN, WITH SERVANTS.

pastor from one of the other Churches, and the minister of the third Church closed the services with prayer.

The missionaries appeared gratified with the service; it was indeed a soul-moving spectacle which thus greeted them on entering the field of their future labours. The greater portion of the assembly were neatly attired, chiefly in native clothing; and when I looked on the calm, cheerful countenances of many in that assembly, seated on the matting before me, and remembered the deeply interesting events in their history, and reflected that forty years before there was not a single native Christian in Madagascar, I could not but regard with wonder and admiration the goodness of God and the power of His gospel.

The religious organisations which the leaders of the Christians had introduced among the believers during the time of persecution were now unequal to their necessities, in the altered state of the Church. The Christians sought advice from the missionaries, and we drew up a simple statement of the chief principles on which their Churches should be organised.

The Christians who had acted as leaders of the small companies of believers which were scattered over the country during the persecution were now joint pastors and teachers in the three large congregations in the capital. We recommended that the communicants in each Church should select at least two of these to be their pastors; to preside over their public religious proceedings, the appointment of deacons and the admission of members. We informed them that we had not come to assume the govern-

ment of the Churches, but to give them the advantage of our knowledge and experience in promoting the welfare of the Church in Madagascar.

We further stated that if, when their Churches were organised, they wished us to associate ourselves with the native pastors, we were willing to do so; but that the maintenance of the Church in its order and purity, and its extension in the country, was the work which the Lord had devolved on them, and in which we would do our best to aid them. Our advice was followed, and upon this plan the various Churches in the capital were then organised. Mr. Cousins was solicited to take the oversight of the Church at Ampáribé, in association with Andriambélo and another native preacher. I was asked to help the Church at Ambá-tonakánga, and Mr. Toy became the pastor of the Church which he himself had gathered in the northern part of the capital.

Having learned that the directors of the Society approved of the proposal to build the memorial churches, and that there was reason to believe that the sum required would be furnished, I applied to the king for written titles for the ground. Radáma having, with the consent of his ministers, executed these deeds, I lost no time, in company with some of the missionaries and with the government officers, in fixing the boundaries of the land, and arranging for the payment of any buildings or fences occupying the ground. I also engaged experienced quarrymen to provide stones for the foundation and commencement of the walls of at least one of the churches. The

Christians engaged to help, and undertook to level the ground, which was accomplished at Ambóhipótsy by the end of March.

Going down to Ambátonakánga early one morning in the beginning of April, 1863, I was delighted to find nearly the whole congregation at work—masters and slaves digging down the hillocks and levelling the ground which had now been obtained, women and children carrying the earth, stones, and rubbish in baskets on their heads, while the preachers were superintending and encouraging them and singing for joy. I did not wonder at their joy. The spot had probably been to some of them a place of bondage on account of their faith in that Saviour for whose worship it was now to be a sanctuary.

In the mean time the Church was extending its influence to new and important portions of the population, and new chapels were opened in different parts of the city; yet the attendance on the means of religious instruction scarcely diminished in any of the former places of worship or in the schools connected with them, while the services associated with the newly-erected buildings drew within their influence many of the residents of the localities which they occupied.

But a season of trouble and anxiety now arose. For some time there had been considerable uneasiness among the different political parties in the capital, and greater activity among the agencies connected with the superstitions of the country. It first reached the capital in the form of rumours, from villages at a

distance, of the prevalence of a sort of sickness, which rendered the subjects of it, at certain seasons, unconscious of what was passing around them, but accessible to communications from the spirit world. It was said that at times they saw visions, and heard voices from invisible beings delivering messages from the ancestors of the present dynasty. These voices were said to deplore the apostasy of the king from the gods and the customs of his ancestors, and to forewarn of fearful calamities, unless the king should put a stop to the worship of the God of the foreigners.

This was followed by a number of persons, chiefly young women from the country, who, seized by some inexplicable disease, were said to be unable to remain in one position, or in the same place; and who, first singly, then in large numbers, and sometimes attended by their friends, came into the capital, running and dancing along the streets or the suburbs, and making their way, notwithstanding the sentries, who with crossed bayonets stood on each side of the gate, into the courtyard of the king's house.

From the beginning, the pretended messages from the ancestors of the reigning family had all been brought as if sent to the king. Radáma repeated to me the messages, and sometimes I was reading to him when the messengers came from the villages around. At first I treated the whole as a delusion on the part of these sightseers and dancers, or as a symptom of disease; but to my surprise, as well as grief, I found that the pretended revelations of the will of his ancestors was seriously affecting the mind of the king. He

lost his natural cheerfulness, and became absent and silent. When he one day said to me that his ancestors were coming in great pomp, with cannon and all the outward insignia of power, I quietly asked, "Where do you think they obtained the cannon? There are none in the spirit world, and your ancestors were all dead before any were brought to the country." But he only half smiled, and then, turning away, spoke on some other subject.

At other times I spoke very earnestly to the king on this subject, which seemed to have taken possession of his mind. My own life, I believe, was on one occasion in jeopardy, from a number of the priests and dancers bursting open the door and rushing into the room where I was sitting with the king and some of his officers. The mad dancers wheeled round the room, while the priests or idol-keepers, with menacing looks and gestures, seemed bent on evil towards me. I stood up when they burst into the room. The king did the same, taking hold of my hand and leaning his shoulder against mine, while he ordered them out of the place. His attendants at length succeeded in clearing the room and fastening the doors and windows, with the exception of one small glass door, through which I saw the women dancing, and the men, with large stones in their hands, gathered around it outside. Though it was three o'clock when I went to the palace, it was long after dark before I left to return home.

I was afterwards informed that the heathen party had arranged to attack me on that day, as they said that my presence with the king was the great hin-

drance to their success with him. I was also warned that they intended to employ sorcery against me, and for nine successive nights small baskets, containing what I was told were death warrants, or intimations of evil, were laid at my door. I did not fear their sorceries, but as incendiarism was sometimes employed to favour the objects of the evil-disposed, I was glad when two soldiers were sent every night to keep guard over the premises which I occupied.

From this time the king's mind became more dark and unsettled, and it was said that he had intimated his purpose to issue an edict authorising those who quarrelled to settle their dispute by force of arms. My own impression is that his mind had already given way. The prime minister and a large number of his adherents more than once besought the king to forbear issuing such an order, but he refused to accede to their wishes. On this they left him, and proceeded to deliberate on the course they should pursue.

There were other causes of dissatisfaction of older date and deeper root than this obnoxious edict, especially regarding the conduct of the counsellors by whom the king had surrounded himself; and it was evident to most, except Radáma himself, that a change was impending, though few perhaps expected so tragical a one as that which followed.

On the afternoon of the day on which the nobles held their last conference with the king, I received notice not to remain in my own house that night, but repair to a house mentioned, where further directions would be sent to me. I passed that night

at Dr. Davidson's, and, on looking out the next morning, saw the plain of Andohálo filled with troops under arms, and heard that thirteen of the king's ministers were prisoners. Some of them had already been put to death, and others were seized and killed during the day. A number of the king's advisers, who remained with him, were surrendered to the nobles, on condition that they should be banished in chains for life; but they were all put to death on the day they were delivered up. Thirty-one had been sentenced to death, twenty-nine were actually slain. Some were irreproachable Christians, others unprincipled profligates, neither Christian nor heathen, but gross materialists.

Whether the conspirators included the death of the king in their original plan, or feared a reaction against themselves if he survived, is not known; but shortly after cock-crow on the 12th of May, two officers, with a number of men, forced an entrance into the room in which he had slept, and, disregarding alike the efforts and entreaties of the queen to save his life, removed her from the apartment. They then seized the king, he exclaiming, "I have never shed blood!" then, casting the mantle over his head, they tightened the sash round his throat until he sank, a lifeless corpse, on the floor, — murdered by the authority which had been chiefly instrumental in placing him on the throne, and which then held the power wrested from his hands. The body of Radáma was carried forth at night to the royal village of Iláfy for interment.

God had raised up this young prince at a most critical period in the early history of the Martyr Church

of Madagascar. He gave him influence with his mother which no other human being ever exercised, filled his soul with a horror against the destruction of human life in any form, and warmed his heart with sincere and disinterested sympathy towards all suffering from injustice and cruelty; and he was honoured by the Christians' God to lighten in their favour the heavy iron rule under which they had been so long bowed down. He had saved many persons' lives, denounced persecution, established perfect religious liberty, and, while guaranteeing unfettered religious action, had afforded complete legal protection to Christians and heathens. But his destitution of the principles of religious life in his own soul disqualified him for anything closer than a mere external association with the outward progress of Christianity.

Within a few hours after forcibly separating queen Rabódo from her husband, the conspirators offered her the then vacant throne, which she accepted; and her reign, while continuing to the Christians the liberty and the privileges which Radáma had bestowed, inaugurated the first germs of approximation to constitutional government ever known in Madagascar.

The conditions on which the new queen received the crown were, that the power over life and death should not be vested in the sovereign alone, and that the word of the sovereign alone should not be binding on the people; but that the agreement of certain representatives of the nobles and the people should be necessary to the putting any one to death, and the enacting of any law which the people should be

obliged to obey. It was also stipulated that perfect religious liberty should be guaranteed to all classes and creeds.

At the first audience she gave to the missionaries, the queen stated that the liberties and privileges of the Christians would be preserved in their full extent, and they were at the same time assured that the objects of the mission were approved. The queen herself was not a Christian, but was publicly regarded as the head of the heathen party and the patron of the idols, yet she faithfully preserved inviolate the liberty of worship and teaching to the missionaries and their converts.

