

The next victim was Rafaralahy, who had witnessed the execution of Rasalama. He was betrayed by a backslider, who gave also the names of twelve others. Being led to the place of execution, after prayer for his country, his associates and himself, his spirit was liberated by the point of the spear.

For several months Rafaravavy and two companions were fugitives amid all kinds of perils, sometimes preserved as if by miracle. At last they heard that Rev. D. Johns had ventured to return to give what succour he could to the oppressed Christians. By wearisome journeyings and frequent hiding, through fatigue and anxiety, they at last reached the ship which was to bear them to Mauritius. They were soon joined by those who had helped their escape. After resting a time they sailed for England, where they were most heartily welcomed by the London Missionary Society, and where they remained for three years. Returning to Mauritius, a house was secured, where Rafaravavy resided till her death, sheltering and ministering to the fugitive Christians.

Another victim was Ravahiny, who had been divorced for being a Christian. Her father refused her a shelter, and she was forced to drink the taugena water, which resulted in her death. Others were beaten and sold into slavery for reading the Bible.

The queen, increasing in ferocity, ordered the soldiers to bind the Christians hand and foot and cast them into a pit, to pour boiling water upon them till they died, and to then fill up the pit. In May, 1840, sixteen native Christians tried to escape, but they were recaptured. Eleven of them were executed (two had escaped). Being too weak to walk, they were tied to poles and carried. "Serenity and joy were on all their countenances," and they gave a brave testimony followed by prayer, during which they were quickly speared.

In 1843, one of their best friends died—Rev David Johns, who had laboured for about eighteen years as preacher, pastor, hymn writer and translator of the Pilgrim's Progress, helping some to escape and cheering the poor tried hearts. During the persecution, which lasted from 1836 to 1843, the hearts of believers were wonderfully and graciously sustained, and there were many secret conversions. Faith and love were being rooted as they could not have been under outward prosperity. From 1843 to 1849 there was a lull, the Government being engaged in serious disputes with France and England, which gave the Christians a welcome respite.

"The word of the Lord was precious in those days," and many gathered in little groups secretly to read over its blessed promises