

teachers and older scholars were drafted into the army, and matters began to look very gloomy and discouraging. Just at this time, however, a French fleet made several attacks upon the fortified ports of the island, and the queen, from policy, was willing to give temporary encouragement to the missionaries, hoping for British support. In 1830 the whole of the New Testament in Malagasy was published, and in 1831, the first Sabbath after the queen's permission to baptize was received, twenty persons professed their faith in Christ, being the first-fruits of Madagascar to the Lord. The number of the faithful increased, and, the fear of the French being removed, the queen began to show her hatred of Christianity by causing the impeachment of disciples high in rank, on a charge of witchcraft. Edicts were issued commanding christians to abstain from the communion, and several of the missionaries were ordered to leave the country. Unhappily, at this time a false prophet, a mad enthusiast, mingling in his creed the doctrines of the Bible with much of paganism, sent a message to the queen, requesting an interview. He was honored with the interview, which cost him his life. Then the spirit of persecution, excited by the execution of this deluded man, began more thoroughly to manifest itself, and on the first of March, 1835, in the presence of fifteen thousand troops and one hundred thousand spectators, amid the booming of cannon and the rattle of musketry, queen Ranavalona published her proclamation against the Christian religion. It was not till July, 1836, that the last of the missionaries left, although for some time their labours had been restricted to the completion of the Malagasy Dictionary and the translation of the Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress. The sufferings of the Christians now began in earnest, and with their increase the progress of the Church kept pace. Imprisonment, slavery, stripes, degradation, had fallen to the lot of many, but it was not till August of 1837 that Rasalama, the first martyr of Madagascar, sealed her testimony with her blood. Some who were to have shared the same fate made their escape, and, after long wanderings, reached Mauritius in October, 1838.

The queen, weary of the slow process of trial and conviction, gave commissions to her officers, similar to those carried by the moss troopers of Scotland in the days of the Covenant, and the dragoons of France in the time of the Camisards, authorizing them to put all Christians to death by hurling their head foremost into a pit, and pouring boiling water upon them till they ceased to live. In addition to this characteristic mode of punishment, many were burned, and others cast over precipices upon sharp rocks that lay below. Mr. Johns paid occasional visits to the west coast of the island in order to help fugitives, and to advance the cause of the Gospel there, and, while engaged in this work, died in 1843. The Christians, left entirely without European teachers, still kept up their Sabbath services in many places, and in the capital a little band of sixty-eight members met every month to commemorate the dying love of Christ. During this time the son of the queen, called Radama after his reputed father, had been growing into manhood, and happily falling among Christian companions, who influenced his mind in favour of Christianity, he made use of his influence with his mother to save some of the victims of her savage zeal. Emboldened by accounts received of this young prince's influence, Messrs. Ellis and Cameron in 1853 visited the Island, and, as they bore official messages from England and Mauritius, they were favourably received. Still the persecution continued; and it was with much difficulty that Mr. Ellis was enabled to smuggle fifteen hundred copies of portions of Scripture into the hands of the famishing disciples, hungering for the bread of life.