

missionaries in China, exhibit a remarkable diversity from those which come from other heathen lands. The minds of the Chinese are not pre-occupied by any system of false religion: there is a great readiness and clearness in their apprehension of the doctrines and precepts of Christianity; the practical result between the love of the world and the Gospel in China approaches more nearly to that of a minister at home, among nominal Christians, than to that of missionary labors among the heathens. The leading feature of the work at present, is 'the oppression of China for the reception of the Gospel.' *Windsor: The missionaries of the London Society write, "To us it seems almost incredible how true, the statement of which, in one or two other lands, has produced such an early and prosperous result, should here be greeted with earnestness and affection for so long a time in vain. One obstacle is doubtless the aversion to foreigners, which they have been taught from their earliest infancy to cherish; added to the recent humiliation which their proud government has experienced in being obliged to allow the entrance of foreigners into the few ports. This, combined with the uneasy state of feeling produced by the recent refusal to open the gates of Canton, and the apprehension that it may lead to some retaliation on the part of the British government, has induced many, doubtless, to keep aloof from us for the present." An American missionary, writing in July, refers to this feeling of prejudice and mortification on the part of the Chinese, as being the new enemy of the Gospel, which is not to be despised; and that his father's remains are refused a place in the hall and tomb of the monarchs of his dynasty, because he remembered the empire by calling Hong Kong to the British.*

SWEDISH LAPLAND.

Although this district lies within the pale of Christendom, yet the poor wretched population have been long in a condition not much elevated above heathenism. An increased interest in their religious improvement has of late sprung up among Swedish Christians, and been honoured with some measure of success. As they come down towards the seasons when winter begins, and again, at the return of summer, spread themselves over large mountain tracts in the interior, the difficulty is great in doing anything effectual towards communicating evangelical instruction to them. Their district of country is divided into sixteen parishes. And, as school instruction appears to be the most efficient means of conveying a knowledge of Christianity to the children, and through them to the adults, schools have been established,—eight in number; three of them supported by Government, and five by the Swedish Missionary Society. Yet so scattered is the population, that not more than 100 children can be got to these schools. The condition in which the Lapland families are found is very degraded. In character, they are rude, shy, ignorant, and superstitious. The children, on entering the school, may have known that there is a God, but they have no knowledge whatever of a Saviour. Among the Laplanders, as everywhere else, strong drink has been the bane of all success; the Laplander's Juggernaut, crushing beneath it his property, comfort, and moral existence. A considerable moral and religious awakening took place, about two years ago, among them; which resulted in the spiritual enlightenment of a godly number, who now constitute a centre of truly God-fearing persons in these parts.—Since the formation of the Swedish Missionary Society in 1835, more than a thousand children have, in the Society's schools, been instructed in the Word of God, and the doctrine of the Christian faith; and their influence is already showing itself in the improved condition of the Lapland families. On approaching the Laplander's hut, instead of being saluted by the yelling of dogs, and the shouting of human voices, intermingled with cursing and cursing, you are often greeted by the music of spiritual songs sung with melody in the heart, and great earnestness of voice. Now, the missionary, instead of addressing the inmates as a few lifeless statues, is cheered and encouraged by the earnestness and warmth of their devotion. The hut of the Laplander, instead of presenting, as formerly, a disgusting scene of filth and indolence, now shows, in those families of which the children have been educated, an inviting spectacle of order and comfort. Nor is it uncommon to meet there with religious pamphlets and journals. From one school there were, during the past year, spread in all directions upwards of two thousand journals and tracts; besides a considerable number of large Christian books sold at the school. Extensive evangelical itineraries are also kept up.

MADAGASCAR

Continued shut. Not only is the Christian missionary excluded, but all intercourse with foreigners is strictly prohibited. It is rarely, therefore, that any communication can be held with the interior, even by letter. But the law itself, which bears the marks of authority, is most deeply a fiction. About twelve hundred were supposed to be capital, in answer for the offence of worshipping the only true God, and believing on his Son. Four of the most distinguished for rank and devotedness were sentenced to be burned to death; and their lingering tortures must have been awfully aggravated, as, three times, while their bodies were consuming, torrents of rain descended and extinguished the fire. Fourteen others were thrown from a rocky eminence near the city, and dashed to pieces. A

letter dated Mahilla, August 29, 1850, signed by two Christians from Madagascar, and addressed to the Andrew Steedman, at present in England, has given the following details:—

