

THE GOSPEL IN MADAGASCAR.

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From a piece

KING RADAMA II.

THE
GOSPEL IN MADAGASCAR:

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF

THE

ENGLISH MISSION IN THAT ISLAND.

SECOND EDITION,

WITH A PREFACE AND AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER BY THE
LORD BISHOP OF MAURITIUS.

“Thou hast magnified THY WORD above all Thy name.”

PSAL. CXXXVIII. 2.

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET.

LONDON : MDCCCLXIII.

PREFACE.

I HAD read the first edition of the present volume before my recent arrival in England, and deemed it well suited to afford a clear idea of such portions of the past history of Madagascar as bear upon the important crisis through which that country is now passing. I was, therefore, quite prepared to give a cordial assent when requested to furnish, for a new edition, a brief sketch of my late visit to that interesting island. The Twentieth Chapter will afford the reader a condensed view of the chief transactions which were comprised in the eight weeks which I was able to give to that visit. I trust that this brief notice of some of the incidents of my journey, and of the intercourse I was enabled to have with the King, and with many of the people, may form a suitable conclusion to this very instructive volume. It is satisfactory to be able to add, that after going

over, on the spot, all the chief circumstances of this deeply-interesting history, I found no one statement of fact in this narrative, which needed any material alteration or correction.

VINCENT W. MAURITIUS.

LONDON:
May 28, 1863.

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THE GOSPEL IN MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER I.

MADAGASCAR.

MADAGASCAR has been aptly termed "the Great Britain of Africa." It merits this appellation from its position, its size, and the character of its population.

Its position, with reference to the mainland of Africa, greatly resembles that of Great Britain with reference to Europe. We commonly keep a globe, in this part of the world, with the North Pole at the top; and while it so stands, the British Isles appear a little to the left of the mainland of Europe, having a length of about 600 miles, by an irregular breadth of about 400 or 500, and an area of between 120,000 and 130,000 square miles. But if we lived in the southern hemisphere, with a southern sky above our heads, we might as naturally allow the Southern Pole, in our globes, to stand at the top, and then we

should find, adjacent to the mainland of Africa, and just where Britain stands in the northern hemisphere, a noble island, 930 miles in length, 300 in width, and having an area of about 200,000 square miles. The resemblance will strike any one who examines in turn the northern and southern hemispheres in their main outlines.

Nor is the likeness in some leading features of the population of Great Britain and Madagascar less striking. As we have, in Britain, a mixture of Ancient Britons, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, so has Madagascar its Betsileo, its Betanimena, its Sakalavas, and its Hovas. The Hovas, too, like our Normans, seem to have been the last settlers, and to have obtained the predominance over the other inhabitants by their superior energy and martial prowess. They appear to be a branch of the great Malayan family, and are of an olive colour, while most of the other tribes are black or dark brown. The Sakalavas have some points of resemblance to our own Saxons. They are "the finest race in Madagascar;" they are tall and robust, well-formed, muscular and strong. They are far more numerous than the Hovas; but, although prompt, energetic, and daring in the hour of danger, they are apt to fall into indolence when the peril has passed, and they now submit, though with some impatience, to the yoke of the more impetuous and aspiring Hovas. As a general term, the whole of the people of Madagascar are known by the name of Malagese, or Malagasy.

The distribution and respective strength of these four great families are thus given: —

The Hovas (central)	750,000
The Sakalavas (west side)	1,200,000
The Betsileo (south)	1,500,000
The Betanimena (east)	1,000,000
		<hr/>
		4,450,000

This estimate, however, was made above a quarter of a century ago, and there have been many wars since it was formed; hence it can only be deemed an approach to the truth. The country in which these four tribes dwell has long been known to be a richly-endowed land. An English merchant (Mr. Richard Boothby) visited the island in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and thus wrote of it:

“Without all question, this country transcends and exceeds all others in Asia, Africa, or America, and is likely to prove of far greater value to any Christian prince or nation that shall settle in it than the West Indies are to Spain. It may be compared to Canaan itself, flowing with milk and honey, being a little world in itself, and the chief paradise upon earth at this day.”*

The provinces of Madagascar abound in all kinds of noble scenery, and in a great variety of natural products. Rivers and mountains are numerous, and the valleys are fertile, and full of fine trees and useful

* Osborne's *Voyages*, vol. ii. p. 634.

plants. They have also medicinal springs and various mineral treasures. Cattle are very abundant. Viewed as political divisions, these provinces are twenty-two, each having its own governor.

Among so many different races, it must be evidently impossible to define with precision the moral and mental characteristics of the Malagasy; but, amidst the usual sins and failings of semi-barbarous tribes, it is noticed with pleasure that they are susceptible of warm friendships, capable of generosity, appreciating tenderness, and much given to hospitality. "Visiting, assisting in distress, lending and borrowing money and property, are carried on among friends and neighbours much more commonly and freely than in England." Love of country, also, is a trait of character which is very discernible.

The religion of Madagascar is singularly vague and indefinite. The people profess to believe in a god, but can scarcely explain what they mean by the term. They sometimes pray, but seem not to know to whom their prayers are addressed, whether to the sun or the wind, or the spirit of some departed sovereign. They have some ugly wooden idols, but they can give no intelligible account of the beings whom those idols are meant to represent. The names of these idols are fifteen, and priests or keepers of these wooden gods are appointed and maintained by the government. These priests, as is universally the case in all ages, extol their respective deities, and celebrate their power. To cure diseases, to drive away pestilence,

and to give fertility to the ground—these are but a few of the assumed virtues of the idols of Madagascar. There is but little stated worship in the idolatry of the Malagasy. The idols are only called upon when need arises; and then the people do not go to the idol, but the idol is brought to them.

A kind of ordeal or divination is in use in Madagascar—the Tangena, or test by poisoned water. It is applied to almost every accused or suspected person; and as its operation is very uncertain, many are destroyed by it, the innocent, unquestionably, as well as the guilty.

The people of Madagascar, taken in the aggregate, are intelligent, and skilful, when instructed, in many of the mechanical arts. They have long been accustomed to spin and to weave, to dig up and smelt iron, to distil spirit, to make ropes and bricks, and to build houses. In all these matters they are far beyond most uncivilised or barbarous tribes. In one respect, however, in which they are backward, they exhibit no resemblance to the inhabitants of Britain. Although inhabiting an island possessing many rivers and fine ports, they show no aptitude for ship-building, and are, in this respect, far inferior to the tribes of Polynesia.

As we have found a resemblance to England in several particulars, hope may be allowed to spring forward, and to imagine one more. Most Englishmen are accustomed, while acknowledging the sins and shortcomings of their country, to trust, that in

spite of these, the world's hopes rest greatly upon England's advance and England's influence. And, although the distance between Great Britain and Madagascar is enormous,—a distance of many centuries; still it may be something better than romance to look forward to the future, and to hope and pray that what England is for Europe, for Asia, and for America,—*that* Madagascar may one day become for poor benighted Africa.

CHAPTER II.

RADAMA.

THIS remarkable man appears to claim and deserve a separate notice, since it is to him that we owe it that Madagascar can be regarded as one state, and can be dealt with as a nation living under a formed and regular government.

Even so recently as the beginning of the present century, travellers could only speak of this island as a fertile country, deserving a better fate, but chiefly inhabited by various barbarous tribes, led and ruled by a number of independent chiefs, as in many parts of the mainland of Africa. But about that period, i. e. towards the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century, the present dynasty began to uprear itself, as one ordained to rule over all Madagascar.

Ankova, or the country of the Hovas, is the most important province of the island. It is sometimes called Imerina, from its principal division. Thus Radama, on obtaining the ascendancy, was sometimes called "the Prince of Imerina," sometimes "King of

the Hovas." It is in this province that the present capital, Tananarivo or Antananarivo, is situated.

Almost a century ago, a principal chief of the Hovas, Andrianbelomasina, indicated as his son's successor an adopted child, Iamboasalama, who, after some disputes, rising even to the height of civil war, became the acknowledged ruler of the Hovas, and conquered several of the adjacent provinces. He took the name of Impoinimerina, or "the desire of Imerina," with the prefix of Andriana, "chief" or "noble." He died in the year 1808, in the palace or royal house at Antananarivo, and left his son Radama to pursue his policy, which plainly aimed at the subjugation of the island. Impoina, or Impoinimerina, or Andrianaimpoinimerina, as he is at various times called, "was a man of active, industrious, stirring habits, and he greatly encouraged industry among his people."* He rendered himself popular by his firm and equal administration of justice; and he greatly advanced and promoted the arts of building, mining, and working in metals. Unhappily, however, in his time, Madagascar became a great mart for slaves: several traders in human flesh settled at the chief port, Tamatave, and by them the isles of Bourbon and Mauritius were chiefly supplied.

Radama, on his accession in 1808, soon showed himself a ruler of energy, penetration, and vast ambition. A few years after, a British agent, Capt. Le Sage, visited the island from Mauritius, and

* Ellis's *History*, vol. ii. p. 126.

succeeded in penetrating to the capital. He says of the chief, or prince, that his manners and conduct were wholly different from those of the other chiefs. "His address was extremely agreeable and prepossessing, and he gave the impression of a man naturally polite."

Intercourse being now opened with Mauritius, Radama lost no time in sending to that island two of his younger brothers, Ratafia and Rahovy, in order that they might receive a European education. Mr. Hastie, a most estimable and competent man, was appointed by the Governor of Mauritius to take charge of them, and in July 1817 he returned with them to Tamatave, where he and they were received by Radama himself, who had gone down to the coast with about 30,000 of his people. Mr. Hastie was now appointed British Resident at the court of King Radama; and his instructions particularly directed him to attempt to induce the king to abolish the slave trade. About the same time another Englishman from Mauritius, Mr. Brady, a non-commissioned officer, took up his residence at Radama's court, in order, at the king's desire, to instruct his troops in the tactics and discipline of a European army. Making good use of Mr. Brady's instructions, the king formed, in a few years, a disciplined army of 15,000 men, armed in the European manner, and provided with artillery, before which no chief or tribe in the whole island could raise any enduring opposition.

Mr. Hastie soon introduced to the king many

things with which he was previously unacquainted, such as horses, clocks, the compass, maps, &c., and he quickly became a great favourite with this ardent and aspiring ruler. He lost no opportunity of urging the point of the discontinuance of the slave trade, and at last gained a promise from Radama, that, if the English government would supply him with arms and ammunition, he would make a law against the exportation of slaves.

Returning to Tamatave, in order to embark for Mauritius, Mr. Hastie found there a letter which had just arrived from Governor Farquhar to the king, in which the strongest reasons were assigned for the abolition of the slave trade. The Governor thus wrote: —

“The first step is to abolish for ever, and by the strongest penalties, the transportation of any black man from Madagascar. Imitate in this the conduct of all the wise kings of the whites. I advise you for your own good, without any view to the interests of the white people, who desire to bring black people into their country to make them work for them.”

Bearing this letter, Mr. Hastie returned to the capital. Radama, for a long time, feared to take the step thus pressed upon him, urging that it would displease his people. At last Mr. Hastie prevailed, and on October 23, 1817, a treaty was signed, by which the king of Madagascar agreed, on certain terms, to put an entire stop to the export of slaves. The English resident now hastened back to

Mauritius, rejoiced at this happy termination of his labours.

A fresh delay, however, soon occurred. Governor Farquhar had returned to England on leave, and his substitute, Governor Hall, refused to ratify or to act upon the treaty. The Malagase king was disappointed and irritated, and all things lapsed into a state of confusion. Happily, in July 1820, Sir Robert Farquhar returned to his government; the treaty was renewed, and on October 11, 1820, a great Kabary (or assembly) was convened, the proclamation was made, and the British flag and that of Madagascar, hoisted side by side, gave token that slavery was abolished.

“I declare,” writes Mr. Hastie, “that the first peal of Radama’s cannon announcing the amity concluded, rejoiced my heart more than the gift of thousands would have done.”

“Radama had shown himself worthy to be a king. Words cannot describe the joy that prevailed, or the glad activity with which the despatches to the provinces were forwarded. The king sent instant orders to the coast for the immediate return of all slaves not yet embarked, desiring that if his subjects were indebted to the slave-traders, they should pay them in money, so that his contract might not be violated.”

Radama took care to insist on one proviso in this arrangement, that ten Malagase youths should be taken to Mauritius, and ten others to England, to be instructed in European arts. One of his own relatives, Rataffe, who had married his sister, had already de-

parted for England, to learn, by personal inspection, something of a country whose power was now so extensively felt; and this prince succeeded in obtaining an audience of George IV., and in becoming personally known to the Directors of the London Missionary Society.

It is no part of our plan to write the political history of Madagascar, nor can we follow King Radama through the various steps by which he led his people onward; for that would be to anticipate the history on which we are about to enter. But a single feature of his conduct at the period of the treaty we may here copy from Mr. Ellis's narrative:—

“When the information reached Radama, in January 1821, that Sir Robert Farquhar, the governor of Mauritius, had agreed to all the conditions of the treaty, and that everything was finally arranged and confirmed, he danced with delight; and on hearing from his brother-in-law, Prince Rataffe, of his reception at Mauritius, he actually shed tears of joy; showing that in a noble sensibility of heart he was not inferior to the inhabitants of more enlightened countries.”*

His rule over his people was wholly despotic; the customs of the Hovas leading them to yield almost divine honour to their kings. The effect upon the ruler's mind was necessarily injurious; especially when a slavish submission was yielded to one of an

* Ellis, vol. ii. p. 250.

impetuous and irascible temper. Mr. Bennett tells us, that on one occasion when the British resident was dining at the palace, one of the king's wives gave her lord a sudden offence, when he instantly exclaimed to an officer in waiting, "Take her out, and take off her head!" The officer soon returned, and the king asked if it was done. The simple reply of "Yes," was given; and the dinner proceeded as if nothing remarkable had happened.*

Subsequently, in noticing the death of this remarkable man, Mr. Ellis adds: "Whether Madagascar ever possessed a prince of equal talent, may be questioned; but there can be no doubt that it never possessed one who did so much for the improvement of his country. His reign constitutes an epoch in the history of Madagascar, too important to be ever forgotten." And we may add that the superintending providence of God, in raising up such a ruler just at the moment when a Christian mission was approaching Madagascar's shores, ought never to be overlooked.

But nothing that is human is free from the alloy of sin and folly. As the wisest of Israel's kings became childish from the indulgence of his appetites, and as the conqueror of Asia sacrificed both life and empire to wine, so fell Radama. "In the latter years of his life, he contracted habits of self-indulgence, which tended to induce disease." "He indulged

* Bennett and Tyerman's Journal, vol. ii.

habits of intemperance which would have wasted stronger constitutions than his own. Vices usually attendant on intoxication were superinduced, diseases followed, and Radama perished by their natural operation." The circumstances attending his death will require to be mentioned in their proper place in the history which is now to follow.

CHAPTER III.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MISSION.

A.D. 1818-21.

FROM the very first uprising of a missionary spirit in England, at the end of the eighteenth century, many eyes and many thoughts were directed towards Madagascar. One of the largest islands in the world, peopled by millions of men to whom the Gospel had never been preached,—it was also nearer to England than India, nearer than China, and nearer than Polynesia. Hence the question was frequently pressed upon the Directors of the London Missionary Society, at their commencement in 1796, whether Madagascar should not be one of their earliest fields of labour. The Directors, however, preferred making their chief effort among the islands of the Pacific Ocean; but when, in 1798, Dr. Vanderkemp sailed for South Africa, to commence a mission to the Hottentots, the Directors urged upon him the desirableness of making diligent enquiry with reference to Madagascar. He was not at all backward, and wrote to them in 1799 to the follow-

ing effect: — “I have obtained here (the Cape of Good Hope) sufficient information about Madagascar to conclude that a mission to that island would be a desirable object.”

He then proceeds to give some valuable hints and suggestions; but these reached England at an unfavourable moment, and no immediate measures could be taken. In 1804 he repeated his entreaties; adding, that if important duties had not detained him in Africa, he would himself have gone to Madagascar. And in 1810 the Directors mention that, by letters just received, they learn “that Dr. Vanderkemp has decided on going to Madagascar, although the state of his health and his advancing years render it a very arduous undertaking.” The Doctor, however, was detained some time longer at the Cape; his weakness and, at last, his illness increased, and in December 1811 he was taken to his heavenly rest.

The London Committee, now left to their own efforts, began to take fresh steps in the matter. In 1812 the Rev. John Campbell, when visiting the African missions, was requested to adopt measures, if possible, for the detachment of one or two missionaries to Madagascar; and the Rev. W. Milne was instructed to learn all he could, while stopping at Mauritius on his way to China, of the feasibility of a missionary effort on the great African island.

Just then, also, an event occurred which offered new facilities. The island of Mauritius, lying within two or three days' sail of Madagascar, surrendered to

the British arms; and early in 1814, a missionary, the Rev. J. Le Brun, was despatched to that island, to occupy it as a missionary station, and also "to prepare the way to the great island of Madagascar, and perhaps to Bourbon also."

The following year, 1815, brought the Directors a letter from Governor Farquhar, of the Mauritius, expressing his satisfaction with what he had seen of Mr. Le Brun, and urging the Committee to send, without delay, their long-intended mission to Madagascar. Hence the Directors began to seek for proper persons; and in their Report for 1816-17, they express their hope of being able, in the course of that year, to commence the mission. Accordingly, in August 1817, Mr. S. Bevan and Mr. David Jones were ordained to this work. They sailed for Mauritius in February 1818, and arrived there in July.

The moment of their arrival was an unpropitious one. Governor Farquhar had returned to England on leave, and General Hall, who had repudiated the treaty with Radama, occupied his place. He received the missionaries with politeness, but discouraged their proceeding to Madagascar, on the score of the unfriendly relations at present existing, and of the unhealthiness of the climate of Madagascar. Thus disheartened, they resolved, after a short delay, to leave their families in Mauritius, and to pay a visit, as private persons, to Tamatave, the port of Madagascar, for the purpose of making personal enquiries. They reached Tamatave on

August 18, and remained there nearly two months, gaining much insight into the state of affairs, and learning some of the rudiments of the language. Returning to Mauritius in October, they wished to remove with their families to Madagascar, but Mr. Bevan was obliged to remain for the present in Mauritius, on account of the health of his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Jones landed at Tamatave on October 19, and immediately began the erection of a school-house. But the Malagasy fever soon seized upon both of them, and on December 28, Mrs. Jones died. Her infant daughter had died about a fortnight previous. Mr. Jones himself remained very ill; and when, in the second week in January, Mr. and Mrs. Bevan arrived from Mauritius, the first intelligence they heard was that Mrs. Jones and her child were both dead, and that Mr. Jones was dying.

Such a greeting was of itself of a perilous kind; and Mr. Bevan at once expressed his conviction that he should take the fever also, and should certainly die. Nevertheless he went not back, but began to prepare for his work. In a few days, however, both he and his wife and their child were seized by fever, and the child soon died. Mr. Jones was now sufficiently recovered to see his colleague, and Mr. Bevan unhesitatingly told him, "I shall die, but you will recover and go on with your work, and will ultimately succeed in the mission." His presentiments were soon fulfilled. On the morning of January 31, Mr. B. finished his earthly course, and on the 3rd his

wife followed him. Out of the six individuals who had landed at Tamatave a few weeks before, Mr. Jones was now the only survivor. His spirits were naturally much depressed, and frequent relapses of the fever rendered it difficult for him to undertake any labour; and hence, about Midsummer, he resolved to return to Mauritius, in the hope that his health might there be gradually restored.

Here he met a kind reception from one or two friends, and soon found occupation in the instruction of a school of about seventy children. But he regarded himself as devoted to Madagascar, and when solicited to become co-pastor with Mr. Le Brun, he declined the offer. In May 1820 he felt sufficiently recovered to be able to prepare for a return to his post.

About this time Sir Robert Farquhar resumed his government, and began to make arrangements for the renewal of the broken treaty. Mr. Hastie was despatched on a new embassy to king Radama in September 1820, and it was agreed that Mr. Jones should accompany him. They reached Antananarivo, the capital, early in October, and were most cordially received. After about a week's discussion, the treaty was renewed, and publicly proclaimed at a great Kabary (or assembly); and three days after, the king received Mr. Jones with great cordiality, and promised him his entire support. Mr. Jones then enquired if the wives and families of missionaries might also come, and be assured of protection: to which the king

replied by the most satisfactory assurances. Preparations accordingly were made, and on December 8, 1820, the work of the mission may be said to have commenced in the capital of Madagascar. On that day Mr. Jones opened a school with three children, a number which soon increased. A house being required, the king himself performed the ceremony of laying the foundation, to the great wonder of all the people.

Sir Robert Farquhar, writing to the directors of the London Missionary Society at this period, (Jan. 3, 1821) thus speaks of Mr. Jones: —

“It was with great satisfaction that I found him a person of that mild and persuasive character, and that zeal for the success of his sacred duties, which enabled me to extend to him, without hesitation, all that assistance and confidence which were necessary to aid his progress: and I consider his residence at the court of Radama a proof and security of the good faith of that sovereign, for the full performance, on his part and on that of his subjects, of the articles of the important treaty which I have just concluded with him. . . . I may add that, in my opinion, never was so boundless and favourable a field thrown open to your pious labours. A people without any national religion, or superstitions of consequence, to combat: consisting of above four millions of souls, ready as well as capable of receiving instruction, under the will of a monarch who is as eager to obtain it as you can be to grant it.”

A second missionary, the Rev. David Griffiths, had now been sent out to supply the place of Mr. Bevan, and he arrived in Mauritius in the autumn of 1820. Being advised to wait for the termination of the unhealthy season, Mr. G. remained in Mauritius studying the Malagasy language until April 1821, when he sailed for Madagascar. He was most graciously received by Radama, and immediately joined Mr. Jones in his labours. The schools, in which several of the children of the highest families were now placed, were henceforth divided, Mr. Jones taking charge of the highest and most advanced class, and Mr. Griffiths of the younger pupils. In August Mrs. Griffiths arrived, and a school for needlework and other female accomplishments was commenced by her. With Mrs. Griffiths also arrived two other Europeans, Mr. Barnsley, and Mr. Carville, artisans, who came to aid in the instruction and civilization of the people. They reached Antananarivo on October 16, 1821: and now the Mission might be deemed to be fully established.

In May of this year, 1821, Mr. Jones thus wrote to the Secretary of the Society in London;—

“ I write to you, for the information of the directors, that I have experienced the goodness of God wonderfully manifested in encouraging, strengthening, and comforting me in the face of temptation, and in the exercise of the functions of my office, since my arrival in this capital.

“ My time has been employed (besides the study of

the language) in teaching the children committed by Radama to my care. Three of them are the children of his sisters; one of whom is heir to the crown. The others are children of the nobles, and seem to possess bright talents and a quick understanding. A boy who is not yet six years old, his sister, and two others, begin to read portions of the sacred Scriptures in English with some fluency, although in November they knew not the alphabet.

‘On Sundays, I catechise them and teach them to sing the praises of God. They can repeat from memory four hymns, which they sing to four different tunes. The king is highly delighted with their singing, and often comes to hear them. They know that they have immortal souls, and can answer many questions concerning God, Jesus Christ, death, heaven, &c. But I find it difficult to convey to their minds ideas of religion, from the want of suitable words, of which their language is destitute.

“As to the religion of the natives, I find that they believe in the existence of one God, who made and governs the world, and whom they call ZANAKAR, or more frequently ANDRIANMANITZ. I have not been able to discover that they have any stated times of worship; except, perhaps, the diviners, who pray to him to direct their divinations. . . . They have very confused ideas concerning their souls, and a future state of rewards and punishments. They pray to their ancestors, and pay great reverence to their tombs.

“Radama says that he does not believe in the superstitions of his people; but conforms to them as to established customs. . . . He hopes that by degrees their minds will be more enlightened, and that a great change will be seen in the course of a few years.”

The missionaries were almost overwhelmed with proofs of the royal favour. The king himself attended the inspection of the schools. He received, with much pleasure, specimens of the needle-work done by Mrs. Griffiths' pupils, and rewarded the children. On New Year's Day 1822, the rite of baptism was performed for the first time in Madagascar, by the reception of Mrs. Griffiths' infant; in the presence of several of the royal family, and of sixty children of the schools. So earnest were both the king and the people about the instruction of their children, that when, at Christmas, the missionaries gave the children a few holidays, an assembly was held, to complain to the king of the cessation of the teaching, and Radama wrote to the missionaries to know why the children were not taught as usual.

It was in May 1821, that prince Rataffe, brother-in-law of the king, attended the meeting of the London Missionary Society in London. He tendered to the Society a letter from king Radama, to the following effect:—

“Mr. Jones, your missionary, having satisfied me that those sent out by your society have no other object than to enlighten the people by persuasion and

conviction, and to discover to them the means of becoming happy ; Therefore, gentlemen, I request you to send me as many missionaries as you may deem proper, together with their families if you desire it, provided you also send skilful artisans to make my people workmen as well as good Christians. And I promise all the protection, safety, and respect which the missionaries may require from my subjects.

“ Saith RADAMA MANJAKA.”

In hearty response to this request, the directors sent back with prince Rataffe, the Rev. J. Jeffreys and his wife, and Messrs. Brooks, Chick, Canham, and Rowlands, artisans, who reached Madagascar in May 1822, and were received by the king with great cordiality.

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS OF THE MISSION.

A.D. 1822—1825.

THE mission to Madagascar might now be said to be prosperously established. Three missionaries and their wives, and six Christian artisans, had been cordially received by the king, and were acknowledged and favoured residents at the capital. The increase of schools, and the instruction of the young, were not merely permitted,—the king earnestly desired them. The acquisition of the language, the translation of the Scriptures, and the privileges of Christian worship, were all gladly accorded to the missionaries. Still it necessarily required much time to master the language, so as to be able to preach and to translate the Scriptures. And, whatever the real cause might be, it is certain that no period of the mission was so little distinguished by the Divine blessing, as this—the period of royal patronage, and external favour and popularity.

The reinforcements to the mission-party reached Antananarivo on the 10th of June, 1822, conducted

by Mr. Hastie, and accompanied by two German botanists, Messrs. Boyer and Helsinburg. The new missionary, Mr. Jeffreys, was conducted to a good house which had been prepared for him, while comfortable accommodations were also provided for the rest of the party. The king gave to Mr. Jeffreys two servants, and to each of the artisans one, they engaging to instruct eight Malagese youths in their respective trades. The two botanists had also assigned to them ten labourers and two boys, and were requested to take charge of the king's garden.

Soon after his arrival, Mr. Jeffreys thus writes to his friends in England :—

“ This morning, June 16, at 7 o'clock, I went to Mr. Jones's school to hear the children catechised. It was a pleasing sight. The children were all clean, washed, and combed, most of them having white shirts and trowsers. When I entered, they were repeating a hymn after the monitor. For a moment I could have fancied myself in England. Shortly after, Mr. Jones entered, and after singing a hymn, he proceeded to catechise them in the Malagese language. The catechism had been framed by himself, after the model of Dr. Watts.

“ At 10 o'clock we had service in English at the house of Mr. Griffiths, who preached from Acts viii. 38. In the afternoon the children again assembled, were catechised, and practised in singing. I have seldom seen a finer set of children, as to cleanliness and order, in any school in England. It is delightful

to witness such fine beginnings in a country like this, and it is, I trust, the dawn of a glorious day. In the evening we assembled again at Mr. Griffiths' house, and Mr. Jones conducted the service."

On the next day, June 17th, an examination of the schools took place, the king, his brother-in-law, prince Rataffe, and the British resident, being all present. Eighty-five scholars were examined in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and the girls in needle-work.

A period of sadness now intervened, for Mr. Brooks, one of the artisans, while having an interview with the king, fainted and fell. The fever soon showed itself, and in little more than a week he was carried to the grave. His last words were "Quite happy!" Mr. Jeffreys delivered an address from the words of Elihu, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out."

Mr. Jeffreys now commenced a separate school with twelve pupils; and on the first Sunday in September the whole missionary party united together in celebrating the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Towards the end of that month Mr. Jones, Mr. Griffiths, and Mr. Canham, with twelve of the more advanced of the scholars, made a tour of seventy miles, in order to obtain a knowledge of the country, and an acquaintance with the people, and with their manners and customs. In the following year a similar tour was taken, with the further view of fixing upon proper stations for schools, and of beginning a system of village-preaching.

In 1824, the king united the several missionary schools at Antananarivo, the capital, in the new school-house just opened, and the first village-station and school was commenced at Ambatomanga, about twenty miles from the capital. Soon afterwards, seven villages were selected as proper places to receive schools, and native teachers were appointed to them. At this time the schools at the capital contained two hundred and sixty-eight children, forty of whom were acquiring English; while the district schools in the surrounding towns and villages were growing in numbers and in efficiency. Meanwhile, during these earlier years of the mission, the missionaries were labouring with perseverance in the usual preparatory works. They were acquiring a knowledge of the language, so as to be able to translate the Scriptures into it; they began to construct grammars and dictionaries; they translated small catechisms and hymns into Malagase. Their Sunday services, up to this period, had been carried on in English, but some of their pupils were able to benefit by them. Their schools now became altogether about twenty-two in number; and, at last, in February 1824, they commenced preaching to the natives in their own language, and invited questions after the sermon, on the subjects discussed. At Ambatomanga, in the course of the same year, Mr. Jeffreys also began to address the natives; but his labours were concluded by his death, which took place in June 1825.

During his period of labour he fully justified the

character given of him by his tutor, the Rev. J. Fletcher: "None excelled him in application, in unaffected humility, in fervent piety, or in devotedness" to his work. His progress in the language was rapid; so much so as to astonish the natives. They used often to exclaim, "You have learned to speak very quickly!" And thus he was enabled, during the last year of his residence, to address the people each Lord's-day in their own tongue. An extract or two from his journal will show his fidelity and his earnestness:—

"1823. Sept. 27. Left home after the morning service with an intention of visiting a village about five miles distant; but I met a number of men who were going into the forest for wood for the king. It struck my mind that an opportunity presented itself, and I asked if they could stay a short time to hear me speak of God. They assented, and I accordingly spoke to them of the great Creator, of His power, and wisdom, and goodness: then of man, his lost condition by nature, his need of a Saviour. Then of Christ, and His salvation, and of His willingness to save all who come to Him. They listened with attention and apparent interest. I trust I was faithful: my heart glowed with affection towards them, while it pitied their perishing condition. Thus nearly one hundred human beings heard the Gospel—may it prove to be good seed cast into good ground!"

"Oct. 12. This afternoon I preached in a neighbouring village, and found my spirits quite refreshed

by the willingness with which the people came to hear. Having finished my sermon, I asked them to kneel down with me while I prayed. . . . They all knelt: it was an interesting season; may it have been a useful one; may some of these people be awakened to inquire, 'What shall I do to be saved?'

In January 1825, Mrs. Jeffreys was visited with an illness which induced her friends to urge the necessity of her taking a sea-voyage, and residing at the Mauritius for a few months. Mr. Jeffreys accordingly secured a passage for her and for himself in a trading vessel, and quitted Tamatave in June, for what was meant to be a mere vacation. But it was his last earthly voyage. On the tenth day, Mr. Jeffreys and one of his children both complained of pain in the head. The little girl died on the next day, but Mr. Jeffreys lingered, without much pain, for two more days. As he evidently drew near his end, Mrs. Jeffreys asked him, "Are you happy in the prospect of death?" He answered, "Very happy; Christ is very precious: I love you and the dear children, but I love my Saviour more; to be with him will be 'far better.' I leave you to God, who is the Father of the fatherless, and the God of the widow; He will take care of and provide for you." John Jeffreys rests, like William Johnson, beneath the billows which roll around the shores of Africa.

The committee in London quickly sent out Mr. and Mrs. Johns to supply his place.

Printing-presses were also sent from England, and

a supply of paper ; for the missionaries were able to report that the New Testament in the Malagasy language was at last ready for the printer's hand. Two or three more mechanics were also sent out in the course of 1826. At this period all bore a promising appearance, *externally*.

Radama made attendance at the schools a point of duty to him. Sometimes the parents complained that the children were "forgetting the customs of their ancestors, and forsaking their gods." But the king, who evidently had but a very slight respect for the idols of Madagascar, replied, "Do you mind your work, and let the children mind their instructions." At another time, some people waited on him to ask for a piece of cloth to clothe their idol :—"Why, surely," said Radama, "he must be very poor if he cannot get a piece of cloth for himself. If he be a god, he can surely provide his own garments."

The missionaries now divided their time every Sabbath between visiting the village schools, and conducting divine service in the chapel at Antananarivo ; and the novelty not having yet worn off, the congregations frequently amounted to above a thousand persons. The doors and windows of the chapel were thronged, and not unfrequently the queen and one of the king's sisters attended.

The missionaries, at this period, begin to mention such incidents as the following, in illustration of the progress they were making :—"Some of the children first taught in the schools, now begin to translate

catechisms from the English language into their own, and they appear likely, in the course of time, to afford assistance in the translation of the Scriptures. Other boys are framing school-lessons in their own tongue, and are beginning to instruct the younger ones on Sundays.

“We have commenced at the capital a regular service in the Malagese language; and many of the natives attend it every Sabbath. We have also formed a small collection of hymns, for the use of the schools, and of the natives who attend the public service. Some of them begin to observe the Sabbath; abstaining from their usual employments. Some of them recently borrowed our Malagese hymn-book, to copy out some of the hymns, and being asked in the afternoon if they had done it, replied, ‘No, sir, this is the Sabbath, and we shall wait till to-morrow.’

“The king has also stopped his band from playing anything on Sunday, except ‘God save the king,’ which they look upon as a hymn. We hope that these small things are favourable tokens. . . . We are proceeding with the translation of Genesis, Exodus, Matthew and Luke, and we hope that these four books will be nearly completed by the close of the present year. . . . This work, together with teaching 120 children every day, and preparing to preach both in English and Malagese on the Sabbath, keep us fully employed; and we bless the Lord for the health and comfort we enjoy in this our arduous work.”

VILLAGE IN MADAGASCAR



In a subsequent letter, Mr. Griffiths writes, " We have thronged congregations on the Sabbath ; our chapel is crowded ; often we have from 2,000 to 3,000 hearers Mr. Canham is settled in a village about twelve miles to the west, and has about 110 scholars. Mr. Rowlands is about fifteen miles to the south, and has more than 100. Everything at present is union and peace. But we see more and more the need of divine influence to bring sinners to Christ. ' Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' "

CHAPTER V.

CAUSES OF ANXIETY.

A.D. 1826—1828.

