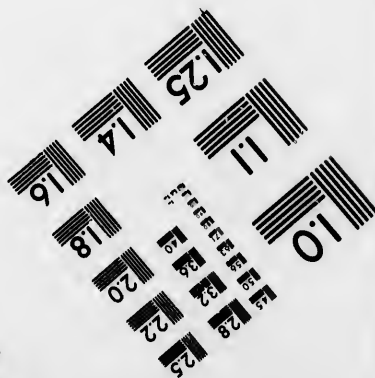
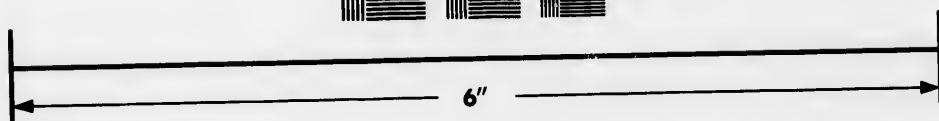
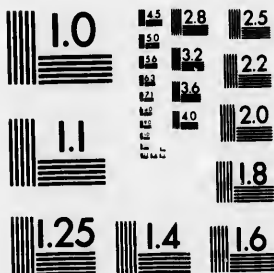


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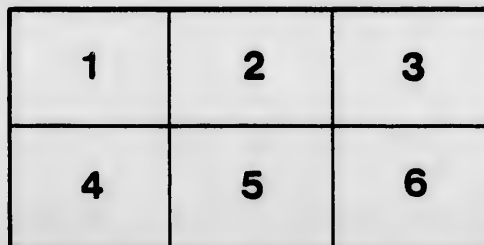
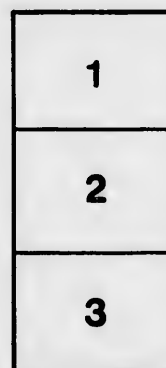
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## PREFACE.

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THE object of this book is twofold: 1st, to give in a concise form the principal facts of Malagasy history, with a brief description of the habits, customs, and natural features of the country; 2d, to direct public attention to, and create an interest in, a small and insular but progressive and worthy people, who are at the present time passing through a great national crisis, which will, however, act, let us hope, only as a stimulus to fresh efforts for self-improvement and judicious domestic reform.

Much of what I have written has been gathered from personal observation during a prolonged residence on the east coast of the island—at the interesting and important town

of Andévoranto—the ancient capital of the once independent and powerful Betsimisaraka tribe.

Much also has been gleaned from the private journals of friends and fellow-travellers. The works of Mr Ellis, Mr J. Sibree, jun., and others, have been frequently consulted; and I hereby acknowledge my obligations to those able and well-informed authorities upon all that relates to Madagascar and the Malagasy.

LONDON, 1884.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FROM LONDON TO TAMATAVE.

IN June 1874, I was commissioned by authority to proceed to the east coast of Madagascar, in connection with work of an educational and industrial character which had been inaugurated amongst the Betsimisaraka tribe by some English societies. I shared at the time the prevailing ignorance of people at home as to the country and its inhabitants, and the island in which I was destined to pass several eventful years of hopeful labour was then a veritable *terra incognita* to me.

I turned at once to the best sources of information then available as to the land and its inhabitants, but on my actual arrival in the island I found that, after all, no pen however brilliant, or pencil however facile, had succeeded in doing

anything like justice to the great natural beauty of the country, or the many peculiar and interesting characteristics of its population. So imperfect was the knowledge of Madagascar even amongst the generally well-informed classes, that, at the time I was preparing to sail, some of my friends were full of commiseration for what they regarded as my unhappy fate in being banished to an inhospitable island in the centre of the ocean, where cannibalism was rampant, and where cold missionary in various forms was the universal article of diet.

One remarked that he had always heard that the Terra del Fuegians, whom he evidently regarded as the near neighbours of the Malagasy, were remarkable for their treachery and ferocity; and with a cruel frankness another friend said his "Farewell," with an expression of his opinion as to the absurdity of any hope on his part of seeing me again.

On a bright June morning, then, I bought my last daily paper—that crowning achievement of our modern civilisation—at London Bridge, and took train for Gravesend, off which port the gallant but somewhat ungraceful and aged ship *Sea Breeze* was lying, awaiting her captain and passengers. Her usual occupation was that of a Mauritius sugar-drover, and her cargo in consequence generally consisted of innumerable

casks of molasses and strong rum. On this occasion she was freighted out with a general cargo, consisting of machinery, Manchester goods, and stores for the English colony at the capital of Madagascar; and amongst the passengers were a bishop and his family, some half-dozen missionaries and school teachers, and other persons, whose homes and avocations were in the far East.

The passage was long—nearly one hundred days—and uneventful.

The usual excitement of the first whale, the first shark, and the incessant exercise of the gentle craft with hook and line over the stern-rail in fine weather, and books, journals, impromptu concerts or entertainments in the saloon in times of storm, or on disagreeable nights, helped to make a very commonplace voyage a little less monotonous. But life on board a sailing-ship after the thirtieth day must be a little wearying; and having crossed the line, and obediently, if not gracefully, submitted to the ancient and somewhat tyrannical and overbearing demands and usages of the court of Neptune, at this particular point of our progress we hailed with delight the offer of our genial captain to give us a day's ramble upon the rocky, and, as we afterwards found, not at all cheerful island of Trinidad, in the South Atlantic. The sensation of feeling



once more the unyielding earth under foot was very pleasing ; and the scrambles over the scoriated and slaggy surface, which resembled a vast red cinder-heap, and had evidently been in the remote past the scene of action of an active volcano, were healthful and enjoyable.

An amusing incident attended the hauling up on deck of our first shark. The brute had been anxiously waited for, and at length secured by a huge bait of salt pork, cunningly disposed upon a fearful-looking three-pronged hook of curious manufacture. We had got him on deck by the aid of "all hands," when by some means, in our anxiety to examine his points more closely, or perhaps through the sudden cessation of tension, the hook released itself from the jaws of the captive, who proceeded to survey the crowd with expressive gestures. He began to show signs of agility and a disposition to act up to his character of an insatiable glutton always in search of prey. There was an expression in his eye, and an ominous click of his jaws, which clearly meant mischief, and his unabashed demeanour under the circumstances was a sight to remember. He was rushing open-mouthed towards the entrance to the companion, in search (with a refinement of taste which was creditable to him) of a bishop, or a naval lieutenant (we had one on board), or a naturalist, or perhaps

only a humble schoolmaster, just as one of our lady passengers put up her head to walk out on deck, entirely unconscious of the proximity of such a visitant. She speedily took in the position and her head, however, and beat a retreat, to the great disappointment doubtless of the wretched shark, who had now complete possession of the poop-deck—crew, officers, and passengers all having shown a remarkable unanimity in their desire to seek other and more remote points of vantage, whence they could witness without danger the eccentricities of their new “find.” The whole scene was, however, brought to a summary close by a daring and reckless seaman, who advanced upon the enemy armed with a wooden handspike. Watching his opportunity, he thrust his extemporised weapon into the open jaws of the creature, and by this simple method destroyed effectually all its powers of doing further injury. Shark cutlets are sometimes belauded, and are even said by some enthusiasts to be preferable to a beef-steak ; but having in a weak moment tasted shark, I prefer beef. One cannot help remarking the odd kind of sentiment which exists in the “foc’sle” and amongst the sailors for anything connected with the shark. The head or jaws are carefully preserved, the backbone is polished and converted into a walking-stick, and the fins have also some peculiar

virtue according to "Jack"-lore, which I fear I have forgotten now.

The exciting rumour on shipboard of the existence of herds of wild pigs upon the island, had induced several of our party to arm themselves with spears and death-dealing rifles; but we found on effecting a landing, which we did after considerable difficulty, that there was nothing more formidable to encounter than a vast flock of stupid-looking gannets and red-pouched and paddle-winged penguins. These creatures were so tame, or wanting in sense, that they did not deign to rise even when we laid ruthless hands upon them, to stroke and admire their handsome plumage, and bear them away in triumph to our ship, to skin and preserve at our leisure, and to send back to our friends in England as mementoes of the passage out. A small white bird, with a very graceful figure and plaintive cry, also shared the place with the gannets and penguins, and came and nestled upon our arms or shoulders with the greatest confidence. It was almost painful to witness, however, the mistrust and shyness with which the whole feathered and pouched population soon began to regard us, after the firing of the guns and the death of one or two members of their community; and before we left the rock, they approved, by instinct, the unwisdom of putting trust in man, for they con-

veyed themselves to the highest and most inaccessible peaks, from which they surveyed our movement<sup>s</sup> with quaking cries and utterances of terror and despair.