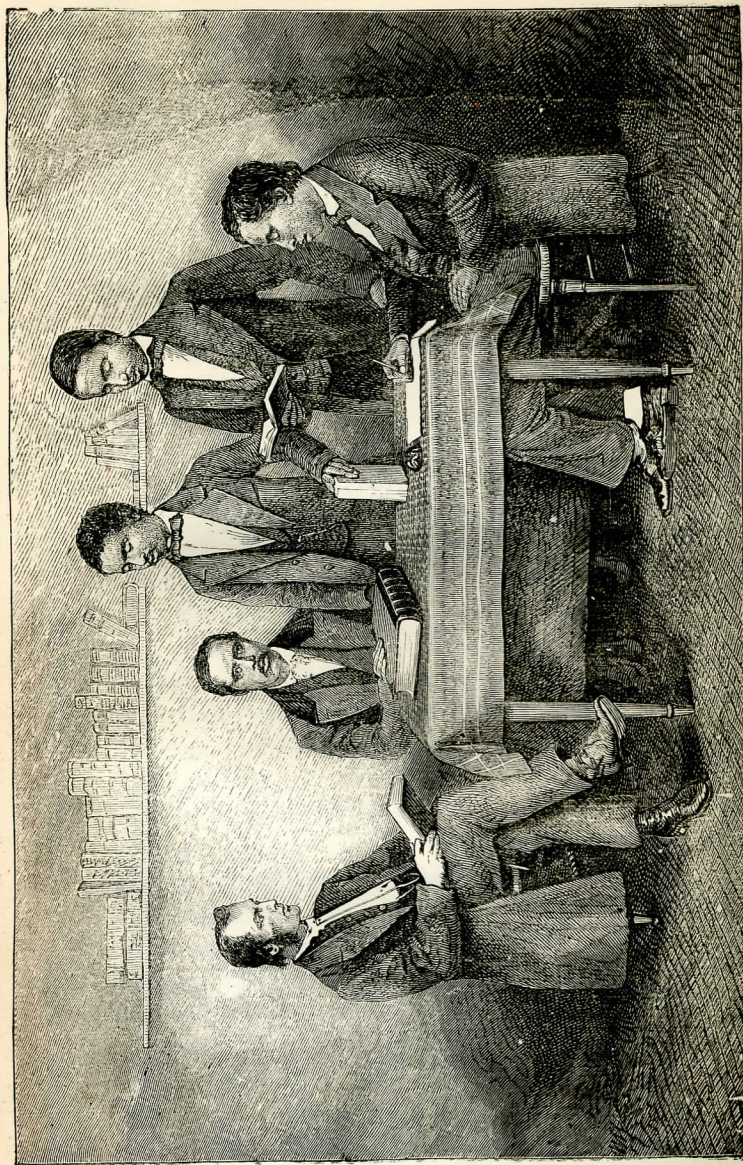
Though many of the Christians were almost stunned and bewildered by the shock of this sudden change, it operated favourably on them as a whole, by causing many to feel the insecurity of earthly things; and it thus induced greater spirituality of mind, and increased earnestness and attention to the requirements of the gospel. The churches were well attended, and numbers were added to their fellowship, frequently as many as twenty at one time.

The missionaries justly considered that the capital had the first claim on their attention and efforts, but they did not confine themselves to this important position. Congregations were reviving in the villages around, many of which had contained one or more of the schools established by the first missionaries. Some of these had been visited by the native teachers, and by the missionaries recently arrived. Mr. Toy had extended his care to various villages in the south.

Mr. W. Cousins had gone to the north. Mr. Toy soon afterwards formed a small class of young men in his Church, to whom he gave special instruction, with a view to their becoming preachers among the surrounding villages. Messrs. William and George Cousins, and Mr. Hartley, also trained classes of young men for the same important work. In order to excite deeper Christian sympathy in our congregations on behalf of their own countrymen, we arranged with the ministers and Churches of the capital to commence a monthly missionary prayer-meeting, which we proposed should be held in rotation at the largest places of worship in the capital, the services at each place to be arranged by the ministers of the congregation.

The first of these monthly missionary prayer-meetings was held at Análakély on the first Monday of August, 1863, and long before the appointed time many more people had arrived than could gain admittance within the building, so that we removed the pulpit to a large doorway, in order that both those within and those without might unite in the service. There were at least three thousand persons present. All seemed gratified, and when they dispersed, as the sun was approaching the horizon, many expressed their regret that they had not met at an earlier hour.

Nor was it at Antananarívo alone that these encouraging tokens of the Divine blessing were manifested. The change in the government brought many persons from distant parts of the country to the capital, and amongst those from the west and



REV. R. TOY AND SOME OF HIS NATIVE PREACHERS.

from the south came Christian men, whose conversation, spirit, and conduct gave satisfactory evidence of their faith. They encouraged us also by the accounts they brought of other Christians in these remote parts. One individual received into communion with us had, as an officer, been most active in arresting some who had died for Christ.

But more remarkable still was the case of the inhabitants of a village to the north, Ampárafaraváto, the whole population of which had been votaries of the idol or idols kept in the village. But the gospel had penetrated there, and a number of these villagers had become Christians. Appropriating one of their houses for Christian worship, they had abandoned the idols, and met together in the house thus set apart for the worship of the true God. Some of these now came to Ambátonakanga, attended our worship, and applied for admission to fellowship with us. Those who knew them having testified to their Christian character, they were baptized, and afterwards received into the Church.

Fears were entertained by some lest these proceedings should displease the queen; but when her Majesty was informed of what had taken place, she said, "If any of the people of the villages are Christians, and wish to leave, they may do so. It is nothing" (meaning, there is no blame). "Let those who wish, go, and those who wish, stay; for there is no impediment to the following of the idols, or to uniting with the Christians." On this word of the queen some of these Christians had come and united

themselves with our Church and congregation. This speech of the queen had been delivered publicly; it was now repeated before the officers of the government and others who were present, inspiring confidence while it gave encouragement.

The dispensary which Dr. Davidson had opened as soon as practicable after his arrival was very successful. The assistance rendered to the sick, and the skill with which the doctor treated a large proportion of the multitudes who daily sought his help, deeply impressed the inhabitants of the capital and the suburbs with the benevolent aims of the mission, which, while seeking chiefly to lead the morally diseased to the great Physician of souls, did not leave, as beneath its notice, those afflicted with bodily infirmity and disease to suffer without help.

The fame of the cures effected spread far beyond those who had experienced their benefits, and of the vast number of strangers who thronged the capital at this period, few returned to their native homes without a visit to the dispensary, to witness the benefits bestowed upon others, or to seek relief for themselves.

Rabódo had been crowned by Radáma as queen consort, but she had now been proclaimed sovereign, and, under the title of Rasohérina, had received the homage and allegiance of her own people, and of the distant races who acknowledged the Hova rule.

The queen had restored the idols and the priests to the position which they occupied in the palace during the reign of Ránaválona, and the public official move-

ments of the government were regulated by divination. As already stated, the queen was regarded as the head of the heathen party, and it is only due to the memory of Rasohérina to say that, by identifying herself with the adherents of the idols, she quieted the apprehensions and calmed the spirits of those who were alarmed and impatient at the numbers and the power which Christianity was drawing to itself; yet she faithfully and carefully guarded the liberties and privileges of the Christians, showing them at the same time much personal good-will, and by the placing of her adopted children under their instruction, she further manifested her confidence in their integrity and general character.

At intervals after the revolution which placed the queen upon the throne, the peace of the province and some of the neighbouring districts was greatly disturbed by rumours that Radáma, though reported to be dead, was still living, and waiting in concealment for his friends to replace him on the throne. Whether these rumours were, as some said, originated by parties seeking to discover any who might be hostile to the recent change, or by parties having political aims of their own to accomplish, or by others bent on plunder, did not very clearly appear; but many lives were sacrificed among the tribes in the west, and sixteen were put to death at the capital.

Even in the dark and depressing years of persecution, the Christians had observed the return of the season when the birth of Christ is commemorated; and having received the queen's approval of their

proposal to pay their respects to the sovereign on this annual Christian festival, they met this year in their several places of worship at daybreak on the morning of Christmas day, concluding the service about eight o'clock; after which they repaired to Andohálo, the place of public assembly within the city, where the number assembled amounted to seven or eight thousand. Thence they walked, four abreast, in one long procession to the palace, singing along the way.

When they reached the palace the members of the royal family were already assembled outside, and when the queen came out she was welcomed with cordial greetings by the vast assembly. The singers sang the national prayer for the queen, and two Christian officers addressed her Majesty with much feeling and propriety. The queen gave a brief but approving reply, and assured the assembly of the satisfaction which their declaration of attachment had afforded. All appeared pleased with the singing, and surprised at the number of the Christians. The national anthem was again sung, after which the queen rose, and, amid renewed expressions of cordial feeling, returned to the palace.

The year thus closed, although it opened with bright prospects, had been one of great changes, alarm, and apparent danger to the mission; but it had closed under circumstances which stimulated to greater effort and stronger hope. There had been a continued increase among the believers, and this although the supreme objects of the nation's worship and dread—the spirits of the ancestors—had sent, it

was said, denunciations from the invisible world against the worshippers of the true God. Though the maddened priests had threatened personal violence, and death warnings against the servants of Christ had been repeatedly given, the confidence of the Christians had not failed. Amid all the wild, erratic movements of the idolaters, through conspiracy, revolution, and shedding of blood, the destruction of one sovereign and the exaltation of another, Christianity had not only held its own, but had increased in numbers and influence, until, at the close of this eventful year, it occupied a more advanced position, and exercised greater power than it had ever attained before.