AMIDST all this apparent prosperity, however, there was abundant cause for disquietude. The mission rested apparently on the favour of the king, and, as he had given no tokens of real conversion of heart, there could be no solid trust reposed on his patronage. Like Henry VIII., he might favour the Bible one day, and the Six Articles the next.

On his return from a military expedition, the children of the schools assembled, and went to salute him, but met with a cool reception. The king had been annoyed by various complaints which had reached him from several quarters, that the children were leaving the customs of their forefathers, and imbibing a new religion. He sent, shortly after his return, to Mr. Jones, to say that the missionaries were over-active; that his people were attached to their own customs, and did not like to hear of new gods and new religions. And when dining with Mr. Hastie, the British agent, he said, "Let me not

go too fast, lest I stumble." In fact, secular, and not religious knowledge, was the chief object of his desires.

In March 1826, the annual examination of the schools took place, and the king presided. Rewards were presented by him to the most diligent. The meeting was so large as to be necessarily held in the open air. The scholars and teachers were above 2,000. The king concluded the meeting thus:—

"Do you tell your parents that by attending the schools, and learning the lessons taught you, you not only give me and the white people pleasure, but do honour to yourselves and your parents. The knowledge you obtain is good—good for trade. By reading and writing, you will learn to record and preserve in remembrance what else would be forgotten, and to acquire the good dispositions which are taught, will render you good subjects; and this will be your greatest honour and glory. Now go home, and tell your parents I am pleased with you. 'Fear God, and obey the king.'"

He then gave the teachers ten bullocks as a present; and the meeting broke up, well pleased with the transactions of the day.

Intelligence of the death of Mr. Jeffreys had now reached England, and the directors of the London Missionary Society appointed the Rev. David Johns to succeed him. Mr. Johns landed at Tamatave, in September 1826, accompanied by his wife, and by Mr. and Mrs. Cameron, and Mr. and Mrs. Cummins,

artisans. One of the native youths, who had been instructed at Manchester, also returned with them.

In October 1826, the mission suffered a great loss, in the death of the British Resident, James Hastie, Esq., to whose wise and philanthropic exertions Madagascar and her people owed much. The king deeply felt his loss. Minute guns were fired; Radama went himself to see the corpse, and took personal measures to prepare the grave, and to find the stones which were to form the tomb. The funeral service took place in the mission-chapel, when an address was given by Mr. Jones, the senior missionary.

The king continued to encourage the mission. Bent upon the improvement of his people, he desired that the study of Latin and Greek should be introduced into the chief or Royal school. Many of the elder boys were now qualified to instruct others. What the missionaries chiefly lamented was the lack of a real interest in the Gospel. The attendants on the Malagese services, who at first were numbered by thousands, after the novelty had worn off, dwindled away, and the people in general seemed to feel little interest in the "glad tidings." Still, the apparent and external work went on. The schools continually increased; in 1827 their number was stated to be 31, and the pupils to be 1,956. Eight of the most advanced of the scholars had been chosen to assist the missionaries as visitors and catechists. The people were being instructed in useful knowledge;

very many could now read the Scriptures, whereas a few years before there were not half a dozen persons who knew a letter. In March 1828, the schools were 38, and the scholars 2,309, the teachers being 44. The king, ever earnest in this work, ordered fourteen new schools to be opened for 1,400 additional scholars; and before the close of that year the total number approached 5,000. Meanwhile the mission-press sent forth 800 copies of a hymn-book, 1,500 of a catechism, 2,200 of a spelling-book, and, in 1829, 3,000 copies of the Four Gospels.

Yet, amidst all this apparent progress, there was abundant cause for doubt and anxiety. "The attendance at the mission-chapel was often very small, the people looking upon it as a part of the school, and as intended only for the children." Very naturally, therefore, did the Committee of the London Missionary Society say, in their Report for 1828, "There is no part of the wide field occupied by the Society to which we look with greater anxiety than to the island of Madagascar."

Yet, in merely preliminary and preparatory work, much had been done. Thousands of the people had been raised from a savage state, and enabled to read, to compare, and to reflect. From 10,000 to 15,000 young persons passed through the schools during the period in which they continued open. Upwards of 20,000 tracts were printed and circulated. The whole of the Bible had been translated, and a con-

siderable portion of it put into circulation. The importance of all these steps none can fully estimate; but in the present instance the actual results, coming to light some years after, showed their intrinsic value to have been beyond all count. Yet often must the hearts of the missionaries have died within them, when, after seven or eight years' labour, they saw their chapel but scantily attended, and remarked the listlessness with which their few hearers received their warnings and their invitations.

The various letters of the missionaries during the last two years of Radama's life have an air of constraint and sadness about them which is easily explicable. Their chief friend and patron, the king, was gradually falling into habits of self-indulgence, which naturally diminished both his zeal and his powers of usefulness. These habits seemed to blight all hopes of a real, substantial, change of heart. Meanwhile the people were advancing, certainly, in civilisation, but not, apparently, in spiritual religion. There might be seed in the ground, but there was little of either blade or ear to gratify the eye. Hence, in the years 1826, 1827, and 1828, the missionaries were reduced to comfort themselves with statistics. "When I first came here," writes one, "there were not six persons who could even read a line in their own language; now, there are four thousand who can write it." The Missionary School Society had raised in the island, in 1827, as much as 1,739 dollars for

the support of the schools. A public library was opened for the use of all who could read. Mr. and Mrs. Johns had arrived in Madagascar, in September 1826; and in the same month of 1827, the Rev. J. J. Freeman, with his wife and family, landed at Tamatave, and were greeted on landing by Radama himself. All was apparently prosperous; but Christian men, thoroughly in earnest, and listening in vain for the cry of the awakened heart, would inevitably speak with depression and uneasiness. This feeling evidently pervades all their letters.

Still the London Missionary Society continued to support the hands of their missionaries. In 1827, with Mr. Freeman, landed Mr. Hovenden, printer, and his wife; but towards the close of the year, Mr. Hovenden, to the great grief of the missionaries, died. Early in 1828, too, a second loss came upon them, in the death of Mr. Rowlands, one of the artisans. Shortly after, a Deputation from the London Society, the Rev. D. Tyerman, and G. Bennett, Esq., visited Madagascar, and Mr. Tyerman, on the ninth day after his arrival, either from fever or apoplexy, suddenly died.

The annual report of the missionaries, dated March 3, 1828, about four months before the death of Radama, is of a dry, statistical, and discouraging character. It was doubtless accompanied by private letters, which gave rise to that strong expression which we have already cited from the London Report, that

“there was no part of the field to which the Directors looked with greater anxiety than to the island of Madagascar.”

The missionaries no longer rejoiced in the thronged attendance on their public services, and no longer told of the thousands who hung upon their lips. Of the chapel they say, “This is generally well attended three times on the Sabbath, viz. soon after sunrise by the scholars, for catechetical exercises; in the forenoon for public worship, and in the afternoon, for the English and Malagese prayer-meeting; in addition to which, many of the scholars remain for the reading of the Scriptures. *The adults of the native population have an objection to attend divine worship in the chapel, because they consider it as intended for children.*”

The schools were confessed to be in not quite so encouraging a state as in the previous year, the vacancies not having been filled up. Of the country schools, no report is made, except that “they require the most vigilant attention and superintendence.” But of their actual advance or decline, nothing is said.



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KING RADAMA I.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEATH OF RADAMA AND USURPATION OF
RANAVALONA.

A.D. 1828.

THE period of court favour and external prosperity was now to be abruptly ended: For a considerable period, and especially through all 1827 and the first half of 1828, the habits of self-indulgence into which the king had fallen had brought with them their usual results—of failing health; and on many occasions, when his presence was needed and expected, the apology was made that the king was unwell, and could not leave home. The Deputation from the London Missionary Society reached Madagascar about Midsummer in 1828, but on arriving at the capital, they found that Radama was too ill to be able to see them. Mr. Jones, the senior missionary, had one interview with him about this time, but could scarcely hear or understand the few words he was able to utter. On the 27th of July, the best and ablest ruler that Madagascar had ever known died, a victim to self-indulgence. Not more sur-

prising is this fact than the similar declensions and falls of such sovereigns as Solomon and Charles V.

He probably had not seriously anticipated his own death, and consequently the reins of government were instantly seized by a woman in many respects resembling queen Athaliah.

The rightful heir to the throne was prince Rakotobe, son to prince Rataffe, whose wife, Rabodo, was Radama's eldest sister. Had the late king anticipated his own departure, he would, doubtless, have summoned these three members of his family to Antananarivo, and have put them in possession of the royal power. But at the moment of his death, they were all at a distance—prince Rataffe and his wife at Tamatave; and Rakotobe, his son, alone, in a village near the capital.

Radama having died on the 27th of July, the fact was concealed for two or three days, during which time Ranavalona, one of Radama's queens, was earnestly employed in obtaining adherents among the chief generals and officers of state. By the 1st of August her plans were matured. The firing of cannon summoned the people to the courtyard of the palace, and it was announced to them that the idols had declared Queen Ranavalona to be the rightful successor to the deceased king. Four chief officers, who were not in the conspiracy, at once objected that it was well known that the late king had named prince Rakatobe his successor. They had scarcely spoken before above a dozen spears were plunged

into them by the conspirators who stood around, and they instantly perished. Silence followed. No other person dared to whisper an objection, and the accession of Queen Ranavalona was proclaimed as an accomplished fact.

The rightful heir, however, still lived, as well as his father and mother. Prince Rakotobe, who had been one of the first scholars placed under Mr. Jones's care, was residing in one of the villages near the capital. A party of soldiers was sent to seize him, and to carry him to another village at a greater distance. He understood his peril, and begged them to allow him a short time to pray. They granted his request, and meantime dug his grave. He was then speared, and at once laid beneath the earth. There was reason to hope that the instructions he had received had been useful to him in the best and highest sense; and that he was, perhaps, the first Malagase who departed in the faith of Christ.

His father, Rataffe, with his wife, Radama's sister, were now summoned to the capital. They well knew the meaning of the summons, and tried to escape, but no means of flight from the island could be found. They next sought concealment in the woods, but were soon discovered. The fact of their having left Tamatave, of which the prince was governor, was a sufficient ground of accusation. Rataffe was immediately speared, and buried on the spot. His wife, being the sister of the late king, could not with any decency be so murdered—a prejudice existing in

Madagascar against shedding royal blood. She was confined in a remote village, and silently starved. Two other relatives of the late king were similarly got rid of; and thus, at last, this Malagese Athaliah found herself the undisputed queen of the noble realm.

By the customs of Madagascar, the mourning for the king should have continued twelve months; and for a long time the operations of the missionaries were greatly impeded by this rule. The schools were at first totally closed; but at the end of six months they were permitted to be reopened. The cessation of almost all useful works, which was included in the phrase "mourning," was found so inconvenient and injurious, that at last, when ten months had nearly expired, the Government thought it expedient to relax; and accordingly, on May 27, 1829, the period of mourning was declared to be completed, and the people were allowed to resume their usual avocations. Preparations were immediately made for the coronation and public recognition of the new sovereign.

On the evening of the 11th of June, at 6 o'clock, which is deemed the beginning of the Malagese day, the firing of cannon gave notice that the great event was at hand. At 6 o'clock on the following morning, the discharge of fourteen guns gave notice to the people that they were to proceed to Andohalo, where the grand Kabary or national assembly was to be held.

At 12 o'clock, the body-guard or grenadiers, with

their band, was drawn up opposite the palace, and the queen appeared, and was first conducted to the tomb of Andrianimpoinimerina, the father of Radama. She there took in her hands the flags of "the idol of the sovereign" and "the idol of the oaths," offered up a prayer to the departed sovereign, returned the flags to the keepers of the idols, and the door of the tomb was shut. She then entered her palanquin, and was carried to the northern courtyard, where the procession was formed.

First came the troops of the Antananarivo division with their bands, the officers of the palace, the generals and officers of state, the members of the queen's family in palanquins, &c. The whole passed on to Andohalo, a large square, set apart for public assemblies. Here the queen was first carried to "the sacred stone." She descended from her palanquin and stood upon the stone, surrounded by the five generals of the five divisions of the army. She then, standing on the sacred stone, exclaimed, "Masina, masina, masina v'abo?" i.e. "Am I consecrated, consecrated, consecrated?" The five generals replied, "Masina, masina, masina, hianao!" i.e. "You are consecrated, consecrated, consecrated!" Then the multitude shouted, "Long may you live, Ranavalomanjaka!" The queen then, descending from the stone, took the idols Manjakatsiroa and Fantaka into her hands, and addressed them, saying, "My predecessors have given you to me. I put my trust in you, therefore support me." She gave the idols

back to their keepers, entered her palanquin, and was borne to the platform on which the sovereign usually appears.

Here she took her seat on the royal chair or throne, which was covered with scarlet cloth and gold lace. Her sister sat on her right, and other members of her family on her left and behind her. On the east and west sides stood the judges, civil and military officers, and men of rank. In front stood an assembly of about 60,000 people, of whom 8,000 were soldiers.

After reposing for a short time on the throne, the queen arose. She leaned on the arm of her sister, whom she requested to receive the *hasina* or tribute-money always paid on such occasions by the heads of provinces, &c. She then came to the front, and addressed the vast assembly, "Veloma Zanadralambo, Veloma Zanakandriandrora, &c. &c. (particularising the several clans or tribes), I salute you. If you have not known me before, it is I, Ranavalona, who now appear before you. God gave the kingdom to my ancestors, they transferred it to Andrianimpoinmerina, and he to Radama, of whom I am successor. Is it not so, Ambaninandro?" (my subjects). They exclaimed, "It is so." She proceeded, "I will not change what Radama and my ancestors have done; but I will add to what they did. My greatest study will be to promote your welfare, and to make you happy. Do you hear that, Ambaninandro?" All exclaimed, "We hear it."

Rainimaharo, one of the chief ministers, now came forward and addressed the queen with words of allegiance and compliment. He then turned to the people and repeated to them what the queen had said, assuring them that they might put confidence in it. Then the chiefs of clans or tribes came forward, each presenting her, as a token of allegiance, with the *hasina*, a dollar. Then followed the military and the foreigners. The queen personally thanked only these last.

Allegiance being paid by all persons bound to pay it, the procession was re-formed, and the queen returned to her palace. Before entering it, she stopped at the tomb of Radama, took the flags of the idols in her hands, and offered up a short prayer to Radama, ending with, "May thy name ever be respected." She then dismissed her guard, and entered her palace.

The usurpation was thus consummated. All opposition had been entirely silenced; the army had been gained; every rival had been slain or driven into exile, and queen Ranavalona sat upon the throne of Madagascar.

In closing this chapter, which has been confined to secular topics, we shall just mention in the briefest manner two circumstances connected with the new reign.

1. The principal agents of the queen in effecting this bloody usurpation were a young officer, named Andriamihaja, and two brothers, Rainiharo and

Rainimaharo. By these three men the whole business was managed. But, secretly, they were rivals. Andriamihaja was the queen's favourite, and evidently possessed the first place in her affections. The two brothers therefore desired to get him out of the way. They succeeded in raising a feeling of jealousy in the queen's mind, and in a moment of anger, increased, it was said, by intoxication, they obtained from her an order for the favourite's execution. Not a moment was lost in putting it into effect; but the recollection of Andriamihaja long haunted the queen's dreams, and embittered her waking hours. The object, however, had been attained. Ranavalona had now no option but to leave herself entirely in the hands of the two brothers, who, for the rest of her life, virtually governed Madagascar.

Their rule, especially for the first seven years, was a bloody one. Whether induced by fear or by the hope of plunder, they originated, year by year, one or more expeditions against the more distant tribes and provinces. In 1831, they sent an army to the south and another to the west. In 1832, an expedition was sent against Ivato. In 1833, the south was again ravaged, and a third time in 1834. In 1835, St. Augustin's Bay was plundered, and in 1836, the Betsileo country. By these various expeditions, Mr. Freeman, who resided in the country during a part of this time, estimates that Madagascar lost in a short time more than 100,000 people.

CHAPTER VII.

CHANGE IN THE PROSPECTS OF THE MISSION.

A.D. 1828—1830.

THE period, then, of outward prosperity had now ended, and the position of the missionaries was in a moment greatly altered. In mere profession, indeed, the new government endeavoured to represent itself as identical with the last. Its policy was to keep exclaiming, "Nothing is to be changed: whatever Radama did, Ranavalona will do also." But, in reality, the friendly ruler had been taken away, and an unfriendly one had arisen in his room.

Ranavalona was a mere ignorant heathen woman, blindly attached to what she deemed "the customs of her ancestors." Her ministers were selfish politicians, of a very low order. Neither the queen nor her advisers felt the slightest interest in "the religion of the foreigners," and, when contradicted or opposed, they had already shown that there was no amount of violence or cruelty which they were not ready to commit.

Fully aware of this state of things, the missionaries,

while they were naturally unwilling to give up their hopes of Madagascar, felt obliged, at the commencement of the new reign, to be cautious, patient, and watchful. Their labours received a sudden check at the outset by the closing of the schools, on the pretext of the customary mourning for the deceased king. This cessation lasted six months, at the end of which time they were allowed to resume their labours. But, inevitably, the scholars had in the interim been greatly scattered, and the missionaries must have found that there was much lost ground to be regained. Another discouragement soon followed. Military expeditions having been determined upon, a call was made upon all the eldest and best pupils in the schools to join the army, and in this manner about seven hundred of the native teachers and senior scholars were taken away, to the great injury of the remainder, and to the discouragement of the managers. Many of these, youths of promising character, were sacrificed in Rainiharo's marauding expeditions.

The report sent home by the missionaries at the close of 1829 presented a sad contrast to most of those which had preceded it. The schools, in June 1828, had contained 5,014 scholars; in December 1829, they numbered only 2,630. The queen had withdrawn the Government allowances for school materials, &c., and the small stipends hitherto allowed to the teachers were also stopped. Exemption from attendance at the schools was also now allowed by the Government, on the plea of the idol-service being in

competition with it. Mr. Jones, the senior missionary, writes at the end of this year:—

“ Things in Madagascar wear a dismal aspect in comparison with what they did in the time of Radama. Superstition reigns triumphant in Imerina. Satan is endeavouring to overthrow, step by step, all the good that has been done. There is a dark cloud hovering over the country at present; but my comfort is, that the Lord reigneth, and that the promise cannot fail: this people shall assuredly be given to Christ. . . . I can now preach with more ease in the Madagasse language than in the English; and this mission lies near my heart; hence I hope to return to Antananarivo.”

For Mr. J. had been so prostrated by illness, as to purpose a voyage to Mauritius or the Cape, with a view to the restoration of his strength. He carried this purpose into effect about Midsummer 1830; and so much respect had his conduct while in Madagascar obtained for him in the minds of the chief persons in authority there, that on his departure he received a letter of thanks from the queen, was accompanied to the coast by a guard of twenty men, and was assured of a cordial reception should his health allow him to return to his post. He reached England in June 1831; but before his health had been re-established, the prospects of the mission became too gloomy to encourage him to undertake another voyage to Madagascar.

Mr. Freeman, also, who had arrived in Madagascar

about a year before the king's death, was now greatly disheartened, and determined to seek on the main land of Africa a more favourable opening for missionary effort. From Mauritius he wrote, May 15, 1830, to the Committee in London, to the following effect:—

“The darkness increases, and almost all events seem unfavourable: an unhealthy season; excessive rains; much rice destroyed; provisions scarce and dear; the younger officers losing their influence; the older, with all their prejudices and superstitions, regaining theirs. Hundreds, if not thousands, have perished by the vile ‘tangena.’ I shall now employ myself on the Madagasse dictionary and grammar. The only favourable circumstance is the completion of the New Testament. From the present government nothing is to be expected, and be assured that under it nothing will be done.”

The circumstances to which Mr. Freeman here alludes were these:—an attack on Tamatave had been made by the French, and a repetition of it was expected. In this state of alarm, the friends of the old superstition gained full power over the mind of the queen. Fears of treason were spread abroad, the queen was advised to retire to Ambohimanga, about twenty miles from the capital; and the arts of divination, with the tangena, were employed to discover the supposed traitors. Most of the civil and military officers were ordered to submit to this ordeal, and “hundreds, if not thousands, perished under it.”

Still, though the missionaries knew it not, it was at this moment that the Gospel of Christ began to take root in Madagascar, and, unseen, to spread abroad on every side. Mr. Freeman, in the letter just quoted, notices the completion of the New Testament as the one bright feature in the case. And, if we watch narrowly, we shall find that from this date, increasing discouragements and opposition from man, and increasing though unseen strength from on high, are found to exist together.

The missionary printer, Mr. Baker, writes from Antananarivo, July 1, 1830, as follows:—

“The New Testament is rapidly dispersing through the whole district of Imerina by means of the schools: it has even reached the sea-coast through some who were scholars, and who are now stationed there on government service. Several instances have come to my knowledge, proving the zeal and spirit of inquiry with which it is read; sometimes equalling in ardour the eagerness with which it is at first sought after. Two of my workmen have, since its publication, commenced to read it with prayer in their families, and they each bring a wife and sister to chapel. . . . In numberless passages, the condemnation of idolatry, sorcery, &c., come with great force to the apprehension of the Malagase. One man, a slave, who has been my right hand during the printing of the New Testament, appears peculiarly alive to religious impressions. His chief desire was to see the New Testament completed, and in meditation

upon it he now places his chief delight. His zeal in persuading others has been most evident. . . . Two other slaves, fruits of this man's zealous conversation, have attracted a good deal of my attention.' I have found them surprisingly acquainted with the leading doctrines of the Gospel. They have had much scorn and ridicule to bear, yet one of them has induced six or eight of his fellows to become learners. . . . Never have I observed so much as now the great effect produced by the Gospel here. Conversation among the natives on the subject of religion is frequent, and the preached Gospel reaches with force the consciences of some of the people. . . . I cannot think that the word of God will ever be driven from this land, or that the name of Jesus will ever be forgotten."

A few months later we meet with the following letter, written by one of the native teachers to Mr. Jones:—

"I am happy and rejoice that some of our people here do embrace the Word of God, and are made partakers of the great redemption; and that the Word of God, which you have sown in Madagascar, has sprung up, and is growing among the people. Pray for us, that that Word which we are now sowing, may sink deep into the hearts of the people, and may grow and bring forth fruit; some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold. Let not your heart be sorrowful, for, by the blessing of God, we shall do what we can to spread the knowledge of the Word of God in this country; yea, we shall do it until death.

. . . . There are now in Antananarivo three places of worship, where the Word of God is taught and preached every Sabbath by us in rotation; and the chapel at Ambodiandohalo is crowded to excess with people who attend to hear the Gospel."

A month or two later, April 7, 1831, another native wrote to Mr. Bennett thus:—

"It is now that we see and know plainly that the Sun of Righteousness begins to rise upon our land; although it cannot be said, 'He burst forth yonder,' or 'He made his appearance there.' We hope that the Word of God will not be stopped in its progress. . . . Its march cannot be seen any more than the wind; but it is written, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.'

"We have several prayer meetings every week among ourselves, and there are many that attend. . . . Blessed be God, who showeth mercy, for sending His Word and His servants to our country, to tell us, who were remaining in folly and ignorance, our lost state by nature, and our redemption through Jesus Christ.

"I send this to you, that you may know that one of the natives of Madagascar wishes you well, as a son his father. May the Lord bless us, and make us Israelites indeed in whom is no guile. And may He make us the honoured instruments of winning many a soul to Christ."

CHAPTER VIII.

A GLEAM OF HOPE.

A.D. 1831—1832.

THE favourable signs noticed in the last chapter continued to increase. A new spirit of attention and earnestness, during the latter months of 1830 and the beginning of 1831, repeatedly manifested itself.

Probably the precarious nature of their own position had made the missionaries, since Radama's death, more serious and impressive in their appeals to the consciences of the people. The chapel in which Mr. Griffiths preached was filled to repletion every Sabbath-day, numbers being unable to find entrance; and many of the hearers flocked to the houses of the missionaries, with the all-important inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" Hence another chapel was commenced in the northern suburbs of the capital, which was opened in June 1831, and in which Mr. Johns proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation. Meanwhile the artisans attached to the mission were exerting themselves in their several

departments; Mr. Cameron alone, as an engineer, having often as many as 600 young Malagese employed under him. In September of that year a room in the centre of the capital was obtained, and here both the missionaries, and also some native preachers, often addressed the people on the great subject of their mission. Now, too, some of the more earnest of the inquirers began to ask for baptism. Such letters as the following were sent, again and again, to the missionaries:—

“May you, Mr. Johns, live long, and never be sick. What we have to say to you is this: We know that we were born in sin, and that we have sinned from our youth until now. But we hope that we repent of our sins, and we bless God that Jesus Christ came into the world to call, not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. We desire to approach Him as sinners, and to give up ourselves to serve Him all the days of our life. It is our desire to be received as members of the church which assembles at Ambatonakanga, and we beg of you to make known this our wish to the church. We hope that God will guard us against the temptations of Satan, and help us to glorify Him, and to walk worthy of the Gospel of Christ till we die.

“Saith”

(Six names subscribed.)

“This is what we have to tell you, that we desire to be admitted into the church at Ambatonakanga,

that we may commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. It is through His name alone we have hope of attaining everlasting life; and we pray that He may be ours, to the end that we may rejoice together in the presence of Jesus Christ.

“Saith R — } husband and wife.”
R — }

Before complying with these requests, the missionaries deemed it advisable to apply to the principal officers of the queen, to know if her Majesty would renew the permission given by Radama, for any of the natives who desired it to adopt the religious customs of the missionaries. This reference to the leave granted by the late sovereign, made the application, under God's providence, successful. It had been the queen's promise, when crowned, that “she would change nothing that Radama had done.” Hence, on May 22, 1831, a royal message was brought to the mission chapel, by some of the queen's chief officers, to the effect that “Her Majesty does not wish to change the words of the late king: hence all that wish are at liberty to be baptized, to commemorate the death of Christ, or marry, according to the customs of the Europeans. No blame is to attach to any for doing it, or for not doing it.”

This, from an unfriendly government, was an immense boon. And it was earnestly needed at this juncture. For in their labour for the spiritual

benefit of the people, the missionaries had for several months witnessed a degree of attention and earnestness, on the part of the hearers, far surpassing any that had before existed. The chapel was filled every Lord's day; many being unable to procure admittance; and considerable numbers seemed deeply impressed, and flocked to the abodes of the missionaries, to ask for counsel and for consolation. Hence, this government authorisation and permission was justly deemed "one of the most important benefits secured to the native Christians since the death of Radama."

Its first-fruits were immediately seen. On May 29, 1831, twenty converts were publicly baptized in the mission-chapel, before a numerous congregation of Malagasy; and on the following Sunday, June 5, eight more were baptized in the suburban chapel at Ambatonakanga. One of these had been, like Simon of Samaria, a sorcerer, an idol-priest, a deluder of the people! He had taken his place among the children in the school, had learnt to read the New Testament for himself, and had been thus "made wise unto salvation." He chose the name of Paul, and, with his wife, who received baptism at the same time, he continued to "walk in the ordinances and commandments of the Lord, blameless."

Paul and his wife were not only examples of "whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report," but they were also zealous and persevering in their endeavours to bring others to the knowledge

of the truth. New instances of an entire change of heart, effected by Divine grace, were now not unfrequent. Applications for baptism continued to increase. One of the letters, received a week after the royal permission had been made known, may here be given.

“Antananarivo, May 30, 1831.

“May you, sir, live long and never be ill, saith your son R——. This is what I have to say to you: I rejoiced much when I heard the word of the queen; and that the way is now open to receive baptism, and to commemorate the death of Christ. I am very glad to find that there is nothing now to prevent or hinder. . . . And it is my wish to be a partaker of these. I devote myself, both soul and body, to Jesus, that I may serve Him in all things, according to His will; and I pray God to assist me by His Holy Spirit, that I may love Jesus with all my heart, with all my spirit, and with all my strength; and that I may not be made to stand in doubt by anything whatsoever. Having thus given myself up to Jesus, both soul and body, I ask permission of you to join the church in commemorating the death of Jesus, and that I may also join you in singing praises to God as long as I live. And now, pray for me unto God, that I may be assisted to fulfil what I have said, and to serve Jesus faithfully all my days here on earth.

“Saith R——.”

The public administration of baptism, and the formation of a native Christian church, naturally excited much attention ; and many professed a desire to join it. Much of the time of the missionaries was now occupied in conversations with inquirers, and in giving instruction to those who were seeking to be numbered with the people of God. Special times were appointed, and meetings of inquirers were held, often amounting to forty or fifty persons at a time, some of whom were men of rank and influence. Now, too, Mr. Freeman, who had left the island, greatly discouraged, in the autumn of 1829, returned from the Cape of Good Hope, at the earnest request of his colleagues and the native Christians, and expressed both astonishment and delight at what he beheld. He landed at Tamatave in August 1831, and on arriving at the capital, he remarks, that "on beholding the new place of public worship which had been erected, the crowded and attentive audiences, the numbers who appeared to be sincere converts, the affection, harmony, and zeal prevailing among them, their social meetings for prayer, and the numbers applying for admission, he could scarcely believe his senses." Thus encouraged, and having the queen's personal sanction, he resumed his labours at Antananarivo, trusting that what he beheld was only the commencement of a glorious gospel harvest.

About this time, also, the missionaries had the further and convincing evidence of God's blessing in the tranquil and happy deaths of several of

the native Christians, who departed this life under the cheering influence of a hope full of immortality. One of these cases is selected by Mr. Ellis, "from amongst several of a similar kind;" and it is worthy of attention from the peculiar absence of all extrinsic attractions. Rabenohaja was a young slave, of sluggish and indolent habits. He had been employed to attend his master's son to the missionary schools; and, while so occupied, he himself learnt to read, and was brought to an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures. These, by the Divine blessing, wrought an entire change in his whole character. Mr. Baker thus describes it:—

"He was enabled to receive the gospel of Christ like a little child. He felt himself to be a lost sinner, and he found in Jesus a Saviour just suited to him. He believed on the Saviour, rejoicing that He had died to save sinners, and was able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him.

"While religion wonderfully improved his intellectual and moral character, it imparted new vigour to all his actions and habits. He became increasingly diligent as a servant. His mind seemed to expand, and his faculties to be enlivened. There was in his character a union of the utmost humility with a degree of manly sentiment and aspiring hope. He would say, 'I am only a poor slave; but I trust I love the Lord Jesus.'

"Rabenohaja was among the earliest and most zealous of the believers. He became one of the

most active—teaching some to read, persuading others to attend divine service, and assisting at the native prayer-meetings.

“After a while, he was sent to teach a school in the country. Here, while engaged in elementary tuition, he ever sought to leaven his instruction with the life-giving power of the Gospel; and in his leisure hours, by conversation and prayer-meetings, to convey to the adults around him a knowledge of the same eternal truths.

“His conduct having long been truly ornamental to his Christian profession, he was admitted to baptism on November 5, 1831. Immediately after, he returned to his post. He had twice had the fever of the country, and had recovered from it; but he felt an apprehension that a third attack might prove fatal. He even ventured to say to some of his friends, on leaving the capital, ‘I think we shall not see each other’s faces again on earth: I believe Jesus will soon fetch me.’

“A few weeks after, he wrote for a fresh supply of spelling and reading books, and for some time longer accounts were received of his increasing activity and zeal. At last the tidings came that the fever had seized him. Two of his scholars walked to the capital expressly to carry to the missionaries the tidings of his death. He was ill only three days, during which he repeatedly exclaimed, ‘I am going to Jesus; He calls me. I do not fear.’ His last words were, ‘I do not fear.’

“These simple words,” remarked the missionary, “presented as strong a contrast as human language can admit to the common feeling of the people. Those who have seen the strongest men in Madagascar die, know how, when stretched on a death-bed, they will exclaim in the anguish of despair, while the big tears trickle down their cheeks, ‘I die! I die! O father, O mother, I die!’ And hence, universally, the natives shun all reference to death, as a subject the most repugnant to their feelings. How inestimable, then, is that Gospel which could enable a poor Malagese to look death in the face, and to repeat, again and again, ‘I do not fear; Jesus is taking me!—I do not fear!’”

The annual report of the directors of the London Missionary Society, presented in May 1832, may be described as the last (for more than twenty years) in which the language of hopeful expectation is used. The directors say—

“There are now two chapels in Antananarivo, the old mission-chapel, and another on the north side of the capital, at Ambatonakanga. To this last, the queen gave wood for the benches and the pulpit.

“Mr. Canham has taken up a station at a place called Ambohimandrosa, where he has erected a house for preaching. There are also several houses in the capital itself in which preaching takes place. In all these places there is a large and increasing attendance. The people come willingly to hear the Gospel, and many evince great anxiety to be made

acquainted with the way of life. A work of the Spirit of God appears to be going on. The number of inquirers is increasing; and those who have been savingly converted are zealous in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel, and in bringing their friends and relatives to a participation of that salvation which it is their own happiness to enjoy.

“Messrs. Chick and Cameron, who are employed by the native government, and have a great number of people under them, have prepared suitable places for the instruction of their people. Mr. Baker also delivers addresses both on the Sabbath and on week-days.

“Since the queen’s permission was given, two native churches have been formed. The first, at Ambodinandahalo, under Mr. Griffiths, consists of ninety-six adults and three children. The communicants on November 4, 1831, were sixty-seven. The other church is at Ambatonakanga, under Mr. Johns, consisting of nineteen adults and one child.

“An officer of the government at Antananarivo, who seems to be seriously impressed himself, has established a school for his servants; and there is also an evening school for the benefit of servants in general. From sixty to seventy attend, many of whom evince a concern for their souls.

“Meanwhile, the printing of the Old Testament has proceeded up to the 12th of Joshua. Mr. Baker had also printed 1,000 first catechism, and 2,000 hymn-books. Of the spelling-book 7,000 have been

printed, and of the tracts 1,000 copies. The New Testament is eagerly sought after, but it is difficult to get the copies bound fast enough to meet the demand. It has found its way to the villages, sixty or seventy miles distant, and even to the sea-coast."

CHAPTER IX.

NEW SYMPTOMS OF OPPOSITION.

A.D. 1832—1834.

AN alternation of storms and sunshine, of biting frosts and more genial weather, has been the regimen under which the mission to Madagascar has subsisted for more than five and thirty years. At the period which is now before us, this was peculiarly the case. For a year or two after the accession of queen Ranavalona, all was gloom, so that one or two of the missionaries abandoned the field from utter hopelessness. Then a short period of sunshine returned, and Mr. Freeman "could scarcely believe his senses" when he saw the change. But this external prosperity was but transitory. As the year 1832 advanced, the hostility of the government—real though not avowed—became more and more visible and perceptible.

