

delayed pouring out the vials of her wrath, and in the meanwhile, all the missionaries left the Island. The people, deprived of their leaders and teachers, were now utterly disconsolate. They durst only recognize each other by stealth in their houses, or hold worship, like the Covenanters of Scotland, in lonely glens, and mountain tops. Open persecution now began. The first persecutor was a woman. So was the first martyr. A young woman named *Raselama* who had shewn the missionaries kindness, and whose heart God had opened, was arrested along with others. She was conspicuous for boldness in asserting her right to worship God. She was dragged to execution and, while she calmly knelt in prayer, the spears of the executioners pierced her body, which was left to be food for dogs. Some who looked on derided. Others said,—“Certainly this was a righteous person.” One faithful friend exclaimed,—“If I might die so tranquil and happy I would willingly die for the Saviour too.” Thus died the first martyr of Madagascar on the 14th August, 1837.

A few of the leading Christians now fled at great peril and concealed themselves in the mountains. Others were not so fortunate. Sixteen, attempting to escape, were betrayed by their guides and carried back to the capital. Eleven of them were instantly condemned to death; two of them however managed to escape: as for the nine, they were tied to poles slung across the shoulders of carriers who bore them to the place of execution, where they are speedily put to death. “Paul the Aged,” a faithful native preacher was among the number. This was in 1840.

These impressions only served to deepen the impression in Christianity, and for a little time appeased the fury of the persecutors. Two years passed without any further public executions. Though the Christians were watched and harassed in their homes, still they increased! And what was least expected, a friend in Court was raised up in their behalf in the person of *Rakatond-Radama*, the Prince Royal, now twenty years of age. Of an amiable disposition, he hated the shedding of blood and shewed his interest in the Christians in a variety of ways. He himself had come under the influence of a popular native preacher and seemed to be for a time deeply impressed. He began to attend

Sabbath-worship. He engaged Christian teachers to come to his house to pray with him and explain the Scriptures. He interceded for those doomed to die. He gained over his cousin, older than himself and a great favourite with the Queen, as well as others of the nobles. Instead of being put to death, the condemned prisoners were now confined in chains, but even thus, they continued steadfast and unmoveable. New proclamations, however, were soon issued declaring death and confiscation as the penalties for worshipping any other but the heathen idols. A fresh haulocast was decreed. Eighteen persons were seized and commanded “to accuse themselves.” They firmly declined, and were dragged to execution. Stripped naked, they were strung upon poles, their mouths stuffed with rags to prevent their speaking of the Saviour to the people. Four of them were burned alive; the remaining fourteen were carried to the edge of a cliff 300 feet high, near the palace, called Ampamarinana, and all were hurled over the rock save one young woman, *Ranivo*, who was led to the cliff in the belief that she would recant. She was entreated to take the oath, but firmly refused saying,—“No, I am Christ’s throw me over!” Such heroism commanded respect even from such savage persecutors. They quailed before it. Her life was saved, and, what is more, she remained faithful during the whole of her life. The people were astonished at such devotion and a brief respite followed. Hundreds were fined and imprisoned, but the work of conversion went on. Believers were added to the Church daily.

Years rolled on until, in 1853, *Rakatond* was appointed prime minister. He did all he could to mitigate the oppressions of the Christians though he could not stop the persecution. Reports of this change in the Government reached England and the London Missionary Society sent out Mr. Ellis and Mr. Cameron to see how matters were. They found two hostile parties,—the one favouring Christianity, the other deadly opposed to it. They confirmed and encouraged the former, but they could do nothing more.

Again, in 1856, Mr. Ellis went out for the third time and reached the capital. He found that in all important particulars the Madagas-