The mission had also been strengthened by the arrival of additional helpers in Mr. and Mrs. Pearse, and Mr. Kessler. Two additional places of worship had been built, in which congregations had been gathered and Churches formed: other buildings were in progress. The large central school had been finished, and was in working operation, with a hundred and thirty children in daily attendance. In reference to these children, Mr. Stagg, the schoolmaster, expressed his opinion that the youth of Madagascar might be educated up to a point equal to that attained in schools of the same class at home.

In connection with the schools, Mr. Parrett had been able to print a supply of the most necessary books for teaching, and was training natives to aid in the work of the press. The missionaries had also extended their personal labours to the adjacent vil-

lages. Mr. Toy had under his care six villages in the south, to which he sent native preachers on the Sabbath day. Mr. Cousins had spent some time in Vonizongo, where he found three good congregations, with six hundred Christians and upwards of a hundred and twenty communicants. When it is stated that the people in this border district of Ankóva had suffered severely during the long season of persecution, and had seen the face of no European teacher or preacher since the expulsion of the first missionaries, it need not be added that the visits of Mr. Cousins afforded unusual satisfaction.

On the 14th of January, 1864, the foundation stone of a new hospital was laid by the prime minister, and about a week afterwards the foundation stone of the first memorial church was laid by the same officer at Ambátonakánga. Quietly and satisfactorily the gospel continued to spread among the people; no month passed for a long time in which additions were not made to the communicants in the churches, or in which messengers did not arrive from distant places with letters of salutation and applications for books.

Among these the Christians of Vonizongo sent, asking for Testaments and Psalms. They said they were indeed many, and their books exceedingly few. The books were supplied; and though the messengers had been two days on the journey, they only rested one night in the capital, and the next day set out for home with their treasures.

A few days afterwards a messenger from a military post three hundred miles to the south-east arrived

with a letter from the Christian governor of the place. His letter gave an encouraging account of the increase of the Christians in that neighbourhood, and asked for books. The messenger had been thirteen days on the journey, and when he came to say that he was about to return, and I pointed out to him the large package of copies of the Scriptures and other books which I had prepared, observing that I feared he would find it somewhat heavy, it was quite refreshing to witness his eye sparkle with joy as he surveyed the package and took it up. He set out the same day on his journey of three hundred miles to his home.

Next to Antanánarivo, the most interesting place in the province is Ambóhimánga, a romantic-looking town crowning the summit of a granite hill, five hundred feet above the undulating plain from which it rises, and which is green and fertile with plantations and cultivated fields of rice. The mountain is clothed to its summit with slender and graceful trees of rich and varied foliage, often festooned with creepers, and altogether so attractive that the native bards have sometimes described the queen as resembling—

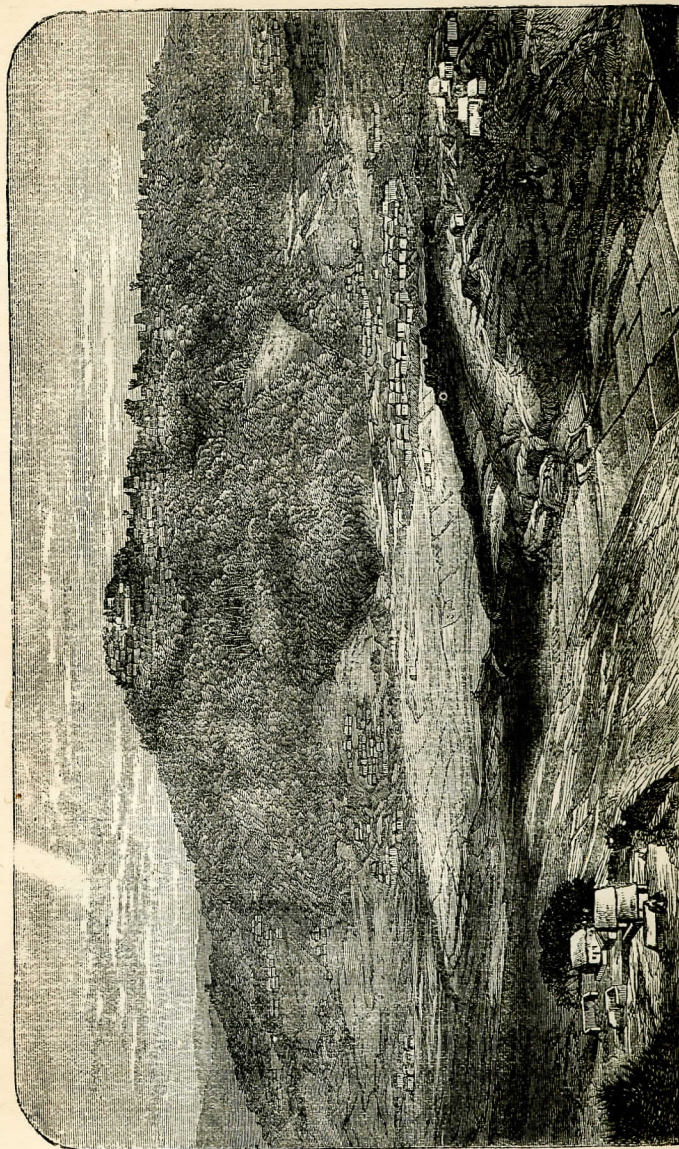
“The woods of Ambóhimánga
Bending down in their growth.”

It was the birthplace of the founder of the present dynasty, and contains, besides the tombs of the sovereign rulers, the house of Fantaka, one of the national idols. No foreigner was allowed to enter within its sacred gates, nor even a native, who was not a resident, without a pass from the authorities. Yet even here there were Christians. They worshipped

in the house of a Christian family, and sought my assistance to obtain a piece of ground on which to build a chapel and a school. I represented the matter to the late king, who cheerfully gave them the land, and appointed special officers to protect the Christians from any outburst of idolatrous zeal.

Ever since the believers in Imérina had experienced Christian liberty themselves, they had regarded with deep interest the progress of Christianity in Betsileo, the inhabitants of which district are more closely allied with the Hovas than any other races in the country. The queen or chieftainess of that large province had charmed the court at Antanánarivo by her noble bearing and glowing eloquence, when she, with her brother and attendants, came as the representatives of the Betsileo to take the oath of allegiance to Rasohérina. Her brother Rafinana, himself a Christian and the representative of a number of his Christian countrymen, was welcomed as a brother by the believers in the capital, between whom and the Betsileo, notwithstanding the distance, cheering and fraternal communication was not unfrequent. The following is one of the satisfactory evidences, not only of the extension of the gospel, but of its power over the hearts and consciences of those who received it in the distant provinces.

An officer at Fianarántsoa lived, before his knowledge of the gospel, as other heathens lived. A number of wives, or of those who scarcely stood in the rank of wives, was allowed by law, and the custom prevailed amongst all classes. This individual



THE SACRED CITY OF AMBOHIMANGA, FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

had several *vady kely*, or little wives, as such individuals are called. The relation had been entered into when all were heathen, and it was not esteemed in any way disreputable. Most of these persons, including the officer, became Christians; and although no European had ever been there, and no correspondence had taken place between them and any of the missionaries on the subject, they became convinced that, for Christians, their manner of life was wrong. The chief, influenced, so far as we could ascertain, solely by the requirements of the gospel, stated that it was not right for them to live together as they had done; and it was arranged that one of the women should continue to live with him as his wife, and the rest should return to their respective homes, with suitable provision for their maintenance.

Such was the decision at which these Christians at Fianarantsoa arrived amongst themselves, simply from what they deemed to be the teaching of the New Testament on this sometimes difficult question. Some of these women were connected with families at Antananarivo who had become Christians, and were members of the congregation with which I was connected. They were sent home honourably, under the care of a trustworthy Christian officer and his attendants. These men frequently visited me during their stay at the capital, and they also stated that the cause above mentioned was the only reason for the separation which had occurred. I do not recollect having met with any more striking instance of the power of the gospel on the consciences of those who had received it.

From the villages in the north we had even greater encouragement than from those in the south. Some of the missionaries had visited Iláfy, a royal village beautifully situated on the summit of a hill, sheltered by gigantic and umbrageous trees. These visits had cheered the people, and revived their Christian zeal. One of their early efforts was to provide for their own spiritual improvement, by erecting a new and enlarged place of worship. They first drew up a statement of their numbers and means, and then sought assistance from the Christians connected with the several congregations in the capital and its neighbourhood.

In the brief statement preceding the list of contributions was the following historical and statistical summary, which was sufficient to set forth the truth of their appeal. The translation is as follows:—

“What the Christians of Iláfy suffered during the time of darkness (persecution).

4 Christians were hunted, seized, and put to death.

3 Christians died in fetters.

2 Christians died from the tangéna, or poison.

4 Christians took the poison, but survived.

15 Christians continued steadfast to the end of the persecution.

28 Christians at Iláfy during that time.

263 added to the Christians since the light (liberty of teaching and worshipping) came to the land.

Total number of Christians at the time this appeal is issued, 298. Of these—

87 are communicants.

51 have been baptized, but are not communicants.

160 have not yet been baptized.

—
298 total.”

This appeal was successful, and they completed one of the best furnished village chapels in the country. The above statement is instructive, as showing probably the average number of Christians in the villages around the capital during the season of persecution, and the proportion of those who actually suffered during “the time of darkness,” as they expressively called it. Nearly one-half of the whole were tried for their lives on account of their faith, and very nearly one-third suffered death because they were Christians.

If the experience of the Christians of Iláfy be regarded as setting forth that of other villages, it will assist us in understanding the severe ordeal through which, in the very commencement of their religious life, the Christian villages of Ankóva had to pass. The addition to their number after the proclamation of religious freedom, which they speak of as the “coming of the light,” will also serve to show the blessed results of that change within three years after it had occurred.

