

with four skilled workmen, when a third school was opened. The missionaries, while learning the names of objects, performed the difficult task of learning, constructing and teaching the language at the same time. In two years they fixed the alphabet, which still continues to be used. Next year an adult school was established in the courtyard of the palace, which was attended by 300 officers and their wives. After a time schools had increased to the number of thirty-two, attended by 4,000 young people.

New recruits were soon added to the list of worthies devoted to the salvation of Madagascar. In 1826, a great impetus was given by the introduction of a printing press, and six young men were set apart to learn its use, but the printer was seized with fever and died two days after his arrival. Others, however, attempted to use it, and with such success that on January 1st, 1828, the first sheet of St. Luke's Gospel was printed.

Now came the first evidences of desire to confess Christ, bringing great joy to those who had so faithfully laboured. It was thought wise that the rite of baptism should be explained to King Radama by Mr. Jones, and permission was obtained for any to be baptized or married.

The health of the King began to decline, and through fever, aggravated by intemperance, his death occurred at the early age of thirty-six years. His reign was unequalled in many respects, in the improvement of the people and the country, most of the tribes being united in one, in alliances with western people, in commerce and civilization. The slave trade had been suppressed, education developed, industries and arts introduced, language reduced to writing, witchcraft and idolatry thrown off and the Gospel proclaimed and received by many.

Radama left no son, but adopted as his successor Rakatobe, an amiable, intelligent young man, the first scholar to enter the mission school eight years previous, and who, there was good reason to think, had been converted to God. While his friends were delaying to mature their plans, a plot was arranged by Ranavalona, one of Radama's wives, a bold, ambitious woman, who had Prince Rakatobe seized and taken out some distance to the brink of a newly opened grave. After a few moments' respite, reluctantly granted, which he spent in earnest prayer, he was heartlessly speared and buried.

All the relatives of Radama were put to death; the troops were pledged to the service of this wicked woman, who closed the schools and drafted 700 teachers and scholars into the army. She was crowned holding the old national idols in her hand and professing her faith in them.