As we left Trinidad to return to the Sea Breeze, which awaited us in the offing, we were suddenly exposed to a danger which is not uncommon in these waters. The wind, striking the high and rugged cliffs of the island, rushes through the enormous fissures, and falls upon the waters with great violence, in the shape of a miniature cyclone, which rushes over the surface, raising a furious wash in its wake, and exhausting itself at length out in the open sea. The only safety is to down sail instantly, or the boat will be twisted round and round for a few minutes like a mere cork, and then overturned in the foaming billows. We were unconscious of this local peril; and whilst we were busily engaged in examining the spoils we had brought off with us, we were suddenly startled by seeing the vigilant captain snatch out his knife and cut the rope which supported the sail of our little craft. The loosened sail fell with a crash amongst us, but not a moment too soon; for we instantly heard a sharp whistling sound, and saw the waters all around us washing and foaming, and lashed with fearful energy by the circular storm which passed over our heads, and away into the distance, happily

without further incident. The reality of the danger, however, and the visible presence of two huge sharks, following steadily in our rear, with their noses about two feet from the shallow bulwark of the heavily laden boat, gave us a considerable scare ; and one of our scientific friends, who always carried a certain quantity of whisky about him, in which to put any specimens of rare insects he might meet with, in the excitement drew the cork of his flask, and hastily swallowed the cordial, utterly oblivious of the fine spider which he had only recently deposited for preservation in the spirit.

The habits and appearance of the shoals of flying-fish which suddenly start up out of the placid waters at this point of the voyage, are always entertaining and worthy of note. The idea of a fish with wings is novel ; but the sight of a flock of these delicate and nicely fashioned creatures in full flight, some yards above the crest of the waves, when pursued by a porpoise or other enemy of their kind, is a spectacle which borders on the marvellous. The flashing of their sides in the bright sunlight, and the almost noiseless motion with which they glide through space, are very noticeable. They fall back into their native element as suddenly as they rise from it ; but an unfortunate member of the finny crowd sometimes loses his way or his centre of gravity, and

falls upon the deck, where he is at once eagerly inspected, the ever-changing hues of his gleaming skin or fins duly admired, and then, alas! he descends to the kitchen, to reappear at breakfast next morning as a dainty and not unwelcome addition to the ordinary fare of the cabin table. We were tempted once, when delayed in the region of perpetual calms, to man a boat, and, armed with harpoon and rifle, the captain in command, and the bishop, a keen sportsman by the way, and a splendid shot, at the helm, the rest of us toiling at the, on that occasion certainly, labouring oar, to venture over what proved to be some miles of calm undulating sea, with a broiling sun overhead, on the trail of some huge black-looking objects which had attracted our attention early in the morning from the deck of the Sea Breeze, and had at once and effectually aroused all the hunting and harrying propensities of our English natures. The uncertainty as to the precise nature of the game we were pursuing, of course added zest to the chase; and we were breathless with excitement and rowing when we at length drew near to the spot which was to be the scene, we all felt convinced, of no uncertain victory on our parts.

But a silence, as intense as it was eloquent, fell upon us as the uplifted harpoon and the strong arm of one of the best of captains and truest of men were arrested in mid-air; the epis-

copal rifle, all ready for the fray, was softly but firmly lowered; and as the huge monsters, some fifty or more, having gone under for a moment, presumably to hold a council of war on seeing the approach of the militant expedition, now rose up in their strength to the surface with a unity of purpose and a series of snorts and violent plungings, which lashed the water on all sides of us with mountains of foam, and threatened the tiny boat with instant destruction, we, as others have done before us, thought discretion the highest form of valour, and beat a hasty retreat from the presence of the overwhelming foe, and retired slowly and by the nearest route to our ark of safety, which awaited us in the distance, looking verily "like a painted ship upon a painted ocean." We had unwittingly disturbed a school of blackfish, as they are called popularly by seamen—huge, coaly-skinned, full-eyed monsters, who, in their playfulness, would have made short work of the whole bench of bishops. As it was, we luckily escaped any damage—although the force with which these creatures can strike is only equalled by that of the whale itself, to which species they naturally belong.

We were followed at Trinidad in a few days by the yacht of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, then Lord Lindsay. His lordship, in the pursuit of his favourite science, had organised an

expedition, entirely at his own expense, to Mauritius, to observe the transit of Venus. The party, on landing from the yacht, were very much surprised to find a lady's woollen wrapper, evidently only lately dropped, and recent footmarks, which revealed the presence of fashionable boots at no very distant period, upon the sands of a tiny rill of pure sweet water, which flowed at the bottom of a deep fissure in the rocks; and various were the conjectures of the bewildered spectators as to how these signs of fashionable female attire could have come there. It was clearly the puzzle of the "fly in the amber" repeated; or perhaps, nearer still, that of the human footprint which so disconcerted the immortal Crusoe.

Whether the mystery of the fashionable shawl left beside the little fountain on this desolate rock in mid-ocean was ever solved by the finders we cannot say. We should presume not, however, as a friend afterwards assured me that a year or two ago he had seen the relic of Trinidad preserved in a northern museum, where it was regarded with considerable interest, not unmingled with pathos, as the only remains of some unfortunate victims of the unknown terrors of the deep. We may say, however, that the shawl had been left behind and forgotten by one of the ladies of our party.

The long passage by the Cape to Tamatave has



several advantages, and, amongst others, I might mention a very important one from a hygeian point of view. It braces up the constitution undoubtedly for a prolonged residence in the hot and enervating climate, and amongst the feverish swamps and marshes of the east coast. It also gradually prepares the whole physical system for those new conditions of life into which we enter when making our home in the tropics. This question of acclimatisation cannot be overlooked; and the best and readiest means of securing it is of the first importance to a dweller in Madagascar, where success in any undertaking is almost entirely a matter of good health and spirits and carefully sustained energy; and therefore a voyage out by sailing-ship is not, as many might suppose at first sight, a pure waste of time.

A brief call at the Cape is often the first introduction the outward-bound passengers have to anything like genuine unconventional colonial or foreign life; and as the anchor falls in the grand harbour, overshadowed by the Table Mountain, eager eyes are strained landwards to catch a glimpse of strange scenes, and glean something of the altogether fresh and striking beauty of these lands, where, to the untravelled English mind, everything in nature seems to be fashioned upon a vast and strangely lavish scale.

The weather off the Cape is generally rough, and the winds are keen and cold; so that the passengers, who had been tempted to throw off their warmer clothing during the passage of the balmy mid-Atlantic, are again glad to shelter themselves behind dreadnoughts and heavy furs. This is the spot, on a wild and tempestuous night, to go up in the dark hours of the middle watch upon deck, and take in, from the lips of some old salt, the weird legend of the "Flying Dutchman," so dear to sailors and so terribly fascinating to landsmen. Onward through the fierce but silent drift of the great Agulhas current we go, and making for the north-west, with a considerable anterior period, however, of southing, we soon welcome overhead the creaking cry of the boat-swain-bird, which hovers over us, with its small body, and one long plume drooping from its tail, and reveals by its presence the cheering fact that our voyage is complete, and that we shall soon sight the lofty eminences of Peter Bot and the Poose, which mountains are the earliest recognisable features of the hospitable and beautiful Mauritius; or, as she proudly but not inaptly styles herself on her official banner, the Star of the Isles of the Indian Sea.

Here warm greetings are in store for us, and with that remarkable air of sincere and generous kindness which distinguishes English colonists

abroad, we are literally overwhelmed with offers of hospitality on all sides.

The harbour of Port Louis, the chief town of the Mauritius, at once arrests the attention of the visitor. Its waters are of great depth and of marvellous purity, so that the forests of coral-trees, and fantastic masses of mountain and valley and rugged counterscarp, which lie deep beneath the translucent waves, are plainly visible to the delighted and astonished beholder, as he leans over the ship's rail, and gazes into their white and sinuous recesses, through which are floating continually myriads of small glittering fish, and occasionally, in silence and solitude, a grim specimen of the terror of these seas, the ravenous shark.

The first impressions of a visitor, upon landing on the busy quays of Port Louis, are on the whole pleasing. A sense of bewilderment comes over us—for a short time only, however—as we pass along the crowded streets, and first experience the great contrast between the bustle and activity of the full flow of oriental life which is all around us, and the quiet and monotony of our days at sea.

The polyglot population, the oriental air of the whole place, the entire absence of European equipages, the domes of a Mohammedan mosque, the open portals of the Indian temples, the

ubiquitous Chinees sitting at his shop-door at every turn and corner, the turbaned coachmen, the dashing carioles, and the roll of the tom-tom, with the bejewelled and gorgeous Indians thronging every thoroughfare of the town, cannot fail to present an ever-changing picture of wonder and delight to the newly arrived European.