In the month of May 1832, a public examination of the schools was held, and the proficiency of the scholars was commended in a message from the queen, which also expressed her sense of the im-

portance of the mission to the nation, and of the benefits it had conferred on the people. Yet, while these were the public professions, their hollowness was quickly shown, by a message received the very next day by the missionaries, intimating that as the year had nearly expired, for which Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson had received permission to reside in Madagascar, they must now prepare for their return, and leave the capital within five days. An application to the government obtained only a slight extension, and on July 6 these two missionaries, who had come to Madagascar prepared to devote their lives to the people, were compelled by the rulers of the land to quit a country which they had hoped to benefit by their labours for many years to come.

In fact, whatever hope the formal commendations of the government, or the attentions shown to Mr. Freeman by the queen, might excite, it soon became quite evident that no friendly feeling towards the spread of Christianity had led to these favourable manifestations. It was made quite clear that the mission was only valued on account of the secular advantages which the government hoped to derive from it. A supply of qualified officers for the army, and the spread of useful arts among the people — these were the real objects desired by the queen's advisers, and on all the others they looked with coldness or aversion. Several new orders were now issued, all tending to check the missionaries in

their proper work. First, an injunction was issued, forbidding the natives from partaking of wine in the Lord's Supper, on the ground of its opposition to a law against the use of spirituous liquors. Then came an order to all the government scholars in the schools, forbidding them to receive baptism or to participate in the Lord's Supper. Next came a prohibition of education for all slaves;—the master allowing it, or the slave obtaining it, being subjected to heavy punishments. All these restrictions, quickly following each other, left no doubt as to the real *animus* of the government.

It was about this time that a new and abortive attempt was made, from another quarter, to assail the heathenism of Madagascar. A representative of the court of Rome landed at Tamatave, bearing, as he declared, proposals from the pope and from the king of France, for the establishment of a Roman Catholic mission in Madagascar. He insisted on going up to the capital, without any permission from the queen. He set off, but while on the road his bearers, dreading to enter Antananarivo without permission, deserted him, and he died between Tamatave and the capital, probably of the fever of the country.

The military expeditions of the government having stripped the schools of all the elder scholars, orders were issued by the proper authorities, that fresh pupils should be provided, and the numbers replenished. But in proportion as the people came

to understand, that to send their children to the schools was, in effect, to send them to the army, a natural aversion sprang up, and it was difficult to draw the children together, for a purpose so plainly at variance with all the purposes and professions of the late king. Still, however, the increasing desire of the people to learn to read the Scriptures had a considerable effect, and the voluntary applications of this kind were very numerous during the years 1833 and 1834. New editions, too, of the spelling-book and of other elementary works, were now printed, sometimes to the extent of 5,000 copies at a time, and yet the demand was not satisfied.

The annual report of the London Committee presented a mixture of fears and hopes. Various unfavourable occurrences were noticed—the order to Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson to leave the country; the prohibition of the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper to the natives; the denial of instruction to slaves; but, on the other side, various encouraging signs were remarked. The spirit of enquiry among the people had evidently increased. One of the missionaries wrote:—

“We have still much left to awaken gratitude and hope. The congregations continue good, and their general aspect is that of serious and devout regard for the word of God. A profound silence is maintained, and the eyes of many are intent on the preacher. The natives pay us numerous visits for the purpose of conversation on Divine truth, often

bringing their New Testaments with them, and eagerly turning to some passage on which they needed information.

“I have often been surprised,” says one of the missionaries, “at the readiness with which they have collated passages, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Many of them, too, have never been in our schools, but have learnt to read of their own accord. I trust they are guided and enlightened by that Spirit who causes light to shine out of darkness.”

The circulation of the Scriptures, and of other books now began to tell. In the course of 1833, as many as 15,000 small books were produced, and upwards of 6,000 were eagerly taken by the people. The native Christians, armed with these, and with copies of the Gospels, went everywhere spreading the knowledge of the truth. The missionaries wrote home :—

“Many of the people, both in the capital and in the provinces, are learning to read, and this creates a great demand for books. A few days ago we were much struck by two young persons, who came to us with a slate in their hands, on which one of them, a respectable young female from the country, had written—

““I have long lived in darkness, and am now most desirous of being brought into the light, that I may know about God and his Son Jesus Christ. Oh, pity me! have compassion on me! give me a copy

of the New Testament. I am greatly in need of it; be merciful to me, and grant, if you possibly can, my request.' ”

In this silent way was the Holy Spirit now working. The public services were not many, nor intrusive; but the missionaries seem to have been earnestly at work. In the mission-chapel about 300 or 400 natives voluntarily attended, and their general aspect was that of serious and devout attention. A prayer-meeting was held each Sunday afternoon, at which, besides the missionaries, a native Christian would sometimes speak. On Wednesday a service was held at a village three miles distant. In several private houses prayer-meetings were held by the native Christians themselves.

Passing on to 1834, the last year of the English mission, we notice, first, the expulsion of Mr. Canham and his family, one of the Missionary artisans, who was compelled to leave Madagascar in August of that year. In their report, the directors speak of “difficulties, discouragements, and trials.” The view they give of the state of the mission is brief and cursory. But in November of that year, 1834, the two principal missionaries now left in Madagascar, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Johns, remitted a general report of the state of the mission, which, while it is cautious in its statements, contains many pleasing features. They say:—

“The preached word is listened to attentively, and the Scriptures are earnestly sought after, and dili-

gently examined. A spirit of prayer exists and increases among the natives; meetings for prayer are convened, and conducted by the natives themselves.

“God appears to manifest His purposes of mercy towards this people in raising up an agency of His own among themselves, to carry on His own work. He is preparing His own instruments, giving them zeal and knowledge, imbuing them with love to the truth, and thus supplying the exigencies of His cause, and compensating for our lack of service.

“As a single instance, we may remark, that in a village sixty miles from the capital, a small chapel has been erected by the zeal and devotedness of the natives; chiefly, indeed, by the exertions of a pious female. A delightful spirit of enquiry is awakened in that district; and several of the natives, men of rank and importance, conduct prayer-meetings with much fervour and propriety. Another chapel is also rising in a district 120 miles to the south. Public worship, chiefly prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, is held in many parts of the country, principally by those who were formerly scholars or teachers in the missionary schools. Applications for books, and especially for the Scriptures, are very numerous.”

Still, so fearful were the missionaries of encouraging too sanguine hopes, that, in summing up the general results, and recording the actual state and prospects of the mission, they use the following cautious and guarded expressions :

“ We have reason to think that *several* are savingly converted to God ; that many more are perfectly convinced of the folly of idolatry and divination ; and that great multitudes are awakened to think and enquire.”

This statement is, certainly, the reverse of boasting, occurring, too, at the end of a fourteen years' mission. Subsequent events have proved that it conveyed less than the truth ; but we now call attention to it as a remarkable instance of a case in which the parties employed undervalued greatly the fruits of their own exertions.

CHAPTER X.

SUPPRESSION OF THE MISSION.

A.D. 1835.

THE Great Enemy of the Church, who of old received permission to oppress and try the patriarch Job, was now allowed to extinguish apparently the light of the gospel in Madagascar. But his main triumph was preceded, as is often the case, by one or two minor advantages. He had not forgotten to sow tares among the wheat. Some of these sprang up about the time of which we are now speaking, and served to attract the attention and to awaken the fears and jealousies of the heathen rulers of Madagascar.

One of the keepers of idols, appointed and maintained by the government, was named Rainitsian-davaka. He had realised some property, and was living in comfort. About the year 1832, he experienced many calamities; the death of his wife, the death of his child, and the loss of some of his slaves. He became melancholy; and while in this state of mind, he met with the native Christian, named Paul, of whom we have already spoken. The

conversation of Paul produced a deep effect on him. He accompanied his new friend to the capital, and attended the services at the mission-chapel. He then called on one of the missionaries, and conversed with him. But, instead of betaking himself to a patient study of the Scriptures, he caught up a few ideas which were novel to him, and went about everywhere declaiming on the general resurrection, the day of judgment, and the millennial state. His friends believed him to be deranged. Paul entreated him to be silent, until he had mastered for himself the Gospel message. But Rainitsiandavaka could not be quieted. He went from village to village, conversing with every one he met, on the descent of mankind from Adam and Eve, the day of judgment, the resurrection, and the millennium. His zeal and eloquence had one natural result; in about a year, as many as two hundred persons became his followers. But he vainly endeavoured to unite the worship of God with the worship of his idol; and thus a sect, resembling some of those in the Apostolic times, was rapidly springing up.

This zeal, too, was mingled with no little fanaticism. The new leader proceeded, at last, to the capital, and announced that he had a message to deliver to the queen. As he was followed by a number of persons, the government became suspicious and angry, and queen Ranavalona issued orders to put the new prophet to death, and to seize and sell his followers for slaves. The poor man was

quietly buried alive, with three of his adherents, and the rest were sold. The queen and her officers made a gain of some thousands of dollars by the whole transaction. This incident both irritated the queen against "the new teachers," and also whetted her appetite for plunder. At this period, too, as might have been anticipated, "a number of the natives who had hitherto attached themselves to the missionaries from mixed or inferior motives, withdrew themselves, and returned back into the ranks of the heathen." The idolaters, also, had their expectations excited by the evident tendency of the court. The queen was a zealous votary of the idols; and her favourite ministers encouraged and made use of this propensity to superstition. Hitherto they had thought it prudent to profess a kind of friendship for the missionaries; but at the period at which we have now arrived, this simulated friendship began to be thrown off. A disregard for the idols had hitherto been winked at; it now began to be treated as an offence.

Early in 1835, a young man, a native Christian, was called on by one of the chiefs to take part in a sacrifice to the idols. He refused, and his refusal excited great anger among those highest in power. Enemies of the native Christians now found that an eager ear was lent in the queen's household to reports to their disadvantage. A preacher had said in one of his sermons, that ere long "God would punish all workers of iniquity, and reward those who loved and

served him." A casual hearer reported this to one of the officers of the court, who told it to the queen. She desired a watch to be kept, and a report to be brought to her. The next sermon was on the resurrection, and parts of it were repeated to the queen. "How should they know," exclaimed Ranavalona, "that God will raise the dead? I myself never heard such things as these; and if they were true, I must have heard of them."

Shortly after this, a young man, Andriantsoa, who was a Christian, was called on to keep a Saturday as a holiday to the idols. He refused, and continued planting his rice-ground. A hubbub arose, and Andriantsoa was accused to the judge that he paid no regard to the idol, nor regarded its "fady," or sacred day. The judge referred the matter to the queen, who ordered the tangena, or poison-water, to be administered, to try if Andriantsoa was a sorcerer. He recovered, and was declared to be innocent. The native Christians, overjoyed, made a kind of procession to welcome him back again. The queen saw this procession from a distance, and was highly offended at it, regarding it as a triumph over *her*. In this way, both Ranavalona and her principal ministers became more and more inimical to the proceedings of the mission.

The officer who had brought the accusation against Andriantsoa, felt himself defeated and disgraced by the latter's acquittal, and it became known to him that the queen shared in these feelings. He soon ascer-

tained that charges against the Christians would be received with favour. He went one day to one of their chapels to listen. A native Christian read Joshua xxiv. 14, 15 : " Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth ; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord," &c. &c. The preacher urged his hearers to quit the practices of idolatry, and to serve the Lord Jehovah and His Christ.

The very next day an accusation was lodged with one of the queen's ministers. " There are," said the accuser, " certain people in and around this capital who are bent on changing ' the customs of the twelve sovereigns.' They despise the idols of the queen and the customs of their forefathers ; they treat them as nothing. They are in league with the English ; they hold assemblies in the night ; and they do all these things without permission from the queen. The end of all this will be, that the kingdom will be transferred to the hands of foreigners."

The queen listened to this, and then burst into tears and cried a long time. She then swore by the name of Andrianimpoina that she would put a stop to these things, even if it were by the shedding of blood. She ordered a kabary, or great assembly, to be summoned for March 1. Rumours naturally began to fly about, of the queen's wrath, and of her dire resolve.

It was now the middle of February. On Sunday,

the queen ordered all her "sewing women" to attend in the court-yard of the palace to sew. These women had been taught in the mission-schools, and most of them were in the habit of attending public worship in the chapel. She passed them in the court-yard, and said scornfully, "Had you not better go and ask the English to give you leave to work for me?" In the evening, returning from some field sports, she passed near the chapel, and heard the singing, when she remarked, "These people will not leave off till some of their heads are taken from their shoulders!"

The chapel was crowded that day at both the services. The daughter of an old judge was in the habit of attending, and he warned her in the morning not to go, as the queen did not approve of it. After he had gone out, she slipped away to the chapel. Returning and finding her absent, he went to the chapel to seek for her. Astonished to see so large an assembly, he remarked, "You will never see such a congregation in that place again."

On the following Tuesday, orders were given to make a list of the houses where prayer-meetings had been held, and another list of all persons who had been baptized. The officers were summoned, and the lists were given in at a sort of council held in the palace. The queen was astonished at the length of these lists, and swore by the name of Andrianim-poina that she would put the owners of these houses to death. She now appeared exceedingly violent,

and her attendants scarcely dared to speak. At last one of the council, Rainingitabe, rose and said, "Take courage, madam, we are here, ready to put to death all who seek to overturn your government. Still, I would entreat you to consider well what you propose to do with these people, who have learnt to pray. I have watched them for years, and I have not seen any among the people more upright, more diligent, or more trustworthy than those who have attended the meetings to pray. They also have more knowledge than most others of the people. Your predecessors, madam, set a great value on faithful subjects. And I fear that if you should put to death any of these young people, who have received instruction from the Europeans—I fear, I say, that you, madam, will be the loser, and will be sorry for it. These are my thoughts, madam, and I cannot conceal them, whatever may be the consequences."

The queen seemed mollified, and said, "I thank you; you do not conceal from me what you think will be of service to the kingdom. We will consider well what is to be done with these people."

Seeing this improved feeling, Andrianisa next rose, and said, that he highly approved of the advice which had been given; that almost all the new things that had been introduced for the good of the kingdom had been introduced by the English: and that, if any of the natives should be put to death for adopting their customs, the teachers would be grieved, and reproach would fall on the queen's government.

Two or three others concurred, and the queen now seemed shaken in her determination to make some terrible examples. But the church's enemy saw his opportunity, and he eagerly pressed his advantage. A chief of rank presented himself at the palace, and requested an audience of the queen. Being admitted, he said: "I am come to ask your majesty for a spear, a bright and sharp spear." Being asked, for what? he replied, that he had seen the dishonour done by the foreigners to the idols, the sacred guardians of the land, and to the memory of her majesty's ancestors; that the hearts of the people were already turned from the customs of their ancestors, and from her majesty, their successor; that this would end in the arrival of foreigners to take possession of the country; and, he added, "as I do not wish to see this, I ask for a spear, that I may pierce my own heart, and die before that evil day comes."

The queen was greatly moved; but still she saw no plausible ground on which any one could be put to death. Her advisers thought it best, therefore, to begin by restriction and prohibition. Meanwhile the court and palace put on the appearance of terror and alarm. Music and dancing were forbidden, silence reigned in the royal abode, and frequent consultations were held, as though some great peril were impending over the nation.

At last, on Thursday, February 26, 1835, the first blow fell. Service was held that afternoon

in the mission-chapel; and it proved to be the last public service ever held there. The deepest apprehensions were felt by the missionaries of some immediate evil, and the text chosen was, "Lord, save us, we perish!" (Matt. viii. 25.) Immediately after, a body of the queen's officers appeared, bearing a communication from the queen. There being no room for the interview in a private house, it took place in the chapel. Ratsimanisa, a known enemy of the mission, was the bearer of the royal letter, and he delivered it with an exhibition of malignant feeling which left no room for hope. The mandate was in these words:—

"I inform you, my friends, with regard to the disposition you have manifested towards my country, in teaching the good disposition and knowledge, I thank you for it; it is highly acceptable to me. . . . And I also inform all you Europeans, that, while you reside here in my country, you may observe all the customs and religious observances of your ancestors, without fear, for I do not change. . . . But I tell you explicitly, that if these people of mine should change the customs of their ancestors, . . . I utterly detest it; for 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. If there be good disposition or knowledge that may be beneficial to my country, *that* I assent to; but the customs of my ancestors I cannot allow to be changed.

"Hence, then, with regard to religious worship,

and the practice of baptism, and the keeping up a society (i.e. a church), these things cannot be done by my subjects in my country. But with regard to yourselves, as Europeans, do that which accords with the customs of your ancestors. And if there be knowledge of the arts and sciences which may be beneficial to my subjects, teach *that*, for it is good. This I tell you, my friends, that you may hear of it.

“ Saith RANAVALO-MANJAKA.”*

Here was a distinct prohibition of the missionary work, of the most total and peremptory kind. And the ruling idea throughout the whole was, “ Nothing shall be changed ; the customs of our ancestors must be adhered to.” At one blow, therefore, the whole mission was declared to be illegal, and an offence to the government.

After a few hours spent in consultation and prayer, the missionaries ventured to forward the following reply to the royal mandate :—

“ To Ranavalomanjaka.

“ May you attain to old age, not suffering affliction. Madam, may you equal in length of days the human race.† We have received your letter, brought to us by the officers of the palace ; and we are happy to find that the disposition we have manifested in your

* Agreeing with “ Victoria Regina.”

† The customary compliments of Madagascar.

country, and in teaching the good disposition and wisdom, has been acceptable to you.

“Nevertheless, we are exceedingly grieved respecting your word, which says, that 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 prosperous those kingdoms which obey it. And this teaching of ours, the word of God, together with teaching the good disposition, and the arts and sciences, are the purposes for which we left our native country.

“We, therefore, most humbly and earnestly entreat your majesty not to forbid our teaching the word of God, but that we may still have the means of teaching it, together with the useful arts and sciences, &c. &c.

“ (Signed) JOHNS, FREEMAN,
 CAMERON, CHICK,
 KITCHIN, BAKER.”

In two days the following reply was sent:—

“Health to you. I have heard the message in your letter, and I say to you: Did I not expressly tell you, that with regard to the customs of your ancestors, they are not changed, that is, among yourselves, while you are here in my country? But I tell you, as I have already told you, that my people are not to do these things, for that which was done by my ancestors cannot be changed.

“Such is the message of the sovereign, which she has directed to be sent in answer to your letter.

“RAINIMAHARO, Officers of the
RAINISEHENO, palace.”

The first of March had now arrived, and the great kabary, or assembly, was gathered together. Fifteen thousand troops were paraded, and the concourse of people was estimated at more than 100,000 persons.

The judges, generals, and chief officers of the court appeared, and presented a royal message, which was then read to the assembly. This document is too long to be given entire, consisting too, as it largely does, of the usual common-places of Madagascar. The pith of it was found in the following passages:—

“I announce to you that I am not a sovereign that deceives, or is deceived. Who, then, is that man that would change the customs of our ancestors, and of the twelve sovereigns?

“Now, on the subject of reviling the idols, treating the divination as useless, and throwing down the tombs of the Vazimba, I abhor that, saith Ranavalo-manjaka.

“As to baptism, societies; places of worship (chapels), and the observance 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 Ranavalo-manjaka.

“Now, then, as to those who have observed baptism, entered into societies, and formed separate houses for prayer, I grant you one month, saith Ranavalo-manjaka, to confess. And if you come not within that period, but wait to be found out, I denounce death against such; for I am not a sovereign that deceives, or that will be deceived. Mark, then, the time; it is one month from this day that I give you to confess.

“You change the customs of the ancestors, for you do not invoke the idols, or the twelve sovereigns. Is not this changing the customs? I detest that; and I tell you plainly that such things shall not be done in my country, saith Ranavalo-manjaka.”

After this edict had been once formally read, Ratsimanisa repeated the substance of it with all the eloquence and force he could command. It was then usual for some of the head-men of the district to speak in reply; and one, from Ambohimalaza, expressed himself as follows:—

“May you, madam, attain to old age, &c. &c. First of all, we express to you our thankfulness. You are a sovereign not condemning hastily, but examining matters well. Who are these fellows that presume to change the customs of our ancestors and of the twelve kings? Let them be delivered up to us, and we shall put every one of them to death. Take courage, Ranavalo-manjaka, they shall not annoy you; we are ready to destroy them.”

The principal officer of the army, Rainiharo, then followed in the same strain:—

“Respecting those of you who have received baptism, who have formed societies, who have reviled the holy idols, who have kept sacred the Sabbath, —unless you come forward by this day month to accuse yourselves, we, the hundred thousand,* shall destroy you; for what you have done is not derived from your ancestors; it is not in obedience to the law of the queen; it is not in obedience to orders from their commanders or from the judges; you have done these things of your own accord, without asking permission of the sovereign. Unless, therefore, such persons come forward by this day month to accuse themselves, we are ready, Ranavalo-manjaka, to cut off their heads.”

And with this speech, the assembly was dismissed; and the people departed.

* I. e. the army.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SUBMISSION OF THE PEOPLE.

A.D. 1835—1836.

THE queen and her ministers, then, had now extinguished Christianity in Madagascar; at least, that was their purpose and their belief; for, up to this time, no such word had ever been heard in that country, as, "We ought to obey God rather than man." In their view, therefore, the Christian faith was banished and cleared away, for, had not the sovereign so ordered?

The fact, however, was, that queen Ranavalona had only begun, in Madagascar, the same contest which had been waged in Rome, sixteen hundred years before, by the Diocletians and Galeriuses of Europe; a struggle which was destined to end, as did theirs, in the confusion of the persecutors, and the triumph of the Gospel.

The kabary, or great assembly, had broken up, and the people had now retired to consider what there remained for them to do. It was the policy of the Malagese government to assume the position of a

parent; and to demand, first, from all offenders, confession and repentance. Those who thus submitted might be assured of some kind of lenity—of a lighter punishment;—while those who remained obdurate were liable to an unsparing sentence of death. Hence, on March 2, the day following the kabary, some of the head-men met the chief officers of the queen, and repeated a request which they had made the day previous, which was to the following effect:—

“When the Europeans came to this country to teach wisdom and knowledge to us, Radama told our children, ‘You are now placed in these schools for the benefit of my kingdom; therefore, whatever the white people teach you, learn with all your might, and do whatever they tell you; for you are placed under their instruction. And whatever hardship or difficulty you may experience in learning, bear it patiently; for we seek knowledge and wisdom from them.’

“And now, madam, we have done so; our wives and children have done so; but whatever was done in this respect, was intended for the good of the kingdom. And now, since the time has arrived when you do not approve of these things, we confess our guilt, and crave pardon for what we have done. And we beg of you, madam, to accept a bullock and a dollar as a fine for our having done what is displeasing to you, and as a pledge from us that nothing of the kind shall be done again.”

This message was carried to the queen, and the

next day notice was given that her majesty's reply would be made public in the afternoon. At that time the judges and military officers, with a body of troops, appeared with the royal answer. The queen declined to accept the general acknowledgment and peace-offering which had been tendered; she insisted on the personal confession of every one who had been guilty of any of the acts denounced.

“And this I announce to you, saith Ranavalomanjaka—I gave you a month to come and accuse yourselves, but you could not wait; you hastened to confess your offence and receive my pardon. I have therefore decided to give you only a week to accuse yourselves, instead of a month. Against all who do not come forward and confess in that time, I denounce death. Take care, therefore, to send in your confessions in a proper way. The soldiers are to accuse themselves to the five head-officers; the townspeople to the judges; and the scholars to the rulers of the schools. Be careful in specifying your offences; and remember that next Sunday is the last day: unless you send in your names by that time, you die wilfully.”

The same evening the missionaries received a message from the queen, signifying, that the children were not to be under their teaching on the Sunday; and that nothing religious was to be taught to the children at any time.

Another message came to the twelve senior native teachers, to the following effect:—

“ And this I demand of you, twelve senior teachers, with regard to the baptism and the holding of assemblies in houses where schools have not been established by my sanction, and the forming of societies ; has all this been done by my order, or by the order of Radama ? ”

To this the teachers sent the following reply :—

“ May you, madam, attain to old age, not suffering, &c. We confess our guilt, and crave your pardon for doing what is not allowed in your country. Do not blame us, madam, while we tell you that when Radama placed us in the schools to be instructed by the Europeans, he told us, ‘ Learn diligently all the knowledge which these foreigners communicate to you, and do whatever they tell you.’ And we did as we were instructed. With regard to the houses opened for prayer-meetings, we are not the persons that commenced them, only we attended as other people did. But after you suppressed baptism, madam, we held no meetings in our houses. With regard to baptism, some of us indeed have been baptized, but when baptism was forbidden by you, we obeyed your orders. With regard to the society, there was one in the time of Radama, but since you suppressed it, we have not attended any, nor have we received a farthing from any society since that time. May you live long,” &c.

This, however, was too much like a defence to please the queen, who answered :—

“ I have heard your reply to my questions, and if you

are going to answer me in that manner, let it be so; but I demand of you again—Did Radama tell you to establish prayer-meetings in houses where schools were not held? and did he tell you to be baptized? If he did give you that order, do not conceal it from me.”

The young men ventured one more attempt to stand their ground, but they received a private communication, that if they made the least attempt at justification, they would involve themselves in the greatest danger; and that if they wished to save their lives, they must confine themselves to confession and entreaties for pardon. They, therefore, by a majority, adopted a humble and servile course, and wrote as follows:—

“To Ranavalo-manjaka.

“May you attain to old age, &c. In the first place, it is our business to express our unfeigned thanks to you. You have not put us to death without giving us an opportunity of speaking; you have not hastened to shed our blood We thank you, Ranavalo-manjaka, for that you are a sovereign, searching thoroughly into every case, so that justice may be done. And now we come to acknowledge our offences; we come to crave pardon for the evil we have done. We are indeed guilty, for we have acted unadvisedly, we did not ask permission, or acquaint you with what we were doing. We therefore confess our offences, and crave forgiveness. May you attain to old age, &c.

“Say the Twelve Teachers.”

To which the queen replied: —

“I have received your letter which contains your self-accusation. It is well that you did not dare to contend with the sun, but that you came to confess your guilt, and crave pardon. As you have done so, and have given me a written document which expresses your sorrow and repentance, it remains with me now to choose what punishment to inflict upon you, and I will do with you as with others who are guilty of the same offence; for I shall show no partiality among my subjects.”

The people were now busily at work in preparing and sending in their self-accusations. Great numbers naturally yielded to the pressure, and voluntarily offered the extremest professions of repentance and abjuration. Some plainly told the missionaries, “Since God will not protect us, we may as well do as we please;” and they, abjuring, went back to the vilest practices of the heathen. Others, more faithful, plainly told the queen’s officers, “We did no evil, and intended none, to the queen or her kingdom in our prayers; we prayed to the God of heaven and earth to prosper her reign.” When they were asked how many times they had prayed to God, they answered that they could not tell; for whenever able, they had neglected no opportunity of public worship; and as to private prayers, they said, “we prayed before work in the morning, and before sleep in the evening; and at other times in the course of the day.” One native of considerable influence, being before

the judges, and being asked how many times he had prayed, answered that he could not tell; but he added, that for three or four years he had not passed a day without offering up prayer several times. The judges asked him to tell them how he prayed. He cheerfully did this; beginning with confession, and describing how he laid his sins before God, imploring forgiveness, and asking for help to enable him to live without sinning; and how he then asked God to wash him from his sin, to make him holy, and to prepare him for eternal happiness. He said that he asked the same blessings for his family and friends, and for the queen and her subjects; and added, "I asked all these things in the name of Jesus; for we sinners can receive nothing from God except through his Son Jesus Christ, who died for sinners." The judges confessed that his prayer was very good, but added that, as the queen did not approve of such things, they ought not be done in her country.

During this season of trial, the native converts continued to meet every evening in the vestry of the chapel at Ambatonakanga, for the purpose of offering special prayer to God. One, a native officer of high rank in the army, who had never before joined himself to the Christians, now did so; declaring his determination to take their God as his God. But he resolved not to accuse himself, seeing nothing wrong in what was done, and not choosing to promise to abstain for the future.

On Monday, the 9th, the people were summoned, and the queen's message was announced by the officers

of the palace. The principal points in it were these. Addressing the self-accused, the queen said:—

“ You owe your lives to the entreaties of the people; for you have said that the idols are *nothing* — that divination is *nothing*—that the Vazimba are *nothing*; but to Jehovah and Jesus alone you pray, and not to the idols and to your ancestors which made the twelve sovereigns sacred. You have dared to say that these things are *nothing*. What is the purport of these expressions? I detest them, saith Ranavalomanjaka.

“ I will now tell you what I have decided to do with you; for you have acted according to your own discretion, without asking the permission of your sovereign. Since you have transgressed my laws so as to deserve death, your honours shall be thrown into yonder river; for you have endeavoured to change the customs of your ancestors. There, half the honours of some of you, and a third part of the honours of others, and all the honours which some possess, shall be thrown. But all this is arranged, and shall be read to you presently.

“ As for you, Ratsimihara, though you are my relative and one of my family, I recognise no relative when the laws of my country are violated. I would even willingly deliver you unto death, but the prayer of Imerina has saved you. You are reduced from the ninth to the second honour.

“ And with regard to the guilty multitude who have no honours, you brought to the queen a dollar and a bullock to crave for pardon, and the mass of the

people have entreated for you, and I forgive you on that ground, and order you to pay this fine—a dollar and a bullock for each district. But if guilty of these things again, your lives will be forfeited.

“And with regard to the mode of prayer, . . . I will tell you how you are to pray. You must first of all invoke Andriamanitra Andriananahary; then all that is sacred of the twelve sovereigns; and of the earth and heaven; of the sun and moon, and then of the twelve holy mountains, and of the sacred idols, Ikelimalaza, Ifantaka, Imahavaly, Imanjakatsiroa, for they have made sacred the twelve sovereigns. And if any change this mode of praying, I will punish them with death, saith Ranavalo-manjaka.”

The whole number of officers thus reduced in rank was about four hundred. This sentence, it must be remembered, proceeded upon their own written confession. So that we have here the fact abundantly proved, that as many as four hundred men, holding office in the army, or in some other public department, had been baptized, or had joined themselves to the missionary churches.

Such a degradation as from the ninth to the second rank is equal to reducing an officer in our own army from being a general to be a serjeant! Yet all this was received with the most entire submission: not a breath of murmuring or a thought of resistance was perceptible. In the course of the second week in March orders were issued that all persons who had

received any books from the Europeans should deliver them up on pain of death. A house was allotted to their reception, and persons were appointed to take charge of them. The utmost sorrow was depicted in the countenances of the people when bringing in their books in obedience to this order. Some of the smaller books — catechisms or hymn-books — were doubtless concealed in many instances. After these prohibited books had been thus kept in a government warehouse for some months, they were sent to the missionaries for removal from the country.*

The immediate effect of all these proceedings was, to stop at once all missionary labour in Madagascar, and to force upon the missionaries the question, what it was their duty to do under such circumstances? The usual communications with England by way of the Mauritius being circuitous, and requiring generally more than twelve months for the transmission of a letter and receipt of an answer, it was clearly necessary that the missionaries should adopt some resolution on their own responsibility, and should at once proceed to act upon it. Nor was there much difficulty in coming to a decision. The case was not one in which it could be a duty to defy the government. The missionaries were not in their own country. They had no rights to maintain, nor had they any

* It was a singular specimen of the modes of action of a singular government, that when these books were found to be injured by rats, a number of cats were procured, and kept by the proper officers, to protect the books from injury.

power of resistance. They could no longer address the people in congregations, for the people no longer dared to hear them; and even in private houses it brought peril upon the natives to be known to listen to a European teacher. The circulation of the Scriptures and of tracts and hymn-books was equally unlawful; and nothing but the mere routine labour of teaching the children to read and to write remained open to them. To contravene the orders of the government was merely to render their own expulsion certain and immediate; and hence the injunction of the Saviour—"If they shall persecute you in one city flee unto another,"—seemed to furnish the only rule which was applicable to their case. Millions of heathen in other countries were crying out, "Come over unto us, and help us;" what, then, could be more natural, than that those whose mouths were closed in the great African island should begin to look towards the mainland of Africa, as presenting very many spots on which their efforts might be more hopefully employed?

They would not quit the island, however, until they had first made an effort to complete the translation and printing of the whole word of God. A portion of the Old Testament remained to be revised and printed; and to the completion of this their chief energies were devoted during the months of March, April, May, and June, 1835. They had the happiness to see the close of this work in the latter month; and before midsummer, Messrs.

Freeman, Cameron, Chick, and Kitching had left the shores of Madagascar.

Two of the missionary party, Messrs. Johns and Baker, remained one more year, unwilling to give up all hopes of Madagascar, and resolving to wait for instructions from England. This year of suspense was a most painful one. They dwelt, on the strength of a permission given, but grudgingly, among avowed enemies and terrified and fearful friends. Their native servants were ordered to take the *tangena*, under which two of them died. The infant of another of these servants was suffocated the day after its birth by the queen's orders, because of the "fatal day" of its birth. The dealings of the government with those suspected of Christianity became more and more harsh and severe. Sunday was expressly and purposely desecrated by public works and amusements. At length the twelvemonth came to an end, and no letters from England had yet arrived. As the two missionaries who still remained had indicated a twelvemonth as the period of their waiting, and as they desired not to give the government any ground for accusing them of double-dealing, they resolved, though with heavy hearts, to close the mission, and to quit Madagascar. Leaving about seventy complete Bibles, and several boxes of Testaments, hymn-books, and catechisms, mostly buried in secluded spots for safety, Messrs. Johns and Baker left the capital in July 1836, and, embarking at Tamatave, reached Mauritius in September. To human eyes the last

spark of life had thus been trodden out by the Church's enemies.

But now those who had preserved their faith in God became gradually known to one another. Slowly and cautiously did they open their hearts, even to intimate friends. One would hesitatingly refer another to a verse, Jer. xxxviii. 15, "If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death?" to which answer would be made by the following verse, "As the Lord liveth, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hands of the men that seek thy life."

Now, too, the natives began to hold secret meetings, often on some solitary mountain, whence they could discern the approach of any stranger from a considerable distance. "Here they could freely sing the praises of their God and Saviour without any danger of being overheard; and none know so well as afflicted Christians, how soothing to the troubled heart is the language and music of a favourite hymn."

CHAPTER XII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE INEVITABLE STRIFE.

A.D. 1836—1838.

BUT now began that strange and fearful history of a strife, lasting more than twenty years, between the unquenchable light of life, and its furious foes. There is scarcely a more striking page in the whole history of the Christian church than that which shows this little bush in Madagascar "burning with fire, and yet not consumed." A Divine life had been implanted in some souls in Madagascar; and it was now to be shown that, though all friends and all foreign aid were withdrawn, and though the poor Malagese believers were left "as sheep in the midst of wolves," still there was a Power on their side greater than the queen, and greater than Satan himself; and one which could sustain this trembling, infant church, even against "the very gates of hell."

