

Being, but they addressed to Him no worship or adoration. The worship of ancestors, though common, was not universal; but they had rude idols and fetiches as foolish and absurd as those of the African races; sticks, stones, roots, and forms of animals. There was not a temple or idol house in all Madagascar, but there were idol-keepers, akin to the African medicine men. They had an ordeal for detecting crime, called *tangena*—the decoction of a poisonous bean, indigenous to the island, which the accused was compelled to drink. Such were the people to whom the gospel was to come, to heal, to purify, to elevate, to educate, and to redeem.

*History before 1820.* Though discovered in mediæval times, Madagascar was not explored, or any colony landed upon its shores, till 1506, when the Portuguese began a series of efforts to enslave and Christianize its tribes. The Portuguese Jesuit priests landed on the northeast and northwest coasts, bearing the crucifix, and attempting to convert them, while right behind them came the Portuguese slave trader, with his coffles and fetters, ready to hurry all the unarmed natives he could find on board his ships, and sell them to the Arabs, or take them to the European markets, where they brought a good price. The Sakalava, who were the tribes most usually encountered, did not admire this method of conversion, and after a month or two they fell upon the colonists and massacred them all. This was repeated so many times, that the Portuguese finally abandoned all further efforts to plant colonies there. In 1642 the French undertook, under a grant from the French king, to colonize Madagascar very much after the Portuguese fashion. At first they were more successful, but presently they, too, attempted to enslave the natives, and after forty years of successive efforts to establish themselves at various points on the coast, which in every case terminated in massacre and expulsion, they surrendered their charter to the King of France from whom they had received it, and abandoned the island. For nearly fifty years (1686-1733), the French did not annoy the natives, though occasionally English and Dutch slavers picked up along the coast cargoes of slaves. In 1733, the French renewed their efforts to take possession of the island, planting their trading forts at various points on the main island, and on one or two of the small islands adjacent, and with much the same results as before, the deadly fevers of the coast aiding in the destruction of the colonies. From 1786 to 1807, the French had no settlement on the island, but about that time they established a small colony and trading fort at Nosy-be, an island near the northwest corner of Madagascar. In 1811 the English Government having captured *Mauritius*, the Isle of France, as the French had called it, claimed also its dependencies, of which Madagascar was the chief, and in February of that year took possession of Tamatave and Foule Point, two small trading forts, these being all which the French then claimed on the island of Madagascar. This capture was ratified by the two treaties with France in 1814 and 1815.

Up to this time neither the French nor any other European nation seem to have had any knowledge of the Hovas or their chief or king; but Captain Le Sage, the British agent or commissioner, who was charged with the establishment of English authority and trade in Madagascar, had discovered that they were a very powerful tribe, and that their King, Radama I., was the thirty-second in the line of the Kings of the Hovas; and he assembled at Port Louis in 1817 four of Radama's representatives (two of them his brothers), one of the nobles of the Betanimèna, the chief of Tamatave, two chiefs of the Bètsimisaraka, and two southern chiefs; he formed with them treaties, offensive and defensive, taking the oath of blood with them, and succeeded