The town, lying spread out in its triangular plain, at the foot of the famous Peter Bot mountain—a name which speaks of the Dutch origin of the colony—with its splendid and capacious harbour in front, and a massive, picturesque background of rugged mountains and serrated table-land, is well adapted for a military or naval display; and the authorities had evidently made the most of the situation on a certain brilliant June afternoon some years ago, when we paid it an unexpected visit, and found it *en fête* in honour of the reigning Sultan of the Comoro Islands, who was just returning to his native shores after a rather lengthened sojourn in the Mauritius. The shipping at the anchorage, and the numerous masts of the consular establishments on shore, were gay with streamers and flags of all nations; the great guns of the forts above boomed at impressive intervals from the ramparts over the town; and at the landing-place a company of the ill-fated regiment, soon after routed by Cetewayo at Isandula, was drawn

up to form a guard of honour, and imparted quite a homely English look to the scene. The then Lieutenant-Governor of the Mauritius, Sir G. F. Bowen, K.C.B., with some of the privileged State officials, were grouped upon the pier, eagerly discussing the latest war news from the Cape; and at a becoming distance were small crowds of the always animated, gaily clad, and diverse inhabitants of the colony. With that generous thoughtfulness and ready tact in dealing with the intricacies of Eastern character, for which he stands out pre-eminently amongst that noble line of satraps by whose wisdom and high personal gifts we have been able for so long to govern our distant dependencies, not only with honour to ourselves, but without loss of comfort or dignity to them, Sir George Bowen had drawn around him, on the occasion to which I refer, some of the dignity which becomes the representative of his illustrious sovereign, to say "Farewell," and wish a prosperous voyage, and a long and peaceful reign to his Highness Abdullah Mohammed Hadji II., Sultan of Johanna, and the chief of the islands of the Comoro group. I found that Sultan Abdullah had for some time suffered from cataract, which at length brought total blindness, and he had been induced to visit the Mauritius for the purpose of availing himself of the valuable services of the medical men of the colony. A very

successful operation was performed, and the sight of the Sultan restored, to his intense delight ; and he was now returning to his island-home, filled with warm sentiments of gratitude, and admiration, and wonder at what appeared to him the miraculous power of the Mauritian surgeons and oculists. As the guest of the Imperial Government, the Sultan had been shown everything that was thought likely to be of use to him on his return to Johanna ; and as he stepped on board his own good ship *Genetiv* from the Governor's barge, there was a kindly look of tender gratefulness and regret at parting upon his swarthy but intelligent features, which was very interesting and touching to witness, and which did not fail to awaken a fresh interest in the little ocean-kingdom over which he ruled. Many kindly eyes followed the *Genetiv*, and many good wishes, as she drew out to sea, with our own familiar colours at the main ; the royal ensign of Johanna, bearing the crescent and the open hand, displayed at the fore ; and the genial Sultan—a tall hale man of about fifty perhaps, wearing the green turban, which marks the lineal descendants of the great Prophet—bowing and waving his “salaam” from the poop-deck where he stood, surrounded by his sons, his prime minister, and chief officers of his suite. One result of this visit has been the ratification of a

new treaty between England and this sovereign, by which considerable injury is done to the slave-trade; and the operations of the chief traders, who have hitherto found a too ready welcome in the Comoros, are considerably circumscribed. From Mauritius to Madagascar is often a voyage of only a day; but sometimes it is extended to a week, or even twenty-one days, if the wind is contrary.

Travellers proceeding to Tamatave *viâ* Mauritius have sometimes to re-embark at Port Louis, and take passage for the land of the Hovas in one of the numerous bullock-vessels which are employed to bring cattle and rice to Mauritius. As the meat-market there is almost entirely dependent upon the Malagasy for its supplies, these vessels are frequently passing between the islands during the summer months. A considerable sum is charged for passengers; the accommodation is abominable, the food almost uneatable, and the danger very considerable. Only vessels already condemned as unfit for use in every other part of the world are put upon this line of commerce, and the bullock-trade with Tamatave has been well described as the "Botany Bay" of shipping. This particular quarter of the world is remarkable for the special dangers to which those who traverse its waters are liable at certain seasons of the year; and whilst the Pacific is known for its

freedom from anything in the nature of storms, and the Atlantic for its gales and tempests, the Indian Ocean, alone is swept by periodic bursts of hurricane and cyclone, which rush across its surface with terrific violence, carrying devastation and ruin in their course over land and sea. The Mauritius is about the centre of the field of these circular storms; and consequently, for long periods every year, the surrounding seas are full of peril even to the best found vessels and most experienced navigators. Few persons, therefore, who have been in the neighbourhood of these islands, have quite escaped without some experience of the dangers and hazards which attend the passage of Madagascar waters at any time. One friend of my own was particularly unfortunate in this respect. He never went on board a ship without being followed almost inevitably by a furious hurricane. His official position necessitated a life of travel, and at length he became known as the man with the "cyclone in his pocket"; and captains have been known to refuse double passage-money, and even to sail a day sooner than that announced for their departure, and with only a part of their cargo on board, to escape carrying my friend.

Communication between Madagascar and the other islands is therefore often suspended during the whole of the winter season, from June to



November, on account of the enormous risk which is run in venturing across the track of these dreaded storms, and during this time vessels only of large size and good build will attempt the passage. A few years ago this was the only route to Tamatave; and on more than one occasion Europeans have passed away on the crazy decks of these bullockers, under a blazing tropical sun, worn out with fever and the terrible hardships incidental to such a voyage. There is a touching story told of a poor missionary, who died, stretched between decks upon a truss of hay, and forgotten by the crew, or at least neglected by them, in a crowded hold of bullocks, with which the ship was packed from stem to stern. The return voyage, which proved too much for this enfeebled missionary, then often occupied from thirty to forty days—a fact which can only be remembered now with a sickening shudder, especially when we think of the poor women and children who have in times past had to endure it. The communication is, however, much improved now, and a better class of vessels are employed; and Madagascar is also now in direct communication with Europe.

It was our lot, in 1874, to take passage in the *Rosa*, a thorough specimen of a bullocker, and commanded by a good and well-known seaman, Captain Judic. The crew and officers of

H.M.S. Shearwater cheered us as we passed out of the harbour, and, having dipped flags, the Mauritius gradually sank out of sight, and we were stretching away for our future home in the great western island. Our experiences were pleasant enough of the passage; it only lasted two days; the captain was most agreeable; and as the weather was fine, we spent most of our time on deck, where we also had our meals, which, as they were confined chiefly to fruit, did not suffer from the bad cooking about which we had heard so much. The strangely untidy appearance of everything on board our craft—the creaking timbers and gaping deck, through which we could catch fitful glimpses of all that was going on below—the vivacity of our captain, and the general originality of the whole position,—gratified us, and, as far as I was concerned, quite made up for lack of table-cloths, beds, or an elaborate *cuisine*. Captain Judic was an epicure in his way, however, and his particular weakness seemed to be an early *al fresco* meal of oysters; and he looked the picture of contentment with the little barrel of bivalves between his knees, from which he took his oysters one by one, opened and swallowed them with every sign of relish, and pitched the shells at his negro cabin-boy, who stood grinning at a short distance, trying to catch the missiles as they flew past him. Poor Judic

made his last voyage soon after this. The ship he commanded was more unseaworthy than usual, and the tempest proved too much for her, and the good, genial, old sailor went down to a sailor's grave confined in his ship.

We reached the outer bar of the port of Tamatave in the evening of September 19; and although it was very dark and there were no harbour-lights, our commander, out of sheer kindness, that we might have a good and quiet night's rest inside the bar, ran us in and over the bar, entering by rule of thumb—a feat about which the old sea-dog boasted afterwards, but for which, I have reason to know, he was severely reprimanded by the owners of the ship and cargo on board. The next morning we rose with the sun, and saw, for the first time, the town of Tamatave at our feet, and, stretching away in the distance, the hills and mountains of the country we had travelled so far to see, and about which we had read and heard so much that was remarkable and interesting. We saw by the inscription of the flag of the Hova fort that the wise and tender-hearted Queen Nanavalona II. still lived and ruled. We were thankful for this, as otherwise we knew that the purpose of our journey would have been in a great measure defeated.

One of our first visitors on board was the

representative of H.B.M. late Consul, T. C. Pakenham,<sup>1</sup> Esq., and the messengers of his Excellency the Hova Governor of Tamatave, who sent to say he hoped we had had a pleasant voyage, and had arrived in good health. On landing from the boats on the shore, the friendly greeting of the Consul and the attentions of the natives soon made us feel quite at home; and we entered upon our sojourn in Madagascar with feelings of pleasure and hope.

<sup>1</sup> The painfully sudden death of Mr Pakenham on the 21st of June 1883, within a few hours of the bombardment of Tamatave by a French flotilla under the command of Admiral Pierre, and immediately after he had been gazetted to the Consul-Generalship at Odessa, after a lengthened period of devoted and faithful service to the British Crown in Madagascar, must be recorded here. It is a matter for melancholy satisfaction to know that Mr Pakenham was accorded a distinguished funeral, and that the obsequies were attended by the French and English naval officers, and representatives of all the chief Governments of Europe. In H.B.M.'s late Consul the native Government had a faithful counsellor, and the English colony a wise and impartial administrator.

## CHAPTER II.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND.

STRETCHED along the south-east coast of Africa, and separated from it only by the narrow channel of the Mozambique, the island of Madagascar occupies a prominent position upon the map of the world; and the attention of the student of geography is at once drawn to it by its peculiar elongated form, its strange name, and its vast irregular surface, scored and marked from end to end by lofty mountain-ranges, deep and often inaccessible ravines, broad tidal rivers, dense forest tracts, and the unique chain of fresh-water lakes, which afford excellent means of communication and transit for more than two hundred miles upon its eastern seaboard.

The proximity of Madagascar to our South African colonies and dependencies, and the influence which it may one day exercise over our Eastern commerce, either in impeding or developing it, and the unwearying and persistent efforts

of France for centuries to secure a footing in the island, render it impossible for the politician to look upon this isolated but rising kingdom with indifference; and its physical conformation, its almost unlimited natural resources, and its valuable mineral deposits, combined with the thrilling history of its intestine struggles, often renewed, between tyranny and freedom, barbarism and civilisation, superstition and enlightenment, at once secure for it the interest and sympathy of the philanthropist and the scientist.

