

RANAVALONA.

Ranavalona was only a black woman born and bred an idolater, queen of a heathen race despised and invalidated by a great Christian nation as a people worth of no respect, possessing no rights. But Ranavalona was every inch a sovereign. Measured by her opportunities, by her steadfast adherence to the right, by what she accomplished for her people and for Christianity and civilization, this black sovereign is worthy to be ranked amongst the good and true of the world's best white queens. Let her name be enrolled with those women of royal position for whom the world has an honorable place in its history.

Ranavalona came the throne of Madagascar in 1868. Her country was just emerging from the most cruel persecution Christians have suffered since the days of Nero. Christianity had been introduced under the reign of Radama, who began the unification of the kingdom. He welcomed the Christian teachers and exhorted his people to receive their instruction. It will help you, he said, it will help the country and it will help Radama. Upon Radama's death in 1828 his senior wife, Ranavalona I, seized the throne, and became the "Bloody Mary" of the Malagasy. A considerable number of converts had been won, and it became Ranavalona's chief object to restore heathenism in its grossest form and destroy utterly the last vestiges of Christianity. Edict after edict went forth against the followers of the missionaries. They were tortured, they were slain with the sword, they were impaled, they were thrown headlong down a precipice, they were burned. They perished by hundreds and thousands, giving as signal proof of their faithfulness as can be

found in Fox's "Book of the Martyrs." After the death of the wicked queen, in 1861, there came a cessation of persecution, and some degree of toleration was enjoyed until the coronation of Ranavalona II. in 1868. She was a worthy daughter of a Jezebel mother. She had espoused the cause if not the faith of the Christians, and was crowned with Christian services by a native minister. Her address on that occasion showed that she had been a close student of the Bible, which had been widely scattered before the persecutions. The next year she was married to her prime minister, and both were publicly baptized.

Ranavalona not only became

the friend and promoter of Christianity; she caused all the state idols, at a suggestion of a public meeting in the capital, to be burned; yet she did not in turn become a persecutor of the heathen. Under her benign rule all her subjects were protected, and civilization advanced with rapid strides. She began at once to lighten the burdens of the people. The oppressive features of the military system were removed; officers were deprived of their feudatory rights; the revenue, or rather the system of public plunder, was reformed; the importation of Mozambique slaves was prohibited; domestic slavery was humanized, the breaking up of families being prohibited; the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors were forbidden; the peaceful arts were fostered, and education was promoted in every

the French Admiral bombarded Tamatave the Queen was urged to expel all his countrymen from her capital. Her reply was:

"We are Christians, and must remember at this trying time that we are so to act as becomes Christians. They gave our friends at Majanga an hour. We will give them five days, and not a hair of their heads, remember, is to be harmed."

When then panic-stricken foreigners left Antananarivo, the natives could not be induced to go with them to Tamatave for fear of being detained as prisoners by the invaders. Under these circumstances the Queen furnished bearers and gave the French safe conduct.

What a contrast is presented by this woman only half a generation removed from heathenism and the representatives of the

her mother's plate, or a cluster of roses and geranium leaves to take to her teacher as a gift.

"I have been to see Jessie Hunter," said sister Nell one night. "I think I never felt so sorry for any child as I do for her."

"What has happened? Are the Hunters in any greater trouble than usual?" asked mamma. Everybody knew that Mr. Hunter drank, and Mrs. Hunter was cross, and the children often went hungry.

Sister Nell went on. Jessie fell through a hole in the floor at the mill yesterday, and has hurt her back. The doctor says it is not likely she will ever be able to walk again."

Molly's brown eyes opened wide with horror, and then filled with tears. Poor, poor Jessie!

A day or two afterwards mamma asked her to carry a little basket of dainties to Mrs. Hunter's. There was a cup of custard, a glass of amber jelly, and a loaf of bread. Robbie brought a half-dozen eggs, laid by his hens, and Nell slipped over everything a double napkin, inside of which was a beautiful Scripture card with a lovely picture and a lovelier text.

"I wish I had something of my very own to give Jessie," said Molly to herself, "but I haven't a thing. Not even a bud is out on my rosebush."

So away she tripped. The basket was a little bit heavy, but that she did not mind. Her feet were light, her hands were strong, and her cheeks were as red as health could make a girl's cheeks.

When she came to Jessie's house, and went into the little crowded room, at one side of which was Jessie's bed she felt, as she said next day, "just dreadfully." To see Jessie lying there so white and thin and still,

not able to turn, and not able to lift her head from the pillow, a cripple for life! Molly left the nice things she had brought, and went soberly home keeping up a very busy thinking.

Two days later any one entering Jessie's apartment would have seen in the window a certain thrifty rosebush turning its leaves to the sun and holding up two or three buds ready to bloom. The sick girl watched it with delight.

Molly had kissed it and bidden it good-bye, and when it was gone she missed it sadly; yet there was a happy feeling in her heart, for she had done what she could, and she knew she would receive the Master's blessing.—*Ex.*



MARGARET, MOTHER OF MARTIN LUTHER.

possible way.

It is not pretended that all these reforms have been perfectly carried out. The evils of slavery and the rum traffic are still, no doubt, crying evils. Malagasy society, it must be remembered, is still very imperfectly organized; and these are evils which more enlightened nations have found it difficult or impossible to get rid of. But the queen was a wise and liberal ruler, leading before her people a life of blamelessness, of true Christian piety, of devotion to the interests of the kingdom. Her Christian spirit brought shame to the representatives of a nation which has been professedly Christian more centuries than hers has years. When

oldest and best beloved son of the Church directly descended from Christ and the Apostles! Queen Ranavalona II. is dead, and her niece succeeds her. The world can ask nothing better of the new ruler, who is said to be hostile to the French pretensions, than that she may be a worthy successor of Queen Ranavalona II.—*Independ.*

MOLLY'S WHITE ROSE.

Molly Nelson had a white rosebush which was the pride of her heart. Never was there a bush which was more dearly loved nor more constantly cared for; and happy was little Molly when she had a bud from it to lay beside