

Bibles amid the wild tempest of cruelty. That this mere handful should have increased twenty fold is surely a grand proof of the working of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Ellis says, "I often felt a solemn awe come over me when conversing with them, the Spirit of God seemed so evidently present working in them."

(2) The wisdom of the founders in teaching the people to read was proved by the persecution. Its bitterness scattered readers with their Bibles like seed over a field which at the same time was being prepared for its reception.

(3) The spirit shewn by the christians toward their persecutors was truly admirable. It was a signal triumph of the gospel, for the Malagasy are by nature revengeful and unsparingly cruel.

III. *Progress.*

From the death of Ranavalona to the present time, the history of christianity in Madagascar has been one of steady progress.

The new king at once set free those who were in chains, and brought back the feeble and emaciated christians, whom all supposed had long since perished.

The opening of this reign was bright with promise, for it was commonly belived that the king was a christian. But soon dissipated companions led him on so far that the people in indignation dethroned him, and set up Rasohernia as queen. At this coronation the throne was surrounded by some constitutional safeguards, chief among which was the preservation of religious freedom for all classes.

During the five years of this reign, the mission made steady progress. Finding neither hindrance nor help in the government, it enjoyed a quiet time of *real* growth. The district around the capital was organized, classes were begun to prepare a future ministry, a monthly missionary meeting—a genuine missionary meeting with an attendance of above 3,000—was commenced. The regular services were crowded, and interest was intense.

On the death of the queen, Ranavalona II. ascended the throne. Almost her first act was to inform the missionaries that their privileges would be preserved. She enjoined the observation of the sabbath. She had a missionary conduct worship in the palace. At her coronation, the queen openly recognized christianity. On the canopy covering the platform, such texts as "Glory be to God," "Good will among men," were written in letters of shining gold. The crown and the bible were placed side by side. Such unqualified recognition of christianity by a popular sovereign, at a time, too, when there was a general movement in its favor, produced a profound impression on the public mind.

The missionaries felt the danger that now threatened them, from the very popularity of their cause. They earnestly prayed that prosperity and patronage might not imperil the highest interests of the mission, while persecution had signally failed. They, therefore, exercised all the greater watchfulness over their charges, and trained more carefully all applicants for admission.

As an evidence of the growth of the mission at this time, think of two facts. One hundred congregations were looking to the missionaries for help to build churches. The missionaries on their first visit to the Betsileo tribe to the south, found already churches built, congregations gathered, meetings regularly held for worship, and everywhere the cry for instruction in divine truth.

The queen continued to favor the mission. At the national festival, formerly connected with idolatrous ceremonies, she said, in addressing the people,