The stirring and eventful history of this island during the past eighty years compels us to believe that it has a great and important future before it. That it will ultimately become in some measure to the great African continent what England is to Europe, we have every reason to hope, from what we have seen of the energy and capacity of the Malagasy in the past; and in the friendly co-operation in time to come of themselves and the English Government, we have doubtless the key to the solution of that perplexing problem—the effectual and complete suppression of the slave traffic in East African waters and the South Indian Ocean.

What more splendid position can her best friends wish for her than that Madagascar, with her central situation, her large and fertile area, her rich natural productions, and her intelligent and

progressive population, should be in the years to come, under favourable circumstances, a refuge for the distressed, and a leading power among the rising nations of that quarter of the world? United with the most influential European powers, as she now is, by wise and liberal treaties of friendship and commerce, she may be called upon in the future to preserve the balance of power amongst the numerous states of the neighbouring continent, and in due course even to plant colonies of her own in the islands of the Eastern Sea.

The history of Madagascar commences with a description of the island by the great Venetian navigator and discoverer, Marco Polo, in the thirteenth century. The entire narrative of the travelling achievements of this famous explorer is full of interesting descriptions of the oriental world, and of kingdom after kingdom which he visited; and he has also faithfully recorded the strange traditions and history of this distant and at that time unknown island. He was the first European or Asiatic writer who had noticed even the existence of the country which is called by him *Magaster*. It was, however, after his time frequently visited by Moorish and Arab traders and adventurers; and an active trade gradually grew up along the north-west coast in slaves, India-rubber, gums, and spices, even at this early period. The Portuguese attempted to

form a settlement after a visit paid by Almeida, envoy to India, in 1506; and a French colony was established as early as 1642, in the province of Anosy, in the south-east. An English settlement was made also on the west coast, which was named St Augustine, in the same year; but these essays in colonisation were imperfect in organisation, and consequently only temporary in their results. The numerous harbours and islets offered refuge to the bands of pirates and slave-hunters which infested the Mozambique Channel; and on more than one occasion the west coast was, as early as the seventeenth century, the scene of conflicts between the combined forces of European men-of-war and these desperadoes. It is sad to think that, after all the sacrifice of life and money which has been freely made by this country for this particular service, it is not possible even now to record the complete abolition of the desolating and foul trade in human beings, which clings like a curse to the African shores.

From time to time attempts have been made, chiefly by France, to plant European colonies in Madagascar; but so far they have only met with disaster and disappointment. From Cape Amber in the north, to Cape St Mary at the extreme south, the length of the island is nearly 950 miles, and it measures in its broadest part about 350 miles, with an area



equal to that of Great Britain and Ireland, and a population not quite equal to that of London. It lies chiefly in the tropics; and a portion of the northern coast, and some of the low-lying districts along its eastern side, are extremely hot and unhealthy, and have an unenviable notoriety, even amongst the natives themselves, for the malarious fogs and vapours and fever-swamps which abound. Although possessing an extensive coastline, Madagascar is strangely deficient in good harbours; and most of its finest rivers are unfortunately choked at the mouth, and so rendered useless as means of exit for native produce, by dangerous sand-bars and drifts of vegetable and other deposit, which form across the estuaries and effectually block the passage. There are no insuperable difficulties in the way of the removal of these obstacles by the use of ordinary engineering appliances; and when the internal affairs of the country are in a more settled state, and the native Government is able to give its attention to domestic affairs and the further improvement of its means of communication with the outer world, some attention will be given probably to this important question of opening up the waterways from the interior to the coast, so that vessels can enter and take cargoes at various points which are at present altogether closed to them.

Considerable danger, and a great deal of diffi-

culty, attend the navigation of Malagasy waters, on account of the heavy surf which beats incessantly upon the shores, and the sunken rocks which exist on all sides of the island. The two principal harbours are,—Tamatave, on the east coast, where the chief trade of the country is carried on, and where the foreign consuls reside; and Mojanga, on the west, also a place of considerable activity, and a port of call for the mail-steamers of the British India Company. The imports from the United Kingdom during 1880 were £57,000, and the exports £7557.

The usual routes adopted by travellers from London to Madagascar are by Paris and the mail-steamers of the French Messageries Maritimes, through the Suez Canal and *via* Mauritius; or directly by the Donald Currie Line, *via* the Cape of Good Hope to Tamatave. The latter is preferable for several reasons—amongst others, that it avoids the intense heat and discomfort of the Red Sea passage, and also affords the voyager an interesting experience of ocean travelling; but the former is more expeditious, the journey by the Suez Canal occupying only about a month, whilst the more circuitous passage by the Cape takes nearly six weeks.

If we except the country along the main roads, or, more strictly, paths, to the capital, which is situated upon a lofty and commanding eminence

200 miles inland, the island is very sparsely peopled. Much of the surface is taken up by extensive forests; and there are beautiful districts and tracts of woodland through which the traveller passes for days without meeting a person or seeing a single human habitation.

The continuous mountain-ridges, rising gradually in a regular series of terraces from the coast to the central province of Imevina, which contains the capital, form the principal and most striking physical features of Madagascar, and impart to the scenery a stern and massive grandeur, that never fails to impress the spectator with a feeling of awe and admiration, which becomes intensified as he traverses the sombre and almost silent forests that fill up the precipitous ravines, and even clothe for a considerable distance the slopes of the more elevated passes. Huge masses of gneiss rise up here and there, sometimes from the greensward, and often from the hillsides, towering high above the surrounding objects, and covered with moss, or hoary with the passage of time, and curiously suggestive often of the tottering arches and buttresses of some old-world cathedral or gigantic castle which has been overwhelmed by some sudden and tremendous catastrophe. The paths that do duty for roads, even to the capital, are rough and always sadly out of repair, and in places are mere inclines of greasy

clay, up which the native bearers climb with extraordinary tenacity—varied here and there by sloughs and pools of red and odorous mud, through which it is only possible to wade with great exertion and considerable patience and pluck. There are, however, between the rocky terraces, bright stretches of grassy and verdant plain, and narrow fruitful strips of soil, where herds of native cattle find pasture, and which supply the people with rich and abundant harvests of rice and sweet-potatoes, with scarcely any expenditure of labour except planting and gathering. These oases are formed often by the mud and decomposed granite brought down by the mountain torrents in the rainy season, and are therefore of delightful fertility.

The Malagasy are very simple in their habits, and their wants are therefore few. Rice is their chief article of food, and this, put in a little soup, or mixed with a few common herbs, will always furnish them with an ample meal. The ox is to them what the camel is to the Arab, and the reindeer to the Laplander.

Perhaps no country presents a greater variety of natural beauty to the visitor than may be seen on a journey from any point on the coast to the interior of Madagascar. The eastern side, which is washed by the Indian Ocean, is especially interesting, from the fact that it is being rapidly

brought under cultivation by Creole planters and other settlers, who have crossed over in great numbers from Mauritius and Bourbon, and even India, to find a home amongst the amiable and peaceful Malagasy.

Extending for sometimes ten and often fifty miles inland to the foot of the first of the ascending terraces, there is a belt of rich productive meadow-land, intersected by numerous deep and rapid rivers, and covered everywhere with luxurious and umbrageous tropical vegetation. The orange-tree, the cocoa-nut palm—the huge water arum, sweeping our boat as it floats along the surface of the beautifully transparent stream—the tree-fern, lifting its graceful fronds high up overhead—the wild citron, the broad-leaved banana, the luscious mango, the feathery bamboo cane, with “its tresses heaving in the wind,”—are all around us in rich profusion ; and the eye wanders with delight over fields beyond fields bright with the fresh green of the young rice-plant not yet in ear, and echoing with the cries and songs of the native boatmen, or the *maromita* at work among the sugar-canes. The Betsimisaraka, a coast tribe, are a happy people, full of good-nature and high spirits, and seem to take a very cheerful view of things. They cannot be silent, and they seem to have a collection of inspiriting and mirth-provoking songs, which they are never tired of

repeating when employed in any kind of labour which brings a number of them together. The ruling tribe, the Hova, which occupies the central table-land, and holds the coast tribes in a kind of feudal subjection, originally landed on the south-east corner of the island, gradually made its way, conquering as it went, up through the interior, and at length became a power under Radama I. (1808), a man of great spirit and intelligence, who consolidated the Government of the Hova, united the twelve subdivisions of the family into one clan, and established the sovereignty at the present capital, Antananarivo, "the city of a thousand towns." This monarch was as ambitious as he was enterprising. He had many good qualities, and seemed a hundred years in advance of his people in shrewdness and mental capacity. He was the founder of the present reigning dynasty. Radama had a peculiar aversion to the French, who, in his day, had designs upon his territory; and his reply to a hint that his enemies were about to invade the island may be quoted as probably explaining that policy of "masterly inactivity" which the Hovas invariably adopt when a foreign foe effects a landing upon their shores, and which hitherto has proved a more sure defence to them than armies or fleets. The king's reply to the intimation of the French invasion of his day was, "Very well, let them try. I have two officers in my

service, Generals Tazo and Hazo ; I'll leave them in their hands for a while, and have no doubt as to the result." Tazo is the name of the dreaded Malagasy fever. and Hazo that of the almost impenetrable forest between the coast and the capital. An important treaty was concluded between Great Britain and Radama in 1817, by which the sale of slaves beyond the seas was prohibited, and the introduction of European teachers and artisans, for the instruction of the natives, was facilitated. The agents of various philanthropic societies, but chiefly those of the London Missionary Society, set up schools and workshops, under the protection and patronage of Radama, and the native youth were taught the art of printing, as well as working in stone, leather, iron, brick, and wood ; and they were also instructed most carefully how to build houses, churches, palaces, and bridges, and to improve their own dwellings and dress both in material and shape : so that those people, who are naturally painstaking and very patient, with the imitative faculty strongly developed, advanced rapidly in civilisation and in the application of the useful arts. They were also taught to read and write their own language, which had not previously been reduced to writing or printed ; and although in 1820 there were not more than six persons, it is said, who could read it even in Arabic let-

ters, the Malagasy language is now universally read and written in European characters by all classes of the people, who have at this time a considerable literature and some newspapers, printed by the natives themselves at the well-appointed Government and mission presses at Antananarivo.