The beginning of this warfare took place just as the last missionaries were leaving the island. On July 17, 1836, three servants of a native Christian woman called Rafaravavy went to a jungle named

Rajery, to lay an accusation against her. The charge was, that she and nine of her friends were in the habit of meeting together on the Sabbath-day, of reading the Scriptures, and of praying to Jehovah and to Jesus, after the manner of the Europeans. The judge sent for the father of the accused woman, and he, at the judge's instance, reasoned with his daughter, but found it impossible to shake her constancy. The judge then forwarded the accusation to the queen, who was extremely angry, and said, "Is it possible that there is any one so daring as to defy me; and that one, too, a woman? Go at once and put her to death!" But two or three of the royal household interceded warmly for her life; urging, that both her father and her brother had rendered great services to the queen. After some delay, therefore, the queen decided to spare her life, inflicting a heavy fine, and warning her that another offence would inevitably be punished by death. After her release, finding herself narrowly watched, she removed to a more secluded spot in the suburbs; and here, retired from view, several of the native converts were in the habit of secretly assembling, for the reading of the Scriptures and prayer.

Mr. Johns had taken up his abode, for a time, in Mauritius; and early in 1837 he wrote to some of the native Christians in Madagascar, to intimate to them his intention of visiting Tamatave (the chief port of that island) in the course of the coming season. Rasoamaka and three other native Chris-

tians were sent down to Tamatave to meet him, bearing a letter signed by the whole little band of Christians at Antananarivo, the capital. We give some passages of this interesting epistle (translated by Mr. Freeman), the unaided composition of a few African islanders, left in the midst of the heathen, with no other help or guidance than that of the Divine Comforter.

“Health and happiness to you, beloved friends, say the few disciples of Jesus Christ here in Madagascar. Let us unite in praising God for the favours He has bestowed upon us; for He has not forsaken us, but has guarded and kept us night and day till the present time, that we might not be overcome by evil, nor conquered by the temptations of Satan. Two or three of our number have ended their course, and entered into their everlasting rest; and two or three have become lukewarm; yet our numbers have not decreased, but have been rather augmented.

“We do not perceive any change in the mind of the queen with regard to Christianity. She remains the same. But we are less interfered with since our friends have left us; perhaps it is thought that we shall certainly forget the word of God, now that we have no teachers. The queen does not understand that the best teacher of all, the Holy Spirit, is still with us.

“When we consider our guilt and pollution, and the evil that dwells in our hearts; we soon faint; but when we reflect upon the mercy of God, and the

redemption there is in Jesus, and call to mind the promises, then our hearts take courage, and we believe that Jesus can cleanse us and bring us to heaven, though the way be difficult; and when we meet there we will tell you all that has befallen us by the way while yet upon earth.

* * * * *

“We long to see you, Mr. Freeman; would that we could see you at Ambatonakanga, preaching to us the word of God—how great would be our joy! . . . The Lord has already heard your cry, and ours; for the kingdom of Christ is advancing in this country. As the leaven in the meal, so is it with the kingdom of heaven. Jesus will not quench the smoking flax. We feared, when the missionaries left us, lest God also might forsake us; but we have found the word of promise true—‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ He has, indeed, remained with us; and great has been the joy of our hearts in praying to Him, and in conversing together on the things which relate to the life to come.

“The Bibles that were left have all been put into circulation; and many more copies are desired. If the Pilgrim’s Progress be finished, let it be sent very soon, for we are desirous of it,—it rejoices our hearts. We meet on the mountains to sing and pray on the Sabbath, and we have three services after sunset in the course of the week. All the Christians here are teaching others to read. There are ten learning with one friend, six with another, four with another; and

so our numbers quietly increase. Do not forget us in your supplications, but let us unite in our petitions before God. We purpose to send every year to Tamatave, to forward letters to you, and to receive yours to us."

The native Christian woman named Rafaravavy, of whom we have just spoken, wrote also, by the same messenger to Mr. Johns, and from her letter we extract a few sentences:—

"Health and happiness to you, beloved friend. May you enjoy with your family the blessing of God, and so may all the missionaries who have been with us. . . I beg you not to grieve, for your labour has not been in vain in the Lord. The number of converts is increasing. . . The power of God cannot be hindered. . . 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' Pray for us."

Another letter from some Christians in Madagascar reached Mr. Johns in the course of 1837. The following are some passages from it:—

"Through the blessing of God we have enjoyed peace and tranquillity beyond our expectation, and have been able to meet together frequently for religious purposes. Give our salutations to all that love the Lord Jesus Christ, and beg them to pray for the few sheep in Madagascar, who are in the midst of wolves. We believe those words of the apostle James, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'

"We have great pleasure in telling you that our

number has much increased since you left. Some who had fallen away have been restored, and others have joined themselves, and are learning to read. We want more Bibles, Testaments, and spelling-books, which we hope you will be able to send us. We are delighted with the Pilgrim's Progress: some have written it out for themselves; but we should be exceedingly glad to have some printed copies.

“ Our beloved friend Ramamonjhasina died on his way home from the north. He was a beloved brother, and we enjoyed frequently great pleasure in his society: yet we must not grieve for him; he is now with the Saviour whom he loved. One of our friends who was with him a short time before he died, asked him whether he had any fear. He answered, ‘ 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 in the thought of leaving this sinful world, to be for ever with my Saviour.’ ”

Of this young man, who died so happily, it was observed by some of his friends, that they never heard him mention the name of Jesus without tears in his eyes. One of them asked him one day how it was that this was always the case. He answered, “ How can I help feeling when I name that dear Saviour who died on the cross to save me ? ”

The above letters, coming up to July or August in 1837, all speak of comparative tranquillity in

Madagascar, and of a growth in the Church. The rulers of the island, and their master, the Church's great enemy, had doubtless expected that on the expulsion of the missionaries, and stoppage of all public worship, the whole work would "come to nought." After a while they soon discovered that this was not the case, and their fury soon blazed forth with new vehemence. A letter was received, dated August 13, which ran thus:—

"I venture at the risk of my life to convey to you the melancholy tidings that fourteen of the Christians are in trouble—five men and nine women. They have been apprehended on the single charge of being Christians, and all of them have been reduced to slavery. The men are sold with their wives and children, and all their property confiscated: the single women are sold as they are, all their property being also confiscated. They are all in chains. It is reported that Rafaravavy is the head of the party. We have no hope that her life will be spared. I hope you will raise your prayers for them, and for this poor country."

This accusation was preferred at the very time when Mr. Johns was meeting his four friends at Tamatave. It was laid before the judges Rajery and Raintiaray, to the effect that there were certain persons constantly doing what the queen had prohibited;—observing the sabbath, meeting to pray to Jehovah, and conducting themselves differently to other people. They were said to meet at the house

of Rafaravavy. The judges reported the accusation to Ratsimanisa, who exclaimed, "Then they shall die; for they despise the queen's law." All the accused parties were soon apprehended, except one who was at Tamatave. Rafaravavy excited much wrath by refusing to tell who were her companions. But another of the prisoners, Rasalama, was deceived by assurances that all their names were known, and she incautiously named Ramanana, Raintsiheva, Andrianomanana, Andrianantoandro, Raivo, and Raminahy, as among those "who had prayed." These were immediately apprehended. Raintsiheva, who was also called Paul, gave his accusers an answer which much perplexed them. He said "I have certainly prayed to that God who created me and who has supported me, and who made all things, and is the fountain of all good, to make me a good man. I prayed that he would bless the queen; give her real happiness in this world, and in that which is to come. I asked Him to bless the officers and judges, and all the people, and to make them good—that there might be no robbers or liars in the country, but that He would make the people wise and good." What Paul said had some effect; for some of his hearers remarked that there was no harm in such prayers; and another said, "Let us do nothing rashly, lest we should advise the queen to shed innocent blood."

The government took a fortnight to consider what punishment should be inflicted. On the fourteenth day the people were summoned, and a message from

the queen was read, authorising them to go and seize the property of Rafaravavy for themselves! In a few minutes her house was filled with people; everything movable was carried off, and the house itself was quickly pulled to pieces. She herself was then ordered to follow four of the Tsiarondahy, or public executioners. They took her along the road to Ambohipotsy, the place of execution. She concluded they had orders to put her to death forthwith, She felt, she afterwards said, "as if she had done with earth, and longed that her spirit might take its flight."

One or two of the Christians were bold enough to follow her; and to one she said, in a low voice, "Go with me and see my end. If I find the strength of Christ sufficient to support me, it may help to encourage our friends."

The executioners soon left the road, and entered the house of one of Rainihairo's secretaries, where heavy irons were put on her. One of the men said, "Do not make them too fast; she is to be put to death at dawn to-morrow morning."

Such was the queen's command, but God had ordered it to be otherwise. That night a fire broke out, and caused so much confusion, that, in the alarm, an order was given suspending all government business, and the executioners dared not proceed in their work. She was now forgotten for a time, and remained five months in irons before any final decision was taken.

On the same day which was intended to be that of Rafaravavy's execution, the other prisoners were taken to Ambatonafandra, to hear the queen's decision, which was thus proclaimed by the judges:—

“It is announced to you, O people, that these are stubborn persons, who persist in doing what is forbidden, and the punishment of their deeds is now inflicted upon them. This have I decided to do with them: I will reduce them to perpetual slavery, so that their friends shall never be allowed to redeem them; they shall die in slavery, for they have paid no regard to my commands, but have set at nought my established law. And if I find out at some future time that they have companions, and that they have assembled in private houses, I will put them to death whenever they are accused.”

Ten of the condemned were confined for a time in the house of Ramiandravola, a *decana* or secretary of Rainiharo. He was a man notorious for his savage and cruel disposition. One of the ten was Rasalama; she seems to have been a woman of a warm spirit and temper, and of a rapid tongue. Her want of caution, in naming some of the brethren, had led to the apprehension of several. She now spoke freely of the wrongs done to the Christians. “Men,” she said, “who have neither excited rebellion, nor stolen property, nor spoken evil of any; yet they are reduced to slavery, and all their property confiscated! I would recommend their persecutors to think a little of what they are doing, lest they bring on themselves the

wrath of God." Her words were reported to the judges and to Rainiharo, who ordered heavy irons to be put on her. She still continued her conversation with those around her, singing hymns, and declaring her love for her Saviour. At last the order was given for her execution the next morning.

On her way to the place of execution she continued singing hymns. Passing by the chapel where she had been baptized, she exclaimed, "There it was that I heard the words of Jesus!" On reaching the place, she begged permission to kneel down and pray, and her request was granted. She calmly knelt, committed her spirit into the Redeemer's hands, and while kneeling received the spears through her side and heart. Her body was left to be devoured by the dogs, who frequent such places.

Her name was formed of the well-known eastern word *salama*, or peace, with the usual Malagasy prefix *Ra*, which is used for most proper names. She had found "peace in believing," and, like Stephen, she now found peace in death. One young man, named Rafaralahy, ventured near and saw her end. "If I might die," he said, "so tranquil and happy a death, I would gladly die for Jesus too." It was not long before his aspiration was realised.

About a week after the death of Rasalama, the rest of the condemned persons were divided as slaves among the chief officers of the queen. Rainiharo, as the principal, took nine of them, and three or four others obtained two each. Meanwhile Rasoamaka

and Ramanisa, who had been to Tamatave to meet Mr. Johns, were on their return to the capital. When about forty miles from Antananarivo they heard of what was taking place, and they heard also that their own names had been given in to the government. They hesitated whether they should endeavour to escape, or should proceed on their way and meet the accusation. After much deliberation and prayer they came to the resolution to continue their journey to the capital, and to bear whatever might be laid upon them. "God," they thought, "might make them useful to some of their fellow-slaves; and possibly afflictions might be among the means appointed of God to render them more meet for heaven." They reached the capital on August 13, and on the 15th the officers came in search of them. The following is given as the form used by the officer in accordance with the general usage, in addressing the accused:—

"May we be excused by the father and mother, and by all the relations who are not guilty:—to you we have no message. Our business is with you, Rasoamaka, for it is said that you still 'keep the book and make prayers,' which 'I do not suffer to be done in my country,' saith the queen, 'and which I have prohibited and made a law against. I am the just balance, and will act equally in Imerina; the way the hands go, shall the feet follow. Let his wife and children be sold, and everything belonging to Rasoamaka; let all be confiscated, and let his relations

be careful they do not claim anything of his property.' ”

Rasoamaka and Raminisa, and their wives, were taken to Ambatonafandrana to be valued. Part of the money went to the queen: part to the judges, officers, and accusers. Rainiharo transferred them to Ramiandravolo, the secretary before mentioned, whose sternness was notorious. He was anxious for an excuse to flog them, but they took care to give him none. After a while, therefore, he made them overseers of his slaves, holding them responsible for the negligence of any slave. When any of the slaves neglected their work, he would say to the overseers, “It is owing to your mildness that the work is not done; I will show you how to treat those placed under you. Do with them in this manner,” — and then he flogged them till the whip cut into the flesh.

Rafaravavy was still in heavy irons, looking daily for the order for her execution. Such of the Christians as dared visited her often in her confinement. Her relations seldom came near her; her father gave her up, and was convinced that nothing he could do would save her life. After about five months' suspense, Rainiharo removed her to the house of his first secretary (or *dekana*) named Andrianandraina, whose wife happened to be a distant relation of hers. Here she was treated with more kindness, and her husband, an officer in the army, was allowed sometimes to see her.

Now, too, a new centre of union had been found in

a house built for the purpose by Rafaralahy; and here the Christians, whether free or in slavery, met together when they could. Rafaravavy soon discovered this place of meeting for believers, and she quickly availed herself of it.

Rafaralahy was a young man possessed of some property. He lived about two miles from the capital, and about the year 1831 the gospel was sent to him by the instrumentality of a native. He learnt to read, and attended the preaching and the other meetings until the suppression of them in 1835. But he did not make such rapid progress in learning as many others of the Malagase did. He was also of a hesitating mind; and when the queen issued her mandates against Christianity, he purposed obedience, and for seven sabbaths he disregarded the sanctity of the day, and lived as a heathen. Large and painful boils now broke out on his body, and his conscience began to trouble him. He visited one of the missionaries, obtained a Psalter and a Testament, and from this time became firm and decided in his conduct. He taught his servants to read, and tried hard to gain the attention of his mother to Christianity. He visited and comforted the persecuted Christians, and devoted much of his property to supply their wants. To be able to assemble his friends together for prayer, he removed to a very private spot; and here his house became a home to the afflicted Christians while he lived.

He was betrayed by a false professor. Rafiakarana

had been a pupil in the earliest mission-school. He was afterwards taken into the printing-office. He thus became fully acquainted with most of the work going on, and with the native Christians. Having been concerned in affairs of trade with Rafaralahy, and being indebted to him as much as fifteen dollars, to escape payment of this sum he went to an officer and revealed all he knew. "Many," he said, "of a certain class assemble frequently at Rafaralahy's house; which is enclosed by a wall, and has a gate, so that no one can find entrance without permission." "If this is true," said Rainiharo, "say who they are, that their names may be taken to the queen." He mentioned twelve or thirteen names as in the habit of meeting in that place.

Rafaralahy was immediately seized and put in irons, and every possible means were used to draw from him the names of such Christians as were connected with him. But he was firm, replying, "I am in the queen's hands, let her do what she pleases with me; but I will say nothing of others." After being kept in irons for two or three days, his death was resolved upon. The executioners came to the house where he was, and asked, "Which is Rafaralahy?" He calmly answered, "I am he." They took off his irons, and told him to follow them; which he immediately did, speaking to them as he went, of Jesus Christ, and of his happiness in believing that he should soon be with Him. On arriving at the place of execution, he asked for a few moments' delay;

and knelt down and prayed fervently for his brethren, and for his countrymen generally, and finally committed his soul to Christ. He was then speared in the usual manner; but his friends were allowed to remove the body, and to bury it in the grave of his family.

The other Christians accused in company with him were dealt with more leniently. They had not been previously accused, and some of them were able workmen in the government workshops. They were sent into slavery, but their friends were not forbidden to redeem them. The government began to find some inconvenience from the number of instructed persons who were now in prison or in slavery. Two of these, however, Rafaralahy's wife, and Andriant-salama, were put in irons, and flogged, and threatened, in order to force them to give up the names of all who had resorted to the house. Among these names were found those of Rafaravavy, Paul, Joseph, and two or three others, who had been previously accused. These, therefore, were felt to be in the greatest danger. Their friends, who heard what had been done, gave them speedy warning, and it was felt that nothing but instant flight could save their lives.

Rafaravavy was at the house of a friend, where she met two other Christian friends; and while they were conversing, a message came that Rafaralahy had been speared, that his wife had disclosed the names of those who had been accustomed to meet at his house, and that search was now making for them. The

friend at whose house they were, exclaimed, "What is to be done? You know that the last time you were scarcely saved, and now you are sure to be put to death."

The three friends determined to go home, preferring to be apprehended there. Rafaravavy set out for her master's house, the other two in another direction. Before they parted, they knelt down together, and commended each other to their Saviour; and then separated, saying, "We have but to walk to town, thence to Ambohipotsy (the place of execution), and there we shall say farewell to all things here below."

Before, however, the officers found them, they met Andrianomanana and Ratsarahomba, two Christian men, who confirmed the news, and invited them to go in and consult with others; as to what it was their duty to do. They did so; and after much consideration it was decided to be their duty rather to act on our Lord's instructions; "If they persecute you in one city, flee unto another." That night, at midnight, they set out. Andrianomanana and Ratsarahomba were servants or slaves of Rainiharo, and had money of his in their possession. It took them some time to make up their accounts, and to leave the money carefully packed up, with cloth and other things, so that their master should not be defrauded. When he found it, he exclaimed, "This is not like most slaves who run away from their masters; these people would make excellent servants if they would leave off their religion."

The following morning the officers were in search of Rafaravavy, with orders to put her at once to death. But it was too late. Five of the refugees, after two days and nights of toil and privation, reached a friend's house about fifty miles from the capital, where they were warmly received. But the soldiers were now in search of them in every direction, and they could not safely remain in that refuge. They were obliged to pursue their wanderings, being literally in the situation described by the apostle: "They wandered in deserts and caves of the earth." Often drenched with rain, and sometimes sinking in the bogs, generally pinched by famine, and always in dread of their pursuers, it was not until many weeks had elapsed that they reached Tamatave, whither Mr. Johns had arrived from Mauritius, purposely to aid them in their escape. He had arranged with a captain, and in the dark hours of evening a canoe took them from the shores of Madagascar, and placed them on the deck of an English ship, which sailed for Mauritius at day-break in the morning. As the sails spread themselves to the breeze, the captain said to them in Madagese, "Efa Kabary," a common phrase, meaning, "That business — that trouble — is over: all is safe!" They burst into tears, and asked if they might sing a hymn of praise to their Heavenly Preserver: "Our souls are escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REFUGEES.

1838-40.

THE escaped Christians who reached Mauritius in October 1838, were Rafaravavy, or Mary,—Razafy, or Sarah,—Ratsarahomba, or David,—Andrianomanana, or Simeon,—Rasoamaka, or Joseph—and Andrianilaina, or Josiah. In November, two others, Ramiandrahasina, and Andrianisa, joined them. At Port Louis in Mauritius they received the most cordial welcome. In that island there dwelt not fewer than 10,000 Madagese, many of whom had been carried there as slaves, while others had migrated from inducements of trade. Among these, the poor refugees could not be otherwise than objects of deep interest. But the English Christians of Mauritius had also their share in the general joy. Nearly 90*l.* sterling was quickly raised, for the supply of the present wants of the poor exiles, and much feeling was exhibited with reference to their future course and welfare. Andrianilaina and Ramiandrahasina preferred being left for the present in Mauri-

tius, the former having some plans for the relief of the suffering Christians who were still in Madagascar. The other six, called by their baptismal names, Mary, Sarah, David, Simeon, Joseph, and James, it was thought best to send to the Cape of Good Hope, there to be committed to the care of the Rev. Dr. Philip. They reached Algoa Bay in December, where they were gladly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Chick, and Mr. Kitching, who had formerly been members of the mission-family at Antananarivo. Dr. Philip was absent on a visit to the interior, but on his return he advised their immediate transmission to England. All the Christians in the Cape showed their interest in the poor refugees, and more than 70*l.* was quickly raised for their support.

They arrived in England in May 1839, and were received with the deepest feelings of cordial welcome. They were presented to the directors of the London Missionary Society, and placed by them under the care of Christian friends in Walthamstow. Rafaravavy and Razafy (Mary and Sarah) were given into the care of Mrs. Johns, whom they had known in Madagascar, and the four young men were placed with the master of the British and Foreign School, under whom they began a course of regular instruction in the ordinary branches of useful knowledge. The object was, that if ever an opening should be made for their return to Madagascar, they should be qualified to become teachers of their own countrymen.

They had not long been quietly settled in England, in peace and comfort, before their hearts began to yearn over the sad condition of their friends in Madagascar. They soon framed a letter to these, of which Mr. Freeman says, "It was wholly their own." He gives an English translation of it, from which we extract a few passages.

After the usual greetings, they say :—

"We have indeed reached this country, a country where multitudes live who are kind and compassionate — multitudes who serve God and keep His commandments; a country of liberty, where none are prohibited from praying to the Lord of life, but all are free to meet and worship God whenever they please, and especially on the Sabbath-day.

"You remember the words of Jesus Christ : 'Every one that has forsaken houses or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or wife and children, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting.' This, in part, has been fulfilled in our case; we have found friends an hundred-fold, who have sympathised with us in all our tribulations, and seek to do us good.

"Although we are thus happy, in the enjoyment of many mercies in this land, yet our hearts are full of grief and sighing, when we remember you, with whom we often united in prayer and praise, and who are still enduring persecution. Dear friends, we cannot forget you : we are partakers of your sorrows, and sympathise with you in your afflictions. When we heard of your enduring cruel scourgings, we felt

as if we also had been scourged with you ; when we heard of your being subjected to hard and cruel labour, we felt as if we were under your burdens ; when we heard of your being compelled to leave your houses, and without any settled abode, to wander in the wilderness, hiding yourselves in dens and caves of the earth, exposed to the sun by day, and the cold by night, we felt as if we were with you in all your journeys, and bearing part in all your troubles. . . . Be strong, beloved friends, and be not discouraged, these afflictions will not last long : better days are at hand ; if you should not be delivered from your troubles while in this world, in heaven you will be free from them all. God is the rock of ages, upon Him you can stand firm : He is a pillar, on Him you can lean without fear : He is a shield and stronghold for you, and His word is a lamp for your feet ; wait for Him, trust in Him, and He will uphold you. He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust. He will gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings ; He will increase your strength, and will guide you even unto death."

This letter was written in 1839. In 1840, Simeon, or Andrianomanana, felt himself continually oppressed in spirit for his friends, and especially for his dear wife, whom he had left in Antananarivo ; and as Mr. Johns had resolved on a visit to Mauritius, to try what could be done for poor Madagascar, he determined to take Simeon with him, and they sailed for Mauritius on August 16.

The winter of that year 1840 witnessed the peaceful departure of one of the remaining five. Sarah, (in Madagese, Razafy) was a pleasing, affectionate, simple-minded young woman of two-and-twenty. She had been an intimate friend of Mary (or Rafaravavy), and by her means had been led into a knowledge of the truth. When deprived of all public ordinances by the expulsion of the missionaries, they found comfort in a private and sedulous study of the word of God, with constant prayer, and thus became 'rooted and grounded in the faith.'

Having joined Mary in her flight, she with her reached England in safety, and became a resident in the family of Mrs. Johns. But she never enjoyed firm health, and to such the climate of England frequently proves too cold and damp. Gradually she sank away, and when Mr. Johns and her countryman Simeon left England for Mauritius, it was greatly desired that she should accompany them. But she was already too feeble, and the physicians dared not recommend such a hazardous step. She remained at Walthamstow, growing gradually weaker, but regarding her approaching end without fear. She loved the Scriptures, was frequent in devotional exercises, and much enjoyed friendly converse on the things of God. When too weak to rise from her chair, she would cover her face with her hands, and resting her arms on a table, silently pour out her heart before God. "In social worship," says Mrs. Johns, "much have I enjoyed hearing her plead for the forgiveness

of her sins, for an increase of faith and love, and thanking God for His mercy in having visited her in a land of darkness.' About six weeks before her death, she begged Mrs. Johns to pray with her, and when asked what she wished to supplicate, she answered, "That I may see more of the glory of Christ; that I may love Him more; and that I may dwell with Him for ever in heaven."

About a week before her death, a friend residing at Walthamstow called to see her. She was in a most happy state of mind. Her countenance beamed with delight while she expressed her desire to be with Jesus, and yet her entire willingness to wait His time. A few days before her departure, she made a great effort to see her English friends and to thank them for all their kindness to her. On the day previous to her death, she said she felt extremely weak, and could not command her thoughts much. The following morning, when death was evidently approaching, she became faint, but again revived, and attempted to speak, but was not able to make herself understood. Being asked if she thought she was departing, she gave a sign of assent. Feeling fainter, she said, "Jesus! Jesus, thou art now taking me," her breath soon became feebler and shorter, she smiled on a friend who was anxiously watching her, and soon gently "fell asleep." She died on December 26, 1840, and was buried at Walthamstow on the last day of the closing year.

England had often been found an ungenial climate

for these natives of the sunny South; and as the remaining four of the fugitives had no special work to do in England, it was resolved, in the spring of 1841, to transmit them to Mauritius, so that they might be near their native land, and with a view, also, of their being employed among the thousands of Madagese who dwelt in that island. On October 12, therefore, Rafaravavy (Mary), Rasoamaka (Joseph), Ratsarahomba (David), and Andrianisa (James), sailed from Gravesend, under the care of Mrs. Johns, who was proceeding to Mauritius to rejoin her husband. They reached Mauritius in January 1842, and in April Mrs. Johns writes:—

“Rafaravavy continues to visit the Malagasy, to read and pray with them: but she is very anxious to go to Madagascar with Mr. Johns. She pleads, and argues, and weeps, till we scarcely know what to do with her. Mr. Johns promised to do all he could to find her husband or brother, and wishes her to stay till that was done. ‘Oh!’ she said, ‘do not keep me back on that account; do not hinder me because I am only a woman; let me be a messenger to tell the people of Madagascar of the Son of God.’”

A plan was now formed for establishing Rafaravavy and Rasoamaka on the little island of Nosimitseo, as teachers; and they were soon placed there, and scholars began to offer themselves. But the French were masters in Nosimitseo, and soon a Romish priest appeared, who gave them their choice: to join him, or to quit the island. As they could not embrace

Popery, they were obliged to leave. Soon after, Mr. Johns fell a sacrifice to fever and dysentery, caused by his exertions in this matter, and Mrs. Johns returned home.

In the following year, however, 1844, we find the poor refugees actively employed in Mauritius, in teaching the poor Malagasy, in various districts in that island. The younger Mr. Le Brun had established a school and chapel in the midst of a large village of Malagasy, and found Rafaravavy and her friends most valuable assistants.

In 1846, when the joyful news of the light which had sprung up in Madagascar reached Mauritius, Rafaravavy wrote to her friends in London:—

“I am exceedingly delighted with the news just received from Madagascar. It is, indeed, as when God said to Israel by Joshua, ‘Not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.’ Wonderful, indeed, is the grace and the providence of God! He said by Jeremiah, ‘I know the thoughts which I think towards you; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.’”

But this gleam of hope was like the revelation to Simeon of the Lord’s Christ, which came just before his departure. The next mention we find of this first and most resolved of the Malagasy confessors tells us of her summons home. Mr. Le Brun, jun., writes from Mauritius:

“Rafaravavy was remarkably cheerful and happy all last week; and whenever she spoke of death, she

expressed a firm persuasion that she should die in peace. On Saturday, she was with my father and my wife till a late hour in the day; and she again spoke of death; when Mrs. Le Brun told her to dismiss these thoughts from her mind, as she believed that the Lord would spare her yet to us a little while, Rafaravavy seemed satisfied, shook hands affectionately with my wife, and wished her good night. To a late hour she was engaged in private devotion, and was heard singing hymns when the night was far advanced. Truly might she have applied to herself the words of the Psalmist, 'Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.'

"On Sunday morning (Easter) she got up early, and while dressing, a fit of coughing came on, and she expectorated blood. She hastened to our house, which was only a few yards distant. My wife was startled to hear her exclaim at so early an hour, 'Mrs. Le Brun!' in an imploring tone. As she entered, the blood was gushing from her mouth and nose. My wife ran forward, and received her in her arms. She was sinking from weakness, they knelt together, her head reclining on my wife's arm. She could just utter 'Madame!' before her eyes closed to open no more in this world. A blood-vessel had burst, and on examination, the left lung was found to have been almost wholly destroyed by disease."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONFESSORS IN MADAGASCAR.

A.D. 1838 — 1841.

QUITTING the fugitives, we return to Madagascar. Two of the missionaries, Mr. Johns and a colleague, had gone to Mauritius to enquire into the possibility of rendering aid to the sufferers; but no channel of relief could be found. All through 1839 and 1840 these attempts were continued.

During these two years, however, persecution had not slept in Madagascar. Soon after the martyrdom of Rafaralahy, a young woman named Ravahiny was apprehended, and as she maintained a good profession, her husband thrust her from him, her family closed their doors against her, and she was sold into perpetual slavery. Irritated by her "obstinacy," and angry that one of their family should be living in slavery, her relatives accused her of sorcery, and desired that the *tangena*, or poison-water, might be administered. This was done, and she died from its effects; being the third martyr of Madagascar.

Shortly after, three more women were accused of meeting for prayer,—Razanaka, Raminahy, and

Ratsaramiarana. The first two escaped and fled, the last was sold into slavery.

In 1840, sixteen more Christians, who, after long concealing themselves in the mountains and forests, were at length found on the road to Tamatave, were brought before the magistrates, who did not know them, but suspected their character and object. They were told that their manner of travelling was suspicious, and not like that of other people. For two days the magistrates tried in vain to bring home any charge. On the third day, the prisoners had resolved to witness a good confession, and Andriamanana, who was one of their number, said to the magistrates, "Since you ask us again and again, who and what we are, we will plainly tell you. We are not banditti or murderers, we are 'praying people;' and if this makes us guilty, then whatever the queen orders, we submit to suffer." "Is this," asked the magistrates, "your final reply—for life or death?" "It is," they replied, "our final answer, be it for life or death."

"And after the Christians had made this confession," continues the Malagese account, "they felt inexpressible peace and joy. They had confessed Christ; concealment was at an end; they could now speak freely, 'We are now,' they said, 'in the position of Christian and Faithful, in Vanity Fair.' And so it proved in the end."

They had been conveyed to Antananarivo, the capital, and, the next morning, the firing of cannon announced what was about to take place, and the soldiery

soon mustered in thousands on the parade. About noon, the proclamation was made, that the queen had ordered nine of the captives to be put to death that afternoon. Therefore, after much more firing of cannon, between three and four o'clock, the nine Christians, each bound to a pole, and quite naked, were borne by men to Ambohipotsy, the place of execution. Here, after a short interval, a gun was fired, and the executioners with their spears quickly left the nine bodies on the ground. The spirits of the martyrs had flown to be with Jesus.

Paul and his wife, Joshua and his wife, and Raminahy, or Flora, the wife of David, who was then in England, were among these nine. The heads of Paul and one other were cut off, and fixed on poles at the close of the ceremony.

In spite of all these afflictions, however, the church in Madagascar still lived. In 1841, the year after the massacre just mentioned, Mr. Baker wrote from Mauritius to say, that at least two hundred Christians were then wandering over the mountains and through the forests, destitute of food and almost of clothing. Yet, although mere nominal professors had grown cold, and had gone back, there had not been one instance of apostacy; not one in which any on whom the missionaries had relied as really converted to God, had "left their first faith." The queen now, furious at the failure of all her efforts, issued orders to the soldiers, that, whenever they caught any of the refugees, they should put them to death at once;

merely digging a pit and throwing them into it, bound, and then pouring boiling water over them!

In the year 1841, of which we have just spoken, two letters were sent from the poor Christians to their friends in Mauritius and England, from which we make one or two extracts.

In June 1841, they wrote: —

“Our salutations to you, say the little flock in Madagascar. Through the blessing of God on us, we are yet alive, and do not forget you or our other friends. Affliction greatly abounds. Executions, miseries, and ordeals throughout the country increase. Three thousand persons have lately taken the tangaena in Vonizongo, by order of the sovereign; and at other places it has been the same. The wretchedness of the people is unutterable.

“Tell us what you advise us to do. Do rescue us, dear father, if it be possible. If God be not our defence, we are but dead men! The government labour continues to be exceedingly severe. When the Israelites served Pharaoh, perhaps they gained a little respite: but ours is incessant labour; we must work both by day and night.”

Shortly after, they wrote: —

“To you, beloved friend, health and happiness. We have received your letter, and the cloth, soap, and salt. May God bless you for the compassion you have shown us! It is not in our power to repay you. You further ask, if there is anything we want. Now, there is one thing which much afflicts us — our

want of Bibles. Those we possess are quite worn out. We can conceal them, though there are many enemies. As to our means of support, it may be said we have and we have not. All our property was taken from us when we were reduced to slavery. However, the Lord has said, 'Consider the ravens, they sow not, they reap not, yet God feedeth them;' and just so, dear friend, the Lord has pity on us! We have been in great affliction and danger, but God has mercifully preserved us hitherto. Salutations to you, and to all friends, from the little flock scattered, for the shepherds are gone."

The following year 1842, witnessed the addition of two more to the list of martyrs. Beyond the central district, called Imerina, there were outlying portions of the island, where chiefs, either partly or wholly independent of the queen, lived and bore sway. It was rumoured that one of these chiefs, in the district of Ambongo, in the Sakalava country, had showed a favourable disposition, and a hope naturally sprang up, that he might render his territory a refuge for the persecuted. Two of the Christians resolved to visit that district, to learn the real state of things. But this involved peril; inasmuch as great jealousy of the Sakalavas was felt, and a guard or watch was kept up on the boundary, to examine all communications taking place between Imerina and the other districts.

Ratsitahina and Rabearahaba, the two Christians in question, accomplished their object, but on return-

ing they fell into the hands of the frontier guard. They were instantly fettered, and sent to Antananarivo for judgment. They were asked, "Who sent you on this errand, and what was your object?" They replied, "We went of our own free will; and our design was to try to soften the hearts of those beyond the border who steal our cattle and commit violence against our country. And it was with that view we took these books (the Scriptures). We do not deny that we prayed, or followed the practices of the praying people: we did so, as the books found on us will show; but as to having any designs against the queen, we are innocent of that."