Having occasion again to visit Ambóhimánga, I determined to go on to Isáratrofóhy, the dwelling-place of Andriamánanténa, one of the distinguished leaders of the Christians, who, after having survived several severe persecutions, fell during the last and

most sanguinary one. I had received in England letters from him till within a short time of his arrest and execution, and felt deep interest in the welfare of his family. On reaching the house I was received by his widow and daughter with a truly Christian welcome. By the energy and influence of this devoted man the gospel had been conveyed to a number of villages in the neighbourhood, among the inhabitants of which his name and character were held in high esteem.

The house and its surroundings were evidences of the enterprise and industry of its master. His widow, a woman of energy and of kindness, as well as an active and devoted servant of Christ, seemed to live but to carry forward the great work for which her husband had died, and by the quiet influence of her unobtrusive kindness had gained the affectionate esteem of all around.

The conversation during the evening was deeply interesting and affecting. Those present narrated the perils of the Christians in that region who had been put to death; they described the concealment of the master of the house and his companions in the neighbouring caverns, or amongst the tall reeds of the swamps or the canes of the river, as well as his marvellous escapes from those who were dogging his steps for weeks together during a long series of years.

I next visited a neighbouring village where I had arranged to meet the people, and found the place of worship nearly filled. Near one of the doors I observed a place like a cupboard, and on asking what

it was, they lifted the board and showed me a passage for escape, by which, in time of danger, a person could leave without being seen by those outside. In addressing the people on this and similar occasions, I was naturally drawn to dwell on the mercy and faithfulness of God, as manifested by their presence there under circumstances of peace and safety; and from the experience of the past I encouraged them to endeavour to bring all around them under the influence of the faith and love of Christ.

A number of Christians sentenced to wear the fetters in the last persecution had been banished for a time to another small village, to which I went, to visit the spot where those Christians had suffered. I was led to a small house having only a doorway, and one or two little windows. In this place nine Christians, chained together night and day, had been confined, and my guide showed me how the heavy bars of iron were either supported by cords from the roof, or propped up by stones against the wall, when they sat or lay down on the ground. It was a deeply affecting place. My friend pointed to a slave woman, with a child in her arms, belonging to the place, and, with grateful emotion, stated how kind that slave had contrived to be to them during their sufferings. I also saw the market-place of the adjacent village of Alátsináina, round which the heavily manacled Christians were led every market day, in order to deter the spectators from following their example.

CHAPTER X.

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

Bereavements of the mission—New churches and increase of worshippers — The Church at Lazáina — Treaty with England — Queen Victoria's message and Queen Rasohérina's reply—Departure of Mr. Ellis—Opening of the first memorial church—Its influence on the people—Arrival of missionaries from the Society of Friends—Remarkable increase of the Christians—Illness of the Queen—Conspiracy in the capital—Death of the Queen.

THE year 1864 had been in some respects one of affliction to the mission. Mr. Stagg, the master of the central training school, had suffered under repeated attacks of fever shortly after commencing his important work, although his death did not take place before he had seen the normal school in promising operation. His removal was justly regarded as a heavy calamity to the mission, which, for a length of time, found itself crippled in one of its most important departments of effort for want of trained and qualified teachers.

Mrs. Pearse, who, with a noble heroism, accompanied her husband to his post of duty, and entered upon the acquisition of the language with great assiduity and success, while drawing to herself the hearts of many of her own sex, was arrested in her labours by alarming illness, resulting in death, scarcely more than seven months after her arrival in the country.

Besides these bereavements, the Christians had

been affected by the evident instability of the existing government, and the danger of violent interruption to the peace of the community. But, on the whole, the year had been a great gain to the mission. Its numbers had been increased by the arrival of three additional missionaries, with their wives. The printing-press had been employed, and the medical branch of the mission had been extended. Three new places of worship had been opened, and two others enlarged. New congregations had been gathered in three of these buildings, and they had largely increased in the others.

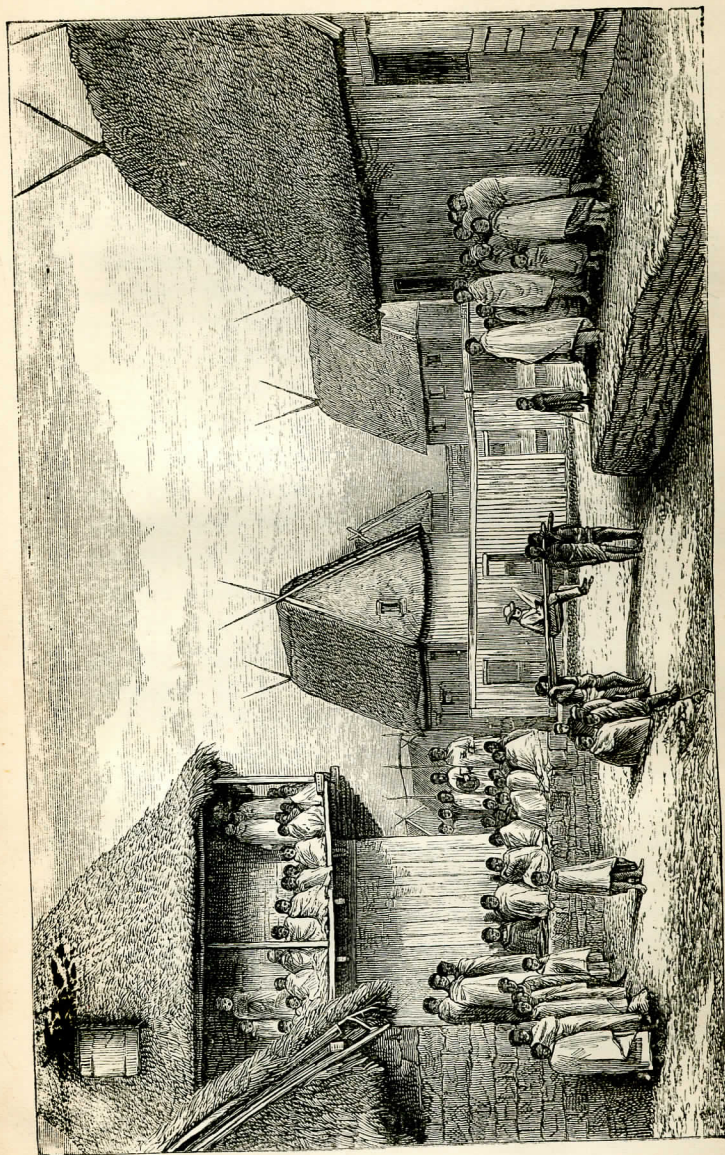
The spiritual work of the mission had been truly cheering. There were now seven congregations in the capital itself, and about seven thousand Christians, of whom six thousand attended public worship every Lord's day. Connected with these avowed Christians there were, in the several churches in the city, one thousand four hundred communicants, in addition to which some of the churches received two hundred during the following year. The Christian Churches in the villages around had also received, in equal measure, the Divine blessing.

A number of the Christians worshipping at Ambá-tonakánga belonged to the village of Lazáina, about nine miles to the north of the capital. This village was the birthplace and residence of Ranívo, who occupied a noble and conspicuous position at the trial and execution of the martyrs in 1849. I arranged to spend a Sabbath there, and found two hundred Christians belonging to the village, and a

nice new chapel, in a central spot, in course of erection. Although it was on public ground belonging to the village, the head men of the place had readily consented to this occupation of the spot for a building devoted to Christian worship. The Christians had many questions to ask, which I answered. I then listened to their expressions of gladness at the privileges which they now enjoyed, as well as to accounts of suffering through which many had passed during the time of "darkness," or persecution.

On the following morning Mr. George Cousins came from the capital, and arrived at the centre of the village in his chair, just as I was taking a photograph of the house in which we had held our worship on the previous day, and which was close to the new chapel in course of erection. I requested him, while I did so, to remain a moment in the middle of the road, and in front of the house on the pavement, in the verandah of which a large number of Christians were assembled. I left Lazaina soon after, but had the pleasure of visiting it again, and of assisting at the opening of the new chapel before my final departure from Madagascar.

After the death of Radama, the Malagasy government sent an embassy to England, to propose a revision of the treaty concluded with the late king. In due time the ambassadors returned with the draft from Earl Russell, and in the month of June the treaty was officially presented to the Malagasy government. It was subsequently signed in presence of the queen by the principal officers of the government at



New Chapel, in course of erection.
VILLAGE OF LAZAINA.

House used for Christian Worship.

the royal palace. This treaty secured to Englishmen liberty to travel and reside in all parts of Madagascar, excepting three cities, of which Ambóhimánga was one. By the third article, the treaty also secured to British subjects liberty to exercise and teach the Christian religion, and to erect suitable places of worship; these to be recognised as belonging to the Queen of Madagascar, as in the case with all other property in the country.

In reference to the agreement respecting the churches belonging to the queen as a trustee for their legitimate appropriation, the following document, executed immediately afterwards, signed by the officers who had attached their signatures to the treaty, and attested by the signature and seal of the British consul, was furnished by the government:—

“In accordance with the meaning of Article III. of the English treaty (with the Malagasy), the churches to be built by the London Missionary Society at Faravóhitra, Ambátonakánga, Ampamarínana, Ambóhipótsy, and Fiadánana, shall be put aside by the sovereign of Madagascar for the teaching and worship of those missionaries, and for the Malagasy who unite in the same worship with them, and for their successors for ever. And the sovereign shall set apart and protect (those churches), and not permit them to be used for worship by persons who do not unite with them, and whose worship is not the same as the worship of those who built them.”

