



### Taking the Tangena.

"The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."—So says the Bible, and so, at every time when we come to examine them, do we find it to be true. You see it in the religions of these places,—they are systems of monstrous cruelty, with cruel ceremonies, cruel superstitions, and cruel sacrifices. You see it in their laws and government,—all full of oppression, tyranny, and injustice. You see it in their customs,—so cruel that the heart sickens as it reads about them, and finds that heathenism tramples on every right and loving feeling, and often turns fathers and mothers into terrible monsters of cruelty.

I have often told you of their rites and customs, and you will readily find many proofs of what I have just been saying in what you know of them.—I am going to tell you to-day of a cruel custom that prevailed in Madagascar before Christianity was introduced, and has since been practised by the wicked queen. It is that of the ordeal of the Tangena.

In our country, when any person is accused of a crime against our laws, a

number of his countrymen are called together, and form what is called a jury. These are assembled in an open court, before a proper judge, and in the presence of as many of the public as may be able to get in.—Various witnesses are examined both for and against the prisoner, and often many hours and days spent patiently by the judge and jury in trying to find out whether the man is guilty or not. If it cannot be proved to the satisfaction of the jury that he is guilty, they say so, and he is set at liberty. But if it is so proved, then he is condemned to bear the punishment he deserves. It is not, however, so done in heathen lands, and it was not so done in Madagascar before Christianity went there. But this is the way that it was done. If anybody was suspected of a crime, whatever it might be—perhaps witchcraft, or stealing, or rebellion—he was taken up and forced to pass through what was called the ordeal of the Tangena, and which consisted of these things: the man was made to eat a large quantity of rice, and three pieces of the skin of a fowl killed for the purpose.—