They were condemned to death, and were executed, one on June 19th, the other on the 20th. Their heads were cut off, and set upon poles, as a warning to others. But they died in peace — whispering to a friend who managed to approach them: "Say farewell to all our friends. If we meet no more in this life, we shall in the life to come."

In the autumn of 1842, several short letters were received by the missionaries from their friends in Madagascar. One or two of these we will copy: —

"Antananarivo, July 8.

"May you live and be blessed of God, dear friend! How are you? We are in the enjoyment of health, by the blessing of God, and we would enquire after your health by this letter. Our trials are now greater than ever, for the number of the persecuted increases daily. The queen's officers search for them

everywhere, to put them to death. We do not know what to do, for our hiding-places are now nearly all known to our enemies; so that we are truly afflicted. If you can find any way of escape for us, pray write immediately."

"Antananarivo, July 16.

"May you live and be blessed of God, dear friend! How are you and your family? I am in the enjoyment of health, by the blessing of God, and would enquire after your health in a letter. And I tell you, dear friend, that the trials of the Christians are very heavy to be borne by flesh and blood: yet they are light to the soul that can lean upon the Lord. Two of our number have been accused and condemned to perpetual slavery. Four brethren have recently been accused and sought after. Obadia and Ralajao they could not find; but Rabearahaba and Ratsitahina were caught and put to death, on Sunday and Monday, and their heads were cut off, and fixed upon poles The queen ordered the tangena to be given to me, but by the blessing of God I got over it. Five of our friends are hiding with me, and I take care of them; but others go from place to place to find something to support life."

"Antananarivo, July 21.

"May you live and be blessed of God! And how are you and your family? I tell you, beloved friend, that our troubles are still increasing. On the 12th, they discovered two of our sisters, Rafaravy

and Razafitsaroana, and tied their hands and feet, and took them away.”

In October, the news was of the same kind. The letter received ran thus: —

“This is what I have to tell you, with regard to our state at the present time. Some person, unknown to us, having written a paper, and fixed it on the wall of a house, the queen was very angry, and issued a proclamation, ordering the person who had done it to accuse himself within four days, and threatening that if he did not, the queen would have him cut in pieces the size of musket-balls. The four days expired, and no one having confessed, Raharo, who was formerly one of the twelve senior teachers, was accused with several others, and ordered to take the tangena. He died under it, and Ratsimilay being detected in trying to save him, was ordered by the queen to be put to death. Imamonjy was joined with them, and they were cut into small pieces, and afterwards burnt.”

Such was the situation of the little flock of Christ in Madagascar in the year 1842, the eighth year of this bitter, grinding persecution. It had come into the position described by the words of St. Paul, “As dying, but behold, we live!” Nothing that this furious queen could do was left undone, to destroy this remnant of Christ’s people; yet all her efforts were in vain. The testimony was frequently heard, “Our numbers increase.” Captivity, slavery, hard bondage, the loss of all things, and often, a cruel

death; none of these things could subdue the poor believers of Madagascar. Strange result, of the apparently feeble and almost fruitless labours of four or five foreigners! In a former chapter, we cited the words of the missionaries, who, after several years of labour favoured by the king, could only venture to say, "We have reason to believe that *several* are savingly converted to God." And now we find, after many had suffered cruel deaths, a large and increasing number of men and women, clinging to the persecuted faith, "wandering about, destitute, afflicted, tormented," but still holding fast their hope! Is this work human? Was not some Gamaliel greatly needed, to suggest to the-queen, "Take heed what ye do, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it;—lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.'

In August 1843 Mr. Johns, fell a sacrifice to his sympathy with the poor Madagase Christians. Intent on saving some of them from the hands of their persecutors, he passed between Mauritius and Tamatave as many as three times in the course of 1842 and 1843. At last, in one of these missions of love, he suffered a new attack of fever, which proved the messenger to convey him home. He died in Nosibe, one of the small islands near Madagascar, where he was endeavouring to find a home for some of the poor refugees.

"Madagascar," say the directors, "was written on

his heart, and to promote the salvation of its benighted millions he lived and died."

In 1845 a political quarrel took place, with which the missionaries and native Christians had no concern, but which excited for a moment, a hope that the Hova government might be overturned, and the island reopened to the mission. The queen issued orders that all the English and French residing in Madagascar should take out letters of naturalisation or leave the island. But these traders were neither willing to become subjects of so arbitrary a government, nor yet to be suddenly uprooted and expelled. The English and French ships lying off Tamatave attempted to protect the European residents by bombarding the fort, but were beaten off with loss. The result, finally, was not favourable to the mission; for the Hova government was neither weakened nor alarmed, but rather rendered more inimical to the Europeans than previously.

The year 1845 was the tenth since the suppression of Christianity in Madagascar, and the ninth since the last of the missionaries left its shores. To human eyes the preservation of a Christian church in that country must have appeared impossible; but "what is impossible with men, is possible with God." In the autumn of that year there came a letter to the Rev. J. J. Freeman, who had quitted Madagascar in 1835, but whom the Malagese Christians had not forgotten. To him they wrote as follows:—

"Our salutations to you. We enquire after your

welfare. We are sorry it is so long since we heard from you. We earnestly desire to hear of your state, and should be delighted to see your handwriting.

“With regard to our condition here, we are well ; but two sisters the Lord has taken away. . . . Wonderful indeed is the blessing of God, for he has answered our prayer and yours, so that none of us have been apprehended by the persecutors.

“The number of learners is greatly increasing. Those among us who were sold into slavery ‘never to be redeemed,’ have had this prohibition taken off, and their friends have redeemed them. Altogether astonishing is the power of God ; He rescues His people from the hands of the wicked, and He plucks them from the hand of the Devil, that they may become the people of God (Acts v. 39).

“Be strong, therefore, in prayer for us, O friends. Tell all you know that ‘what is not possible with men is possible with God ;’ and that when He works none can hinder it. Be not unmindful of us, your children, for God will not be unmindful of you ; and He will help us still more abundantly. Be earnest in prayer, O beloved friends, for prayer is power, and strength, and life. God hears your supplications, and sends his answers to us.

“Touching the general condition of the country, the people are more and more afflicted ! the work becomes harder, the service more oppressive, and the government does not change. But, in conclusion, O beloved friends, when we examine the word of God,

especially the passages which are suitable to us, we gain hope and confidence indeed. We see that God is powerful; that no one can pluck us out of His hands, or hinder that which He is doing. Read, if you please, Dan. iii. 27, 28; iv. 34, 35; vi. 20, 28. Earnestly, therefore, plead on our account and on your own; for 'if God be for us, who can be against us?'

"All the Christians in Madagascar present their salutations to all you that are in Christ Jesus; in whom friends who love one another, though distant, are united in one."

In a postscript, the Christians added, that several natives had lately joined their number, and that there were several who preached to them.

Shortly after, there came another letter, addressed to Joseph and Mary, and the other refugees in Mauritius, to the following effect:—

"To our beloved friends, kindest salutations from all your companions. This is what we have to tell you: afflicted are we because of the fewness of the Bibles here with us, and we extremely desire to have more. We thirst for them, for the Bible is our companion and friend, to instruct and search us thoroughly when in secrecy and silence, and to comfort us in our grief and tribulation. Blessed be God, the people who, through His grace, are going forward, are becoming many, so that the greater part of them cannot have Bibles. Send us, therefore, all you can, for even then there will not be enough: and let them

be small, so as to be easily concealed. We need also hymn-books, catechisms, and Bunyan's Pilgrim; and also such tracts as are suitable for us. Remember, Jesus said unto Peter, 'Feed my sheep.'

"As to the condition of our country, it is still dark, and persecution continues. Nevertheless, the people are going forward. Blessed be God, who thus prospers them! On the Sabbath-day we always go to some hill or valley far away out of sight. We leave home on the Saturday, and on the Sunday we meet together and worship God. But only those who are strong can thus go to a distance, and we feel very much for the sorrow of those who cannot go. Still we do not faint, but continue to ask of God that he will help us not to sink under our affliction; for Jesus said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.'

"All our friends who were reduced to slavery have now been redeemed, blessed be God! We are going on safely, for He hath hidden us beneath the shadow of His wings, so that we have not been discovered. Yet many do see us, and know and hear about us, but they do not accuse us, as formerly; for they have become more compassionate towards us. Our salutations to all our friends."

Could such letters as these fail to excite, in Christian minds, emotions of wonder and thankfulness? Surely the parallel, if ever it existed, is scarcely upon record. Ancient churches, indeed, like the Walden-

sian, have, under persecution, clung to their faith during long periods of hardship and suffering; but here was a small Christian fellowship, established but yesterday, and suddenly deprived of all its teachers on the one hand, and exposed to the sternest persecution on the other. That it should pine away, and dwindle, and soon become extinct, would have been the natural anticipation of every human being. Nothing but the mighty power of God could have preserved it; and hence its continued existence, and its large increase, is as evident and as irrefragable a proof of the Divine presence and the Divine working, as was presented to the eyes of Moses in the burning bush on Mount Horeb.

CHAPTER XV.

BRIGHTER HOPES.

A. D. 1846—1848.

TEN years, we must again remind our readers, had this little church been now left, with no human support, no human aid. The last missionary had quitted the island in 1836, and although Mr. Johns had stolen back to Tamatave not less than three times, it was not as a missionary, but secretly, among the traders at that port, and with no other view than to make enquiries, and to aid, if he could, the escape of the persecuted believers. For ten years had the Church been left in God's hands without the slightest human support; and it is not usual with Him, in these days, to work without human instruments. Generally, when we hear that the missionaries have been expelled from any country, and that the profession of Christianity is prohibited on pain of death, we deem that church to be extinguished. So, in a dozen different countries of the earth, has the light of Divine truth been quenched; and so, most men supposed, was that light now expiring, in the island of Madagascar. God, however, had determined, in this

case, to give a special proof of His goodness, and of His power. He had resolved to fulfil to the utmost His well-known promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and it shall be found after many days." For year after year had the directors of the London Missionary Society met their constituents at the annual meeting, with various shades and aspects of sorrow and of mourning. For seven, eight, nine, ten long years had the messenger gone up and looked towards the sea, but the answer still was, "There is nothing." In the year 1846, in the Annual Report, only sixteen lines were given to Madagascar, to state once more, that "no additional intelligence of importance had been received during the year," and that "the oppressed Christians, though cast down, were not destroyed." But even then, the messenger of glad tidings was on his way. Speedily, letters came in, from Mr. Le Brun of Mauritius, and from Mr. Baker, bringing many enclosures from Madagascar, but all abounding with joy and wonder. Mr. Baker writes:—

"My dear friend:—Joyful news from Madagascar! I enclose you the chief particulars, and will send by the first vessel all the letters. Madagascar is not lost. The Prince Rakoto-Radama converted, and one hundred new converts added to the church, shows a vitality which leaves no room for unbelieving fears. I congratulate the directors on this wonderful work of God."

Among the Malagasy letters forwarded by Mr. Baker, the following gives the clearest view of the

case, and points out the manner in which God was pleased to work.

“Antananarivo, Jan. 8, 1846.

“This is our state here. After the martyrdom of the nine Christians in 1840, the remaining believers became lukewarm and discouraged. But a certain youth, named Ramaka, received the Word of God, and became exceedingly bold and powerful in proclaiming it. We had assemblies every Wednesday Saturday, and Sunday, in a large house. More than a hundred new converts joined us, and we became very numerous. Through the courage of Ramaka, the Word of God reached even to the prince Rakoto; and it was through his intercession with the queen, that the twenty-one Christians who were taken were not destroyed. Tell all our friends that Rakoto-Radama does indeed receive the Word of God, but his mother remains a heathen.”

Another letter dated two days after, proceeds thus:—

“Antananarivo, Jan. 10, 1846.

“We received your letters, and were exceedingly delighted to obtain the Gospels and the Pilgrim’s Progress; for they are easy to be concealed. But they are quite insufficient, for we are exceedingly numerous; and Rakoto-Radama has embraced the Word of God, by the Divine blessing, with true affection and joy.

“And we, five months after the prince had joined us, were the subjects of a new persecution; twenty-

one being made prisoners : but by the help of God, afforded to Rakoto-Radama, their death was prevented ; the queen's heart relented. These were part of one hundred who had recently received the Word of God, and had been accused to the government. By the blessing of God the accusation was not entered into ; for Rainiharo, the prime minister, found among the names his own aide-de-camp. The number of believers increases very much."

Another letter gave the names of the twenty-one Christians, whose lives were spared, and the punishments to which they were subjected ; nine to the tangena ; three to slavery, &c.

Other accounts added various incidents, such as these :— That Rainiharo said to the queen, " Madam, your son is a Christian ! he prays with the Christians, and encourages them in their new doctrines." To which the queen replied, " But he is my son, my only son ; he must do what he pleases !" Also, that Rainiharo sent his nephew, who was his aide-de-camp, to enquire after a meeting of Christians, and to bring their names. The nephew brought no list, but confessed that he himself was a Christian, adding, " If you will, you must put me to death, for I must pray !" And this confession led Rainiharo to drop the enquiry.

A friend at Mauritius wrote thus :—

" You must not think that persecution has ceased. Sometimes the goods of the Christians are confiscated, their wives and children sold into slavery, and themselves reduced to perpetual bondage. They can only meet for worship in the night, or in caves, or in the

deepest recesses of the woods. Even there they may be troubled by spies, sent by the government to take down their names; though, thanks to the mediation of the prince, things do not generally proceed much further.

“Amidst all these perils and distresses the number of disciples increases. One of the Christians writes to us, ‘Oh, send us spelling-books, for many come to us to learn, and we have none left!’ ‘Do not forget,’ writes another, ‘to send us Bibles, hymn-books, the Pilgrim’s Progress, and catechisms.’ The prince keeps his mother from doing us harm; he comes with us into the woods on Sunday, to pray and sing, and read the Bible; and he often takes home some of us with him to explain to him the Word of Truth.”

Some time after the receipt of the above letters, another epistle found its way to Mauritius, from a native female, without any date. Its enumeration of the twenty-one accused persons and their punishments assigns it to the same period as the foregoing. We give all the chief passages:—

“To our beloved brethren: Through the blessing of God we present our salutation to you, for we are now able to write a letter. . . . Though we can hardly have a sight of the light which enlightens our path,* we do not cease to pray to God, in the name of Jesus our Lord, to bless both you and us; and that the Word of God may have free course in every country, especially in the island of Madagascar, where

* Meaning, the Word of God.

we remain. Do not forget us in your earnest prayers to God day and night, that He would strengthen us, open the door of our hearts, and cause the love of Christ to increase within us. Your fervent cry to the Lord will not be in vain; for He regards the groans of the afflicted, and the prayers of the disconsolate He answers.

“How wonderful is the power of God, as seen in the spirit of anxious enquiry produced in the minds of the people! They come to seek the Lord, in the prison with the prisoners, in the hiding-places of the persecuted, in the mountains, and in the caves of the rocks; wherever and whenever they can meet with any calling on the name of the Lord, thither they resort. What is still more marvellous, even some of the queen’s family are thus minded. Sweet are the bonds of imprisonment to the prisoners; they are not ashamed of them; for what the word of the Lord saith must be fulfilled.

“Tell all the churches in your country that we are famishing and hungering for the bread of life. . Con-
trive in some way to send us Bibles: for we are as an
hundred hungry ones to one plate of food! The books
we formerly had have for the most part been burnt.
The persecution has not prevented the spreading of
God’s Word; but rather has caused it to spread far
and wide. The bonds of the prisoners, and the blood
of the martyrs, have aided the growth of God’s Word
in the hearts of men. . . . When any are con-
demned to be sold as slaves, none will buy them; and
when any of those who conceal themselves are seen

men do not accuse them; for the Lord softens the hearts of men.

“The five who are in confinement remain each with a guard. They speak the Word to all who see them, and even the jailors who watch them have become Christians. This fills the minds of the people with astonishment, and their own hearts tell them that there is a God. Blessed be God, the blood of Jesus redeems us, saves us, purifies us, and cleanses us from all sin. By a great and strong voice has Christ called us, and we have returned to Him. All the brethren and sisters desire to have a letter from you as soon as possible.”

“One of our beloved brothers in the faith was lately taken ill, and his disease was very violent. The Lord caused all the brothers and sisters in Christ to come and see him in his sickness. He did not cease to speak of the goodness of the Lord, even while, owing to the violence of his disease, we all wondered that he could speak at all. But when Christian brethren came to see him, he seemed as happy as if he had had no disease upon him. The love of the brethren was kindled to a flame by hearing him speak as freely as if he were in a country where there is no hindrance to the truth. We all rejoiced and praised God for what He had done for him. Still, we had no hope of his recovery; yet, blessed be God, he has been restored to us. All were amazed, and exclaimed: ‘God alone maketh alive.’ And this sickness caused many to come forward, and to enquire the way to eternal life.”

CHAPTER XVI.

RENEWAL OF THE PERSECUTION.

A.D. 1849.

THE exhilarating intelligence received in 1846 and 1847 created the liveliest interest in England, and hopes were naturally indulged that, at no distant period, the Mission itself might be revived. But "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways." A still more fiery trial was yet to be permitted; and this brief gleam of hope, in 1845 and 1846, seems to have been granted to prepare and strengthen the church in Madagascar for the severest of all its conflicts.

The persecution of 1849 has only been described by native pens. Mr. Johns had departed to his rest. Mr. Jones and Mr. Freeman had returned to England. No friend or counsellor stood by the side of the poor Madagese when they had to meet the utmost wrath of a despotic and angry sovereign — save that unseen but Almighty Supporter who supported the three children in the furnace, and Daniel in the den of lions. The choicest and best, too, of the native Christians, we may reasonably suppose — as in

our own Marian persecution — to have been selected as the victims. Hence we may be thankful that amidst all this gloom and terror, some precious records were preserved, to tell all future ages of a persecution as terrible, and of a victory as glorious, as were any in the early church, or in the days of our own Reformation.

The first document which reached England was a kind of diary or record, kept by a Madagase Christian, in his own language, and translated in England by Mr. Griffiths, formerly one of the missionaries in Madagascar. The writer gives no information as to the origin of the persecution; but we gather from various passages in this and other letters, that the queen, after being somewhat silent and tolerant for two or three years, grew suddenly and angrily alarmed at the progress which she found “the foreigners’ religion” to be making, and blazed forth, in the fiercest wrath, as one who was resolved to put an immediate stop to the growing evil. The first narrative runs thus:—

“The persecution was commenced on Monday, February 19, 1849, by an order from the government to destroy two private houses which had been used for the purpose of worship. This order was carried into effect. Five individuals were arrested at the same time, and put in fetters. All possible means were used to induce these prisoners to give the names of their companions. Three of the prisoners refused to do so: but from the other two they drew the names

of several other Christians, of whom four were immediately arrested.

“On February 22, two other Christians, a father and son, were arrested. On the 29th, the people were summoned to hear a message from the queen. One of her officers said :—

“These are the words of the queen —

“I ask you, saith the queen, to tell me the truth, and no falsehood: what is the reason you will not give up this new religion and worship? I have deprived officers of their honours; I have put some to death, and reduced others to slavery; and yet you still persevere in practising this new religion! what is the reason you will not renounce it?’

“Two of the Christians, speaking for the rest, answered, ‘We fear God, and dare not disobey His law.’

“This reply was carried to the queen; and on the 25th another assembly took place. The queen’s message now was :—

“If any new religion or mode of worship, especially this worship of yours, be introduced and practised in my country, I forbid it; it shall never be done. These are the things that are prohibited: the practice of baptism; abstinence from work on Sunday; forbidding to swear by father or mother, or by the queen; refusing to sacrifice bullocks, or to worship the idols. Therefore, come forward and confess, all of you that have done so, that I may determine what punishment to inflict upon you. But if any one shall wait until he is accused, he shall be punished without mercy.”

“On March 14, nine persons from the province of Vonizongo, five of whom were women, were called upon to swear by the idols, and declared their adherence to the Christian faith. They were immediately put in chains, and wrapped in mats. On the 16th, a pious soldier, having likewise refused the oath, was added to the number.

“On the 21st, all the people who had accused themselves were ordered to repair to Analakely, to take the required oath. By that oath they were to invoke all the curses that the idols of the deceased kings could inflict upon them, should they offend any more. An officer of the fifth honour declared that he worshipped God alone, and could pray to none other; whereupon he also was put in chains.”

On the 22nd, this swearing of the people continued; when two more confessors, one of them a servant of the queen's nephew, refused to swear, and were put in chains. Next day, two others followed their example. One of these was also a servant of Prince Ramanja. He stood up before the people and said, “I believe in God, and wish to obey his commands: I put my trust in Jesus, the Saviour of all who believe in Him.” A female also, named Ranivo, of royal lineage, added her confession, and with the others was cast into prison.

“Three days were then spent in making further enquiries; especially as to who were the preachers; when Rabetsarasaotra and Rasoalandy were named as having preached.

“On the 28th, another great assembly was held, when the queen’s final decision was proclaimed. The officers of the palace read the following message :—

“ ‘ I, Ranaval-Manjaka, say, that no religion whatever, excepting of Andrianampoinimerina and Radama, and the customs of the ancestors, shall ever be introduced and practised in this my country; anything else I totally reject. Had I not ordered the followers of the new religion to accuse themselves, they would soon have overturned everything, and all the people would have followed them. I deem them rebels; therefore I will punish them as the spirits of Andrianampoinimerina and Radama have revealed unto me.

“ ‘ The preachers, and those who sold books to others, I have set apart.’ (Here the confessors before-mentioned were brought into Analakely, borne on poles on men’s shoulders, naked, but with mats wrapped round them, and their mouths stuffed with rags. The female, Ranivo, was not carried, but was made to walk behind.)

“ The sentences were then read, as follows :—

“ The wives and children of all taken by the officers were condemned to slavery.

“ The multitude who had confessed their guilt were to atone for their crime by paying each three dollars and three bullocks. But one-half of this fine the queen, in her mercy, forgave them.

“ With respect to the confessors, who had avowed and maintained their crime, four (being of noble

blood) were to be burnt alive, and the remaining fourteen to be thrown from the rock Itsinihatsaka, and their bodies afterwards dragged to the same fire which had consumed their companions.

“All the slaves who had confessed their guilt were to receive each twenty lashes, and to pay the same fine as the others.

“The Christians who had been condemned to slavery were then sold, in the presence of all the people.

“The prince Ramanja, nephew to the queen, was condemned to pay a fine of one hundred dollars; and Rajoaka, an officer of the palace, a fine of fifty dollars; but these fines were reduced to one-half, by the queen's mercy.

“All degrees of honour enjoyed by any of the Christians were declared to be forfeited.

“The whole of the sufferers on this occasion were enumerated as follows:—

“18 were put to death; 4 by burning, and 14 by being thrown from the rock.

“6 families of wives and children were reduced to slavery.

“27 were ordered to pay half the valuation of their wives and children.

“42 were fined half the value of their persons and their property.

“27 of the province of Vonizongo, the same punishment.

“1,643 persons to pay three dollars and three bullocks each, but one-half of this was remitted.

“ 109 slaves to receive twenty stripes each, and to work in chains for the rest of their lives.

“ 2 persons of rank heavily fined.

“ Making a total of nearly 1,900 sufferers of various degrees.”

On November 10th in that year the Christian officers who had been deprived of their rank, and reduced to the rank of common soldiers, were ordered to build a stone house. Here they had to quarry the stones, and to carry them to the building, for a whole year, under hard taskmasters, and with scanty food and clothing. In their letters they speak of this servitude, as “more grinding than the hard bondage of the Israelites under Pharaoh.”

Such was one of the earliest accounts of these transactions. In another letter, dated “Antananarivo, 1851,” a few other particulars are added.

“ We now write to tell you of our state. The persecution of the people of God has been more severe than ever; yet the Lord Jesus causes His people to multiply. The houses used for prayer have been destroyed. The confessors were put in chains and kept a long time in prison. When they were brought out, and as they passed through the multitude to the place of execution, they sang hymns to their Saviour. Four were then burnt alive, and fourteen others, having been thrown from a precipice, were afterwards brought to the fire, and their bodies consumed. While the first four were suffering, a great rainbow, a triple arch, stretched across the sky,

and seemed to overshadow the martyrs. The multitude were struck with amazement.

“We beg our friends to remember us in our sorrows, and to pray to the Lord on our behalf. May the peace of God be with them, and with all the congregations of His people.”

These accounts reached England in the course of 1851 and 1852. But in 1856, the Rev. W. Ellis, by the queen's permission, visited Madagascar, conversed with many of the widows and orphans of the above-named martyrs, and brought back with him another and a more detailed account of this remarkable scene — an account that deserves to rank with the most interesting of the narratives of old John Foxe. We give it, *verbatim*, from his volume.*

“On March 14, 1849, the officer before whom the Christians were examined said, ‘Do you pray to the sun, or the moon, or the earth?’

“R. replied, ‘I do not pray to these, for the hand of God made them.’

“‘Do you pray to the twelve mountains that are sacred?’

“R. answered, ‘I do not pray to them, for they are mountains.’

“‘Do you pray to the idols that make sacred the kings?’

“R. ‘I do not pray to them, for the hand of man made them.’

“‘Do you pray to the ancestors of the sovereigns?’

* Three Visits to Madagascar: London, 1858.

“R. ‘Kings and rulers are given by God, that we should serve and obey them; nevertheless they are men like ourselves: when we pray, we pray to God alone.’

“‘You set apart and observe the Sabbath-day.’

“R. ‘That is the day of the great God; for in six days the Lord made all His works; but God rested on the seventh, and made it holy; hence we rest, and keep sacred that day.’

“So answered all the Christians. And when one who had stood by, saw that even a woman confessed God, and remembered that to deny God is a sin, he went and joined himself to them. And when the brethren and sisters were bound, the husband of one of them, who had heard their confession, came and encouraged them, saying, ‘Be not afraid, for it is well, if for that you die.’ He was a soldier, and not one of the accused. Then they took him, and examined him, and bound him also. And they removed these brethren and sisters, and made their bonds more hard, and put them in confinement.”

The writers here add, “And at one o’clock in the morning we (the other Christians who were at large) met together and prayed.” They then proceed:—

“On March 22, when one had said, ‘Jehovah is God alone and above every name, and Jesus is also God,’ the people cried out with taunts and mocking; and the officer said, ‘Rabodampoinimerina (the sacred name of the queen) is our God, but not yours.’ Our brother answered, ‘The God who made me is my

God, but Rabodo is my sovereign.' And when he would make no other answer, they said, 'Perhaps he is an idiot or a lunatic, take him away!' And they took him to prison.

"And before light on the appointed day, the people assembled at Analakely. Then they took the eighteen brethren that chose God, and to inherit eternal life, and they bound their hands and feet, and tied each of them to a pole, wrapped in mats, and placed them with the other prisoners. And when the judges and officers arrived, they read over the names of each class of prisoners, and placed each class by themselves, stationing soldiers round them. Then the sentences were read: some being adjudged to suffer fines and confiscation; some were consigned to slavery; some to prison and chains; some to flogging; and eighteen to death—four to be burned, and fourteen to be thrown from the precipice, and their bodies burned to ashes.

"These eighteen, as they sat on the ground, surrounded by the soldiers, sang the 137th hymn:*

"When I shall die and leave my friends;
When they shall weep for me,
When departed has my life,
Then I shall be happy.

"And after this they sang the 154th:—

"When I shall behold Him rejoicing in the heavens.

When the sentences were all pronounced, the four

* This refers to the collection of hymns printed in the Madagase language.' The translation is literal, not metrical.

who were sentenced to be burned, requested that they might be put to death first, and then burned; but their request was not granted. So, when the officers had departed, they took those eighteen brethren away. The fourteen they tied by the hands and feet to long poles, which were borne on men's shoulders. And those brethren prayed, and spoke to the people as they were being carried along. And some who beheld them, said that their faces were like the faces of angels. And when they came to the top of the rock they threw them down, and their bodies were afterwards dragged to be burned in the fire made for those who were burned alive.

“And as they took the four who were to be burned alive to the place of execution, these Christians sang the 90th hymn, beginning, ‘When our hearts are troubled,’ each verse ending with—‘Then remember us.’ Thus they sang on the road. And when they came to Faravohitra, there they burned them, fixed between split bars. And there was a rainbow in the heavens at the time, close to the place of burning. And while burning they sang the hymn —

“ There is a blessed land,
Making most happy :
Never shall the rest depart,
Nor cause of trouble come.

“ That was the hymn they sang while they were in the fire. And they prayed saying, ‘ Lord ! receive our spirits. Thy love to us has ordained this for us. And lay not this sin to their charge.’

“Thus they prayed as long as they had any life. Then they died ; but softly, gently. Indeed, gently was the going forth of their life ; and astonished were all the people.”

We have already given one native account of the aggregate of the punishments inflicted on this occasion ; and Mr. Ellis, being on the spot several years after, brought the following. The difference between the two, it will be seen, is inconsiderable, and is merely such a discrepancy as is usually found in two independent narratives. Mr. Ellis says:—

“Numbers were reduced to slavery, sold in the public markets, and subjected to all the ordinary miseries of captivity, with two special sources of suffering,—that they should be sold only to those who would engage to make them labour severely, and that redemption from this slavery should be prohibited. Many others, not sold to perpetual slavery, had been reduced in rank, and sentenced to the hardest kinds of labour ;—quarrying and carrying stones, &c. Several who had held considerable rank had thus laboured, and some of them carried to their graves marks of their punishments ; others, living, were tortured with the whip. Some were still in imprisonment ; others wandering as outcasts ; others loaded with cumbrous fetters ; while not a few had been put to death.

“Of the numbers implicated some idea may be formed from the fact, that at one time and place

(1849) thirty-seven who had preached the Word were reduced, with their wives and children, to slavery; forty-two, who were found to have books, were made slaves, and their property confiscated; twenty-seven, who had possessed books, and had read or explained them, were sold with their families; six others were imprisoned; 2,055 had paid a fine; and eighteen had been put to death, fourteen by being thrown from a rock, and four by being burnt alive."

Of this last execution Mr. Ellis adds the following particulars:—

"Seventeen of them had been tied each to a pole, and carried along between two men to the place of execution. One, a young female, was allowed to walk behind the rest. Four of them, being nobles, were not killed in the ordinary way, but burned alive. Two of them were husband and wife, the latter expecting shortly to become a mother. Amidst the smoke and blaze of the burning wood, the pangs of maternity came on and the infant was born. It was thrust at once into the flames, its body to be burned with its parents, its spirit to ascend with theirs to God.

"The remaining fourteen were taken to the precipice—the Tarpeian rock of Antananarivo; there each one was held by a cord on the edge of the precipice, when the option was offered him of life on taking the idolatrous oath. Not one even wavered. One of the martyrs spoke with such a calm self-possession, of the near prospect of eternal life and blessedness, as deeply to affect all who heard him. They were all

successively thrown over, till it came to the turn of the young woman who had been allowed to walk the last in the fearful procession. She had witnessed the fate of all her friends, and now, it was hoped, her fortitude would have given way, and she would take the oath. But she persevered, and expressed her readiness to follow in her turn. The executioner, in vexation, said, 'She is an idiot; she does not know what she says; take her away.' She was spared, but of her subsequent fate we hear nothing."

Such was the last great assault which Satan was permitted to make on this infant church. It failed; as, indeed, looking at the Divine support already given to the poor Christians of Madagascar, it might have been expected to fail. But, alike for its fierceness, and for the wonderful grace given to the Malagese confessors, it will bear a comparison with the most glorious passages in the whole history of the Church. When, in the days of Polycarp or of Cyprian, or of Latimer and Bradford, was there a more resplendent scene than in this noble martyrdom at Antananarivo? Nor must we ever forget the vast difference, to human eyes, of the external circumstances of these different cases. When Polycarp died at Smyrna, or Cyprian at Carthage, or when Ridley and Latimer "played the man" at Oxford, they were acting as Christian heroes, each on an heroic arena. They were champions, long trained for the great fight, prepared for the last struggle, and dying gloriously amidst thou-

sands of admiring spectators. But what were the martyrs of Antananarivo? Scorned of men; alone; no friend or adviser to encourage or support them; their firmness and calm reliance on the promises would be almost incredible, had not the fiery trial of the Three Children been left on record. In that great model we see both the fact and the supporting cause; and one brief sentence of St. Paul explains the whole mystery: "I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me."

CHAPTER XVII.

REVIVAL OF HOPE.

A.D. 1850-52.

TEN years and more were yet to pass away before the heavy cloud which hung over Madagascar was to be removed; but the London Committee knew not how far distant was the moment of relief, and they naturally continued to watch, and pray, and strive, year by year, in hope of the renewed appearance of the light of day.

After the accounts of the great persecution of 1849 had been received in England, there was a natural pause of several months, resembling the dreary silence which follows the passing away of an earthquake. Then came a stray letter or two, full of sadness and fear. One of the earliest of these was dated from Madagascar, November 19, 1851, and was addressed to David, one of the refugees at Mauritius. It ran thus:—

“We received your letter, dated October 24, informing us of the sympathies of our Christian friends, for which we rejoice and thank God. And how glad

were we when we received the packages—forty-two books, six quires of paper, and a bottle of ink—which you sent us by the hands of Mr. Zamety. All came safe to hand; and you cannot imagine how thankful we felt to God that day, for his great mercy in enabling you to send us those things, for we are hungering and thirsting for the bread of life. Thanks be to God! he hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Blessed be His holy name, that he hath opened a way for us to correspond with one another. . . . And this also we tell you, our three brothers sent us the large book that is bound, which contains an account of each tribe and district, with the names of our friends who suffered, and those who endangered their lives. The remainder of our persecuted friends are stationed at the different military posts, and we hear that they have liberty to go about. Blessed be God, who retains power over all things! We thank you, our friends, for writing to us. May the Lord Jesus bring us to see each others' faces in the flesh again.

“Beg Mr. Le Brun to send us a large number of Bibles, Testaments, and hymn-books. Put them in the bottoms of cases, place small bars of iron across, and fill up the cases with eatables. . . . May you live long, and be blessed of God, say

“ JEREMIAH,

“ JOSHUA,

“ SARAH,

“ And all the Christians here.”