No title in Madagascar is more valid than that by which the Memorial Churches are secured.

The most welcome part of the communication, to the Christians, was the statement in the letter which accompanied the treaty, that Queen Victoria requested, as an expression of friendship to herself, that Queen Rasohérina would not allow the Malagasy Christians to be persecuted on account of their religion.

The following are the words by which, in the treaty, Queen Rasohérina responded to the generous and humane solicitation of the Queen of England:—

“Her Majesty the Queen of Madagascar, from her friendship for her Britannic Majesty, promises to grant full religious liberty to all her subjects, and not to persecute or molest any subject or native of Madagascar on account of their embracing or exercising the Christian religion.”

When I read these paragraphs I thanked God that He had disposed our gracious Queen to make this request, and had inclined the Queen of Madagascar to agree to it promptly and fully. It is only just to say that this engagement was faithfully kept. Often in our places of worship on the Sunday, when I have heard the native ministers pray for their own sovereign, I have been gratified to hear them, at the same time, implore the Divine blessing on Queen Victoria.

On the first Sunday in July, 1865, I administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper at Ambátonakanga for the last time; and at a subsequent meeting took leave of the Church and congregation, commending them to the care and blessing of the Great Head of the Church. I was deeply affected by the evidences of

their kindness and Christian feeling on that occasion. Mr. George Cousins, who had for nearly twelve months been associated with me in the pastoral duties there, and who had entered with ability and energy upon the great work before him, afforded me every encouragement in relation to the care of the flock over which he was now to become the English pastor. With him was to be associated Rátsiláingia and the young preachers whom Mr. Cousins was training for their work.

This native pastor, who was one of the first converts baptized in the Church in 1831, I found acting as minister of the people when I arrived. The Church then consisted of seventy-six members. When I left, without reckoning fifty or more who had been sent to help in the formation of other Churches, they amounted to two hundred and seventy-nine.

When I left the capital on the 18th of July, the Christians met me on the road at the foot of the hill on which the city stands. I addressed a few words of encouragement to them as they stood around me, and then my native co-pastor affectionately bade me farewell on behalf of the Church and people. There were present a number of the widows and orphans of the martyrs, and Rátsiláingia asked me to accept from the Church a silk lamba for my wife. I gratefully received their present, and, taking leave of them and the missionary brethren, pursued my way. I sailed on August 3, and having received from friends in Mauritius their wonted hospitality, proceeded to England, where I arrived in safety on October 14, 1865.

The review of the mission at the close of that year exhibited marked and cheering progress. The new hospital had been finished, and proved a source of extended benefit to the people. A new substantial chapel had been built at Análakély, where the labours of Mr. Pearse appeared to be followed by increasingly satisfactory results. A Church had been organised among the people worshipping in the temporary building on the edge of the precipice, and the male and female scholars were being carefully taught by Mr. and Mrs. Briggs.

Mr. William Cousins, returning from England with Mrs. Cousins, had not only received a joyous welcome, but had found, under the care of Andriambélo and his native assistants, an augmented Church, comprising nearly six hundred members, and a prosperous congregation. The large supply of Malagasy Bibles, which had been received from the British and Foreign Bible Society, with smaller books, had supplied the long and deeply felt wants of a large portion of the Christian community; while, besides the advantages of the mission press, Mr. Parrett rendered valuable aid in the Sunday-schools and Bible-classes.

Mr. George Cousins had enlarged his temporary chapel, still too small, and rejoiced with Mrs. Cousins in the progress of the scholars in both schools. He also met with much encouragement in the extension of the gospel among the villages to the north, where eight of the most important places were connected with his city Church. When he visited Ambóhimánga, the officers appointed by the queen to guard that

sacred city and its idols from the intrusion of Christians and foreigners were amongst his most attentive hearers. The village stations under the care of the other missionaries had also increased and were prosperous. When I left in July, there were one thousand five hundred communicants in connection with seven of the Churches in the city, and by the close of the year their numbers had greatly increased; the influence of the Christians was also recognised in every section of the general community, and Mr. Toy stated that all the churches were crowded every Lord's day.

The following year, 1866, opened with still more promising indications. In April, Mr. Toy received into fellowship with his Church a hundred and forty-five, thus increasing the number of communicants in the Church under his care to five hundred. Two months later, those under the care of Mr. W. E. Cousins exceeded six hundred. The statistics of the mission in June, 1866, gave a total of seventy-nine city and village Churches, under ninety-five native and European pastors, with a total of 4,374 communicants, and nearly nine hundred children in the mission schools.

The year 1867 opened with the most important and joyous event which had yet marked the progress of the Madagascar mission—the opening at Ambátónakánga, for the worship of the true God, of the first of the memorial churches given by England to Madagascar. Its foundation had been laid with prayer, its top-stone had been brought forth with ascriptions of

praise to Him by whose guardian care the sacred edifice had been completed.*

The opening day partook of the character of a national festival. Christians from the surrounding country, as well as from every part of the capital, in their holiday attire, gathered in the early morning in the surrounding space. Even the heathen gazed with wonder at the structure, and felt that the Christian worship was something deemed to be of far greater importance, and to be offered under circumstances vastly more impressive, than had ever been conceived of by the votaries of the idols.

The mission was further strengthened by the arrival of Mr. Jukes, appointed to the long vacant station at Ankádibeváva. Writing of the united missionary prayer-meeting, which he first attended at Mr. Toy's church, at Ambóhipótsy, Mr. Jukes observes:—"Although the service was announced to commence at nine o'clock, there were crowds in and around the building long before that hour. Mr. Toy told me that the keys were fetched from his house as early as six, to open the doors to the people, who were at that time waiting for admission. When I went, a few minutes

* When the top-stone with the vane was fixed on the pinnacle of the spire, Ráinimaházo, the chief mason, proposed to Mr. Sibree, and Mr. Cousins, the minister of the church, who, with the workmen, were sitting on the scaffolding around the top of the spire, that they should then and there offer thanks to the Lord, who had enabled them to complete the building without accident or injury to any one engaged in the work. All took off their hats while this devoted man, who was a deacon of the Church, offered their united thanksgiving to God, who had thus far prospered the work of their hands.

before nine, the church was densely filled, and large numbers were standing round the windows and doors, because there was not room for them inside. I should think there were at least 1,600 persons present, all of whom appeared to manifest great interest in the service. It really did my heart good, and caused me to praise God for His goodness, as I sat there, remembering that I was in a heathen land, and looked down upon that vast concourse of people, assembled together the first thing on a Monday morning to hold a missionary meeting."*

The good effect of the opening of the memorial church in the beginning of the year, which produced considerable impression on the minds of the heathen, was still further increased when a substantial school, capable of receiving a hundred and fifty scholars, was shortly afterwards opened. This school had been erected by the generous aid of the Society of Friends, in England, who, since the reopening of the country to missionary efforts, had very liberally contributed towards the promotion of education amongst the people, in connection with the operations of the London Missionary Society.

Not satisfied with simply aiding others in providing buildings and materials, the minds of Friends in America, as well as in England, were influenced in favour of rendering more decided and valuable help in missionary work than their Society had hitherto given; and, in 1867, Mr. and Mrs. Street, and Joseph S.

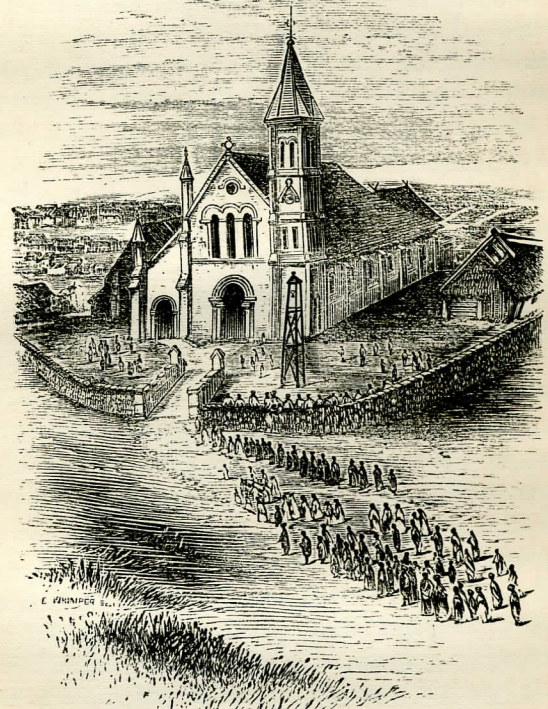
* The meetings at this season of the year are held in the early morning, as heavy rains often fall later in the day.

Sewell, reached the capital, and commenced assisting in the school.

These brethren were welcomed with affection and pleasure by the missionaries, who felt themselves strengthened in that important department which, by the death of Mr. Stagg, had been left most deficient. By friendly arrangement they have been able, with God's blessing, to carry forward in harmony, and with mutual kindness, the great and important objects in which they are unitedly engaged.

Native-built chapels at Imáhamásina, Ambónilóha, and other places, were opened in this year. Mr. Pool was proceeding, as rapidly as the aid available would allow, with the erection of the memorial church at Ambóhipótsy, and before the close of the year Mr. Cameron had laid the foundation of the Children's Memorial Church at Faravóhitra.

The remarkable feature in the Churches at this time was the enlarged interest, increased attendance, and spiritually beneficial effects connected with the Bible instruction. The aged, adults, and youth of both sexes were regular, earnest, and deeply attentive learners in these classes. Sometimes the chapels were the only places large enough to contain the numbers who came to hear and to learn. God mercifully raised up and brought to the aid of the missionaries additional native helpers, or they would have been unable to lead the people onward in the path of life. As it was, their strength was taxed to its utmost limit, and they were often obliged to relax for a season, to enable them to continue their arduous but delightful work.



