

and Bara are the principal, are dark skinned, with curly and frizzled, but not woolly, hair; tall and vigorous, with fine forms. They are a sly, perfidious, brutal, and arrogant people, universally addicted to theft, and given to drinking, fighting, and plundering. About A.D. 1000 there came another tribe, or perhaps two, from Eastern Polynesia, who, landing on the island, soon pushed their way into the interior or mountain region, and exterminating the *Vaquimba*, who had fled thither from the west coast, occupied their lauds, and increased very rapidly. These were the Hovas and the Betsiléos. The Hovas are of much lighter color than the coast tribes, with straight black hair, fine and soft, and sometimes inclined to curl. Their complexion and features are much like the Malays, and are not much darker than those of the Spaniards and Italians. They are rather below the middle stature, but of erect figure, and with delicate and finely-formed limbs, and they are agile and graceful in their movements.

The Betsiléos are larger, the men averaging six feet, the women from five feet seven to five feet nine inches. Their complexion is darker than that of the Hovas, and their hair more crisp and curly. As to moral character and intelligence, they are somewhat below the Hovas. The Bétanimèna and Betsimisarakà resemble the Hovas much more than any of the other tribes.

There are, according to the latest authorities, 22 provinces or tribal divisions of the territory, some of them sub-divided into districts, making a total of (so-called) provinces and sub-provinces of 28. These are occupied by fourteen tribes, some of them divided in clans, and these clans seventy years ago, and even fifty years ago, were often fighting each other. Wars of conquest, to obtain either territory or slaves, were constant between the tribes prior to 1820, and have not been infrequent since that time.

The great province of *Imerina*, occupying the central and highland portion of the island, is the largest of all the provinces; and has been occupied for several centuries by the Hovas, who are now the most numerous and intelligent of the Malagasy tribes. Sixty or seventy years ago they numbered but 750,000 or 800,000 souls while the Betsiléó, an adjacent highland tribe, numbered 1,500,000, but owing to changes produced by wars, civilization, etc., the Hovas have now about 1,300,000, and the Betsiléos only from 650,000 to 750,000. In the earlier history of Madagascar, the Hovas seem to have been unknown to those who visited the coast; the Sakalava, the largest of the coast tribes, having a population estimated at 1,200,000, the Betsiléos, from 1,200,000 to 1,500,000, the Bétanimèna and Betsimisarakà about as many, and the Bâra, a particularly savage and ferocious tribe, about 600,000. There were some smaller tribes, numbering in all, perhaps, 300,000 more. It is probable that at that period the Hovas were included among the Bétanimèna and Betsimisarakà, to whom they are apparently affiliated by race characteristics. The condition of all these Malagasy tribes in the first decade of the present century was deplorable, much lower than that of our most degraded Indian tribes, whom, nevertheless, in their habits, customs and worship, they resembled. They had no written language, and, except in the case of the Hovas, no regular form of government; their wars were constant, and ended either in butchery or enslavement of the defeated party. They were lustful, brutal and cruel; some of the tribes were reputed to be cannibals; all were treacherous, thievish and revengeful. Polygamy was general, and they had acquired from the foreigners who had visited them the most loathsome vices of civilization. Some of the tribes had a vague idea of a Supreme