Shortly after this, came another letter, which, from a fear of involving the writers in danger, was not made public, but which contained the astonishing intelligence, that the wonder wrought in Egypt, had been repeated in Madagascar, and that again it might be said, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." This little church, described by the missionaries in 1834, as consisting of "*several* persons who were savingly converted," was now estimated, after many years of terrible persecution, at *five thousand souls*. It was added also, that the persecutors, as though weary of slaying, were now dormant, and that the Christians were allowed to go unmolested. The young prince, also, remained unshaken, and was ready at all times to use what influence he possessed in favour of the harassed Christians. And lastly, it was reported that Rainiharo, the queen's favourite and chief minister, had died, and that thus a prime mover of the severe measures adopted towards the Christians had been taken away.

As the year 1853 approached, fresh tidings of a similar character were received, and the London Committee, excited to the liveliest hopes, met and agreed to issue a special appeal to the friends of missions, on the new prospects opening for Madagascar. In that appeal they stated, "At length God has heard the blood of his martyrs from beneath the altar, and to his suffering church there has arisen light in the darkness. The only child of the persecuting queen has learnt the faith in which the

martyrs died, and the only son of the late prime minister (the bitterest foe of the Christians) has avowed himself the Christians' friend.

"To the young prince has been committed the government of the country, while the son of Rainiharo has succeeded to his father's office; and as the first fruits of this most blessed change, the ports of Madagascar are about to be opened to foreigners, and English missionaries, it is confidently expected, will be freely admissible to the country."

Very naturally, therefore, the Committee called earnestly for aid, and they did not call in vain. Between February 1 and April 30, 1853, the special contributions made for Madagascar exceeded EIGHT THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS.

But the Committee soon perceived the necessity of fuller information. The letters from Madagascar, though not contradictory, were of various hues and tone. Some were full of sadness, others overflowing with hope. One of these letters, dated May 1852, ran thus:—

"My heart and soul are full of sorrow and grief while I take up my pen to write to you. . . . The wrath of the sovereign continues to rage against us. There is a law that no one shall pray or worship according to the religion of the white people; and that he that does shall be put to death. This law is read once a fortnight to the soldiers in their military exercises. . . . Yet the people here are advancing. They meet to receive the Lord's Supper once a

month. They worship in seven different houses, for the law of the sovereign is very strict. It says, 'Spy into the houses, make a diligent search, and if you find any practising this new religion, bring them to me, saith Ranavalo-manjaka.'

"Yet Prince Ramonja, the queen's nephew, officer of the palace, is one of our company. He is a wise man, and he truly loves Christ. He continually preaches to the queen, though her heart kindles in rage against him when he speaks to her about the Christian faith. . . He does not fear the queen's anger. . . . He is deemed stubborn and obstinate; but the queen does not punish him, because he is her sister's beloved son.

"As to those that have been imprisoned, they are still in chains. Some remain in various prisons, others are at home, but still in chains. Those that took refuge in the wilderness are still wandering from place to place. The officers whose honours had been taken away, were ordered to carry muskets, as common soldiers. And having been thus punished and tormented, we remained nine months in town, and then we were sent to Mantasoa, near the forest, to build a stone house. When this was done, we were sent to drag timber out of the forest."

The queen's instructions, or "General Order" here alluded to, are given with more fullness by Mr. Ellis, as follows:—

"If any baptize (i. e. administer or receive baptism), I will put them to death, saith Ranavalo-manjaka; for they change the prayers of the twelve

kings. Therefore, search and look, and if ye find any doing that, whether man or woman, take them, that we may kill them; for I and you will kill them that do that, though they be half the people. For to change what the ancestors have ordered and done, and to pray to the ancestors of the foreigners, and not to Andrianampoinimerina and Lehidama, and the idols that sanctified the twelve kings, and the twelve mountains that are worshipped; whoever changes these observances, I make known to all people, I will kill, saith Ranavalo-manjaka."

Yet, while this unrelenting enmity was still apparent, other letters adduced grounds of hope. One, dated Tamatave, Aug. 23, 1852, was to this effect:—"I come to see you with this letter, to mention to you the great changes that have taken place. . . . The great minister, Rainiharo, is dead, and his son fills his place. The commander here, at Tamatave, is waiting for the English to come and make a treaty of commerce between the two nations, as in the days of Radama. The queen has issued an order by which all her subjects who have left the country may return."

A third note ran thus:—"Rainiharo, 13th honour, is dead, and Roharo, his son, succeeds him as commander-in-chief. He was promoted by Rakoto-Radama, now reigning prince, for they are great friends. The laws of Madagascar are much better than they were before, for it is Rakoto-Radama who now makes the laws."

Mr. Le Brun also wrote from Mauritius as follows:—

“ We have received encouraging news from Madagascar. Rainiharo is dead, his son has succeeded him as prime minister; he is a Christian, or at least is favourable to Christianity, and seconds the young prince in all his plans of usefulness. The flags hoisted along the coast bear the name of Rakoto-Radama. He may, therefore, be considered as being in fact king, though his mother still wears the royal diadem.

“ The prince is making every effort to renew the good understanding between our Government and his own. . . . Three messengers have been sent to Tamatave with powers to negotiate.

“ Is not this good news? Should not our friends in England do all in their power to bring about the opening of Madagascar to the messengers of peace. Oh, that we had one of the old missionaries watching the moment when his feet could again tread the land so dear to his heart! Now is the time to plead earnestly with God. Let the churches set apart a day of humiliation and prayer, in behalf of the mission to Madagascar. May the Lord once more cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us.”

Thus encouraged to hope, and yet perceiving ground for fear, the Committee very wisely decided on requesting the Rev. W. Ellis, who had spent many years in the Polynesian mission, to repair at once to Madagascar, and to ascertain, as correctly as possible, the real position of affairs. To him they

also united in the same mission of enquiry, Mr. Cameron, who had been a member of the former mission, and who had fully acquired the language. Mr. Ellis left England on April 15, 1853, and reached Mauritius in July; from whence, on the 10th of that month, he sailed for Tamatave.

From Mauritius he wrote to the London Committee, explaining many points which were not understood in England. He says:—

“My first object was, by strict enquiries, to ascertain what foundation there was for the tidings which had been sent to England. . . . The prince, I learn, is *third* in rank and authority. The queen is first: next, her high officers of council, and after them, the prince. Very recently, a chief of one of the districts, presented “hasina” (a token of allegiance) to the prince, when the queen sent him a message to demand if he did not know that she was still living, and to degrade him from his rank. . . . It is frequently stated in the letters from Tamatave, that the prince desires the friendship of the English, and would be glad if amicable relations could be renewed; but this is no authorised expression of the wish of the Malagasy government. The prince is not in command of the army; that post has been given to the son of the late minister, Rainiharo.

“Other letters speak of the great increase of the Christians in Madagascar; of their having not fewer than seven houses in the capital, where they meet during the night for worship, and of their having

access to the prince at all times. There are also letters from Prince Ramonja, nephew of the queen and cousin of the prince, requesting Bibles and Testaments, and naming the agent at Tamatave, to whom they may be sent.

“ I hear nothing of any *recent* persecutions or imprisonments; but those in bonds and slavery are still afflicted. The laws against Christianity are still in force, but remain dormant at present. Looking at the whole of the information which we now possess, I see, that although the state of things in Madagascar is less favourable than the hopes and expectations put forth had led me to expect, there are not a few indications of an improved state of feeling.

“ We propose, on reaching Tamatave, to address a joint letter to the queen, asking permission for Mr. Cameron and myself to proceed to the capital; and stating that we wish to stay one year, or until the next good season. Should this permission be granted, we shall at once proceed to Antananarivo, where I have no doubt we shall find some means of administering to the relief and comfort of the afflicted Christians. And should any favourable change occur, we shall be on the spot to take advantage of it.”

Messrs. Ellis and Cameron reached Tamatave on July 18. The captain of the port, an officer who had visited England and France, and spoke English, came on board, with several attendants.

After making the usual enquiries as to the ship, crew, officers, passengers, and objects of the voyage, during

which a considerable degree of reserve was manifested, they returned. By them Mr. Ellis sent letters to the queen and the officers, with a note to the governor, requesting him to forward them as early as possible to the capital. The memorial, &c., from the merchants at Mauritius were also delivered to an officer sent to receive them. Mr. Ellis writes, —

“Early the next morning, a white flag on the beach intimated that a communication from the government awaited us. Our captain and mate went on shore, and found that permission was given to take off some supplies for the ship. They informed us, on their return, that the officers wished to see us on shore. We landed shortly afterwards, and found two of the chief officers of the place, and numbers of the people, on the beach. Some of them recognised Mr. Cameron, and all of them, when they learned that he had formerly resided at the capital, appeared glad to see him. The officer who had been in England led us to his residence, which was at some distance from the shore. It was a strongly-built native house, standing in an extensive enclosure, most of which was under cultivation. We ascended by two steps, and entered a large room, the walls of which were covered with rofia cloth, and the floor raised, boarded, and partially covered with matting. A table, on which a white cloth was spread and refreshments placed, stood in the centre; and around it were a number of chairs and native seats of matting, in the form of raised hassocks. We had not been here long before the



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MALAGESE CHIEFS, AND NATIVE WOMAN.

chief judge, the next in authority to the governor, was announced. He was dressed in full official costume, and attended by a number of inferior officers. On entering the room he frankly offered his hand, apologised for the governor, who, he said, was, on account of pressing business, unable to see us, but had sent him to bid us welcome. He then sat down, and after a few general remarks on the object of our visit and the state of the country, directed his attendants, and the inferior officers, to leave the room and wait outside. The judge and the chief officers then entered into a very free and grave conversation with us, which lasted several hours. The *rumoured attack of the English* naturally became one of the first subjects of enquiry, and without pretending to any peculiar knowledge of the intentions of our own government, we felt no hesitation in assuring them that we did not believe there was the slightest foundation for such a report; adducing reasons for our opinion which appeared perfectly satisfactory; especially the friendly feelings towards the Malagasy people, so recently expressed by the governor of Mauritius to ourselves, when he knew that we were about to visit them. They brought forward a variety of other subjects, including also the attack made upon them in 1846, of which they gave us their version, and after alluding to the object of the merchants in their present application to the queen, asked, very gravely, What was the real purpose of our visit? This they were frankly told was no other than

had been stated in our letter to the queen — a visit, and only a visit of friendship and good will, and to converse on subjects which we thought would tend to the good of the kingdom. Some of these we specified, and added, that we did not ourselves come with the intention of continuing, but as visitors, to remain in the country till the next suitable season for returning to the coast. They gave us many particulars about the state of things at the capital, and one of them added that there was now no preaching or praying there. We doubted at the time whether all present concurred in the statement; but the want of schools was generally regretted. At the close of our interview, they all accompanied us to the house of one of the foreign residents, and when we left it the judge walked with us to the public road, and, after again assuring us of our welcome, that arrangements should be made for supplying our ship with provisions, and that we were at liberty to come on shore as often as we pleased, he returned to his own dwelling, directing some of the officers to accompany us to the beach. *Our impression was, and still is, that the welcome given us was sincere*; that, whatever might be the answer to our application for permission to proceed to the capital, the officers here were glad, after the cessation of so many years of all friendly intercourse, to have an opportunity for full and unreserved communication with those belonging to a nation whom they declared they knew to be their friends, and in whose statements they might fully confide. The

officers gave us many proofs of their good-will, and their readiness to show us all the favour which their orders, prohibiting all intercourse with foreigners, would allow.

Mr. Ellis remained at Tamatave until the royal answer to his application should arrive. In the interim the native Christians were not long in discovering his presence and his character. "They soon," he says, "found means of communicating with us, and verbally and by writing, in answer to enquiries which we proposed in writing, we obtained a considerable amount of deeply affecting and most valuable information. This intelligence we obtained from parties to whom the highest sources of intelligence were accessible, and whose veracity is more than guaranteed by their present circumstances. I shall never forget our first interview with the native Christian with whom we had most frequent intercourse. We were seated at breakfast with one of the foreign residents when, according to appointment, he arrived. 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 of emotion as I had never before witnessed in any human being. It was not ecstasy, it was not terror, and yet a seeming blending of both, marked by a measure of intensity but rarely seen. During the whole interview, which was long, there was a strange uneasiness mingled with apparent satisfaction, which it would be difficult to describe."

The leading feature, however, in these communications, was one which even to an Englishman was surprising. "Nothing struck me so much," says Mr. Ellis, "as the earnest, importunate, and reiterated applications for the Holy Scriptures and other Christian books, which reached us through all available mediums. One fine-looking young officer, who had come from a distance, on hearing that we were at Tamatave, almost wept, when, in reply to his solicitation for a book, Mr. Cameron told him we had not a single copy left. In answer to an enquiry as to the number of Christians in his neighbourhood, he replied "We are few in number, because we have so few books. If we had books, many would read them, and would unite themselves with us."

After a delay of fifteen days, the official reply to Mr. Ellis's letter came down from Antananarivo. It was couched in courteous and friendly terms, "making kind enquiries after some of the missionaries who had formerly resided amongst them; stating that the queen and her relations were well; that at present there was much public business of the queen's to attend to, requiring a considerable time to finish it; and that, in the meantime, we had better return to the other side of the water, lest we should be overtaken with sickness,* by remaining at Tamatave." So ended all present hope of obtaining a renewed entrance for the gospel into Madagascar.

* This remark had reference to the well-known insalubrity of the coast during the winter season.

Mr. Ellis remained only six days at Tamatave after the receipt of this courteous refusal. In that time he found means to learn much respecting the state of the poor converts, and what he learnt was truly astonishing. He states, that although it was not easy to form a correct estimate of the number of the native Christians, yet testimony, fully entitled to confidence, gave the number in and about the capital as fully *one thousand*, mutually known and recognised as disciples of Christ. This was exclusive of large numbers at the other places where schools and chapels had been opened. And these Antananarivo Christians were in the regular habit of meeting for worship each Lord's day, though generally at night, in several houses used for that purpose. He also learnt that, in the various persecutions of the preceding seventeen years, the actual number of sufferers whose lives had paid for their stedfast adherence to their Saviour, was not fewer than *one hundred*; while a far greater number, still surviving, were suffering bonds or captivity, besides "the loss of all things," rather than relinquish their hope in Christ. He adds, with abundant reason, the remark, "that under circumstances so adverse, *their number should continue to increase*, which, according to the testimony of many witnesses, is the case; and that men and women, by birth and rank much above the inferior classes, though now in bonds, and wearing rudely-fabricated heavy irons on their persons, night and day, as the penalty of their attachment to Christ, should be *among the most*

active and the most successful in bringing others to the Saviour, presents a state of things which the Church and the world have but rarely been privileged to witness. It must be ascribed to a higher than any human influence, and is a demonstration that God is with them of a truth."

Mr. Ellis also obtained an insight into the interior workings of heathen faction in the queen's palace; so as to be able to understand the seemingly contradictory tendencies of the government. He found that while the prince, and his cousin Ramonja, and some personal friends of their own, stood near the throne and favoured the progress of the Gospel; there was, opposed to them, a numerous, active, and influential party, at present possessing great power and all its advantages. These were the patrons and supporters of the idols and their keepers; of the "sikidy" and the "tangena," of slavery and coerced labour, and all else included in what are termed the ancient customs of the country. "At the head of this party," he says, "is one of the most active and able members of the present government. He is a nephew of the queen, consequently cousin to the prince, as well as own brother to Ramonja, another member of the government, who is said to be in great favour with the queen, and an attached and faithful Christian friend of the prince. . . . The leader of the anti-christian party is represented as a shrewd, ambitious, daring man, with considerable business talent and large property. It is said that no efforts are spared, by this chief and

his party, to prevent the accession of the prince to the throne. They are said to represent him to the queen as totally unacquainted with the business of government, and bewitched by the Christians; and that to place the sovereignty in his hands would be to promote dissatisfaction, and to sacrifice the good of the kingdom. This is probably the queen's own opinion; for we were more than once told, that the fact of the Christians having, as she deems it, taken advantage of the prince's inexperience and amiable disposition to draw him over to their party, has, more than all besides, excited her extreme indignation."

Meanwhile, the prince himself was represented as being exceedingly amiable in disposition and honourable in character. One who had seen much of society, was lately some time at the capital, and though he had no sympathy with his religion, expressed his opinion of his moral worth in strong terms. He said he was not like a Malagasy in any feature of his character, but more like an English gentleman. "He is at all seasons very respectful and attentive to his mother, spending much of his time with her, and the queen is said to be exceedingly attached to him; and when dissuaded from gratifying the purpose of her heart by making him her successor, the fact that he is her son, her only child, seems to overrule all objections and supply all deficiencies." How wonderful are the ways of God! Seldom was a purpose more resolutely formed, or more relentlessly carried out, than the determination

of the highest authorities to extinguish Christianity in Madagascar. There was "no sparing of the fire and faggot," and so long was the persecution continued, and so profuse the shedding of human blood, that many imagined the purpose accomplished. At that time He, who subordinates all things to His own will, called into exercise the maternal instinct in the only heart in which it could effectually operate, to stop the flow of human blood, and to cherish and invest with the requisite prestige of authority and power, the only human agency that could effectually shield and foster the despised and defenceless sufferers for Christ.

Mr. Ellis adds, that one of the latest letters from the capital confirmed, most fully, rumours previously heard, of a formidable conspiracy against the life of the prince. "At the head of this conspiracy is his deadly rival; and a gentleman recently at the capital, and possessing good means of information, said very recently, that if this man were not most vigilantly watched, night and day, no one could guarantee the prince's life for four-and-twenty hours."

"The queen, who is now about sixty-four or sixty-six years of age, and is moreover said to have recently become comparatively feeble, and to take but little part in public affairs, does not perhaps feel herself strong enough to seize at once, and to depose the chief of the conspirators; she does not, however, omit what she doubtless deems effective precautionary measures. Whenever his adversary is absent from

the palace, the prince is not allowed to leave it ; and when the prince is absent, the queen commands the personal attendance of his rival ; or, if emergencies require both to be absent at the same time, special means are used for the prince's safety. A strong corps of selected men have been enrolled as his body guard, having the same equipment and arms, and designated by the same name, as those formed by Radama for a similar purpose. These troops are at all times, but especially when he goes out, in considerable force about the prince's person. He himself, no doubt, places his confidence in the protection of a more invincible arm ; but these precautions show the queen's sense of her son's danger, and her anxiety on his account."

Mr. Cameron, Mr. Ellis's companion, was so fortunate as to meet with one of the native Christians, and reports portions of his conversations with him. Mr. C. says, "He showed not the least anxiety for money, but assured me that many were in deep distress. His great anxiety was for books, and that anxiety, in which he said many participated, appeared to me *as great as words could express*. He felt disappointed when he found that we had judged it best for us not to bring many books with us at present ; he however was most desirous of getting the few we had before the queen's answer to our letters should arrive.

"He most earnestly requested a few copies of a small work I lithographed at Antananarivo — Dr. Chalmers' 'Scripture References,' for teachers, &c.

That little book, he said, was of the greatest use to them in composing their sermons, &c. I had none with me, and had but a very few remaining at the Cape. I promised to write to my friends at the Cape to get a small edition printed there immediately, and sent to Mauritius by the return steamer; I told him I was sure my friends would get it done.

“There was another point he pressed very hard, viz., to try to get the forthcoming edition of the Bible printed with marginal references. In the absence of books and teachers, this would be a very great help to them; it should also, he thought, be rather small in size. And finally, he wanted to know whether I had not *one English Bible* with marginal references. I told him I had just one with me — a pocket Bible, which I had had a long time in my family. He pleaded hard for it, said it would be very useful to him, as the figures and most of the names of books were the same as in Malagasy.”

Prince Ramonja, also, hearing of Mr. Cameron's arrival at Tamatave, and recognising his name, as that of one of the former members of the mission, wrote to him as follows:—

“Antananarivo, 23 Alahamady, 1854.

“To MR. CAMERON. — Hearing of your arrival at Tamatave, through the blessing of God, I now visit you to ask after your welfare, for I am alive in this dark generation; and I also praise God for his grace (or goodness) manifested towards me. And I send my salutations to all the brethren in Jesus. And, sir,

wishing you the blessing of God, when you send Bibles and Testaments and catechisms, give them to Mr. —, that I may receive them, and that we may examine them in this dark place, and that God's blessing may rest on you. Farewell, says

“DAVIDRA RAMONJA, Prince,

“Your relation in Jesus.”

And so ended, for the present, this apparently hopeful attempt to revive the mission in Madagascar. The directors saw the impossibility of proceeding farther at that time, and they very wisely invested the sum subscribed, and “waited for the day.”

Mr. Ellis, however, made one more effort. Subsequently to his visit, the long-standing quarrel, arising out of the English and French attack in 1845, had been ended, and the trade with Mauritius reopened. He therefore resolved on a second attempt to reach Antananarivo. The usual commerce with the two islands having been renewed, he paid, in June 1854, his second visit to Madagascar, arriving at Tamatave on the 12th of that month. But the cholera had recently broken out at Mauritius, and so alarmed was the Malagese Government, that peremptory orders were issued, that nothing coming from Mauritius should be sent to Antananarivo. Even dollars were ordered to be buried in the sand for forty days, and every vessel and every person coming from the English port, was at once placed in quarantine. Under such circumstances, Mr. Ellis's second

attempt was as fruitless as his first. He embarked on his return on September 14, stopped a short time in Mauritius, and reached the Cape of Good Hope early in 1855, landing in England the following July.

We must not forget to mention that, immediately after Mr. Ellis's visit, a brief but touching note was received from Tamatave:—

“ We were exceedingly glad when we received the letter from Mr. Ellis which told us about the Bibles with references for us. We went out to a distance from Tamatave, and there we sang praises to God in the fields. We desire much that the Bibles may soon come, and three of our friends are still waiting their arrival, and will not go up to Antananarivo till the Bibles come. We wish, if it be possible with you, to have many Bibles, for *we are numerous.*”

Of this visit to Madagascar in 1853, Mr. Ellis, on his return, thus writes:—

“ I spent a week among the native Christians at Foule Point, which is forty miles from Tamatave, and was surprised and gratified with the simple, scriptural views they entertained, as well as with the satisfactory manner in which they had proceeded. This appeared the more remarkable, when I remembered that the ordinances of the Christian church had scarcely been introduced among them when their instructors were forced to leave, and that eighteen years had passed away since those teachers had departed. . . . Every day, with few exceptions, from two or three to

six or seven of the Christians passed the evening with me, either in conversing on passages of Scripture, or in reading, singing, or prayer, sometimes until midnight. Every Sabbath, we met to worship in greater numbers; and on these occasions the native teachers addressed their brethren with much affection and earnestness. . . Nothing can surpass the estimation in which the sacred writings are held, and I believe no treasure is so earnestly desired. One of them told me that for many years he had been chiefly employed in transcribing portions of God's Word for those who were destitute, until his health and his sight had failed. . . . Very affecting accounts have been conveyed to me of the destitution and sufferings of some who were in concealment, or in prison, or in slavery. . . . I was often surprised to find persons not in the least suspected of Christianity, either already possessing, and carefully preserving, Christian books, or else anxious to obtain them."

Although Mr. Ellis and Mr. Cameron were not able, in 1854, to penetrate to the capital, they received, and brought back with them, a letter from the native church there, from which we copy a few sentences:—

“To the beloved Christian brethren in London :— We have received the letter written by you, speaking of the affliction which we have endured, and telling us also of your love and oneness of heart with us in Christ. We rejoiced greatly in God when we read your letter; for your reminding us of the love

of Christ deeply affected* our hearts. We praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us, and enabled us to bear those calamities. We search the Holy Scriptures day and night ; they establish our hearts. . . . The books sent by our brethren, Mr. Cameron and Mr. Ellis, have arrived ; but many are the people of God, and they (the books) are not sufficient. Therefore we say to you, finish the work ; for the people are diligent, through the great mercy of God. Also, forget us not in your prayers, day and night. May the love which comes from God, and the word of peace which is above all knowledge, be with you."

* The Malagese word used is that which describes the boiling of water.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FURTHER TRIAL OF FAITH AND PATIENCE.

A.D. 1854—1861.

SEVERAL years remained of the long waiting-time prescribed in the Divine counsels, before the light of the gospel should fully shine upon Madagascar. Mr. Ellis, after his repulse in 1853, and his renewed effort in 1854, had returned to England in the summer of 1855, as we have already narrated. For two long years the Missionary Reports and Missionary Magazine had passed over Madagascar with nothing more than a sigh. No news of moment had been received, and nothing could be reported to the annual gatherings of the members, except the movements of Mr. Ellis and his companions. The poor native Christians were scarcely able to transmit or to receive any letters. At last, towards the end of 1855, an unexpected ray of light broke out. A native who held office in the government, and who had been one of the youths sent to England for education by Radama, more than thirty years before, was permitted to write to Mr. Ellis that, if he desired to revisit the island, there

would now be no obstacle to his proceeding to the capital. As this unexpected condescension was the highest favour that could be hoped for from a government so jealous of foreign influence, the directors earnestly besought Mr. E. not to let slip the opportunity; and hence, in March 1856, he again left England for Madagascar.

Arriving at Mauritius in June, he lost no time in seeking a passage, and on July 9, he embarked for Madagascar, on the shores of which he landed, for the third time, on the thirteenth of that month.

His reception was now that of one known to be expected by the government. A house was assigned to him; officials were courteous and obliging, the governor paid him a visit of ceremony, and handed him a letter from the secretary to the government, authorising him to proceed to the capital without delay. Still, however, as on all former occasions, a set time was appointed him, and a month was to be the limit of his stay.

On August 6, the persons appointed by the government attended Mr. Ellis, and he began his progress to the capital. Nineteen days were occupied in the journey, no horses or carriages being employed, excepting the palanquin in which Mr. E. was borne. At Amboipo, a small village near the capital, a messenger from the queen's secretary handed him a letter, requesting him to halt there for the night; as the queen would, on the following day, send three of her own officers to escort him into Antananarivo. It was, therefore, August 26, before Mr. Ellis

could make his public entry into the capital of Madagascar:

Here a house, conveniently furnished, awaited him, and visitors of all classes began to pour in upon him. Four officers of the queen soon paid him a visit of compliment, and in the evening the prince came and sat with him for a considerable time. The next day, Prince Ramonja called, and, very naturally, large parties of men of rank followed in the steps of the two princes.

On September 5, he was called to an audience. He found the queen, surrounded by her family and chief officers, seated in a balcony overlooking the principal court of the palace. Here, in the court, he stopped, paid his respects, presented his "hasina," and uttered a short speech or two of compliment and friendship, to which he received a courteous reply. He was then told that he might withdraw. Two days after he was invited to a dinner given in the palace; and on every occasion the utmost courtesy was shown him. But no allusion to the question of religion seems ever to have been made on any of these visits of ceremony. Nor was it the queen's intention, apparently, that the subject should be mentioned. Prince Ramboasalama, the enemy of the Christians, was always near the queen, and Mr. Ellis reports no interview or communication with him. Finally, when Mr. E. applied for an extension of the time allowed for his visit, his request was politely refused. On the whole this visit seems to have been useful in re-establishing friendly relations with the court, and

also in giving Mr. E. the opportunity of many free conversations with the leading Christians: but it effected no change in the position of affairs, nor rendered the profession of Christianity in the least degree less perilous than heretofore. On September 26, he took his leave of the capital; and thus sums up his estimate of the state of religion among the native Christians. After adverting to the martyrdoms and other sufferings of the believers, he says:—

“The religion of the present is the same as that of the past, and appears to be a religion derived simply and solely from the teaching of God’s Holy Word, unfolded, applied, and sustained by the operations of the Holy Spirit. Under this Divine influence it appears to have attained a measure of developement which is truly marvellous. That it is to be ascribed to this source alone; would appear from the fact, that a large number of those who have suffered, became Christians after the last missionaries had left the country. I repeatedly passed the places where the martyrs suffered — spots which will be consecrated by the most hallowed associations in the minds of the Malagasy throughout all future ages. I met and conversed repeatedly with their widowed survivors and their orphan children, and with those who had witnessed the stedfastness of their faith, and the triumphant character of their deaths. Deeply affecting were the details which I received of the sorrows and consolations of the sufferers; of their conduct in the hour of peril; and of the noble testimony which they bore when ‘brought before kings and rulers for

His name's sake." From these testimonies I derived more than confirmation of all that I had previously heard."

On November 17, Mr. Ellis embarked at Tamatave, reaching England on March 20, 1857.

All through 1856 and 1857, the *Missionary Magazine* and *Missionary Reports* had furnished no other intelligence to their readers than that relating to Mr. Ellis's arrival, reception, and departure. In 1858, however, fresh, unexpected, and disastrous tidings came to hand. The *Missionary Magazine* of February stated, that —

"The friends of the Society will learn with no ordinary pain and sorrow, that the native Christians on this island have recently become the victims of another persecution, apparently more vindictive and cruel than any that preceded it." "In the course of this fresh outbreak of heathen rage, thirteen persons were stoned to death, and their wives and children reduced to slavery; between fifty and sixty were subjected to the ordeal of the tangena, of whom eight died; nearly sixty were bound in chains, and a large number had been reduced to slavery."

But at the annual meeting in May, the Directors were able to state that "subsequent accounts had greatly modified this representation." The outbreak had had a political, rather than a religious complexion. There had been a conspiracy, in which certain foreigners (chiefly Frenchmen) were implicated, which had justified the Government in taking strong

measures. Still, these plots and machinations had naturally augmented the fear and jealousy of the rulers of the island, and made access to Madagascar increasingly difficult. And this was all that could be learnt in 1858 of the state of that country.

Two or three years after, much additional light was thrown upon the transactions of 1857 (the year in which the conspiracy was discovered), by the publication of the last journals of the celebrated traveller, Madame Ida Pfeiffer, of Vienna. This remarkable woman had spent more than fifteen years, (from her forty-fifth to her sixtieth,) in traversing the globe in various directions. She had exceeded, in her various journeys, 150,000 miles of travelling, and yet she had never seen Madagascar. A craving desire seized upon her, in 1856, to see this beautiful island. She visited both Paris and London, in search of some means of conveyance; but was at last forced, by reasons of economy, to avail herself of a Dutch ship, leaving Rotterdam for the Cape. By this vessel she reached Africa and Mauritius, falling in by the way with M. Lambert, a French merchant of Mauritius, who proved to be the very centre and mainspring of the conspiracy of which we have just spoken.

Madame Pfeiffer informs us, without any reserve, that, filled with indignation at the cruelties practised by Queen Ranavalona, M. Lambert had applied to the French and English governments in order to induce them to interfere, and had received a repulse in each

quarter. She also confesses that the governor of Mauritius warned her that M. Lambert was "a dangerous man." Still she disregarded the warning, and persevered in her resolve, to go to Madagascar in M. Lambert's company. This resolution involved her in great personal danger, and ultimately, it may be said to have caused her death. She landed at Tamatave on May 1, 1857, and remained in Madagascar more than four months, re-embarking on September 16. She found M. Lambert an intelligent and powerful patron, but she also found him to be, in reality, what he had been styled, "a dangerous man." He had influence enough to introduce her to the queen and to prince Rakoto; so that she saw, in a few weeks, more than most other travellers could have hoped to see in as many years. But she makes no secret of the fact that M. Lambert was, in fact, actively engaged, during her whole stay in Madagascar, in a conspiracy, having for its object the dethronement of the queen. On this point we will cite two or three passages from her diary.

"June 20. This was to be the great and decisive day. M. Lambert was nearly recovered from the fever, so there was to be no more delay, and to-night the long-contemplated *coup d'état* was to be carried out."

She then explains the whole plan, for seizing the palace, &c., and proceeds:—"Unhappily, this plan was not carried out. It was frustrated by the

cowardice or treachery of the commander of the forces."

"June 22. To-day we heard some very bad news: the queen has received information of the plot; but efforts are made to divert her suspicions from the right direction."*

"July 3. To-day sorrow and fear have been spread over the city. Early in the morning the people were called together, and ordered to attend a great *Kabar*. Such an announcement always spreads terror and apprehension among the people. . . . The purport of the *Kabar* was as follows: The queen had long suspected that there were many Christians among her people. Within the last few days she had learnt that several thousands of this sect dwelt in and around Antananarivo. . . . She gave the people fifteen days to accuse themselves," &c. &c.

"July 6. More than two hundred Christians have been discovered in the few days that have elapsed. They are being sought for everywhere. . . . In spite of these untoward events, MM. Lambert and Laborde do not appear to have given up hope, but still consider the *coup d'état* to be practicable."

"July 8. The queen has taken fresh precautions. The palace has been surrounded with treble the usual number of guards. None are allowed to pass near it but those of whose loyalty the queen is

* This probably means that the queen was made to believe the conspiracy to have had its origin among the native Christians; which was a deception.

assured. . . . Our position really begins to be very critical. We learn that, since yesterday evening, every one has been prohibited from entering our house. M. Laborde no longer ventures to appear in the streets. . . . Our slaves tell us that more than eight hundred soldiers are employed in searching for the Christians, but they do not find many : all flee to the mountains and forests." . . . "We have also learned that the queen has in the last few days occupied herself much about us, and has held long consultations, in which the question of our fate was discussed. To kill six Europeans at once seemed almost too bold a stroke. But our lives are certainly in great peril."

"July 11. Yesterday an old woman was denounced to the authorities as a Christian. She was immediately seized, and this morning they dragged her to the market-place, and her backbone was sawn asunder.

"July 12. This morning, I am sorry to say, six Christians were seized in a hut at a village not far from the city. . . . I fear there will be horrible scenes of blood.

"July 13. The queen is said to have been in continued ill-humour, or fits of rage, for the last eight or ten days."

"July 17. Our captivity had already lasted thirteen long days; when, this morning, I heard an unusual stir in the court-yard, and soon found that a Kabar was being held, at which we were immediately summoned to appear. We found more than a

hundred persons, judges, nobles, and officers; together with a number of soldiers. One of the officers received us, and made us sit opposite the judges. I felt alarmed, and whispered to M. Laborde, 'I think our last hour has come;' he answered, 'I am prepared for everything.'

"At length one of the judges rose, and in sepulchral tones addressed us. He told us, that the people had heard that we had come to Madagascar to overthrow the throne of their beloved queen, and to set up a republic:—That they had also found that we had had interviews with the Christians, a sect peculiarly obnoxious, both to the queen and to the people. These proceedings had so greatly exasperated the people that they were clamouring for our lives; but the queen had never put a white person to death, and in the present instance she had resolved in her mercy to limit our punishment to perpetual banishment from her territories. M. Lambert and his party must depart from the city within an hour; but M. Laborde might remain twenty-four hours longer. The queen allotted to each party an escort of seventy soldiers, who were to protect us from plunder, and see us safely on ship-board."

