

When he had done this, he was forced to drink a poisonous draught made from the juice of the nut of the plant called Tangena, and which was intended to act like an emetic. If the draught made him sick, as it likely would, and he threw the pieces of skin, they declared him innocent; but if the skin remained in his stomach, they declared him guilty, and at once gave him up to be punished as the law, or the will of the sovereign might require. Sometimes he was at once knocked down with a club and killed; at other times he was run through with a spear; at others scalded to death, or sometimes crucified; and at others, sold into perpetual slavery to some distant part of the country.

Sometimes this ordeal is administered in a very wholesale manner. On one occasion, eighty men came to the capital to take the oath of allegiance, from a distant part of the island.— They were detained by order of the queen's government at a village in the neighborhood. The lightning that year had been very terrific, and done much mischief, and the superstitious Malagasy could think of no cause for it but the sorceries, as they supposed, of these eighty men, and viewed it as a scheme of theirs against the queen and her people.— So they were kept in the village till the Tangena should be tried upon them: It was vain for them to declare they were innocent, and that they knew nothing of the cause of the lightning, and had had no hand in it. Soldiers were sent to the village, and they were all compelled to drink the abominable draught. About forty of them threw up the pieces of skins, but the others not doing it, were at once considered guilty, and ordered to be put to death for having "sent the thunderbolt to destroy the queen's people." They were all at once hurried into an under-ground granary or rice pit, where they were shut up, and then boiling water poured upon them

till they were scalded or drowned to death. The other forty thought they had escaped, but the queen did not feel satisfied that they had been fairly tried, so she had the Tangena applied again, and these, too, were all put to death in like manner; so the whole eighty perished for nothing but a cruel superstition.

This wicked and unjust practice has again and again been put into use with those suspected of or charged with Christianity. On one occasion, some wicked persons accused no fewer than ten thousand people, living in a certain district, of favouring Christianity. Now it so happened, that they were many of them the worst enemies of the Christians, and all of them more or less opposed to it. So, to prove their innocence, and strong in belief of the power of the Tangena, to prove their innocence, they offered at once to take it if the queen desired. It was accordingly administered, and it is said that about three thousand died in consequence.

We trust now that the young Christian prince has got the power, so horrible a practice will be laid aside, and that one of the first triumphs of Christianity there again will be to give the people a system of laws and form of government which shall be distinguished by good sense, justice, and mercy.

Let us thank God that we live in a Christian land, and that the holy, loving influence of the Gospel is allowed to prevail over all our laws, and form the ground-work of all our noble institutions.

Heathen Delusion Destroyed.

Our readers know that at those seasons of the year when people can travel safely, many Missionaries in India take long journeys in that country, preaching the Gospel in cities and villages and giving away Christian books to the heathen. In these jour-