THE CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL CHURCH, FARAVÓHITRA.

In this, as in previous seasons of religious earnestness amongst the people, there were no additional services, and no new methods of procedure introduced; all was effected by increased concern in the minds of the people, and by the enlarged experience of the influence of the Holy Spirit on their hearts. The several pastors of the Churches had devoted a longer time than heretofore to the preparation and admission of members to their fellowship, yet the increase is described, even in regard to accession to their numbers, as greater than ever known since the establishment of the mission; for, at the close of the year, there were twenty-one thousand native adherents to the Christians, and five thousand communicants.

The opening of the year 1868 was accompanied by increased desire on the part of the people after acquaintance with the holy Scriptures, especially their practical teaching. Classes for reading and explaining the Word of God were multiplied, and these were attended by numbers so large as to require the meetings to be held in the places of worship. These services continued to be well attended, and the missionaries were continually cheered by additions from among the heathen. Messrs. Toy and Pearse, who at this time paid a visit to Vónizóngo, met with eight hundred Christians and two hundred communicants.

The queen, whose health had been failing, went, early in the year, to Ambóhimánga, the favourite resort, as well as the sanatorium of the royal family.

But the change of air and the charms of scenery, as well as the trusted influence of the idols, all failed to restore her wasted strength or renew her waning life. Rumours began to circulate in the capital of a vacant throne, and certain partisans of the late prime minister, and opponents to his successor, formed a plan for proclaiming a young man of their own party as king of Madagascar, and they only waited for the queen's death to execute their project.

The queen was now rapidly sinking. The officers endeavoured to persuade her to return, but as the idol had promised her recovery, she refused to make the attempt. The prime minister then requested the chief of the priests to induce the idol to recommend her Majesty to return. The veteran hierarch is reported to have replied that he could not force the god. The minister replied that was true, but perhaps he might influence his keepers. The priests afterwards brought the idol Kélimaláza to the queen, and said the oracle declared her Majesty must go to Antanánarivo, but the queen doubted their word, asking if they had really received such inspiration; and although they answered that they really had, she still refused to return.

About this time a rumour reached the conspirators that the queen had actually expired, and they began to execute their purpose by attacking the officers, and entering the palace; but the prime minister, having intelligence of their proceedings, sent troops, with orders to seize their leaders.

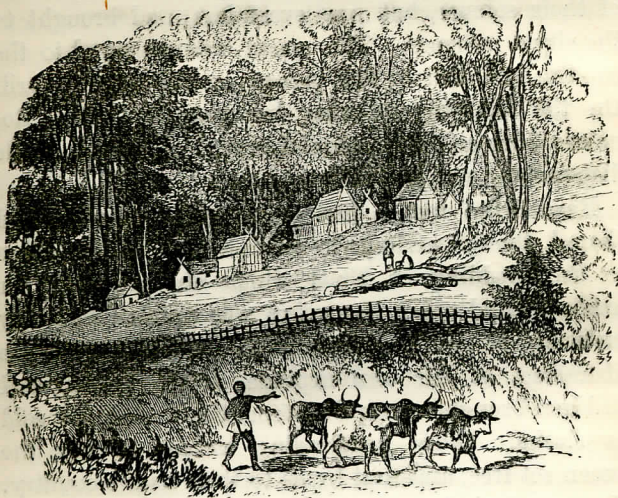
The queen being informed of this movement, sent

a message that all the men in Antanánarivo who were loyal to her should repair to the spot where she was, and that night there was scarcely a man left in the capital except the conspirators. Ill as she was, her Majesty was brought out on a couch under the verandah of the house, and was cheered by the loyalty and devotion so promptly tendered by her subjects.

The leading conspirators had been already captured. The former minister, who at their call had nearly reached the city, hastened back when he heard of their seizure, but was overtaken, and brought to the city a prisoner. The queen was conveyed to the capital, and died at the palace on the 1st of April. On the following morning her younger sister Romómo (also called Ramórabé, on account of her gentle disposition) was proclaimed queen.

Rasohérina was a just and considerate ruler, and shared, though perhaps in a less degree, that aversion to the shedding of blood which characterized her husband Radáma. Her reign was marked by many instances of personal kindness; especially so was the liberating, at her own expense, of the women and children brought as captives from the west to be sold as slaves. These unoffending victims of war the queen set free, and sent home to their native country. Her promise, when she came to the throne, to protect the Christians, was faithfully kept to the end of her life; and though she never disavowed her faith in heathenism, her confidence in the idols would seem to have been shaken, by her conduct after the last

pretended communication from them. Some incidents during her last illness would seem also to indicate that she was not ignorant of the value of prayer to Jesus Christ; and the prime minister, in a letter which I received from him shortly after her death, spoke of her as having openly prayed to God before she died.



A MALAGASY VILLAGE.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT ?

Accession of Ránaválona II. — Her refusal to acknowledge idolatry — Edict respecting the Sabbath—General religious awakening among the people—The crown and the Bible—Opening of the second memorial church—Baptism of the queen and prime minister—Large increase of inquirers—Mr. Sewell's testimony—Spread of the gospel in Betsileo—Fifty years of missionary labour in Madagascar—Its glorious results—Burning of the national idols—Inadequacy of the present missionary agencies —“Waiting and praying for teachers.”

RÁNAVÁLONA, the name adopted by the newly proclaimed sovereign, sent word to the missionaries, on the morning on which she became queen, that their privileges would be preserved; and decisive evidence of the principles and purposes actuating her was soon given. On the morning after the funeral of the late queen, the priests of the idols came, as priests or keepers, to offer their *hásina*, or acknowledgment of her sovereignty, to the new queen. She declined, however, to receive it, and informed them that she could not recognize them as priests, but only as subjects. The idol of Rasohérina was also removed from the palace. The astrologers, or manipulators of the *sikidy*, and the diviners, were also informed that the queen could only regard them as subjects, as she did not recognize their pursuits.

After the termination of the national mourning, when the people returned to their ordinary employ-

ments, the queen issued an order that all government work should cease during the Lord's day. About the same time, the prime minister sent for some of the native preachers, and had the Scriptures read and prayer offered within the court of the palace. A proclamation was some months afterwards issued, closing all Sunday markets. Weekly markets are held throughout Madagascar in different towns and villages on different days, and the people whose markets had been held on the Sunday were directed to choose some other day.

Thus far the course of Christianity in Madagascar had been one continued unfolding of the Divine care and blessing. The instrumentality employed had been weak and imperfect, as all human agency in such a work must necessarily be, but the evidence of the Divine efficiency attending it was thereby rendered more unmistakable and strong.

The progress of Christianity in that country has been, from the beginning, remarkably instructive; but the events which have marked its course during the next two years have been, perhaps, unsurpassed by any that have recently occurred among other portions of mankind. It is as if the Most High had been repeating, among a small and isolated portion of our race, for the encouragement of His Church in the present day, the process by which Christianity achieved its earlier triumphs, and by which all nations shall see His great salvation.

At the time now under review all the places of worship were crowded. The movement in favour of

Christianity became general, and more strongly marked than it had ever appeared before. The most influential portions of society, as well as the more numerous members of the servile class, appeared to be simultaneously drawn to the house of God. The existing places of worship were enlarged, but the attendance was still in excess of the accommodation at every place; while additional meetings for reading and explaining the holy Scriptures attracted increasing numbers, and aroused more earnest attention.

Sensible of the dangers to which such a state of feeling exposed the people, the missionaries held special meetings for prayer and conference amongst themselves, and arranged to devote greater attention and a longer period to grounding their catechumens in the great foundation truths of Christianity, before they administered baptism or received them to the fellowship of the Church. This earnest religious concern among the people was not confined to the city or the villages of the province. The same attention to the claims of the Word of God and the welfare of the soul appeared to be manifest in remote provinces, as well as in Imérina. Messengers and letters relating to this subject came especially from Betsileo, with its hundreds of thousands of inhabitants—a race more closely allied with the Hovas than any other in the country.

The government, which had heretofore been unwilling that missionaries should visit the Betsileo, now encouraged the communication of the gospel to these people; and early in July, Messrs. Toy and

Jukes spent about two months in visiting that country. They found, at the chief places, chapels built, congregations gathered, and Churches formed; many villages willing to receive Christian teaching, in others meetings for worship already being held, and few of the people retaining any very firm hold on idolatry. The two missionaries returned, filled with joy at having beheld the fallow ground apparently broken up, and ready to receive the precious seed of Divine truth.

The great national transaction equivalent to coronation in other countries, but here called the showing or presenting of the sovereign, took place on the 3rd of September, 1868. The large parade ground at Imáhamásina was covered with encampments of strangers from a distance, and with representatives of the subject races. On the day of the coronation Andohálo was thronged from an early hour.

When, at the appointed time, the queen, preceded by a hundred ladies of rank, who walked before her palanquin, advanced across the plain, ascended the richly decorated platform, and appeared before her people, she was enthusiastically cheered. Then, surrounded by the high officers of her kingdom, she took her seat beneath the canopy, on the front of which were inscribed in shining letters the Malagasy words signifying "*Glory be to God;*" on the other sides, "*Good-will among men,*" "*On earth peace,*" and "*God shall be with us.*" On one hand of her Majesty stood a small table with the crown, on the other a small table bearing the handsome Bible sent to her predecessor by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

An event so unprecedented and so important as the public recognition of Christianity on such an occasion by a sovereign who promised to become exceedingly popular, could not fail to have great influence with the people; and while the missionaries were gladdened by the fresh security given for the undisturbed prosecution of their sacred work, they were all profoundly impressed with the new dangers to which such high sanction of Christianity might expose the communities over which they had so sedulously watched. They had recourse to special prayer for Divine guidance and protection, and for the more abundant influences of the Holy Spirit, that prosperity and patronage might not succeed, where persecution had failed, to weaken the love of Christ in the hearts, or destroy the beauty of holiness in the lives of the Christians. They also inculcated on their helpers in the work, and studiously exercised themselves, a prayerful watchfulness over their respective flocks.

