

were destroyed by the Queen's order, and Madagascar to-day, in its government and in the purpose of its people, is a Christian kingdom, with over four thousand native preachers, and nearly a quarter of a million souls under Christian instruction. — *Mission Stories of Many Lands.*

## HANGING THE BABY.

BY SOPHIE S. SMITH.

Some of you may think this sounds strange and too wicked to be true, but I do not mean that the baby is hung up with a rope around its neck like a criminal, until it is dead; but that it is placed in a basket which is hung to the branches of a tree, and left there to drive away the evil spirits.

It must remain there three days, and if at the close of that time it is alive, it is taken down, but if it dies, or is killed by the jackals, or some bird of prey, it is all the same; no one cares except the baby's mother, who has a love as great for her baby as any Christian mother feels, but who is so much under the control of her husband, and so afraid of displeasing the God whom she worships, that she hides her feelings and does as she is told, though her heart breaks in doing it.

Now it happens that only the girl babies are hung up, sold, or left to die, as they often are in India and China, where girls are of no account to their fathers, and where only the boys are welcomed and tenderly cared for. These ignorant people believe that if sickness or trouble comes upon them their god is angry with them, and they take him presents of money and food to appease his anger. If the trouble still remains, they then think he wants a greater offering, and will only be satisfied with a child.

I read of a little girl baby who was thus offered to the god, but was rescued just in time to save its life. It was in India, and the baby fell sick. The mother took offerings to the idols, but nothing seemed to do any good. After a while, the little boy grew thin and pale, and the mother said the

baby must be carried to the temple and hung up to drive the evil spirits away.

The mother clasped the poor baby to her breast and begged her husband to wait a little longer.

"No not a day longer," he sternly answered. "Agenar is angry with us and his anger must be appeased. He is already showing his anger on my boy, and he shall not be injured for a girl. To-morrow at sunrise have everything ready."

The poor mother sat down and cried as if her heart would break, but she must obey her husband, and so the next morning the family started for the temple, carrying the baby in a basket, and some food and money for Agenar, the god of demons.

When they reached the temple a priest took the baby and said some words over it, and then tied it to a branch of a tree that was supposed to be inhabited by evil spirits. Then they all left it and went to their home. The poor mother was allowed to take it food, but she dare not stay there to watch or protect it in any way. But the baby had a little sister named Bazu, who did not know it was wrong to watch it. She stole out of the house and took her stand where she could see all that happened.

For two days all went well, but on the third day, baby grew restless and tossed about so hard that it fell from its basket. Poor Bazu was frightened. What should she do. She was afraid to touch it because the god would be angry, and yet there was a jackal running for it as fast as he could. Just then a gentleman came hurrying up, drove away the jackal and picked the baby up.

"That's my little sister," said Bazu.

"Show me where you live and I will take it home," said the stranger.

He carried the baby back and soon it was in its mother's arms. He told her if the baby was taken back to the tree, he would send an English officer to arrest her husband. So the baby was saved and there were happy hearts in that home that night.