Considering that both M. Lambert and M. Laborde had actually been conspiring to dethrone the queen, this sudden expulsion was hardly to be wondered at, or censured. But Madame Pfeiffer constantly reiterates her statements of religious persecutions, mingled with these political turmoils.

Thus she says—

“This very morning, a few hours before our departure, ten Christians were put to death, with the most frightful tortures. I am told that the poor creatures behaved with great fortitude, and continued to sing hymns till they died. On our way through the city we had to pass the market-place, and encountered this terrible spectacle as a parting scene.”

As Madame Pfeiffer is apparently a sincere and truthful woman, and repeats statements of this kind in several parts of her narrative, we must suppose that mingled with the political alarm and turmoil, there was also a revival of the old animosity against the Christians, and that, fearing to put the Europeans to death, it seemed an easier way of appeasing the queen's rage, to hurry a few Christians to execution.

It was not, however, the intention of the rulers of Madagascar that the Europeans should escape; but a more covert way was devised of getting rid of them. The usual time for making the journey from the capital to Tamatave is about eight or ten days; but the military escort which conveyed M. Lambert and Madame Pfeiffer to the coast, acting, doubtless, under instructions, protracted the journey during fifty-three days; during which the culprits, already suffering from fever, were kept in the jungles and marshes, which were at all times unhealthy. M. Lambert escaped the fate intended for him, but poor Madame Pfeiffer reached the Mauritius, as she says, “almost in a dying state.” She partially recovered; but

disease of the liver, arising from the Malagasy fever, could not be eradicated, and it terminated her life in the following year.

The natural effect of this attempt to get rid of the tyranny of queen Ranavalona was apparent during the whole of the few remaining years of the queen's life. All access to the island was closed. In the two years, 1858-59, the Directors could only speak of Madagascar in these general terms:—

“The clouds which have so long impended over this unhappy island remain in all their density; if, indeed, they have not become more dark and portentous. The Christians continue to suffer bonds, imprisonment, and death: no white man is now allowed to proceed to the capital, who might aid them by his counsel, or cheer them by his sympathy; and for the present, all that Christian love can effect on their behalf must be accomplished by fervent prayer, that God would take pity on his afflicted saints, and turn the hearts of their persecutors, or break the rod of their power.”

The Reports for 1860 and 1861 are still more brief and sad. A few lines only are given in each, to state that the darkness of the night was still impenetrable, and that not a ray of hope had yet appeared. But in the *Missionary Magazine* for January, 1860, a few more particulars were given, “to meet the anxious enquiries of thousands.” It was stated that, according to the latest accounts,

“The laws of Madagascar remain unrelaxed, and

multitudes of both men and women, who have been convicted of believing the truths and practising the duties of the Gospel, are now suffering poverty, imprisonment, and slavery. Still, for some months past, these oppressive and sanguinary laws have not been put in force as regards *new victims*. A kind and powerful influence has been, through the merciful providence of God, exerted on behalf of his suffering saints, and the effort has happily been successful to the extent now indicated.

“For the present, however, access to the island on the part of any Christian missionary, or indeed of any foreigners, is strictly prohibited, and communication with the suffering Christians is all but impracticable. Still, believers continue to increase, and the churches of Madagascar are multiplied, and this applies not only to the capital, but to different parts of the island.”

One more communication, direct from the capital of Madagascar, will close this melancholy chapter. It is a letter from an intelligent native Christian, and we give it without abridgment.

“Antananarivo, June 27, 1861.

“TO MR. ELLIS AND ALL OUR FRIENDS.—Blessed be Jehovah, God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has preserved us unto this day; for from God does all mercy come, which we obtain through His love towards us.

“Although the distance by sea is great between us,

it is as though it was even near for us to look upon each other. Therefore we can talk with one another, and this increases our gratitude.

“Pray to the Lord for us, simple children, that He would give us power and strength to endure this affliction, and that He would pardon our transgressions which we commit in His presence, and that we may be remembered among His chosen people (John xv. 16); and that the darkness of the land may close (1 Tim. ii. 1—6).”

“Pray, dear sir, that the blessing of Jesus Christ may be with us, and with you, and that we may be helped to receive the exhortation given by you to us, and to endure the affliction that is so severe. May we have love and courage during our lifetime upon earth (Rom. v. 8—11), and may the God of peace quickly subdue the work of Satan, and advance the knowledge of the people respecting Jesus Christ (2 Cor. ix. 10; x. 15).

“The distress of the people here is increasing daily; for they are in darkness, and have no knowledge. The country is not tranquil. There is much war with the enemy; so that they are hated, and hating one another. Therefore we say, pray to God that light may spread among us the people of Madagascar. Let us ask the God of mercy that darkness may be scattered from the land of Madagascar; and perhaps while we both are alive we shall see your face, and shake hands with you, dear sir; and even though we be not permitted to see one another in

this life, may God help us to meet in the great salvation that was accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, to increase our gratitude and praises.

“With respect to the Royal Prince, indeed, dear sir, it causes us to rejoice and bless God that he supports and makes the people of God strong to bear the affliction and trouble in Madagascar. Yes, what he has done, he has done by the help of God, and we therefore bless the Most High on that account (Matt. xvi. 17); and not towards the Christians alone does he show kindness, but to the people in general, when he can. And when any evil thing or calamity overtakes a man, he protects him from being reported, if he can do it. And also when any one wishes to talk with him, and shake hands with him, he does it in a friendly manner with all. This comes from the mercy of God.

“The blind woman, whose name was Rabodamana, spoke, saying, ‘May God be blessed, who made my ear to hear the words, “God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” May God be blessed for sending the white men to tell these words to the people of Madagascar, that their ears might hear, though my eyes have not seen the messengers.’

“She had been for a long time blind, and in the year 1831 the people spoke of the nature of God, and the nature of man, and of God’s mercy in giving His Son. This was the conversation of the people

that knew her before the forbidding of Christianity and the word of God in Madagascar; and when the prohibition came, she was blessed of God, for she would not let that word depart from her mouth, saying also, 'He is at the right hand of the Father in heaven, asking God to bless us, for he always maketh intercession for us.' She continued during her life, though both in trouble and blind, according to what I have said to you since you were at Antananarivo.

"And may you all, dear friends, live and be happy in love and holy salvation. And I send this letter to shake hands with you, dear sir, saith Noah Rainibekoto and his companions.

"Please to send books for explaining the Bible, &c.; and a telescope, if it can be done, sir; and send me a letter, dear sir, to tell of them."

CHAPTER XIX.

LIGHT BREAKING FORTH.

A.D. 1861-62.

THE darkest hour, it has been often said, is that which precedes the dawn, and this was remarkably the case with Madagascar. For three years after Mr. Ellis's return, the condition of that unhappy country seemed utterly deplorable. It was shut up in gloom and cruel oppression, and all access was forbidden. Suddenly, in the autumn of the year 1861, the thick, dense cloud which had so long covered the island, was at once removed, and light instantly broke forth.

"On September 20," said the "Mauritius Commercial Gazette," "his Excellency the Governor informed the Council that he had received a communication under the sign manual, from the new king of Madagascar, Radama II., announcing the decease of the late queen, and his own accession to the throne. The king expressed the satisfaction he should feel in the establishment of a freer intercourse with this colony; and intimated that any congratulatory message would meet with a favourable reception, and

that no obstacle would be thrown in the way of an approach to the capital."

Simultaneously with this communication to the Governor, there came letters to Mr. Le Brun, the venerable missionary at Mauritius, from the king, and from his prime minister. The latter, Ra Haniraka, had been one of the pupils sent by Radama I. to England thirty years before, and he therefore knew well what that England was, whose friendship he was cultivating. These letters expressed the earnest desire felt by the king for the revival of those efforts for the enlightenment of Madagascar which had been commenced by Radama I. in 1820.

Very naturally, on the receipt of this intelligence, the Directors of the London Missionary Society took immediate measures for the renewal of their mission. A sum of more than 7,000*l.* was still in hand, remaining from the subscription of 1853. They resolved on seeking immediately for six suitable men to proceed at once to Madagascar as missionaries; but, first of all, they requested Mr. Ellis to proceed, without delay, to the island, to learn the real position of affairs, and to advise them generally as to the most expedient course. A passage was instantly secured, and on November 20, 1861, Mr. Ellis left Southampton for Madagascar.

Prompt, however, as were these measures, other parties were still more prompt. Romish priests and agents of France, rushed in from Mauritius the moment the door was known to be open; and before

the missionaries from England could get on ship-board, tidings came — false tidings, but supposed to be merely anticipation of the truth — that the young king had embraced the Romish faith.

The next letter that reached England was written, it will be seen, little more than a fortnight after the queen's death, and it succinctly describes the events which followed in the following terms:—

“ Antananarivo, Sept. 11, 1861.

“ To REV. WM. ELLIS. — We have received the letter that you wrote in the month of June 1861, which came from London, and we rejoice at the exhortation you gave for our continuance in Jesus Christ, and your remembrance of us in your prayers to God; and that the brethren and sisters with you ceased not to entreat God on behalf of the brethren and sisters with us.

“ And now God has heard the prayers which we have offered to Him, and Madagascar is wide open for the Word of God: those that were in bonds are now all released from their chains, and are come to Antananarivo. The pilgrims that were in hiding-places are now to be seen; and these are now new things with us.

“ On Friday, August 23, Ranavalona the queen died, and Rakotond Radama was raised to be the king of Madagascar — on August 23, 1861, he, Radama II., was raised to be the king.

“ But there was nearly a contention about it, for

Prince Ramboasalama hired many people to set him upon the throne, and there was nearly a struggle at Antananarivo among the people. But God brought their foolish plans to nothing, and the officers, and the judges, and the leaders of the people were banished by the king, and sent away as exiles. Prince Ramboasalama was also banished from Antananarivo, and the people that were chained and banished were those that were strong in persecuting the Christians. And now we thank God for subduing the enemy.

“When the people heard it proclaimed that Radama II. reigned, all the people, both great and small, rejoiced exceedingly; and the commander-in-chief, Rainiharo’s son, and his family, and some of the officers and Christians, did all they could to cause Radama II. to reign. But all these people had not power enough to do that; for it was God who sought to do good for Madagascar, and gave strength to these people to cause Radama II. to reign.

“And on Thursday, August 29, 1861, we that were in concealment appeared: Rainivaio, Ramiandry, Rainiketaka, Razaka, Rabodo, and Andrianbahiny. Then all the people were astonished when they saw us; that we were alive, and not yet buried or eaten by the dogs; and there were a great many of the people desiring to see us, for they considered us as dead—and this is what astonished them. On September 9, those that were in fetters came to Antananarivo, but they could not walk on account of the weight of their heavy fetters and their weak and feeble bodies.

“And this we tell you, our beloved friend, that whosoever of our brethren or sisters that wish to come up to Antananarivo, there is no obstacle in the way—all is free, for Radama II. said to us, ‘Write to our friends in London, and say that Radama II. reigns, and say, that whosoever wishes to come up can come.’ And bring all the Bibles and tracts with you; for we long to see your face, if it be the will of God. We are much in want of medicine; for many are sick and feeble among the Christians, and we long for you to come up to Antananarivo. And we visit you, and we visit your wife, and we visit your children, and all the brethren and sisters in the faith; until we meet may God bless you, saith

“RAINIVAIO, “RAZAKAIOSA,
 “RAMIANDRY, “RAZAKA,
 “RAINITAHINA, “RATSILAINGET.”
 “RABE,

“And all the brethren and sisters salute you.”

A few days after, Mr. Le Brun received another letter, from four other native Christians, which carries on the narrative.

“Antananarivo, Oct. 2, 1861.

“To the REV. J. J. LE BRUN.—We write you a few lines to inform you that we are filled with joy that the kingdom of God gains ground and establishes itself more and more in our country. We have begun to meet for public worship at Antananarivo since Lord’s day, September 29, last. As one house

was not large enough to contain us all, we had to meet in eleven separate houses, and they were all crowded to excess. When the people saw how great was the number of Christians, they were exceedingly amazed; and what still increased their astonishment was the appearing in public of Christians who, having been hidden for so long a period, were considered by all as dead. Everybody could not but exclaim, 'Truly God is great, who can thus watch over those who place their confidence in Him!' A general disposition to join us seems to take hold of the people. We therefore anxiously desire to see you here at Antananarivo, to consult with you about what it would be best to do under the circumstances. The king, Radama II., tells us to write and persuade the missionaries to come and settle at Antananarivo, as well as all our friends and countrymen who are at Mauritius. There is now no obstacle in the way; the road is open to everybody. Every one can pray in all security; the Word of God has free course in our midst. Bring, therefore, with you all sorts of Malagasy books—the Bible, the New Testament, Tracts, and Alphabets; yea, everything printed in the Malagasy language; for everybody here scrambles, as it were, for the Word of God; so ardent is the desire expressed for it that they throw themselves upon any portions they find!

“French Roman Catholic priests have already reached Antananarivo, and use every means to instruct the people in their religion. Pray ardently to the

Lord that he prevent any of us who are Protestants at heart from being tempted to listen to their teachings. Everybody, young and old, are eagerly learning to read. All the Christians who were in bonds have received their liberty, and are living at the capital. Such is a brief statement of our present position. Salutations. Adieu. May God bless us all, you as well as us, say—

(Signed) “RATSILAINGA, “RAINIKETAKA,
 “RANDRIANTSOA, “ANDRIAMBELO,
 “And the brethren and sisters in Christ.”

Great, meanwhile, was the activity of the Romish ecclesiastics. A letter from Tamatave, dated October 13, states, — “Arrived, French steamer, Mascareignes, from Bourbon, with a few passengers, including two priests and four sisters of charity. A large crowd of natives collected to witness their landing; they were dressed in the robes of their order, and some had large crosses suspended from their necks. The packages accompanying them were labelled ‘Mission, Tamatave.’ I understand the intention of the sisters is to establish a school at Tamatave for the instruction of Malagese girls. This reinforcement, with the priest already here, who arrived from St. Marie, will make a total of three priests and four sisters.”

And a letter from Mr. Ellis, written on board the mail packet for Mauritius, and dated Aden, December 12, states that among his fellow-voyagers were six

Catholic priests, and four lay-assistants, who were, as it was understood, proceeding as missionaries to Madagascar.

Mr. Ellis himself reached Madagascar on May 22. He found one of the king's officers waiting for him, in order to conduct him without delay to the capital. He was also greeted with the important intelligence, that Ramboasalama, the cousin and rival of the king, had died on April 21. The letter from the prime minister which awaited him was as follows:—

“ Antananarivo, April 27, 1862.

“ SIR,—I take the opportunity by Rabongolahy, 11th honour, to send you a few lines. He is sent by the king to conduct you to Antananarivo. We shall be *very glad to see you* and the other (missionary) brethren at Antananarivo. The coronation of the king, Radama II., will take place here about the beginning of August, and you will let the Governor of the Mauritius know of it, that he may send some officers of rank to be present at the coronation, to impress the natives and the king in favour of the British nation.

“ Ramboasalama died on the 21st inst.

“ I am ill of the asthma, consequently I shall be very glad to receive some instructions from you about the treatment of that disease. Please to excuse these few lines, as I hope soon to see you face to face.

“ Your friend,

(Signed)

“ Rev. W. Ellis.”

“ RA HANIRAKA,

“ 14th Honour.”

The "Mauritius Gazette" of July 9 added the following intelligence:—

"The news we receive from Madagascar is favourable. Tranquillity prevails and industry is beginning to flourish. Great preparations are making for the coronation of King Radama II. England will be worthily represented from this colony. Major-General Johnstone, Commander of the Forces; the Lord Bishop of Mauritius; Captain Anson, Inspector-General of Police; and Captain Wilson, R.N., of H.M.S. Gorgon, are the principal members of the deputation. The British Consul, Mr. Pakenham, has left, as well as Mr. Caldwell, who has charge of the presents from her Majesty Victoria. Amongst other objects is a beautiful large Bible with her Majesty's autograph in it, which will be presented by the Bishop. There is also a letter of congratulation from her Majesty to Radama II."

The next arrivals brought intelligence of Mr. Ellis's reception. He writes,

"I left Tamatave for the capital on May 31, our journey occupying fifteen days, three of which were Sabbaths; so that we were twelve days travelling. We had public worship each Sunday, and on the first Sunday in the month, I administered the Lord's Supper to six communicants, who formed part of our numerous company.

"Thirty miles from the capital, a large number of Christians from Antananarivo met me near one of the villages of Imerina. As we approached they

commenced singing a hymn of praise to God, in which the Christians who were with me joined, till we met and halted. The two pastors who were with them said they were sent by their brethren and the churches to bid me welcome, to assure me of the general joy among them which my arrival would produce, and to bear me company to the capital. We travelled together till we reached Ambatomanga, twenty miles from Antananarivo.

“Here we rested for the Sunday, where we had large congregations both morning and evening. Shortly before the evening service, seven officers, one of high rank, from the palace, arrived. They said they were sent by the king to meet me, but would not enter upon any arrangements on that day, as it was the Lord’s Day. In about a quarter of an hour after this they came to our worship, in which they joined with earnest cheerfulness. I had spent Sunday at the same village on my way up in 1856. *Then*, a few Christians came by stealth, and we met for prayer at night. *Now*, the chief room in the largest house in the place was opened in broad day, and was thronged with simple and devout worshippers, while numbers crowded round on the outside.

“The next morning the officers delivered a letter from the king, and another from the principal secretary of state, bidding me welcome, and informing me of the king’s wish that I should enter Antananarivo that day. Soon after nine o’clock we set out, quite a large company; for each officer had his palanquin-

bearers and attendants, and we were not less than 200 persons. About two we reached the suburbs, and I was greeted by multitudes gathered in their court-yards, and on the walls, as I passed along, till I reached a very comfortable house, which the king had appointed for my residence not far from the palace. The king and queen, and the nobles of the court, received me with great friendliness and pleasure at the palace the next day, and expressed themselves gratified with my communications respecting the friendship of the English, the interest taken in their welfare, and the endeavours the Society were making to aid in extending the blessings of Christianity and education, as the best means of promoting the permanent welfare of the people. Mentioning the number and specific objects of the several missionaries on their way to Madagascar, with the supply of books, school-materials, and printing apparatus, which they would bring, both king and queen thanked me for the communication I had made, and requested me to assure their friends that it was peculiarly gratifying to them. The prime minister, the commander-in-chief, the first officer of the palace, and other high authorities, some of them apparently most earnest Christians, were equally cordial in their welcomes, and in their conferences with me at their own residences, in which I have been their guest.

“For more than a week my house was continually thronged with Christian friends from different parts of the capital, or from Christian families from the

numerous villages in the suburbs, all expressing their joy at my arrival, as an earnest of their again enjoying the advantage of the teaching and assistance of English Missionaries, as well as the extension of schools, and the acquisition of the Bible, for which their desire is most urgent.

“The chief disappointment they feel arises from my having no copies of the Scriptures. They had learned by my letters from Mauritius that I was coming alone, and that the Missionaries were to follow; but they expected, and most urgently do they need, the Holy Scriptures. In some entire congregations there is not a copy; and they only hear them read when a minister or friend from the capital comes to them; and yet their faith is simple, *scriptural*, and firm; no deviation in their teaching or belief from the great essential truths of the Gospel; no visionary or erratic opinions on the subject of religion, which seems to be with them a simple, sincere, earnest, personal concern.

“I have been two Sabbaths in the capital, and have attended two of their places of worship—rustic, temporary buildings—houses enlarged by taking out the ends and forming two or more together, and taking down the front wall, and spreading out a screen of rushes. At *Analakely* more than 1500 were present, and scarcely fewer at *Amparimbè*. These places are filled soon after daybreak on Sunday, and continue crowded, with not more than an interval of a couple of hours, till five in the afternoon; not, indeed, with

the same audience, but with successive congregations. On each of the Sabbaths I have taken part in these services, reading the Malagasy Scriptures, delivering a short discourse in broken Malagasy, but in which the pastors encourage me by saying they understand it, and the people are glad. I also pray partly in English and partly in Malagasy. No description can convey to you any correct idea of the seriousness, attention, apparent devotion, and deep feeling of these assemblies during the time of worship. Some of the pastors are with me every day; but we have not been able to hold a general meeting yet, though they greatly desire it.

“I am occasionally sent for by the king or some of the high officers, and I have for some short time past attended the king at his house daily, from one to three o'clock, to read English with him. We read together out of a large quarto Bible, on the outside of which is inscribed in gilt letters, ‘Presented to Radama, king of Madagascar, by the London Missionary Society, 1821.’ A number of officers, some of them Christians, are generally present, and we frequently converse on what we have read. I have also every forenoon, at my house, eleven or twelve sons of the chief nobles and officers, who come to learn English an hour and a half daily. They will be the future rulers of the country. They accompany me to the chapel, and sometimes to my readings with the king. Last Sunday, with his majesty’s approval, I held Divine Service at the king’s house at three

o'clock in the afternoon. His majesty, some of his high officers, all my pupils, and a number of others, were present. I read in the Old and New Testament; we sang twice, I prayed, partly in English and partly in Malagasy, concluding with the Lord's Prayer in Malagasy, and occupied about a quarter of an hour in an address from 1 Tim. i. 15: 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' This was faithfully translated by Ra Haniraka. All were very attentive. I was informed that the king expressed his approval, and I hope to be permitted to continue the service. I have seen nothing yet to diminish the high opinion I had formed of the strength and purity of the religious feeling among the people.

"We must not conclude that all are genuine converts; but I believe future years will prove that many are walking in newness of life and spiritual fellowship with Christ. The Christians are indeed numerous, for they may be counted by thousands in the land. Still, they are only a minority in the general population, and this probably operates favourably in stimulating them to watchfulness, earnestness, and sincerity in their profession of Christianity. Most fervently do I desire, and most earnestly would I pray, that the brethren on their way may come to them in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ."

In the course of July Mr. Ellis wrote again, and with this letter we must close this chapter.

“Antananarivo, July 21, 1862.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,— Although I have been five weeks here I have been unable to secure an hour or two to furnish even a brief notice of the truly wonderful progress of the kingdom of our Divine Lord among this people, of the labours and encouragements that await the expected missionaries, or of the strong and urgent claims of the Malagasy at the present time upon the sympathy, prayers, and efforts of all sincere Christians. And now I can only send a hurried business letter, which one of the government-messengers waits to take to Tamatave; for from daybreak till fatigue obliges me to seek rest at night, I have been constantly occupied with immediate and pressing engagements.

“The young nobles, my pupils, continue their daily attendance, and this morning the queen sent to say she would send her little adopted boy to learn with the rest, though he has hitherto been taught only in the palace. I attend the king daily, read the Scriptures with him, and converse with him on their contents, as well as on other matters. I continue my Sunday service at his house, and, as I am told by his officers, with increasing interest and satisfaction to the king, who sometimes interrupts me to express his entire concurrence in something I may have said, or to impress it more forcibly upon the minds of the hearers. Besides these engagements — which take the best hours of every day, viz., from half-past ten

in the morning till three in the afternoon — my house, during other intervals, is seldom free from persons who come to seek medical aid, or instruction and advice on religious subjects.

“I take a service, or part of one, every Lord’s Day, in each of the large chapels in the capital alternately; and am sent for by day, and sometimes called up at night, to visit or administer medicine to the sick. These demands on my time and strength, besides other more grave and weighty matters to which my attention is frequently called, have prevented my attending to anything beyond the urgent claims of the passing hour. * * *

“The few copies of the Scriptures that I brought, viz., fifty-nine New Testaments, and eleven copies of portions of the Old Testament, were received with a degree of avidity that would have astonished the friends of the Bible Society. The portions of the Old Testament were by the consent of all given to the pastors, and there are many of these, and also many faithful and laborious evangelists, who have not yet been able to obtain a copy. At the time of my arrival there were some entire congregations without even a single New Testament among them all. With such a scanty supply of seed the harvest so rapidly and gloriously ripening is the more wonderful.

“While writing this letter I have had a visit from sixteen or eighteen pastors and officers of the churches, who came to bring me a statement of the communicants, &c. They remained about two

hours, in conference on the state of the churches, and some of the difficulties arising from polygamy, &c. I wish the friends of missions could have heard their account of the purity of the church, and the standard of personal piety kept up amongst them. They would have exclaimed 'It is the Lord's doing!' and would have taken fresh courage in their work; but I can only state that, though *the returns are incomplete*, they state the number of communicants to be *seven hundred and forty*, and the number of Christians in the island to be *seven thousand*.

"I hope to write again soon, but I must close now, for it is very near midnight, and I must be up soon after daybreak to go to one of the large congregations in the city soon after seven o'clock.

"Believe me, very faithfully yours,

"(Signed) WILLIAM ELLIS.

"P.S. If the directors would send out some Concordances, they would do a great deal of good among the preachers and pastors. Their sermons now are something more than 'Gospel talk,' but they have no helps of the kind, and delight when they can get hold of my Concordance. They cannot, as the first preachers of the Gospel did, give themselves 'wholly to the Word of God and prayer,' for, besides preparation for pulpit and other services, they have their wives and families to provide for; yet their ministry is truly efficient, and with a little help would be more so.

“I took part in the services of one of the native congregations yesterday, which consisted of more than 1500 persons, and also preached in the king’s house to the king and a large number of people. I have had my school to-day, and much public business to attend to, and seem as if I should never get time to communicate many of the most interesting, and, some of them, critical circumstances of the people around me ; but I hope to be able to do so soon.”

CHAPTER XX.

VISIT OF THE BISHOP OF MAURITIUS.*

“I LEFT Mauritius in H.M.S. Gorgon on July 12, 1862, and arrived off Tamatave on the 16th. Major General Johnstone and Captain Anson accompanied me; and at Tamatave we found the newly-appointed consul, Mr. Pakenham, and Mr. Caldwell, the bearer of the presents from Queen Victoria. At two o'clock I landed with the general and the other members of the mission from the government of Mauritius, and proceeded to pay my respects to the governor of Tamatave. The Malagasy costumes, uniforms, &c. of the officers and military were very strange in some respects; but the heartiness of our reception was quite unmistakeable. The general's speech was a very feeling and appropriate one. It would be likely to give an excellent impression of the good wishes of the queen and of the governor of Mauritius towards the king and people of Madagascar. I believe

* This interesting narrative, of a recent date, is inserted here by his lordship's permission.

all this is thoroughly appreciated here. Sarradié* walked by the side of my palanquin, and was asked afterwards by one of the chief people whether he was my aide-de-camp, to which he replied 'Yes,' and was then told to speak to me about schools and teachers in Malagasy and English. A beautiful letter from the native Christians was brought to me this morning, addressed 'To the Bishop of Mauritius, the beloved brother, on board the ship.' I hope to meet them to-day. There is a wonderful opening, great need, great readiness for teachers, and no obstructions, except such as are common to all efforts made for diffusing the truth of the Gospel.

"The next day I again went on shore, and amongst other visits I went to see the native Christians, or rather they came to see me at their catechist's house, and I had a very interesting time with them. One fine young man had worn a chain for five years because of his profession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When I referred to the persecutions which they had endured, and the destruction of their books, one of them took out a hymn-book from his pocket, the only book he had rescued from the destruction, and showed by his digging in the sand how he had buried it in the earth. I told them of the strong and wide-spread feeling of good will which exists in England for them, and that I hoped that the light which was beginning to shine would increase and extend over all

* A Malagasy Christian, long employed as a catechist in Mauritius.

Madagascar, and dwelt on the parable of the mustard seed, and on each point fervent and striking answers were made by them. I then told the catechist to read the latter part of Rev. vii., and stopped him when he came to the part about the 'lamba fotsy,' the white garment. When he had done, they were in a state of tremulous and even tearful attention. They would not hear of my going away without a present; so they made me accept three geese and several fowls, and when I asked them what I could do for them, the one reply was, 'Bible, Bible.'

"The next day was Sunday. The heavy fall of rain prevented the residents on shore from coming off to the service on board ship, and the same cause made our having service on deck impracticable, so that we had it down on the lower deck. This enabled the sick to hear. My subject was Rom. xv. 29—'The fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.' As soon afterwards as a boat could be got we started in the rain, and I found my cloak most acceptable. We proceeded to the place of worship. The congregation numbered between twenty and thirty, and as I found the majority understood French better than English, I performed the service in the former language, and addressed them on Psalm xxiii. From this place I went to the native Christian's house of prayer. Very interesting and touching was the sight. They sang hymns, being led by a young man who had been in chains for five years in the late queen's time. The catechist (sent by Mr. Le Brun) prayed with them,

and at my request read part of John x. They expressed a great desire that I should pray for them in the English language, which I did, and at the close of the service I told him to explain to them the benediction, which I then pronounced. General Johnstone, who is at the head of the Government Mission, and who takes a great interest in the spiritual state of the people, was present at the close, and enjoyed it greatly. I was very thankful for such a Sunday, the first in Madagascar.

“ We started to-day for the capital, and were seventeen days in reaching it. Often the enchanting loveliness of the view to the south-east, commanding the sea, with hills, and woods, and valleys, was quite indescribable. The road is grotesquely difficult. I was so tired with my walks in the sun on some days that I determined to remain in the palanquin, but found it impossible to do so, and I walked a good deal, but in the wood, where the shade makes a great difference.

“ July 31. We are now in, or near to, the worst part, it is said, for the fever. But I feel thankful that I have come. Last night we had fourteen native Christians at our evening prayers, three of them officers just come down from the capital, and one of them, quite a young man, made some beautiful remarks on John xv., which I asked him to read. Their singing is delightful. The need of Missionary effort, comprehensive, vigorous, and persevering, is most painfully impressed on me, chiefly from the very

sad and degraded condition of the women. It would be difficult to conceive anything more vile and debased than their condition in general, and this of course reacts on all the relationships of the whole community. Their only tie seems to be their children, up to nine or ten years of age.

“ Aug. 1. The morning of this day found us at Beforana, of which we had heard very bad accounts from all quarters. Its special unhealthiness is strongly dwelt on in Colonel Middleton’s report. When we were there the evening was fine and dry, and though the morning was cloudy there was no mist, and having had a delicious bathe in the river which runs by it in the evening; I left the place rather impressed in its favour. The early part of the journey was very pleasant, but before eight o’clock in the evening I had gone through more strain, pressure, and effort, than in any previous day’s journey in my life, I believe. The rain fell at times heavily, and increasingly so towards evening, and rendered the steep clayey hills slippery in the hard parts, and sloughy in the soft ones, to an extent which it is difficult to recollect even after having gone through it. Many steep and long ascents, succeeded by descents as steep and as long, seemed to be varied only by miry places, into which the men sank up to their thighs; and by rivers of which they had to descend one bank and ascend the other in the most extraordinary manner; and by trees which had fallen across the path in every strange position that could be conceived. Going up one of

the worst hills, we overtook the Queen's picture, carried by twenty-five men. The deal case was covered over with various integuments of fibrous leaves, many of which were torn and fluttering in the wind. The outrunners among the bearers had two long powerful lines, or native creepers, attached to the box, so as to check or pull forward as occasion required, and on they went, step by step, or rather half step by half step, with this immense case, swaying, balancing, and leaning first to one side and then to another, but in no instance being permitted to give way. Progress was made, though the old chieftain told me he expected to sleep three nights in the wood. After I had walked to the extent of my strength, I determined to remain in the palanquin, but at least four times afterwards I wished to get out, and gave orders for the bearers to stop, but they would not let me get out, and it was well they did not. The general, who had been compelled to abandon his large palanquin, hailed me as he passed on, accompanied by Sarradié on one side and a bearer on the other. I was delighted to hear his voice, but very sorry when I found he was out of his palanquin, and felt intense anxiety about him, which was dispelled at last by Sarradié's welcome announcement that he had arrived safely and was well lodged.

“Aug. 5. It is evident that vice and licentiousness have eaten into the very heart of the people, and the amount of disease which one meets with is but an indication, I fear, of their filthy and

immoral habits. But the grand subject of interest is the leavening of so many thousands with Christian teaching, and the apparent aptitude of the people to receive and to diffuse that light. I feel much more hopeful now than I ever did before, of the good results from our Malagasy work in Mauritius.

“ Aug. 6. The thermometer varied from 81 to 47 in the twenty-four hours, but when I got out of my palanquin the brightsun had a most exhilarating effect. One view of to-day excelled anything of the kind I had ever seen. From the top of Angova we looked back upon a very clear atmosphere down to its base, and to the plain immediately below; but beyond that, as far as eye could reach, all the hills and woods we had crossed were covered with a white fleecy mist, or rather snow-like clouds, to which the sun's rays gave the most pure and beautiful brightness—it was a soft white shining light. A native Christian seeing me admire this, told me that the idea in the words, ‘*Though your sins be as scarlet, yet shall they be white,*’ &c., was borrowed in their translation from that very appearance, which, therefore, must be familiar to them. It is a very beautiful adaptation. We are evidently now in the country of a dominant, warlike, and industrious race.

“ Aug. 7. This has been a most interesting day. Starting at eight in the morning, I walked for two hours and a quarter. From one spot I counted fourteen villages. All the valleys are inundated artificially, so as to make rice-grounds. There are very fine

herds of cattle. At nine o'clock we came on the most imposing view of the Silver Palace at Antananarivo. It must be a wonderful structure, and the perfection of a royal palace as to appropriateness of situation, for it crowns the summit of the highest land to which we can get from the sea. In the bright clear sunlight it looked so clear and light as well as lofty, that it was almost as if it were hovering on wings over all the surrounding dwellings which are far beneath it. Messenger after messenger met us, and at last we had to halt and to be received by a band of soldiers; there were thirteen officers in gorgeous but well-made uniforms, of every shade of blue and every style of embroidery. Their splendid cocked hats and waving plumes of red and blue gave them a most picturesque appearance. The band wore red tunics, and the common soldiers were dressed in white; nothing could be more cordial than the greeting they gave us, and it sounded very touching to me to hear them play 'God save the Queen,' with so much spirit, on the side of the hill where we met them. They escorted us several miles, and we were stopped once by an officer of high rank, who came as an extra messenger from Radama to express his very great satisfaction at our arrival. They brought us to this village, Ambrasoeiro, where we are to pass the night in sight of Antananarivo. It was very touching to hear these young officers asking for 'the Book of Jesus Christ.' The severe trial to my chest in coming up makes it appear as if the work of

regularly visiting Antananarivo was not to be mine, but much practical good may result with God's blessing from this journey of research and enquiry.

