

custom of each sovereign erecting a stately building at the beginning of the reign, Ranavalona II. erected a church in the court of the palace for the royal use; which still stands, a beautiful house of prayer.

The queen had all the idols in the land belonging to the crown destroyed, and many followed her example. Meeting the desire of the people for instruction, the prime minister and the missionaries selected one hundred and twenty-six native Christians and sent them to teach and preach. Many reforms were made in her fifteen-year reign. Schools of all grades were opened and compulsory education carried out; churches were built, sometimes at the royal expense; trial by jury was instituted and police appointed. Slavery was prohibited, and when her edicts were evaded she and her husband sacrificed their private fortune and liberated all the slaves in the island, numbering 150,000.

Imperious and unjust demands from the French met with a dignified refusal; and then, going apart, the queen, like Hezekiah, laid the letters before God, calling on Him for help. Appeals to other nations met with no response. Then, assembling the people, she declared she must defend the land, and called on them to trust in God and prepare to fight and, if need be, die for the country. One hundred thousand volunteered.

The French, without any formal declaration of war, invaded the land, and at once the queen gave notice to all of that nationality and Jesuit priests to leave. Fever and the immorality of the troops made the death-rate forty per cent., and they never ventured beyond the range of their own guns unless to meet with quick repulse. For four years the Malagasy conducted the war with great prudence and some success, while there was no sign of moral deterioration.

During this conflict the good queen sickened, and died on the 13th July, 1883, after summoning her husband and niece, who was to succeed her, and charging them to encourage religion, and lead the kingdom still to rest upon God in whom she trusted, and that the French were never to have one foot of the land. During her whole reign she had been a high-minded Christian, spending two or three hours daily in the study of the Bible and prayer.

The niece, as Ranavalona III., ascended the throne at twenty years of age, well educated at the Friends' school and the London Missionary Society high-school, a thorough Christian. She immediately incited the people to continued trust in God and loyal defence of their country. They generally "gave themselves to prayer," and seemed to grow more robust as they