The real history of the country may, in fact, be said to have commenced with Radama; and since his time it has continued to progress and to develop its resources and power—slowly, it is true, but always in the right direction. Nations are not made in a day, or even in a century. If only there is growth, however gradual, we must not be too anxious about the measure or the depth. That a great and searching change has come over the whole heart and mind of this people, is clear to those who know their history or have passed through their borders. During the past eighty years, old systems of idolatry and superstition have disappeared completely and for ever, evil and degrading customs have been abolished, just and humane laws have been enacted, horrible and barbarous state punishments have been discontinued, old habits which defiled and debased the people have been given up or have died out, the laws relating to slavery have been wisely and considerably modified, enslaving prisoners taken in war is now unlawful, all African slaves have



been manumitted, polygamy discountenanced by royal decree, and the spear and shield are laid aside for the implements of the husbandman and the artificer. Sunday is respected as a day set apart for rest and religious exercises; a system of compulsory education has been adopted by the Government; the life of every man, even of the poorest slave, is held sacred; and no person can now be put to death without a fair and open trial in the presence of the representatives of the Queen. Much remains to be done before the whole Malagasy people, especially in the remote districts, can be said to enjoy the full benefit of these important and vital reforms. But we may venture to say that probably in no state in modern times has more real improvement been effected than in Madagascar, already known as the "Great Britain of Africa"; and when we consider the short period in which this has been accomplished, the small resources and the limited opportunities of these people, we cannot but feel admiration for their energy and patient perseverance in the path of self-improvement. It has seldom been given to men in any age to witness the pleasing spectacle of a nation such as this—small, obscure, and insular—working out its own regeneration and civilisation, and securing for itself a place amongst the older and long-established Powers, and making considerable advances in its intel-

lectual and social life, within the short period of little more than half a century.

The Comoro group of islands, which occupies a position midway between the northern point of Madagascar and the African mainland, although possessing an independent government of its own, may fitly be noticed here, as it is intimately connected with the country of the Hova, by race, commercial ties, and a unity of interests, as well as by its geographical position. Much has been written about the natural loveliness of Comoro, Johanna, Mohilla, and Mayotte, the islets which form the group, and which seem to float upon the bosom of the clear waters "like emeralds set in a silver sea"; but of the moral and intellectual condition of the active and numerous inhabitants—partly negro and partly Arab—there is scarcely anything satisfactory to be said. Their chief source of revenue is the trade in sugar, rice, and coffee with Eastern Africa and the adjacent islands of the Mozambique, — viz., Bourbon, Mauritius, and Madagascar. There are several flourishing sugar-estates on the island of Johanna, the property of the sultan of that island—who is the supreme authority throughout the Comoros—and one or two Creole planters who have established themselves along the banks of the rivers of Johanna and Comoro. But it is of a less legitimate com-

merce than this that we are compelled to speak when considering the past, present, and future of the sultanate of Johanna. The various harbours and roadsteads of this ocean-kingdom have always afforded ready and secure shelter to the vessels and dhows engaged in the fiendish and desolating slave-traffic between Africa and Madagascar, and the other islands of the archipelago; and as the poor kidnapped Africans or Mozambiques are sturdy of limb, and of untiring energy in manual labour, they are eagerly sought after, at prices varying from £6 to £10 English money, for the heavier work connected with the cultivation of the sugar-cane, which requires a powerful frame, a dogged determination, and a certain recklessness of consequences, such as exposure to extremes of weather, and privations in matters of sleep and food, which characteristics are all to be found in the native of East Africa. The Comoro Islands are, or were till very recently, the home of some of the most enterprising slave-traders in the African or Indian seas. It is very difficult, after all that has been said on this subject, for people who have never left Europe to appreciate, even in the smallest degree, the whole amount of misery and despair which is contained in that word "slavery." There are good people who speak gently, and even kindly, of the system, and of

the condition of the slave—of the comfort he has, and the immunity he enjoys from all anxiety or responsibility. The examples of Abraham and the patriarchs, and the Pauline instructions, have been quoted with a view to modify the harsh judgment one might be disposed to pass upon a system which makes one man the chattel of another, to be sold or slain at will. But the real healthy feeling of the whole civilised world is, without doubt, altogether against this lenient view of what is really an outrage upon the first great law of human life and society. Man was made upright, and endowed with an individuality and a will. No doctrine of expediency or of necessity, no theory as to inferiority of mental power, or difference of cranial structure, or deficiency of facial angle, can destroy the sacred individuality and personal responsibility of man. Indeed, from whatever stand-point the subject of this trade in mankind is approached, we find it remains in principle, as it is in fact, a horrible and cursed thing, an outcome of that greed and cruelty which has so long disgraced heathen and semi-civilised communities. It is a fearful defiance of the laws of divine beneficence, and an outrage against humanity the foulest and most disastrous in its effects which the evil heart of man has yet conceived or the earth witnessed. Imagine the mental and moral condition of a

man stolen in the first place from his home, bought and sold in the public market, with no power of acquiring anything, and possessing nothing he can call his own, not even his body or his will. He is wholly and solely the property of another. His master eats the produce of his labour, sells his children, separates him from his wife, and, as often happens, ships him off to lands from which he can never hope to return. The influence of the English Government has been brought to bear upon the Sultan Abdullah of late, however, and there is now an active consul in residence at Johanna; so that we may hope soon to see a right view of this traffic in sorrow and death adopted by the more intelligent members of the community of planters and chiefs in the Comoros. The details furnished to the House of Commons in 1871, of the condition of the slave-trade on the East African seaboard, are more than sufficient to convince the most sceptical mind that the efforts, great as they have been, for the destruction of this hateful commerce, still need to be followed up by energetic and sustained action if the trade is to be in the end and for ever abolished.

Much depends upon a proper treatment of this moral plague, which hangs over the people of the Mozambique like a thick cloud, crushing out every hope and energy, and destroying the

very humanity of its victims, so that in too many cases they soon cease to be men, except in form. The abolition of this evil will also remove the difficulties which bar the way to the legitimate trader in South Africa and the islands along this coast, and which at present hinder the rapid and sure development of commercial activity through the length and breadth of the continent. Remove men and women and children from the public markets, once let them cease to be saleable commodities, and other merchandise will naturally and necessarily become the negotiable basis of barter, and other articles will become the medium for the employment and circulation of capital and the acquisition of wealth. The evil has been reduced and its area considerably limited of late years, through the devoted energy of the officers and men in our ships of war on the Zanzibar station. Much, however, remains to be accomplished; and it is to Madagascar that we must look for that assistance which will enable us, in a few years perhaps, to regard the slave-trade of Eastern Africa as a phase of life in that region which has passed away happily for ever.

## CHAPTER III.

## TRIBAL DIVISIONS—CONQUEST BY THE HOVAS.

ALTHOUGH the name "Malagasy" is now given to the whole of the inhabitants of the island, they do not appear to have sprung originally from one race. On the contrary, the distinctive marks of a diverse descent are numerous and conclusive. The oval features, lank hair, elegant figures, and light complexion of the dominant race, the Hovas, at once fix their origin as Malayan; whilst the woolly head, thick and prominent lips, broad faces, and black skin of the numerous branches of the Betsimisaraka tribe on the east coast, point to Africa without doubt as their ancestral home. The whole question, however, of the origin of the Malagasy, is a difficult one, and it is almost impossible to obtain any accurate information upon the subject from either their traditions or their folk-lore. The peculiarities of the people generally, their physical appearance, their mental capabilities, their manners and customs, their

imitative rather than constructive powers, and above all, the structure of their language, distinctly point to affinity with the Asiatic rather than the African continent; and there are many words in the dialects of the natives of Sumatra, Borneo, and the islands of the Pacific, which are identical in sound and signification with words in common use by the inhabitants of Madagascar. Before the rise of the Hova power, the country was divided into five great kingdoms: the Sakalava, a name given by the Hovas, and meaning "long cats," occupying the north-west; the Hova, holding the central province of Imerina; the Betsimisaraka (the great undivided), inhabiting the east coast; the Betsiléo, with Fianarantsoa as their capital, dwelling in the south; and the Antsianaka tribe, located between the Sakalava and Hova territory. The numbers of the various tribes have been roughly estimated as follows: The Hovas, 800,000; the Sakalavas, 1,000,000 (including the Antsianaka); the Betsiléo, about 2,000,000; and the Betsimisaraka, 1,000,000. No census has ever been taken, however, and a correct statement of the population is impossible. It is generally supposed that the people are not by any means so numerous as in the days of the first Radama; and the ruins of villages in all parts of the country, which were once centres of activity, and the existence of the remains of large