"Believers and unbelievers in Madagascar are still laboring under great sufferings, arising from the vindictive spirit of Ranimanika (the Queen's prime minister). A few of them have reached Mahilla; they are those who were captured in approaching the Sacka'ava at Ambohona (a large village on the western side of Madagascar), and were sold as slaves to the Arabs who brought them here. They have since been assumed by the sovereign of this place. It is now four months since they fled. The following is the latest news brought by them from Madagascar:—

"Rakotosahema (young prince heir to the throne), had ordered his male followers to go in search of the Ampanimany (converts and malefactors.) Rakotosahema, one of the lower class, having discovered, was beaten by Ramaka, which raised in him a spirit of revenge, in consequence of which he seized an opportunity, when Ramaka and his friends were worshipping in a remote place, to inform against them, and they were all detected in the very act of praying in the house they had erected for that purpose. The crowd that accompanied the Tsingahia (constable) the high priest, being the great number of Christians, were seized with surprise, as, in this meeting they were 2000. The constable then set to work in seeking for the ringleaders and builders of the chapel, and also to trace out those who had already been warned by the sovereign against embracing the Gospel, from those who had lately become converts. Their traitor son caused, in the presence of the whole population assembled for that purpose, Ramaka to explain the plot, and he was encouraged by the young prince, his cousin, to refuse the oath in these words:—"Do not accuse yourself, or repent, or take the oath, for he that will put an end to your life, will put an end to mine also." Therefore, when called upon, he refused, which brought the whole of his relatives (which are also those of the Queen) around him, to entreat him to obey. But all was vain, till he still persisted in his refusal. They then retired and told the sovereign he had complied by swearing, in the strongest terms, that he would never again pray. However, he was reduced to the rank of a private soldier.

"Four tribes, who were Christians were burned to death.—Andrianjambao, of Tanjoanika; Ramitaka, the nephew of Andrianjambao; Andrianjambao, and his wife. Fourteen were killed by being thrown into a fearful precipice called Ampanimany; a great number being severely bound wristed down the precipice a certain distance, to frighten them, so as to induce them to take the oath, and all who did so, were saved, but those who persisted were dashed to pieces. Ranimanika astonished the spectators; on being placed at the edge of the precipice, he entreated a little time to pray, 'as on that account,' said he, 'I am to be killed.' It being granted, he prayed most fervently; after which he addressed his execrations, and spoke in the strongest terms:—"My body," said he, "you will cast down this precipice, but say not you cannot, as it will go up to heaven to God. Therefore it is gratifying to me to die in the service of my Maker." Thus are the servants of the Lord destroyed.

"What would have been the doom of the multitude of slaves determined, had not the Prince of Madagascar, at the risk of his personal safety, now interposed as the protector and patron of the Christians, and boldly withstood the authority of their cruel adversary, the prime minister of his Royal Mother. Subsequent results are unknown; but while these tragical events must excite our deepest sympathy, and fervent prayers for the comfort and martyrdom of Madagascar, the happy also reflection that strengthen faith and demand faithfulness.—Upwards of fourteen years since, all the faithful shepherds were driven from the island, and the fold of Christ was left like lambs among wolves; but after enduring fourteen years of fiery trials, still they live and still increase. Between forty and fifty have been doomed, for the sake of Jesus, to meet death, in forms the most agonizing and terrific; but such a number have been redeemed— all have been faithful even to death. The blood of the martyrs has proved the seed of the Church; and for one Christian there are ten, and for ten there are hundreds."

THE METHODIST DISSENTION.—The London Patriot states that "the returns of 19 out of the 32 Wesleyan districts into which the kingdom is divided, exhibit a decrease, as compared with those of 1850, of 34,000 members. The probability, therefore, is, that the decrease throughout the Connexion will not be less than 50,000. It appears that the dominant party show neither surprise nor regret at this startling result of their arbitrary proceedings. One of the mildest of them is reported to have said that they are quite prepared for the loss of a hundred thousand members, although, according to calculation, the stated contributions of that number should be equivalent to the maintenance of not fewer than three hundred travelling preachers. Dr. Bunton himself is represented as having avowed before the London Meeting, that he was "prepared at whatever sacrifice, in point of numbers, to maintain the great doctrinal principles of the Methodist constitution;" in other words, to withstand the smallest concession to popular demands. As one indication that this defiance is deliberate, it may be mentioned that Dr. Beaumont, who, instead of going to either extreme, has done his utmost to mediate between parties, and restore peace, has been rewarded by the adoption of a resolution commending to the Conference that he be degraded from the rank of a Superintendent, and be declared unfit to hold office among his brethren."