

persons also saw visions and heard voices from the invisible world. One of these visions, seen by many, was the ancestors of the King, and the voices they heard announced the coming of these ancestors to tell the King what he was to do for the good of the country. Subsequently, a message was brought to him as from his ancestors, to the effect, that if he did not stop "*the praying*," some great calamity would soon befall him. To the surprise of his best friends, the King was exceedingly interested in this strange movement, seemed to believe the pretended messages from the world of spirits, and encouraged the frantic dancers, who daily thronged his house, and declared that the disease would continue to increase till "*the praying*" was stopped. It is generally reported that these movements were prompted by the guardians of the idols, and promoted by his own *Mena maso*,* who bribed parties to come as sick persons in large numbers from the country, in order to continue the delusion.

It was then proposed to assassinate a number of the Christians as a means of stopping the progress of Christianity, and also to kill the chief nobles who opposed the King's proceedings. With a view of increasing the influence of this fanatical party, the King issued an order, that all persons meeting any of the so called sick should take off their hats, and thus show them the same mark of respect as was formerly given to the national idols when they were carried through the city. With the view, also, of shielding the perpetrators of the intended murders, the King announced his intention to issue an order, or law, that any persons wishing to fight with firearms, swords, or spears, should not be prevented, and that if any one were killed, the murderer should not be punished. This alarmed the whole community. On the 7th instant, Radama repeated before his Ministers and others in the palace his determination to issue that order; and among all the *Mena maso* present, only three opposed the issuing of the order; many were silent; the rest expressed their approval. The nobles and heads of the people spent the day in deliberating on the course they should pursue; and the next morning the Prime Minister, with about one hundred of the nobles and heads of the people, including the Commander-in-Chief, the King's Treasurer, and the First Officer of the Palace, went to the King and remonstrated against his legalizing murder, and besought him most earnestly not to issue such an order. It is said the Prime Minister went on his knees before him, and begged him not to issue this obnoxious law; but he remained unmoved. The Minister then rose and said to the King, "Do you say, before all these witnesses, that if any man is going to fight with firearms, sword, or spear, that you will not prevent him, and that, if he kills any one, he shall not be punished?" The King replied, "I agree to that." Then said the Minister, "It is enough, we must arm;" and turning to his followers, said, "Let us return." I saw the long procession as they passed my house, grave and silent, on their way to the Minister's dwelling. The day was spent in deliberation, and they determined to oppose the King.

Towards the evening I was most confidentially preserved from assassination at the King's house; five of his confidential advisers.—i. e., the *Mena maso*, having, as I have since been well informed, combined to take my life, as one of means of arresting the progress of Christianity. Under God, I owe my preservation to the warning of my friends, and the provision made by the Prime Minister for my safety. I went to the King *an hour earlier than usual*, and returned immediately, to prepare for removal to a place of greater safety near my own house. Messengers from the Ministers were waiting my return, and before dusk I removed to the house of Dr. Davidson, which stands on the edge of Andohalo, the large space where public assemblies are often held. The city was in great commotion; all night women and children and slaves with portable valuables, were hurrying from the city, while crowds of armed men from the suburbs were crowding into it. At daybreak on the 9th, some two thousand or more troops occupied Andohalo. The ground around the Prime Minister's house, on the summit of

* *Mena maso*, literally, red eyes. These are not the acknowledged ministers of the King, but a sort of inquisitors, supposed to investigate and search out everything tending to the injury of the Government, and to give private and confidential intimation to the King of all occurrences, as well as advice on all affairs; and their eyes are supposed to be red with the strain or continuance of difficult investigations.