

and will be opened with a sermon by the retiring Moderator, the Rev. George Cheyne.

Certified rolls of Presbyteries and papers for transmission to Synod, should be sent to the Synod Clerk, eight days before the meeting of Synod.

The Treasurer will be present at this meeting to receive congregational payments to the Synod fund.

WILLIAM COCHRANE.

*Synod Clerk.*

### REVIEW.—THE MARTYR CHURCH OF MADAGASCAR.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM ELLIS, OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

In this book, the veteran missionary of Polynesia has furnished what has long been desired by the Christian Church, a complete and readable account of the progress of Christianity among the people of Madagascar.

Madagascar is one of the largest islands in the world, being 900 miles long, and 300 broad, or about two and a half times the size of Great Britain. It is separated from the African continent by the Mozambique Channel, which is about 260 miles in breadth, and 480 miles to the east of it lies the Island of Mauritius. Its population, which is between three and four millions, is of the most varied character, embracing tribes that show African Negro, Moorish Arabian and Polynesian Malay affinities. The original stock seems to have been one called Vazimba. The Sakalavas, now confined to the Southwest, exercised supremacy over the greater part of the island till the commencement of the present century, when the Hovas, a Malay tribe, assumed dominion, which they are likely to keep. Although Marco Polo discovered this island in the 13th century, it was, up to the present century, only visited by Europeans engaged in the slave trade, coming from Mauritius and the neighbouring islands.

In 1816, however, an embassy from Britain reached the shores of Madagascar, and was kindly welcomed by Radama the First, the great Hova conquerer. In the following year a treaty was made, abolishing the slave trade. Radama was a shrewd, intelligent king. He perceived the advantages that would accrue to his race from an alliance with a great European power, and the influence which the adoption of the arts, customs, and above all the military weapons and tactics of civilized nations, would give him over the other princes of Madagascar. He sent many of the Hova youth to England to be educated, and welcomed mechanics and artificers to his dominions. The Malagasy had already made considerable progress in certain arts. Although the majority of the people were agriculturists and herdsmen, they had also among them manufacturers of silk and cotton stuffs, and had successfully worked their rich iron mines.

To turn to matters of religion. The Hovas were an intelligent but most depraved race. Humanity, purity, honesty and truth were almost unknown among them. The slave trade had aggravated their naturally bad character, and the system of slavery that universally prevailed made slaves of all free men in placing them above the necessity of manual labor. They were, however, a religious people in a sense, had the name of God frequently upon their lips like the Mohammedan, and were very superstitious. They worshipped the spirits of their dead ancestors, and, like the ancient Greeks, made representations of them, to which they offered presents and sacrifices. Divination and the ordeal of the tangena were frequently resorted to.