

some European power, and thus obtain for his people a written language, and, what he valued still more, arms and instruction for his army in military matters, that he might be more successful in his schemes of conquest. Through the influence of the British Resident, Mr. Hastie, he was induced to permit the London Missionary Society to establish schools and churches there; to reduce the language to writing, and to translate the Scriptures and other books into the Malagasy tongue; and to prohibit the foreign slave trade. He kept his promises to the English Government; but for himself, he was an uncultured barbarian and savage; his wars were marked by constant rapine and license; his government was stern and often cruel, and his private life stained by lust and polygamy. The idol worship, a sort of fetichism, was maintained throughout his reign, the idol-keepers received their offerings, and the worship of ancestors was as active as ever. Yet it may be said to his credit, that he did not suffer the missionaries to be molested in their work during his life.

These missionaries of the London Missionary Society left England early in 1818, and commenced their work in Madagascar at once. There was much preliminary work to be done; the language was to be reduced to writing, and thoroughly mastered, school-houses and churches built, the desire for education awakened, and even the first elements of the knowledge of God, as a supreme Governor and Ruler of the universe, introduced into these darkened minds; then they were to be taught the guilt and destructiveness of sin, and the need of a Redeemer, and made to comprehend that Jesus had come to be their Saviour. The work was great, and the opposition of the idol-keepers was intense and malignant, but in a wonderfully short time they began to see the fruits of their labors. The Spirit of God illumined these dark hearts, and they crowded to the mission-houses to hear the Word of God, and soon a Pentecostal season was presented to the eyes of the astonished missionaries. In 1828, ten years after they left England, the Scriptures of the New Testament were translated into this soft and beautiful tongue, hymns of faith and hope, such as had cheered the saints of God in other lands, were translated, set to music and sung; 100 schools had been established and 10,000 children were under instruction; 15,000 of the people were hopefully converted and between 7,000 and 8,000 had professed their faith in the churches; already some of the most promising converts had begun to preach the gospel they had so lately received, and as the Malagasy are "a nation of orators," their preaching was attended with great and precious results. The churches, "walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were greatly enlarged and multiplied." But the time was soon coming, when the genuineness of this work was to be tested by the fires of persecution.

On the 27th of July, 1828, Radama I. died at the age of thirty-six. His successor should have been, according to Oriental custom, his nephew, the son of his sister, a very worthy young man, but Radama's second wife (he had twelve), a bigoted idol worshiper, and a woman who rivaled in her crimes Catharine II. of Russia, though she did not possess her intellectual or political ability, aided by some of the idol-keepers, intrigued for, and obtained the throne. No sooner was she fairly established, than she put to death every near relative of the late king, and every prominent noble who had favored Rakoto, the legitimate heir to the throne. She was crowned in 1829 as Ranavalona I. She soon issued a decree forbidding any foreigners, especially Europeans, from coming into her dominions: and soon after another, prohibiting the missionaries from teaching religion to the Malagasy, or