

holding any meetings or societies which should be attended by them; they might teach sciences, or the mechanic arts, but not religion, and all churches must be closed. Most of the missionaries left the island in 1833. In 1834 another decree was promulgated forbidding any meeting public or private of the people to talk of religion, under penalty of arrest, and if found guilty, of punishment by death. Under this decree many Christians were banished and a few put to death.

In 1835 a fanatic, who had mingled some Christian doctrine with his prayers to his idols, and had approached the queen's palace to address her in regard to his creed, was seized and put to death, and the rage of the queen being roused by this incident, she issued a decree that all persons suspected of being Christians should be arrested and examined, and if they did not disavow their belief in Christ and offer worship to the idols, they should be put to death. Nobly did the Christians stand this test. Some fled, but very few would deny Christ. Some were beheaded, others beaten to death, others still, and a large number, were hurled from the lofty rock on which the City of Antananarivo, the capitol, is built, and fell mangled corpses at its base.

The present Prime Minister of Madagascar relates an incident in connection with this slaughter, of which his father, one of the judges, was a witness: A mother and daughter were brought for examination; the mother confessed her faith in Christ, refused to worship the idols, and was summarily thrown over the rock; then the daughter, a beautiful girl of fifteen, came forward and said: "I, too, am a Christian; throw me over." The judge said, "She is only a child, and does not know what she is saying; take her away." But the young girl was firm. "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," she said, "and I will not worship idols. Throw me over!" Once more the judge tried to save her. "My child," he said, "life is sweet to you. Only bow your head ever so slightly toward the idol, and you shall be free. I will take you to my own home." "No!" said the young maiden, "I will bow to no God but Jesus Christ. He is my Saviour. Throw me over." And throw her over, they did. More than two thousand were put to death at this time (1849) by this cruel queen, because they would not deny Christ, and several thousand more in the course of her reign; others were subjected to torture, and many more to the ordeal by drinking the *tangena*, a poison prepared to try the guilt or innocence of suspected persons. But it was not alone against the Christian subjects of this bloody queen that her malignant and murderous temper was manifested. On various pretenses, the most common one being that they were conspiring against her, she put to death most of the principal men in her realm; and when her son, whom she claimed as the son of Radama, though born about a year after his death, had arrived at his eighteenth or nineteenth year, and had shown a disposition to be more merciful than his mother, and to pity the Christians whom she persisted in slaughtering, she tried to put him to death for conspiring against her. She was, during most of her reign, constantly engaged in wars with the other tribes on the island; and as her armies were badly handled, and her treacherous management was notorious, she almost depopulated whole provinces of Imerina and the adjacent country. It was estimated that more than a million men, women, and children perished in her wars. The French made repeated attempts to establish settlements on the coast, but were repulsed either by her ambushes or by the deadly fevers of the coast. At length her own people grew tired of her oppression, and would have dethroned her had not sickness attacked her hitherto robust frame, and weakened her imperious will. She lingered for some