Towards the close of this eventful year the attractive and beautiful church erected at Ambóhipótsy,* close to the spot where the first Christian martyr suffered, was so far completed as to admit of its being opened for public worship. The dilapidated temporary building in which the Christians had worshipped, after being repeatedly enlarged, was taken down, and a number of tombs were removed which had stood on the high road from the city to the commanding promontory on which this church stands. The road was then levelled to the site of the building, which affords perhaps the most command-

* See Frontispiece.

ing and extensive view in the whole city, of the east, west, and southern ranges of the country around. For the occasion of the opening of the church, the Christians provided a number of green plantain trees, which were planted along the narrow neck of land leading to the end of the mountain. But all around this spot is arid and sterile, and although the foliage of these trees was fresh and green when planted, the keen winds that sweep over the mountain soon reduced them to ribbons, and left the stems unsightly.

The queen, who seemed to share her people's joy, was present, with her court, on the public opening of the church, and all present appear to have been astonished at the building, and gratified with the services by which it was dedicated to the worship of the living God. There could not be many present who would remember the constancy and love to Christ with which Rásaláma yielded up her life on that very spot; but if there were any who had witnessed her last moments, how strange and full of wonder must have been their thoughts that day.

The year, of which this was the last public act, had been a year of active labour, as well as of unexampled success. New, large, and substantial churches had been completed, and dedicated to the worship of God. The gospel had been widely extended in the provinces, increased educational efforts had been made, and from the press, besides other publications, ten thousand native spelling-books had been disposed of, and an edition of five thousand more was in hand.

In addition to the attention required for these

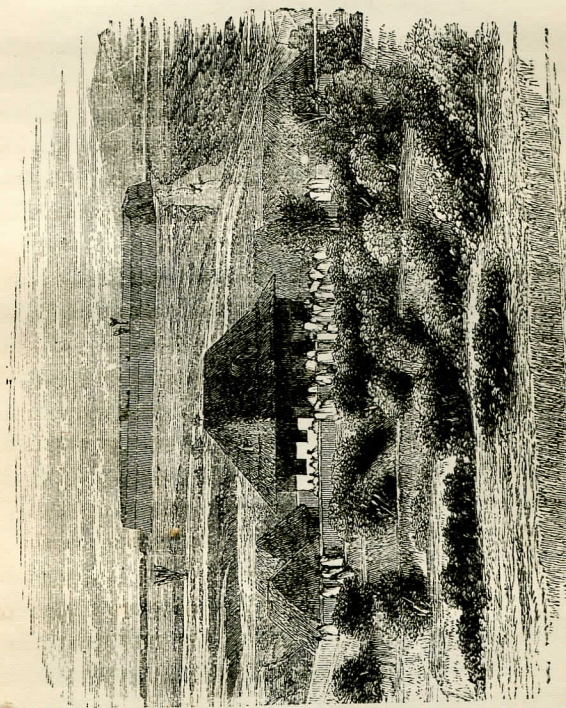
minor publications, literary work imperatively required, but for which it was scarcely possible to secure the requisite time, had been accomplished. The native periodical, *Tény Soa* (Good Words), had in its second year attained a higher character and a wider circulation, fostering among many a taste for reading. The extremely popular native hymn-book had been enlarged, revised, and forwarded to the Religious Tract Society, by whom a new edition had been printed, under the supervision of Mr. Hartley, when in England on account of the failure of his health. But more important still, the missionaries had completed the revision of the Malagasy New Testament, twenty thousand copies of which were printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, also under Mr. Hartley's superintendence.

Marvellous as were the tokens of Divine favour to the Church of Madagascar during the year which had passed, richer blessings were in store for that which followed. At the annual festival of the Malagasy new year, which was held on the 21st of January, 1869, the Christians and the English were invited, with other guests, to the palace, where the feast in former years had been celebrated with idolatrous ceremonies. But on this occasion there was neither idol, priest, nor recognition of the gods of the ancestors. Instead of this, three of the preachers engaged in prayer, and in her address on the occasion the queen said, "This is what I have to say to you, my people. I have brought my kingdom to lean upon God (or I sustain my kingdom by leaning upon God), and I expect you,

one and all, to be wise and just, and to walk in the ways of God."

Andriambélo and his companions had been engaged for some time in instructing the queen in the Word of God. On the 21st of February, on the invitation of the queen, the high officers, the judges, the nobles, the head men of the people, and preachers from each of the city churches, assembled in the large court in front of the palace. After singing, prayer, and preaching, Andriambélo, according to previous arrangement, publicly baptized the queen and the prime minister. The people who were spectators were greatly surprised when they saw the queen, the prime minister, and all the Christians greatly moved and weeping. We cannot wonder, however, when we recollect how many edicts, sentencing to death all who called on the name of Jesus, had gone forth from that palace; perhaps carried into execution by some of those officers, or by the fathers or brothers of some gathered on this occasion to behold, in the broad light of day, and in the midst of the highest dignitaries of the nation, another Ránaválona, now filling the throne of Madagascar, publicly and for ever renouncing the idols and every form of heathenism, and openly, by this act, avowing her faith and associating herself with the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well might the Christians weep from sympathy, thankfulness, and joy.

In a letter which I afterwards received from Andriambélo, he speaks of his continued Sunday services in the palace, and of his pleasure in the diligence



ISAROTRAFOHY, THE MARTYR'S HOME.

[See page 251.]

and attention of the queen and prime minister to his instructions, as well as in their understanding of the Scriptures. He then communicates the truly gratifying intelligence that on the sixth of June, nearly four months after their baptism, they commemorated the death of Christ by partaking of the Lord's Supper, and have thus taken their places among those who declare to the world that they have given themselves to Christ their Lord, and build all their hopes of salvation and eternal life upon the great Sacrifice offered on the cross.

From the windows of her palace the queen may now see the dwelling of the man of God who nurtured the martyrs' faith, and died a martyr's death, and who, in his visits to her brother, Prince Ramónja, first implanted in her young mind the germs of that heavenly truth which yields the precious fruit we now behold. Her husband, the prime minister, appears to be equally earnest and sincere in the manifestation of the influence of the gospel on his own spirit, and the commendation of it to the people. He must sometimes look with interest at the spot within the palace court in which he buried the martyr's gift, the Bible, which he has since so diligently learned to prize.

The missionaries regard the public avowal of the Christian faith, and participation in the ordinances of the Church, by these high personages with grateful feelings. Speaking of their baptism and their partaking of the communion, Mr. Toy, in his letter on the subject, remarks:—"One thing is certain, the queen received the same course of instruction as that

provided for the other Christians, whatever their station in life, and none ever studied more earnestly, or manifested a more humble and becoming spirit. And the same must be said of the prime minister."

It seemed as if, simultaneously with the events above described, though without being immediately connected with them, interest and concern on the subject of personal religion were exercising the thoughts of men, and urging inquiries on the minds of many in the country around, as well as in more distant parts of the provinces. Numbers of individuals were almost constantly resorting to the houses of the native Christians or teachers, to ask what they must do to be saved. These and others were thronging the Bible-classes and the meetings, amongst them individuals the least likely to be seen there—astrologers, diviners, and others—sometimes aged men, the greater portion of whose lives had been spent in the service of the idols, or in the cruel and superstitious customs of their country. One of the missionaries mentions that even the late queen's astrologer, or revealer of destiny, was a member of his class of candidates for baptism.

In one of their communications the missionaries state, as indicating the rapid increase of the adherents, that one hundred congregations were looking to them for help to build either new or larger chapels, aid being only given towards providing what the natives themselves are unable to supply—such portions of the buildings as have to be bought, and cannot be otherwise contributed; and they add that

one-third of the buildings, for which pecuniary aid was sought, would accommodate from 800 to 1,200 persons each.

The arrival of missionaries from the Society of Friends has already been noticed. The following extracts from a clear and valuable statement from Joseph S. Sewell, of the condition and prospects of the Friends' Foreign Mission in Madagascar, where he and Mr. and Mrs. Street have been successfully engaged, will show the satisfactory state of missionary work in Madagascar as it is now being carried on.

"As to the great truths of the gospel," he observes, "which we long to see laid hold of by the natives of Madagascar, we and the agents of the London Missionary Society are of one faith. And we are very desirous not to introduce among the Christians questions as to forms and ceremonies which, even regarded from our point of view, might have a tendency to unsettle their minds unprofitably, and distract their attention from what is of most importance, by leading them into nice inquiries as to the importance or otherwise of what we consider unessential."

Speaking of the capital, he says: "There are few towns in England where the Sabbath is better observed, or where there is a better attendance at the places of worship; and since I came I have not, to my knowledge, seen more than two persons drunk. There are but few people seen about the streets during the hours of public worship, and there cannot be much fewer than 10,000 people who are in the habit of

attending one or other of the thirteen Protestant places of worship, within the town and its suburbs, every Sabbath. About three or four hundred preachers are frequently engaged in preaching either in the town or the surrounding villages, of whom about sixty or seventy go out every Sabbath day to assist the village congregations—most of them walking five, six, or eight miles, and some further.”