“Aug. 10, Sunday. This has been a very solemn day. I passed a night of much disquiet and pain, and had to send for the doctor early this morning, and was not able to go with Mr. Ellis, as I had arranged, to the Christian assembly. Their reception of me is deeply touching: to-night I had a man with me accompanied by his sons, fine young men, and younger children, who had a Bible which he had kept for eighteen years in the midst of tremendous persecution. The texts which he had found and fed upon were most remarkable as matters have turned out: Jeremiah xlvi. 27 — ‘Fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel; for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid;’ Jeremiah xlii. 11, 12 — ‘Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the Lord, for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand; and I will show mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land;’ Isaiah xlix. 15 — ‘Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.’ And others which I have forgotten. At eleven o'clock I was able to

have service here, and all the English in Antananarivo, with one exception, were present. I had hoped to go to some Malagasy service this afternoon, but it was advisable for me not to move.

“ Aug. 11. Between twelve and one we were sent for to the Palace, to which we were conducted by several officers and a band of soldiers. General Johnstone had to present the Queen’s letter, and to introduce the other members of the embassy, which he did in a very earnest and feeling manner, dwelling particularly on the affectionate interest felt by the Queen and people of England, in the welfare of the rulers and people of Madagascar; on the satisfaction with which the King’s policy was regarded in England, and on the hopes of future progress and advancement which that policy tended to encourage. He dwelt, also, on the personal pleasure which it afforded him, to be commissioned to express these sentiments; and ended with placing in the King’s hands the letter with Her Majesty’s sign manual appended to it, which was then read to the King, His Majesty looking over it, while Ra Haniraka, the secretary, first read the English, and then gave a translation. The first reply the King made, was to step forward and ask very earnestly about the health of Queen Victoria, whether she was well when the general heard of her, &c.; to which the reply was made that the last accounts were good, and that our earnest hope and prayer was that she was in the enjoyment of good health.

“The general then introduced me, and as the Bible sent by the Queen was ready for presentation, it was brought up in a palanquin by Sarradié and another native Christian, folded in a handsome railway wrapper, over which were placed two handkerchiefs, one the union jack, and the other the royal standard. I then addressed His Majesty in the following words, which were interpreted to him, paragraph by paragraph, by Ra Haniraka :—

“‘Sire, it is my pleasing duty to present to your Majesty, in the name of my gracious sovereign Queen Victoria, a copy of the best of all books, the Holy Word of God. I trust that your Majesty will receive it as a sign of the heartfelt interest with which the Queen of England and her people desire to help, as far as they can, in promoting the welfare of the rulers and people of Madagascar. The Bible has been to the Royal Family of England the basis of many years of such public and domestic happiness as few princes have ever enjoyed. The Bible has been the solace and stay of our beloved Queen, in that deep sorrow which befell her when her Royal Consort was suddenly taken away by death. It is therefore a treasure, of which she appreciates the value; a source of light and strength of which she knows the depth and purity. May it prove to your Majesty, under the teaching of that Holy Spirit by whom it was indited, a fountain of wisdom, for guidance in the discharge of your high and important duties, a means of advancing in true and solid

progress, and a channel by which the love of God in Christ Jesus may be more and more fully conveyed to your soul. It is a book full of encouragement, as your Majesty already knows, to all who desire to glorify God by doing good to man; a book which shows how the light of God Almighty's countenance and favour shines on every effort to teach and train the young in the way in which they should go, to alleviate the sorrows of the needy, to relieve the oppressed of their burdens, to maintain the cause of the helpless; to distribute equal justice to all classes in the state; and I cannot more fully express the earnest and affectionate solicitude which I trust I may be permitted to say I feel for your Majesty, and for all ranks and degrees of men in the beautiful island over which you are called to rule, than by offering the fervent prayer that the light of this sacred book may shine brightly in all the homes of Madagascar, from the king's palace to the peasant's cottage, and that under that heavenly influence, peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established amongst you for all generations.'

“The King seemed to enter with much feeling into some parts of the above, and shook my hand warmly at the close. Captain Anson was then presented, and informed the King that he was commissioned to offer to his Majesty several presents from the Queen, in token of the goodwill felt towards himself and his people, but as they were not all arrived, he

hoped to have some future occasion of presenting them.

“The next day, at twelve o'clock, an officer came, who conducted Captain Anson and myself to a house near the palacé, where the King and Queen, with Ra Haniraka, were waiting, with several officers, two young ladies, and three little boys. I at once presented a copy of the Church Service to the King, and explained to him through Ra Haniraka, that a part of the book contained our prayers in public worship, a part the Psalms, another the Lessons, &c. I afterwards gave a manuscript copy of the prayer, which I have composed for use after the prayer for our Queen: and the chief secretary took a great deal of pains to read to the king the prayer for Queen Victoria, and to translate it; and he then translated our prayer for the King and Queen of Madagascar, and I placed it in the Church Service.* In doing this I told the King what my wishes were with reference to the diffusion of the Gospel in Madagascar, and the establishment of schools; that I found Antananarivo pretty well occupied by Mr. Ellis,

** Prayer for the King and Queen of Madagascar.*

O Almighty God, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, we earnestly beseech Thee to give Thy blessing to Radama, King of this Island, and to his Queen, and to make them instruments in Thy hand for promoting the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people committed to their charge. May they be guided by Thy grace in the performance of their high duties, and at length obtain the crown of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

and that I had no wish to interfere at all with his work, but that I desired, wherever an opening was presented, to try to avail myself of it, and alluded especially to places on the coast. The King's reply was that he would be glad for me to do anything I could for the good of the people, whether at Antananarivo or elsewhere, and I said that I was very thankful to have his sanction so clearly expressed. I then spoke of the Royal College at Mauritius, and the advantages which might be reaped there by youths from Madagascar. The reply was that any families desiring to send their sons were at perfect liberty to do so. Schools for the children of the lower classes were then spoken of, and I offered to do anything I could in procuring the requisite appliances, in the way of slates, books, maps, &c.

“Mr. Ellis, who came in soon after we had begun, spoke of the love of the English people for Queen Victoria, as connected with their habit of constantly praying for her, and with the diffusion of the Word of God among the people, adding some plain and faithful remarks on the paramount influence of such facts as these.

“There were two good atlases on the table, sent from Mr. Ellis's native town, and we took occasion to show how Madagascar occupied the same sort of relative position to Africa as Great Britain did to Europe. Also we pointed out the relative sizes of Mauritius, Madagascar, and Bourbon. This last point seemed greatly to interest the Queen. Then,

the King taking my arm, we went on to the school which he is building, and for some time heard very nice singing in English and native music. The national song struck us as very beautiful, and also one in praise of Antananarivo. The King seemed passionately fond of music, and was greatly pleased at our approval of several of the pieces. After remaining for some time we took our leave, and the King remained behind, keeping Mr. Ellis with him.

“In the evening of the same day, a large body of Christians, representing the three congregations of Antananarivo, and several of them related to the nobles, came with Mr. Ellis as their interpreter, to express their very great pleasure at our visit, the love they felt for us, and their wish to show in some substantial way their goodwill and affection. These words were accompanied by a present of a fine fat ox and other gifts. The general replied through Mr. Ellis, that he felt their kindness very deeply, that he rejoiced in receiving such a mark of the goodwill of those whom he trusted he could regard as Christians not only in name, but in reality; that the fact of many of them being related to the higher families in the land, added much to the importance of their being real servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, as their good example might have so great an influence on others; that he prayed they might be blessed of God in their basket and in their store, in their persons and in their families, and that we might meet together hereafter in a better land above. A very marked

effect was produced on them as Mr. Ellis interpreted the address, of which the above is only a summary, and I then spoke to them in substance as follows, Mr. Ellis again acting as interpreter:—‘I am very thankful to receive such words of affectionate kindness from you and other Christian brethren here. They answer to the feelings of my heart towards you, and I have had such feelings for many years now. I have read a great deal about Madagascar in Mr. Ellis’s books and others, and I have thought about you and prayed for you often. And now, on coming to visit you, I am received by all the Christians I have seen, with much love and kindness, and I am very thankful for it. If I can do anything for you, it will give me much pleasure, for I earnestly desire your happiness. You have given us a very valuable present, but we value it chiefly because of the affectionate feeling and kind words with which you have accompanied it. I shall now pray that God may bless you all, and though I do not know your language well, I shall say the words in Malagasy, taking them from the New Testament, 2 Cor. xiii.14.—“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.”’

“Aug. 13. Captain Anson accompanied me to Mr. Ellis’s house, from whence he guided us to places of the most touching interest,—the spots where the martyrs were put to death. Several native Christians, most of them leading men in the congregations, accompanied us; and while their presence added

greatly to the reality of the impression made on us, they were also able to fill up many of the little incidents which give so much effect to the description of such events. We proceeded along the crest of the hill on which the city is built, passing by the King's Palace, the house of Prince Ramonja, the school which is being erected, and at last came to an unoccupied space, at the end of which, overlooking the steep ascent at the southern extremity, was first of all a slightly elevated mound, with the remains of the perpendicular part of the cross, on which several had suffered, still in the ground, and the transverse part lying on the grass, and then a ditch some feet down the slope where many Christians had been speared, some of whose bones were there when we visited the spot. The subdued, and yet eager manner, in which the native Christians described what had happened, was quite exciting to witness; it made old stories of martyrdom appear quite recent and fresh. From the parts interpreted and explained to me, I gathered the following facts:—That the Christians went to their death with cheerful countenance, singing hymns as long as they were able to do so. Straw was stuffed into their mouths by their persecutors to stop them, but until violently hindered they sang loudly the praises of God. Some of the heathens, who were particularly desirous of seeing how they behaved when the last hour of suffering came, confessed afterwards that nothing so impressed them as the courageous demeanor and glad singing of those who were being

led out to death. A large crowd seems to have followed on the occasion to which our friends referred, with shouting and imprecations against the Christians. The victims were taken into the ditch and made to bend forward, and then two spears were struck into their bodies, one on each side of the backbone, and when they fell prostrate with their wounds, their heads were cut off, and placed in rows along the edge of the ditch. The heads of five members of one family were placed thus in a row on one occasion, and thirteen others behind them, and were left a long time there, till removed secretly, as I understood, by their friends. The whole scene, the description, the mournful tone of voice, the affectionate earnestness of manner of those who told us, some of whom had been for years exposed to the most imminent danger themselves, all produced a most solemn effect on the mind. There was a keen wind blowing from the south-east, reminding me of the breezes on Hampstead Heath, and the story to which we were listening made me realise the deep sympathy which Christians at home would feel in all such records and evidences of the faith and devotedness unto death, of that part of 'the noble army of martyrs' who had suffered where we stood.

“On going from that extremity of the hill back towards the town, we descended by a very steep path so as to go under the rock from which many had been hurled. Mr. Ellis pointed out in one of the many villages, which are as it were dependent on Antanan-

arivo, the spot where several persons were stoned or beheaded, I think as recently as 1858, because they were Christians. We then passed along the base of the town hill, crossed a very deep ditch, and ascended as near as we could get to the fatal rock from which many had been hurled; the summit of the rock is in sight of the western verandah of the large palace, one fall appearing to be more than 70 feet, followed by a rounded-off ledge, over which they went some 50 feet more, and peach-trees were in blossom when we were there, at the very spot where the bodies generally stopped. It was a very harrowing spectacle to witness, the actual rock from which our brethren and sisters had been thrown to meet so fearful a death; but the evidence was clear, that they had died with unfailing faith and triumphant hope. The brother of one of the sufferers was with us, a manly and devoted Christian he seemed to be; I saw him nearly every day while I was in Antananarivo, and sometimes twice a day and oftener. He brought his children to see me, and from all that I saw of him, I was led to form the highest opinion of his straightforward, earnest, Christian character; but when we afterwards came to the spot to which the bodies of those eighteen were taken to be burnt, he wept like a child at the recollection of his brother's sufferings. One severe part of the fiery trial through which these Christians passed to their rest with God, was their being placed where they could see the fall of their brethren, and then being asked whether

they would not recant; but all attempts to move them proved ineffectual. They seemed so filled with the love of their Saviour, and with joyful hope of heaven, that they utterly despised all offers of life on such conditions. One very striking instance I heard of from an old officer of the palace, as well as from our companions on that day. A young woman, who was very much liked by the Queen, was placed where she could see her companions fall, and was asked at the instance of the Queen, whether she would not worship the gods and save her life? She refused, manifesting so much determination to go with her brethren and sisters to heaven, that the officer standing by, struck her in the face, and said, 'You are a fool, you are mad!' and they sent to the Queen, and told her she had lost her reason, and should be sent to some place of safe keeping? She was sent away strongly guarded into the country, some thirty miles away, and afterwards was married to a Christian man, and died only two years ago, leaving two or three children behind her.

"It may well be conceived that our feelings were very deeply stirred by all this, and that we were prepared to look with no ordinary interest on the houses of the first Missionaries, on the sites of the first chapels, and on the European grave-yard, all of which we passed on our way to the last of the four spots we had to visit. This was just at the opposite end of the town from the first, forming the northern or north-western bluff of the hill, and visible from the

palace. Here four nobles were burnt because they were Christians, that kind of death being inflicted, because it is not counted right to shed the blood of a noble. One of them was a woman, and a child was born while she was at the stake, and was pushed back into the flames by the ruthless persecutors. The bodies of those who had been hurled from the rock were brought hither to be burned, and it was here that the brother of one of the sufferers was so much overcome by his grief. The object of bringing those bodies so great a distance seems to have been to intimidate the residents in that quarter where Christianity had especially flourished, among the artisans by whom it is chiefly inhabited.

“ Each of these four spots is likely to be had in lasting remembrance ; for Mr. Ellis has secured these four sites for chapels, which he hopes soon to be able to erect. The congregations have so long been in a state of extreme depression as to worldly circumstances, and so many of their members have so recently been delivered from persecution and from imminent danger of death, that they are not able to do this of themselves; and it is to be hoped that there will be no difficulty on the part of friends and brethren at home in showing their practical sympathy with the survivors of such devoted servants of Christ, by giving gladly of their substance to help them. I was very much struck with the similarity of the accounts given by these Madagascar Christians to the Martyrologies of earlier days. The insulting taunts

and the insidious questions, met with calm courage and unbending firmness, were points on which one might have expected an agreement; but the supernatural appearances, the beautiful rainbows, and other such well-known accompaniments of ancient stories, were repeated with an earnestness, which was the more striking because I did not expect it. God grant that the National Church of Madagascar, which has yet to be formed, may approach in other points to the primitive model, and that we may be able to hold sweet communion in public worship with those whom we ought so fully to esteem and love!"

"Aug. 14. I breakfasted with a native family, going with Mr. Ellis to the house. The father, mother, and six children were assembled, the youngest in its grandmother's arms. It was a beautiful sight to see the little things with their foreheads on the ground, in the Oriental fashion, at prayers, the infant in its grandmother's arms covered by her lamba. The old lady seemed much pleased when I made a remark on the affection of grand-parents for the little ones.

"Afterwards I visited the king's school with the general. We found the king there, as he was reading with Mr. Ellis in a room close at hand. Ra Haniraka's sons were there again, and Haniraka repeated my request for the music of the National Anthem, and the song in praise of Antananarivo. The general was also much pleased with the singing. After that was over we came away, and afterwards

heard that the king had resumed the reading with Mr. Ellis."

"Aug. 16. A banquet was given for the king at the house of the commander-in-chief. On arriving at three o'clock we were ushered into a handsome room, with a gallery all round it, where we took our seats at once round the table. I sat on the left of our host, the general on the right. There were many courses, in each of which rice held a chief place, and many toasts were drunk, with much moderation. We (the general and I) left at about six, as did Mr. Ellis, to whose house I afterwards proceeded, and held an important conversation with him, ending the evening with prayer with the little company assembled in his room.

"I had a parting interview with the king; Mr. Ellis, Dr. Mellor, and Ra Haniraka were present: again I thanked the king and queen for their kindness, and expressed my earnest wishes for their prosperity, and for God's blessing on their people. Afterwards I called at Ra Haniraka's house; I found that a beautiful lamba had been sent for me, instead of being presented to me."

"Aug. 17. On the last Sunday I was up early, and witnessed in various ways the gatherings of the Christians on their way to their public worship. The groups of people in their white lambas going to the chapels, which begin to be filled quite early, were a most interesting sight; and the cheerfulness of countenance of such as I met on my way to Mr. Ellis's

for my early bath was very pleasant to witness. A little before nine o'clock Mr. Ellis called for me, and I went with him to one chapel, the front doors of which were so densely thronged that we went round to the others, hoping to find an easier entrance, and at last were obliged to force our way through a crowd, and it needed the greatest care not to tread upon the people. We thought about 1,200 were present. A native evangelist was speaking with much fluency and apparent effect when we went in. When he had done, Mr. Ellis spoke for a time, and then introduced me as their friend. I addressed them through Mr. Ellis, as interpreter, on the words, 'The fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.' We afterwards looked in at another chapel, just to say 'Veloma,' pronounced 'veloom,' and I read the blessing, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, in Malagasy. I then proceeded to my own English service, which was attended as on the previous Sunday, with the addition of several young Malagasy officers, most of whom I have often seen and conversed with; not long after the conclusion of this service, I was told that the leaders of the singing in the chapels wished to come and sing with me before parting. About seventy men and women came into the room and sang. I prayed with them in English, ending with the Lord's Prayer, and the blessing in Malagasy. The evening service was chiefly in French. It is probable that my public work in Antananarivo is now over.

"The simplicity, fervour, and zeal of these native

Christians are most remarkable. Their enjoyment of the Sunday services has reminded me forcibly of Watts's lines —

“ In holy duties let the day
In holy pleasures pass away.

And one part of their practice is very suggestive of a pleasant explanation of some of our anthems. I mean the very great repetition which there is in their singing. They go over the same verse eight times and oftener, without the least indication of anything like weariness, as if the heart was so taken up with the sentiment that it was quite a pleasure to repeat it.”

“ Aug. 18. The morning of my departure from Antananarivo was full of interesting incidents. Before I bade good-bye to the little party at Mr. Ellis's, Psalm cxxii. was read, and prayer offered, and I left them with many assurances of their kind wishes and good will. A generous kindness had manifested itself every day, and often several times each day, during the whole of our residence there. I left at about eight, having seen Mr. Pakenham, who had arrived on the Saturday, and Mr. Wadling, who had come down to wish me good-bye. The general accompanied me as far as Amprasoeiro; and I parted from him with feelings of thankfulness at having had so much of his company in all the previous time, and with the earnest prayer that a blessing may rest upon him in remaining to fulfil his important duties in the capital.

“ About seven miles from Antananarivo, with a bright

sun, a clear blue sky, and a delicious animating breeze, I saw before me on the plain several groups of people, among whom the white lamba predominated; and on looking through my glass I found that some of them were Christian friends who had come to the capital to see me, and who were mindful of my statement to them that I should probably pass not far from their village on the Monday. The whole was most Pilgrim's-Progress-like, and the similarity was not diminished by the fact that twenty-six of them, eight men and eighteen women, came to our resting-place for a few hours, and we had singing and prayer together, and they gave me their names and asked me for mine, and left a present of poultry and rice for our journey."

"Aug. 26. Last Sunday was a very remarkable one. We were resting at a place called Ampassimbe, when who should come into the village, but two of the London Missionary Society's missionaries, with their wives and the missionary superintendent of schools. We soon made their acquaintance, and they came in to our Litany service, at the close of which we sang 'How beauteous are their feet,' &c.; and then a Malagasy service began, singing, prayer, and reading, and I pronounced the blessing. We then dismissed the Malagasy congregation, amongst whom I counted nine or ten native Christians. Yesterday morning we parted from the missionaries, and yesterday evening, as I was walking across the hilly country of our last stage, I met the three others, looking in excellent

health and spirits. They have a vast work before them."

"Tamatave, Sept. 1st. Through God's grace and blessing, I have got back safely thus far, and it is now the fifth day that we have been here waiting for our ship. This is a great disappointment to me, especially as I have had some very unpleasant symptoms of illness since we arrived, but I am thankful to say that I feel much better to-day, and I hope that the delay here may help me in the work for which I am come to Madagascar. The time of my journey has been a very solemn one, with spiritual and eternal realities pressing very closely on my soul. The degraded state of the heathen here, and the fervent piety of many of the Christians, bring the kingdom of Satan and that of Jesus Christ into very palpable contrast; and the joy of the Christians in their present liberty is very clearly explained by the sad tales of persecution and suffering, even unto death, of which they have to tell. It seemed strange as well as delightful to be holding services, as I did all the way up, when there was the opportunity, in places where one short year before it would have been death to have attended them.

"I have prayers with them morning and evening here, and have been much comforted by their company. The people here are very thankful for the prospect of help from us. Their devoutness and affectionate manner in the service of God are very instructive to behold. May we be guided and pros-

pered so as really to help them! The need of Madagascar is urgent.”

“Sept. 3. Last night fifteen native Christians came in to our evening prayers, and this morning about nine. Two of my best bearers have returned to-day to the capital. I quite feel that I have parted with brethren in saying ‘good-bye’ to them;—such society has been the great charm of my travels here.

“The ‘Gorgon’ arrived at Tamatave on Friday morning, September 5th, and we started the next day; reaching Mauritius in three days and a half.”

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

WITH the reopening of Madagascar to the Gospel the present narrative naturally terminates. Its object has been to bring into one view the whole past history of the introduction of Christianity into that country; so that when the attention of men is called to the work of the second Mission—now only commencing—they may have a general understanding of what has been done and suffered in the time past.

Of the marvellous tale, which, in a rapid and imperfect manner, has been told in the foregoing pages, it is scarcely needful to point out the obvious lessons. Still, as a few concluding observations will naturally be expected, we proceed to direct attention to two or three especial features of this wondrous history.

And first of all, regarding the work as having been from first to last guided and controlled by the special providence of God, we remark the singular absence of any human hero or chief instrument in the case.

We deprecate not the admiration, if cautiously bestowed, which has been drawn forth by the labours and sufferings of the Brainerds and Martyns and Judsons of former days. The churches of Judea "glorified God in," or because of, the abundant labours of St. Paul.* And the glowing zeal of a missionary, shining forth in his toils or his writings, has often kindled the like flame in other hearts. Brainerd drew Martyn after him; Buchanan fixed the wavering choice of the youthful Judson. But in the present case the Church's Lord had another purpose. He meant to perform a different sort of work from any that had been seen before. And hence he allowed no very shining or attractive human instrument to draw away our attention or to distract our view.

The missionaries who carried the Gospel to Madagascar were perhaps more than ordinarily earnest and faithful: scarcely a blot or a suspicion dims a single page in the whole history. They well discharged their duty, and will never be forgotten by their brethren, so long as this astonishing history is cherished and remembered. But among them all there was no one who, like Johnson, or Williams, or Vanderkemp, stamped his own name on the foundation-stone of the Malagase Church as "the apostle of Madagascar." Simple-minded, faithful, earnest men, they patiently laboured, so long as they

* Gal. i. 24.

were permitted to do so, and then sorrowfully retired ; little dreaming how great a work their Master had permitted them to carry through its opening stage. The Church of Madagascar knows no Columba, no Anscarius, no Schwartz, no Judson. "This was the Lord's doing;" and it claims our reverent notice and attention.

A second observation, which certainly ought to be made, is this — that the Mission to Madagascar is a cogent instance in reply to those who are fond of charging missionaries with sending home highly coloured accounts of their successes. We believe that such a charge is generally made in ignorance and recklessness, by men who know little of the subject, but who rely on the safety with which vague and general accusations of this kind may be hazarded. It can never be easy to refute charges which avoid all particulars and offer no proofs ; but the story which has just been told is at least one example of a mission in which the agents employed neither made known to others, nor even suspected themselves, one half of the substantial good which had flowed from their labours.

The grand feature of all, however, is that which the Directors, in their last Annual Report, have forcibly pointed out. They therein remark, that—

“ When the founders of this Mission were driven from their converts, in the infancy of their knowledge and their faith, the exalted Saviour called from among themselves faithful men, taught by His Word, and

qualified by His Spirit, to become pastors and teachers of His Church. These native overseers have ministered the word and ordinances of Christ with singular wisdom and fidelity, and have in all things been ensamples to their flocks, in their holy lives, their patient sufferings, and their triumphant deaths. Most truly may we say that the mission in Madagascar has been GOD'S OWN MISSION; and from its trials and its triumphs we may learn what His presence and His power, apart from human agency, can do, when the prosperity of His Church and the honour of His name are involved."

It was "God's own Mission" in a peculiar sense. In a hundred other heathen lands He had gone with his servants, and had given them sometimes more, sometimes less, success. But here it pleased Him to permit the great Enemy to drive them away, and then to let loose upon the poor affrighted believers—"grievous wolves, not sparing the flock." He allowed this, as He allowed Satan to strip Job of every cherished possession, and to cast him to the very earth; and as He permitted Daniel to be cast into the lion's den, and the Three Children into the furnace, and Stephen to be stoned. He thus "made the wrath of men (and devils) to praise Him," while "the remainder of wrath" it was easy for Him to restrain. He suffered His enemies to cast Bunyan into Bedford gaol; and that calamity He caused to bring forth the "Pilgrim's Progress;" for the good of His Church to the end of time. He allowed his poor servants in

Madagascar to be devoured of grievous wolves for many a long year, and out of their sufferings He wrought an example and a trophy, which will be seen and heard of, in all future time, to the utmost ends of the earth.

We have been accustomed to read the apostle's description of the sufferings of the confessors of former days with a sort of wonder, as of something far off and strange:—"Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Yet what feature of it has not been realised *in hundreds of cases*, in our own time, in Madagascar? Here is a single description given to Mr. Ellis, by one of the sufferers, of his wanderings to escape his persecutors:—

"We then entered a thicket or wood of small bamboos, where in many places there was water up to the knees, and there were many crocodiles in the water. We were nine days in that wood, and had nothing to eat but clay and water. It was all water or marshy ground, and we found no place to lie down and sleep on, except when we came to a tree, or a piece of ground somewhat raised and dry. We frequently saw crocodiles, and at night we smelt them. We did not expect to live, or ever to see man again; for we thought we should die in that swamp.

But after nine days we came to an open country, and when we had proceeded a short distance, we came to a place where there were great numbers of water-lilies. We gathered and ate the leaves of the lilies, and remained five days in the place where we found this food. When we went on again we came to a broad river, where we stopped two days, and we then cut a quantity of long coarse grass, which we tied up in a bundle, to serve the purpose of a raft. We also made a rope of long grass, with which to draw the raft across the river. Then I swam, with one end of the rope, to the other side of the river. My wife and another woman pushed the bundle of grass into the water, placed their bundles and the little child on the top of it, and I pulled it across, while the women swam, on each side of the bundle, to keep it upright; and so we all reached the other side safely, though the stream was rapid, and there were numbers of crocodiles in the river."

Still more affecting are the simple words of another confessor, who wrote to Mrs. Johns from "Antananarivo, Nov. 6, 1861," to the following effect:—

"Beloved Mother,—When I lay hold on this paper, and pen, and ink, to write to you, my heart and all within me is moved. I have much to say to you. I wish to tell you of the sorrows that have befallen us. Very great was the persecution which drove us into the wilderness. They sought to put me to death. I was accused of praying to the ancestors of the English, and also of teaching the people to do so. They sent officers and many besides

to take me up, and they took all the people they found in my house, and my wife Rabodo also. My children, servants, and everything I had in my house they took away as a forfeit to the queen. They bound my wife Rabodo, and flogged her from morning until night, to make her tell who were her companions. She fainted, and they left her to recover a little, and then flogged her again. But she refused to give up the names of any, so that they were astonished, and said, '*She is a Christian indeed.*'

“Failing to get her to tell who were her associates, they put a heavy iron ring round her neck and round each ankle. They also fastened these rings together by heavy iron chains from the neck to the ankles, and then bound her to four more Christians. Five others were also bound together, and there was a third party of sixteen also bound together. Every Sabbath-day, for seven months, they placed these three parties before the people, that they might see how they were punished for keeping holy the Lord's Day. At the end of the seven months they separated them, and sent five to the east: of these, two died, and three still remain. The other party of five they sent to the north: of these, four died, and one only remains; and the sixteen they sent to the west; of these, five died, and eleven remain. My wife Rabodo was among those they sent to the west. She was left in bonds, and died in March 1859. Yes, she died in her chains; her works follow her. They pursued me for four years and three months, seeking

to put me to death. They issued a proclamation to search for me in every village for six months, and they sent papers in all directions, ordering a search for me. But the Lord watches over the afflicted, and will not give the enemy to rejoice over them. My children they have sold into slavery, and my property they have taken, so that I have now no house to dwell in or land to live upon. What has befallen me is too hard for nature; but precious are the riches in Christ, and in him light are the sorrows of earth."

Is there any document extant, from the days of the apostles to the present hour, exceeding in interest this simple story from the pen of a poor Malagase?

Such was the depth and reality of the faith of these poor Christians of Madagascar. Its existence, ten, twenty, or twenty-five years after the last missionary had been driven away, is clearly supernatural. No man would have ventured—seeing how little apparent fruit had followed the labours of the missionaries in Radama's days—no one would have ventured to hope that even a relic of Christianity would be found, after all teaching, all worship, and the possession of all Christian books had been prohibited for more than twenty years. We must naturally feel desirous of learning how this remarkable preservation of the Christian faith was effected; what means, if any, it pleased God to employ, to keep alive—and not only to keep alive the spark of Divine truth, but even to cause it to burst into a flame.

The answer to this question lies on the surface. No one can read the preceding pages with attention, without being struck with the remarkable love felt by these poor Malagese for God's holy word. They did, indeed, receive it, "not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." * They lived upon it, they walked by its light. Every letter teems with this subject. They asked not for money, though they were poor; to ask for missionaries they knew to be useless; but every cry they sent to England was for "more Bibles." "We are hungering for the bread of life." "We are like an hundred starving men to one plate of food." "Do send us more Bibles—we can scarcely get a sight of the light which lightens our path." Men of business, men in office, would entreat, would implore, almost in tears, for one copy—only one—of the New Testament. When a ship was expected to bring some copies, men would toil through a twelve days' journey, from the capital to Tamatave, and would linger on the shore for whole days, watching, with longing eyes, for the first glimpse of the sails of the vessel which was to bring them the bread of life. They had fully recognised the great truth, that in that book they had, in verity, God's own message; His testimony, to receive which, with the belief of the heart, was Everlasting Life.

* 1 Thess. ii. 13.

In one case which is narrated by Mr. Ellis, he tells how, while at Tamatave, two men called upon him late one evening, to say, that having heard of his arrival at Madagascar, and that he had brought some copies of the Bible, they had travelled a long way to beg for a copy. Being strangers to him, he sent them away until the following day, while he made enquiries about them. He soon learned, from the Christians at Tamatave, that they did really belong to a Christian family; and that, having heard of Mr. Ellis's arrival, they had travelled more than a hundred miles, solely to obtain from him, if possible, the Holy Scriptures. When they returned the next day he questioned them as to their knowledge of the book for which they sought; whether they had seen it, and knew its character. They replied that they had seen and heard the Scriptures, but that all that they possessed were "some of the words of David," which, however, did not belong to them alone, but to their family. He enquired whether they had these "words of David" with them. They confessed that they had, on which he expressed a desire to see the book. They looked at each other, as if they knew not what to do. At length one of them thrust his hand deep into his bosom, and drew from the folds of his lamba, this precious possession. Wrapt in many coverings of cloth, there at length appeared, slowly and cautiously unfolded, a few leaves of the Book of Psalms. Although kept with the greatest care, their worn appearance showed how large and

constant a use had been made of them. Mr. Ellis naturally desired to make this cherished relic his own, and he asked them if they knew not the words of Paul, and of Jesus. They confessed that they had heard them, but had never possessed them. "Well," he replied, "if you will give me those, I will let you have *this*,"—holding out a Malagese New Testament, with the Psalms. They eagerly compared the Psalms of David with their own, and finding that all that they possessed was there, with much more, their countenances beamed with delight,—they eagerly accepted Mr. Ellis's offer, made the exchange, and hastily left the house. He afterwards found that without the least delay, they instantly set out on their long journey homewards, "rejoicing as one that findeth great spoil."

And He who had given to the poor Malagese this great faith, then put wondrous honour on His own gift. There is not a page, in the whole history of the Church, which shines with a brighter light than that which tells of the stedfastness of these poor Malagese believers. In our English persecutions, as in those of the primitive Church, we meet with deserters, unstable men, who, "when persecution ariseth, fall away." The Church in Madagascar seldom knew one such false brother. "The queen must do what she will with me; but I must pray," was their usual answer. Life was usually offered them, on condition of merely swearing by the idols, and "leaving off their

religion;" but constantly, with death in view, the offer was rejected. Was it mere human strength which enabled a young female, after witnessing the dreadful deaths of thirteen companions, to reject, as firmly as ever, the offer of life if she would only take the oath? Was it a mere notion, which drove hundreds from their homes, and compelled them to dwell among the swamps, surrounded by crocodiles, when a simple act of renunciation would have saved their lives? Truly, remembering that most of these poor Malagese confessors had seen no Christian missionary for ten, fifteen, or twenty years, but had lived solely on God's Word, applied to their hearts by His Holy Spirit, we may well exclaim, with wonder and with admiration, "Thou hast magnified THY WORD above all Thy name!"

And now, the earnest prayers of the Church of Christ should be sent up to its exalted Head, that He will protect his people in Madagascar from the dangers of prosperity—dangers often greater than those of persecution. The circumstances in which this infant Church is placed are of a peculiar kind. It is still, and for a long time must be, a "little flock," among five millions of heathen. And this great population, in the midst of which it is placed, is not only accustomed, when excited, to deeds of cruelty, but it is also, when at peace, steeped in all the customary sins of the heathen world. All

travellers, for instance, agree in their testimony, of the extreme degradation into which the whole female population is sunk. And for Christians to dwell constantly in the midst of a people sunk in corrupting and debasing practices, is of itself a peril of no ordinary kind. The present government, too, of Madagascar, though favourable to the Mission, consists of individuals who have not even outwardly professed the faith of Christ. And amidst all this, and watching its opportunity to turn any circumstances to account which may injure the cause of Christ, stands a Romish Mission, powerless for good, but often potent for evil. Supported by the agents of France, it will, as in Tahiti, rejoice as much in plucking up the truth, as in planting the lie. So far, then, from Madagascar being Christianised, there is enough in its circumstances to fill any earnest Christian with despair, if he looked merely to human means or human strength. How shall ten or twenty men prevail to lift five millions out of the slough of vice, and ignorance, and sensuality? Truly, if "our help" were not "from the Lord," the idea of the conversion of Madagascar would be a dream of the most romantic description. But still the watchword of Missions ever remains, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it!"

"O Lord, it is nothing with Thee, to help, whether

with many, or with them that have no power : help us, O Lord our God ; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God, let not man prevail against Thee."

FINIS.

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