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earthworks and irrigation schemes, since fallen to decay, all point to the presence of inhabitants in places which are now forsaken. This reduction of numbers is due partly to the enormous drain upon the youth and manhood of the country during the terrible reign of Ravalona I., and the custom, now long abolished, of sending yearly large consignments of slaves across the seas to supply the markets of Arabia and India. Each of the great divisions of the Malagasy had formerly its sovereign chief, its capital, its own social customs, particular dress, language, code of laws, and even its own peculiar civil and religious rites and ceremonies; and some of these latter observances were marked by horrible atrocities,—as, for instance, the offering of human sacrifices in the southern province of Vaingaindrano, where it appears that a weekly oblation of victims—if possible, chiefs or persons of some importance—was made to satisfy the vengeance and outraged dignity of the local deity. Over the Betsiléô, the Betsimisaraka, and the Antsianaka, the Hova Government has long exercised its supremacy; and this arrangement is decidedly for the advantage of the whole community, as its policy is one of advance and enlightenment, and will no doubt ultimately effect the complete moral elevation and improvement of the whole population.

The repeated attempts at aggression by foreign nations will be in the end beneficial to Madagascar, as they have tended considerably to consolidate the power and strengthen the influence of the native Government over those portions of the country where hitherto its rule has been scarcely more than nominal. The great and only real hope for the future prosperity and advancement of the Malagasy lies in the Hova domination; and this all friends of the country wish to see secured, as the only possible or feasible means for securing the certain and systematic progress of all classes of the people, and for the prevention of those devastating tribal wars, which, as in South Africa, have been a constant source of alarm and spoliation, and a certain hindrance to all industry, and to the extension of legitimate commercial enterprise. But apart from these considerations, the Hova is evidently born to rule: he has the air and gait by nature of a king of men; and better still, he has great sagacity, indomitable perseverance, great powers of endurance, much patience, strong self-restraint, and a natural adaptability to trade and intercourse with the foreigner. In all these respects he stands out in marked contrast to the neighbouring and subject tribes. His presence on the island is, however, an interesting mystery; and in the absence of any authentic information, various

attractive and clever theories and traditions have been put forward to account for the phenomenon of a Malayan family crossing the troubled and uncertain waters of the Indian Ocean in the centuries past, and obtaining a home and sovereignty on an island hundreds of miles from their original location. The matter may be explained in this way. In the distant period long before the British ascendancy in the East, the Indian and China seas were infested by pirates and freebooters, who had their honours and fastnesses in the rocky islands of the Malayan Archipelago.

The men were remarkable for their ferocity as well as their adventurous spirit, and they struck boldly out to sea in their rude vessels in search of plunder and slaves. In the hurricanes which prevail with fearful energy at fixed seasons in those seas, safety for the unfortunate mariner who happens to be entrapped within the fatal circle of the tempest is in drifting before the wind. A fleet of these piratical marauders having been caught in one of these storms, is supposed to have drifted across the sea, and to have reached at length the south-eastern corner of Madagascar. At least the first traces of the Hova occupation are found there. More than one incursion of the strange colonists is considered to have taken place. The country at that time was inhabited by the

forefathers of the tribes already referred to. These, however, the invaders (who probably in the first place landed through stress of weather) found in a weak and defenceless condition, given solely to pastoral pursuits, and armed with sharpened sticks, their only weapon of defence. Against these the Hovas used the spear with its iron head, which they had sufficient knowledge to fashion out of the metal which is found close to the surface in the central parts of Madagascar. This, at that time, formidable weapon, combined with their natural hardihood and intelligence, soon placed the districts through which they passed in their hands. They appear to have gone up towards Imérina, where they gradually established themselves, and became the sovereign power under Andrian-impoin-Imérina (the prince of the heart of Imérina), 1790. There are still to be seen around the capital and in the neighbourhood of the sacred towns some curious and massive tombs, which are described as the burial-places of the Vazimba, who were supposed to have been the chiefs of the original inhabitants, who were overcome and brought into subjection by the Hovas. Cruel and degrading as were the practices and ideas of these people till the opening out of the island to European influence and teaching in 1818, they were still far in advance of the other island tribes by which they were

surrounded. The Hovas were thorough-going idolaters, and given over to vile and degrading superstitions, which actually justified murder and infanticide to a terrible extent.

Next in importance and interest to the Hovas we must place the Betsimisaraka. This tribe is of African descent, and the people all along the east coast present every characteristic of that race. They were originally governed by an independent king, who ruled at Tamatave and Andevoranto; but they retained their tribal system, and the independence of their chiefs was respected, as it is to this day in a modified way, by the Government of Queen Ranavalona. The name of Betsimisaraka (the great undivided) was derived from the fact that the clans composing this large and widely scattered family were always found united together for the common good, and their subjugation to the yoke of the central authority in Imérina was not effected without considerable difficulty and exercise of diplomacy on the part of Radama I. Assisted by an astute non-commissioned British officer named Brady, an Irishman, who was raised by the king to the rank of general and commander-in-chief of the Malagasy forces, Radama led a large army down through the defiles of the central provinces and the pass of Biforona to the seaboard, and established himself at Tamatave, which then became

a Hova fort and stronghold. The Hova king called an immense assembly (*kabáry*) of Betsimisaraka chiefs and people at the ancient village of Ambohibohazo, and a treaty of service was entered into, by which the coast people bound themselves to act as soldiers and bearers for the Hovas, the king undertaking on his part to afford them protection from foreigners, and all the other privileges enjoyed by his most favoured subjects.

As there are no beasts of burden or roads in Madagascar, the whole of the imports have to be carried on men's shoulders over the tract of 200 miles of forest and mountain which leads to the capital. This work is performed by the Betsimisaraka as part of their tribute to the reigning power. These people are naturally indolent, self-indulgent, and indifferent to their position as a subject race. They indulge to a large extent in a native drink made from the sugar-cane; and this habit tends still further to weaken their character and to diminish their power for exertion, either mental or physical. The consequence is, that they have never made any real effort to free themselves from the bonds placed upon them by the first great Hova king; indeed they seem "to love to have it so." Between them and the Sakalava on the opposite side of the island, there is a remarkable contrast. The Sakalava have

never really been completely subjugated, and they have constantly resisted the attempts of the Antananarivo Government to bring them into a position of obedience and servitude. The resistance of this tribe to any idea of submission has been unceasing; and although at one or two periods of their history the Hovas have effected a temporary lodgment upon their territory, they have in the end been driven off by force, or tempted to retire by specious promises which have never been performed. The Sakalava people are fierce, warlike, and nomadic in their manner of life. They dwell in forest villages, are rapid and panther-like in their movements, and are splendid shots with the rifle. Every Sakalava carries his gun, powder-horn, and supply of bullets. Whatever else he lacks, he retains his gun. It is his companion by night and day. Without it he is disgraced in the eyes of his family and fellow-men. He does not value money except that it will secure him a superior weapon, a refill of powder, or a fresh stock of bullets. And supposing he is well furnished from other sources with these—for instance, by the sale of his oxen—he does not scruple to beat out the surplus silver dollars of which he may happen to become possessed into broad plates for the decoration of his gun-stock or powder-horn. It was with these people that the French made treaties,

and it is from amongst them that they propose to raise levies of troops and a native militia for the defence of the tract of country claimed by them along the west and north-west of the island, against any further invasion of the Hovas. The French island of Nosi Be lies abreast of the Sakalava country, and the island of St Mary on the east coast also belongs to France. The English have no possessions nearer than Mauritius. In 1816, however, when that colony was ceded to Great Britain by the French, a part of Madagascar was also formally made over to England by the native chiefs; and it remains ours, though unoccupied to the present day. In fact, this action of the Malagasy authorities was the ground of the understanding between the two great European Powers, which was respected up to a few months ago, that neither Government should attempt to gain an actual footing in the island of Madagascar without the full and free consent of the other. In the almost unknown forests of the west, there exists a tribe of nomads, inhabiting tree-dwellings, and communicating with each other in a speech at present unknown to any outside themselves. They wear no clothes, are diminutive of stature, mild and inoffensive in demeanour, very timid and retiring, and are covered with hair, and would delight the heart of a disciple of Darwin, or a philosopher, or student



of anthropology in search of the "missing link."

Much that has been said of the Sakalava applies to their immediate neighbours the Antsianaka. But of the Betsiléo in the south a somewhat different description is necessary. The Betsiléo more nearly resemble the Betsimisaraka, and are less given to war, and a wandering and unsettled life generally, than the north-west tribes. They have some of the martial ardour of the Sakalava, with a considerable pastoral and domestic preference in their character and disposition.