After enumerating the defects amongst the preachers and the general body of the Christians, Mr. Sewell bears the following testimony to the great change now in progress among the people:—“My own firm conviction is that, with much that is unsatisfactory, there is a great work going on in this country, of which the Holy Spirit is the author, and that, with much that is merely outside profession, there is a large amount of genuine Christianity which is decidedly on the increase.”

A glance at the introductory chapter of this volume, where the despotism of the religion and government of the country, together with the sanction, encouragement, and the reward, often, of immorality are noticed, will do much to account for the low standard of morality which Mr. Sewell with truthfulness and great candour reports, and which every Christian must deplore; while it will increase our thankfulness that so many have been raised from the mournful degradation in which all were originally held.

The narrative of the progress and triumph of the gospel in Madagascar would be incomplete without some further notice of the astonishing growth of

Christianity in the Betsileo province, which has received only native culture and a brief visit from the English missionary. From this country, Mr. Jukes, one of the missionaries from Antanánarivo, writes in August, 1869:—“I am filled with wonder and gratitude at the showers of grace with which God is favouring His Church. Everywhere that I go the cry is for instruction in Divine things, and Christian congregations are being formed in every direction. The progress made in the Betsileo country is quite equal to, if it does not surpass, the progress in Imérina last year. Here, where I am standing, two days west of Fianarantsoa, there is a most interesting congregation, composed almost entirely of Betsileo, who come to chapel with no dress but a mat, and listen most attentively to the gospel.

“I find in preaching to these people, as I did in England, that nothing gains their attention and wins their hearts so much as the ‘old, old,’ but ever new ‘story’ of the Saviour’s love. The people here are about to build a new chapel, capable of accommodating 1,000 hearers, but I think it will be too small for the crowds who flock to hear the gospel. From this village, right onward to the west coast, congregations have been formed, and the Christians have begged me to visit them.”

In this large province of the Betsileo, which has hitherto only received the culture of native Christians from Imérina, and occasional visits from the missionaries, English missionaries are now labouring, and others are early expected to proceed to this truly inviting field.

In closing the narrative of the glorious progress of Christianity in Madagascar, it only remains now to notice some of its latest and greatest achievements, truly national in their character, and such as must affect every town and village in the kingdom. The foundation stone of a stately chapel royal, to be built of granite, was publicly laid within the precincts of the national palace at the capital, by the Queen of Madagascar, on the 20th of July, 1869. After Malagasy and English ministers had invoked the Divine blessing on the work, and on the sovereign by whom it was undertaken, a regal document was read, and deposited within the stone. This edict, printed copies of which were widely distributed, enacted that the building should neither be destroyed nor diverted to any other purpose than that for which it was built; and further declared that any successor of the present ruler or sovereign who should destroy that edifice, or appropriate it to any other use than that previously stated, should not be allowed to be sovereign of Madagascar for ever.

We have reached in this history the fiftieth year since Christianity first entered the capital of Madagascar, and the results of its progress during the intervening years demand our unfeigned thankfulness to God. Multitudes of the people had renounced their household idols. The national idols had been removed from the palace, the priests no longer formed part of the court, and the astrologers and the diviners were no longer recognised. Some of these have since found a place in the missionaries' Bible-class, at the

Christians' prayer-meeting, or among the numbers who have, by baptism, publicly renounced heathenism and avowed their faith in Christ. A royal sanctuary for the worship of the living God was in course of erection within that palace-court which was deemed so sacred to idolatry that the head of every one who crossed it was uncovered, and obeisance rendered to the tombs of the deified dead which it contained. Christianity, in the person of the present queen, sat enthroned in the royal palace, which resounded with the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and with the voice of Christian prayer and praise.

Another act of the rulers, full of hope for the future, was the establishment before the close of the year of a government printing-press; the first sheet issued from which conveyed to the reading inhabitants of the country a native account of its own coming into existence.

But the great event of the year was the burning of the national idols by order of the queen. The inhabitants of the surrounding districts forthwith committed their own idols and charms to the flames, in which, according to the native expression, they passed away in smoke. So effectual and general was the action of the people, that, within a month after the first idol had been burnt, a small heap of ashes, lying in the open space situated in the centre of most of the villages, was all that remained of the once dreaded objects of the people's worship.

By some this event was regarded as a calamity, while by many it was viewed with extreme satisfac-

tion; but the greater part of the people were probably actuated by a desire to please the queen, or only to obey the orders of the local authorities, many of whom remained in heart as much heathen as before.

Numbers of the people were moved by a desire after Christian teaching as well as by government influence, and numerous and earnest appeals for Christian teachers speedily reached the government and the missionaries from the now destitute people. After conference with the prime minister, the missionaries and the Churches in the capital selected and set apart the best men they could find, whom they sent as evangelists to the necessitous districts. They also provided money for the support of these men, in which they were generously assisted by the minister, the queen, and the Church in the palace; and such was the earnestness and diligence of the people, that before the close of the year 126 teachers and preachers had been sent forth among the 16,000 recent adherents who were now accessible to instruction. Each evangelist received a paper from the government, stating that his appointment by the Church to which he belonged was approved by the queen, and also conveying very wholesome advice about teaching faithfully the Word of God. Some may have proved unequal to the onerous duty to which they were appointed; nevertheless, their work, on the whole, has been carried out with zeal and discretion; they have been single in their aims, and have managed by kindness and patience to win over to the cause of Christ many who were by prejudice and pride thoroughly opposed to the spirit of the gospel.

Considering that the government of Madagascar is absolute, and that the relations that were until lately believed to exist between its rulers and the chief powers of the invisible world, had made it the duty of the former to sustain the religious observances of the people, it would not have been surprising if the present rulers, while acknowledging the supreme spiritual authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, had deemed it right, in part at least, to direct as well as aid the work of the Church. But the missionaries, and others long and well acquainted with the people, express their increasing belief that the government is dealing justly and honestly with the Christians in its declared purpose not to interfere with their freedom. For the ground of such hope and belief we cannot but be thankful unto God.

Equally favourable to the intelligent reception of Christianity is the growing desire for education among the children and young people. The schools connected with the congregations in the capital, under the oversight of the missionaries, continue to afford encouragement; but nothing surpasses the ardour, activity, and determination of many of the young men, the hope of the nation, in seeking advanced teaching and higher attainments; while, in the judgment of their best qualified teachers, they are capable of advancing far beyond all present acquisitions. Death and sickness amongst those engaged in training teachers, together with the great increase of applicants for instruction, have made the existing educational staff of the mission disastrously weak,

and render imperative its early reinforcement. The progress of the mission and the stability of its work depend largely on its teaching power, and painfully as the missionaries feel their need of help, they rejoice to report the progress made as evidence of what might have been achieved with increased means. At the close of the year 1870, there were 359 schools and more than 15,000 scholars amongst the adherents of Christianity, then exceeding 230,000. But three-fourths of these, only just emerging from heathenism, needed the schoolmaster as much as the preacher.

The missionaries, besides attending to the claims of the capital, frequently visit the numerous congregations in the country which are united with the parent Churches in the capital. It was soon found that an educated native ministry was required for these Churches, as well as for the extension of the gospel to more remote regions, and an institution for training a native ministry was commenced in 1869, of which Mr. Toy and Mr. G. Cousins were appointed tutors. The work was commenced with thirty-five pupils, and its progress has been highly encouraging.

The Mission Press, worked by native printers under the management of Mr. Parrett, has rendered important service to the mission, greatly aiding the progress of education. By the efforts of the early missionaries and those of their successors, with the help of some of the best educated among the people, the germ of a native literature has been created. Including the translation of the Bible, Malagasy hymn-books, and the periodical *T'eny Soa* of sixteen pages (of which

nearly 600 are sold monthly), more than 120 publications have been written or translated into the native language. Some of these are but small tracts, others are volumes of from 100 to several hundred pages each. In 1870, besides the Scriptures, large numbers of Malagasy publications were supplied to the people.

But the wonder of that year was the vast number of those who sought Christian teaching. The statistics sent home in December, 1870, exhibit an increase rarely, if ever, equalled in the annals of missions. There were at that time 14 missionaries, occupying 13 centres of influence ; 621 Churches, 158 of which had been added during the year ; 209 native pastors, 56 having been appointed during the year ; 1,802 evangelists, of whom 867 had been engaged during the year ; 20,951 communicants, of whom 10,405 had been received in the course of the year ; there were 231,749 adherents of Christianity, of whom 73,752 had joined the Christians during the same period. In the course of the same year the Churches in the capital and the adjacent villages contributed £3,697 7s. 10½d. towards the maintenance and extension of the gospel in the country.

The year which witnessed these great and blessed results was the Mission's Jubilee. How little during the early season of toil, and through the long, weary years of conflict, suffering, chains, and death, could it ever have been thought that such would have been the close of the first fifty years of this mission.

The conflict was long and sanguinary before Christianity gained the citadel of the nation's idolatry ;

and though the battle has been won, the fruits of the victory, which God by His Spirit has achieved, have yet to be secured. The servants of Christ in the field are unequal to the demands which their very success has created. They cannot sustain their position without a larger amount of help than it has yet been possible to send. Christianity there cannot remain stationary; it must advance, or suffer. For the Churches at home to withhold the required aid will be to invite reaction and inflict loss. Changes have recently been frequent in Madagascar, and others may come. The possibility that some may be less favourable, as well as more cheering considerations, urge immediate effort to meet the cry which is *now* being heard from multitudes in Madagascar, whose Sabbaths are silent, and who are anxiously waiting and earnestly pleading for teachers to tell them how to pray aright, and show them what they must do to be saved.

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