

were stoned in one day and others subsequently. Their heads were severed and fixed on poles, but under darkness their friends would come and rescue their remains for Christian burial.

Fifty-seven or more were chained together by the neck and driven to distant parts of the island, where more than half died, after enduring indescribable torture. One set of irons weighed fifty-six pounds. If any chained together died, their comrades had to drag the dead bodies fastened to them until death liberated them also. Some were thrown over the rocks, others were sold into slavery; a few escaped death but had to remain in hiding for years. This awful persecution was the fiercest and the last.

Relief came at last in the death of Ranaivalona, July, 1861, after a reign of thirty-three years, twenty-five of which had been marked by her cruelty to the Christians, making her the "Bloody Mary" of modern days.

Prince Rakatoud was proclaimed king under the title of Radama II. The joy of the people was very great, especially that of the Christians, whose feelings found utterance in the words of the Psalmist, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like those that

dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing."

On the day of his accession, Radama proclaimed perfect religious freedom to all. Great rejoicing followed. Banished ones were reunited to their families and confiscated property was restored to its rightful owners.

Although the young king had never confessed himself a Christian, yet he had no faith in idols and banished them from the



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