They were also reduced to subjection by the notorious Brady, of whom it is recorded that he gave orders, in his campaigns on behalf of the Hovas, that all the young men of the enemy were to be cut down as the army advanced, so that no hostile element should be left in their wake to endanger the safety of the invaders. When asked to give a standard for the guidance of the executioners of his atrocious order, he merely stretched out his arm, and directed that all who could not pass beneath it should be instantly slain. As he was a man of short stature, the slaughter was immense, but the effect was certain. The pride and power of the conquered people thus perished; and before the next generation grew up to take arms, the dominion

of the Hova was completely and firmly established. One brave old chief of the Betsiléó, however, resisted for many years the vanquisher of his clan, in his rock-protected fortress, to which he withdrew with his children and his immediate retainers, and whence he defied with bitter taunts the opposing forces for many years, although the latter had the formidable assistance of cannon and rockets. He only surrendered on receiving a promise that he should retain his rank and title; and this he did to the end of his days. Fiananantsoa, the chief town of the Betsiléó, in several points strongly resembles Antananarivo, the capital of Imérina. It is situated upon a long stony ridge of considerable elevation, and has already several large and imposing buildings, erected after European models, and is surrounded by beautiful scenery and rich and fertile plains.

The Malagasy are long-lived, and one is struck, in passing through their villages, by the number of old people to be seen at the doors of their dwellings, and enjoying the balmy atmosphere and the warm sunshine. This is partly due to their abstemious habits, simple diet, and active lives passed chiefly in the open air. Their indulgence in intoxicants to excess is a habit of recent origin, brought about by the introduction of a cheap and fiery rum from the Mauritius, which has a deadly effect upon the consumers in

a very brief space of time. The present Government has dealt with the matter, however, by putting into force a very stringent code of laws dealing with the whole question. This code makes it penal to sell, or even possess, spirits; but the evasion of the law is almost universal, in consequence of the difficulty of the native Government in dealing effectually with the servants and *employés* of the European and other settlers at the capital.

It is interesting to find that the English, centuries ago even, took great interest in Madagascar, and, in fact, talked of settling a colony there as early as the time of Charles II. Some portions of the island are still woefully degraded, and the inhabitants of these remote districts are still sunk in barbarism and ignorance; but it is right to say always in this connection, that wherever the central authority penetrates, then at once a great improvement takes place both in the physical and moral condition of the people.

The Antimora and the Tanala inhabiting the country south of the Betsimisaraka and Imérina, the central province, are still far behind the rest of the population. Hova traders have, however, circulated amongst these people; and when the Government is free again to direct its undivided attention to domestic affairs, efforts are to be made to reach the whole length and breadth of

the land by a judicious system of national education. The fabulous reports of the existence of rich deposits of mineral wealth, especially in the north-east, have always been a great attraction to the French and others; and there is a romantic tradition extant in the island of a Count Benyowsky, a Polish nobleman, who went, by permission of the authorities at Paris, to form a settlement in north Madagascar in 1773. His history is a remarkable one, and not without pathetic incidents, which reveal something of the true spirit and generosity of Malagasy character. He soon gained the confidence and affection of the natives by his gentleness, and truth, and evident sincerity. They became most attached to the stranger, whose distinguished presence and noble figure fascinated and charmed them, and they gradually laid hold of the idea that he was the son of one of their most famous but long-buried chiefs. We have no proof of any kind that Benyowsky encouraged this romantic idea, but the superstition grew and gained such hold of the people, that at length they went so far as to determine to offer him the crown of the island in a formal assembly of the people. They therefore invited him to a *kabáry*, or great gathering of the several tribes. When he arrived he found 50,000 people in solemn assembly, who immediately and silently ranged themselves round his

feet, circle by circle; they fell prostrate before him, and swore allegiance to him as king of Madagascar! He consented to become their monarch, and was beginning to draw up a legislative code for their better government, when an attack—prompted, doubtless, by jealousy—was made upon his settlement by the French in 1786, and Benyowsky was slain. But his memory is still cherished by the children of those who had sworn fealty to him, and a cairn of stones, raised by them, still marks the lonely burial-place of this friend of the people.

The Kimos are now extinct, and no traces of them can anywhere be found, although diligent and patient search has been made for any relics of them by modern explorers. They were a community of pigmies, little more than three feet high, and of very amiable disposition, excellent craftsmen, and given to industry. Former travellers make frequent allusions to them and their peculiarities; but they have now passed away, and their existence is only a tradition.

The vast number of slaves brought into the island by Arab traders from the African mainland for over two centuries, has given to the population on the west coast an almost African character entirely. The slaves, known familiarly in Madagascar as "Mozambiques," were much in demand for carrying purposes. They were

faithful, and in spite of their untoward circumstances, cheerful and industrious. Many of them have risen to high rank in the country by purchasing their own freedom, and making themselves useful to the Hova Government, and have thus shown again that there is nothing in the natural capabilities of the negro to prevent his becoming, with favourable surroundings and fair opportunities, an intelligent and useful member of any civilised community. The manumission of all who were either brought into the island, or who could trace their descent from any imported slaves even to the remotest period, was a bold measure on the part of the present Prime Minister, who, in conjunction with the late British Consul, Mr Pakenham, ever a true friend and counsellor to the native authorities, designed and carried out the manumission in the face of great opposition on the part of a considerable section of the native nobility. By this stroke of policy, however, the Prime Minister at once secured a new and powerful body of supporters and devoted adherents, who felt that they could not do less than give in their entire allegiance to a man who had dared to free them from the bonds of slavery, and had not even paused to consider the question of compensation to their masters.

That the "Mozambique" element in Malagasy

political life will make itself felt more and more as time passes, there can be no doubt. It is aggressive, patient, and sagacious, and already possesses wealth and influence, and under these conditions must soon possess a voice in local and domestic matters, which will be certain to be listened to with attention and respect. More than one of these people have already returned to their native country, carrying with them money, new ideas, some education, and a knowledge of other lands, and of people more advanced than themselves ; and in this—at present slender—current of emigration from Malagasy shores, we see the first signs of that condition of things, upon which we have already touched in these pages, when Madagascar will become the centre from which a well-organised system of commerce, a higher stage of civilisation, and a more extended wave of enlightenment and knowledge, shall flow over the whole of the African continent.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, PAST AND PRESENT.

ALTHOUGH surrounded by a dense cloud of superstition and ignorance, there is a marked contrast between the manners and customs of the natives of Madagascar and those of the inhabitants of the neighbouring continent of Africa. There is also an utter absence of those fearful atrocities which formerly were enacted by the barbarous aboriginals of New Zealand and the South Seas; and there is nothing, nor, as far as can be gathered, has there ever been in the island anything approaching the horrors of the holocausts of Dahomey or the "spear-washing" of the Kaffir tribes. Human life has, on the contrary, been always to a great extent respected, and, in the darkest days of heathendom, we only hear of human sacrifices being offered to a very limited extent—by a savage tribe in the south-east corner of the country. The terrible persecutions and wholesale massacres which disgraced the



reign of the first Ranavalona, were rather the outcome of violent paroxysms of political fear and religious fanaticism than an expression of the real mind and feeling of the Malagasy as a nation. It is remarkable that—notwithstanding the large area of the island, and the thinness of population, and the very limited communication which is kept up by the inhabitants of one district with those of other parts of the country—there is a marked similarity in the habits and manners of the natives.

In their domestic architecture, dress, speech, and family arrangements they differ very slightly; and this fact has been made the most of by those who hold that originally these people all came from one common stock. Infanticide prevailed to a large extent years ago, and even now the dread custom lingers in some remote places; but the crime is heavily punished wherever the perpetrators can be brought to justice. The superstition of lucky and unlucky days prevailed throughout all the tribes, and the unfortunate infants who came into the world on any of those days were immediately destroyed. The fearful trial by poison ordeal, or administration of the *tangéna*, was perhaps the most cruel and revolting practice with which the Malagasy, however, could be charged. The test was administered to prisoners accused of capital crimes, by command

of the sovereign or the judges of the native courts. The *tangéna* nut, which, although a deadly poison, only produces sickness if given in small quantities, was used for the purpose. The nut, or a portion of it, was inserted in the fruit of the banana, and thus swallowed by the wretched criminal. If retained by the stomach, a terrible and rapid death ensued, and the victim of the *tangéna* was pronounced to have been guilty of the crime of which he had been charged. If, however, the poison was ejected by sickness, the sentence of not guilty was awarded. Persons who were in danger of this trial by ordeal, were often induced by their friends to drink large quantities of cold water; and this, it is said, prevented the poison from acting deleteriously in any way, as it invariably produced nausea and the rejection of the deadly nut.

A pleasing feature of Malagasy life is the studied courtesy and hospitality shown to strangers. Throughout the island, and even in the most uncivilised parts, the duty of kindness and hospitality to strangers and friends alike is considered of the first importance. In journeying from one village to another, the traveller may always feel sure of a ready welcome and an ample meal. Each town, however obscure and unimportant, contains a good house, which is called the Queen's house, and which is always

placed at the disposal of passers-by for their use and enjoyment, free of any charge, by command of the central Government. This house is kept clean and in good repair by the chief man of the village, and this duty is part of the *fanampóana* or personal service rendered to the State in lieu of direct taxes. The ceremony of the *fanangénana*, or covenant of blood, as practised by the Malagasy, is peculiar. It prevails to a considerable extent even now amongst the Sea Dyaks of Borneo, and consists of a solemn vow of eternal friendship and mutual obligation, sealed by the act of solemnly partaking of each other's blood by the two contracting parties—by which act they become brothers or members of the same family. A small puncture is made in the breast, in the region of the heart, and the smallest quantity of blood possible suffices for the ceremony. But its effect is binding and life-long, and its obligations are always observed by the Malagasy with the most profound respect and care.

The betrothal of children prevails here as in India and elsewhere in the East, and they are often engaged long before they can understand the nature of their engagement, such arrangements being made by the parents for family reasons, and for the purpose of keeping together the possessions of the tribe. The Malagasy are

much given to festivity, and the betrothal of a daughter is always the occasion for a great display of good-nature and friendliness on the part of the parents. A dowry invariably accompanies the bride whatever her circumstances may be, but this has to be returned to her parents again in the event of a divorce being obtained in after-years. In Madagascar the woman is always regarded as the helpmate of the man; but she receives much honour and attention, and her position in the household is certain, and her influence, as amongst European nations, often very considerable.

The royal dignity is not confined to one sex, and the fact that the present sovereign is the fourth woman who has occupied the throne, shows how Malagasy women are regarded, and contrasts most favourably with the condition of miserable drudgery and abject slavery which is their lot in most barbarous and even semi-civilised countries. She is not scorned as essentially inferior to man, and therefore unfit to share his counsels or responsibilities, as is the case in the East generally; but she enters into her husband's cares and joys, and shares his life, in fact, much in the same way that a wife does amongst us. Divorce is much too frequent, and is too freely granted, upon any pretext almost, and upon the most trivial grounds; but the change of public opinion of late years,

with the gradual growth of knowledge, and the customs of other nations, have already had considerable effect in this matter, and will ultimately, it is hoped, reduce the evil within very small limits. As in India, the marriage of persons of different rank has always been contrary to the national idea and feeling. For instance, the *andriana* or noble, however poor, must only marry a member of the same clan, and a Hova must only unite with a Hova, or the citizen with a person of the same class, and so on. A free-man must not espouse a slave-woman; or if he does so, he is bound to redeem her, and make her his equal in social position. If afterwards judicially parted from her husband, she retains this freedom. In this, as in several other customs, as will be shown, the Malagasy resemble the Jews. Marriages take place at a very early age, frequently soon after twelve. These people do not as a rule have large families, and a considerable portion are childless. Children are therefore much prized by the Malagasy. The native mother carries her infant upon her back, and not in her arms, as elsewhere; and there is a very pleasant usage amongst the grown-up sons and daughters, who gather together from different parts of the country at each New Year, to visit their homes and parents, and to present the mother with a small gift called *fôfon domôsina*—

fragrance of the back—in remembrance of their infancy, and the trouble and anxiety she then underwent on their account. To a very limited extent indeed, and chiefly in the more distant parts of the island, polygamy still exists. It is but fair to the central Government to say, however, that every discouragement is shown towards this mode of life, especially amongst all persons holding any official position. The custom of the son taking over the wives of his father, on succeeding to the headship of the family, is now entirely abolished. Although considerably modified of late years, there is yet room for much improvement in the enactments of the law of divorce. One of its most cruel features as it now stands is that a man can, under certain circumstances, so divorce his wife that she is unable ever to marry again. The practice of adopting children is frequent, in consequence of so many marriages being fruitless. Family names are unknown in Madagascar, and persons are usually known as the “son of” or “father of” others. For instance, the present prime minister is called “Rainilaiarivony,” which, however, only means the father of “Laiarivony,” “Rain” signifying father, the remainder of the word being the name of his first-born. The names of animals are often given to the children of even the best families; and we meet with “Mamba,” the crocodile—

"Voalavo," the rat — "Totosy," the mouse — "Omby," the ox,—and so on. Of late years, however, an improvement has taken place in the matter of personal nomenclature, and the names of Mary, David, John, Caleb, Henry, &c., with the native "Ra" as a prefix, testify to the improved taste of the Malagasy in naming their children.

The houses of the Malagasy are by no means the miserable, comfortless huts persons might imagine them to be. As a rule, they are built only of leaves and the branches of the *rofia* palm, and the walls and roof fastened together by thongs formed of the twisted tendrils of some forest creeper; but they are very cosy and comfortable, and in Imérina the wood dwellings are even substantial, with two storeys, and a sleeping-chamber in the roof. It is only lately that houses built of dried clay, brick, or stone have been allowed in the capital and the chief towns of Imérina. The palaces formerly were constructed of a kind of teak of great hardness and durability. On the coast the ribs of the *rofia* palm and its leaves afford all the material necessary for the erection of a suitable and commodious dwelling. No chairs or tables are used, but the inmates usually sit and partake of their meals upon the floor, which is first cleanly swept, and then covered with finely woven rush-mats. No knives

or spoons are employed, but a kind of cup, twisted deftly out of a piece of green leaf, serves all the purposes of these articles of domestic comfort in use amongst ourselves. The smoke finds vent through the door or windows, and in course of years the roof becomes festooned with spiders' webs and soot, which are never on any account disturbed. These are regarded by the natives as marks of honour, as they are supposed to show the age of the family, and the number of years the particular dwelling has been occupied by themselves and their ancestors. The progress of time is reckoned by the age and phases of the moon; and the Malagasy have a very ingenious plan for marking the various periods of the day from sunrise to sunset, by pointing the finger to different elevations of the sky, which mark the stages of the sun's progress. For instance, if they wish to speak of noon, they raise the finger vertically overhead; if of evening, they point low down to the western horizon, as the spot where, as they express it, the sun dies. If afternoon is meant, they take a point midway between these; and the clear blue sky, which is seldom altogether clouded, makes it possible to follow this system with tolerable accuracy. The natives are very early risers, and they are astir and commencing their daily employment soon after "cock-crow" in the morning. This is about four o'clock, or



even earlier ; and the crowing cock is an invariable adjunct to a Malagasy family, being accommodated with a perch inside the house, or on the rafters just above the sleeping-place of the head of the family.

The intense heat in the middle of the day necessitates these early habits. From eleven o'clock to three in the day all activity ceases, and all who can do so retreat to the shade of their houses for refreshment and rest.

Strangers on their first visit to Madagascar will possibly be startled occasionally by the spectacle of some miserable-looking and poorly clad wretch hobbling along through the streets, with iron shackles about his ankles, and attached to a roughly fashioned iron girdle, which galls the flesh terribly at times, and is riveted about his waist. This is one of the convicted felons. The tottering wretch is generally carrying a bundle of firewood or perhaps merchandise upon his shoulders, and is altogether one of the most repulsive sights to be witnessed either in Madagascar or in the world, in these days of advance in social science and in the methods of treatment of the poor and the degraded residuum of society. The more humane treatment of its criminal classes is a point we would in all friendliness press upon the Hova Government, as well for the sake of the community at large as the prisoners themselves ;

and surely the missionaries and apostles of humanity who have influence at the capital, might find in this work a most congenial and useful field for the exercise of their religious and philanthropic zeal. So far as we know, there is no mission as yet organised to the *prisoners* of Madagascar; but we venture to think that such an effort, carried out by even one zealous and single-hearted man, with the spirit of John Howard in his breast, would be most useful, and would be gladly welcomed by the degraded outcasts, who in many cases stand sadly in need of true sympathy and tender treatment. In one respect the convict system of the island differs from any probably which prevails elsewhere, in the amount of liberty allowed to the prisoner. The Government only provides a sleeping-place for the convicts to herd in at nightfall. After conviction they are shackled by the public executioner, as we have described, and assigned to the charge of some prison-keeper. They then proceed to find employment in the ordinary way, as they have to provide their own food and raiment, and support their own families as usual; but each night at sunset they have to return to the fixed location or prison to which they have been assigned, and report themselves to the officer in charge. Some few of the convicts, however, who have friends in high places,

and are under life sentences, obtain, through monetary or personal influence, a considerable relaxation of the rules of even this very modified criminal code, and are allowed to live in a house apart from the common prison, with their wives and slaves and families, and to carry on trades, or engage in agricultural pursuits. But the condition of the poorer prisoners, who happen to be friendless and without means, and who have in consequence to use the prison, and live as best they can, is deplorable in the extreme. They are often desperate characters, and victims of intoxication; and being neglected by all classes, they become reckless and daring, and sometimes take advantage of the mistaken leniency of the Government to remove their chains, and flee to the forest fastnesses, where they form themselves into bands, and prey upon any travellers or bearers of merchandise who may fall in their way. But as the punishment for this crime of breaking prison is death, and the chances of ultimate escape exceedingly precarious, these cases are rare.

The manners of the Malagasy deserve commendation. Like the natives of our Indian empire, the native of Madagascar is always reserved, courteous, and exceedingly well-behaved. The coast tribes are perhaps less dignified than the Hovas, and are more remarkable for their hilarity

and good-nature; but the entire population may be described as showing what we in England would call the points of good-breeding; and even the most ragged and tattered slave possesses a natural dignity and ease of manner, which contrasts favourably with the rude conduct and boorish manners of the lower class at home. No one would think of passing another upon the road without saying, "Allow me to pass, sir;" to which the usual reply is, "Pray proceed, sir." Then follow a number of inquiries: "How are you?" "How is it with you?" &c.; "May you reach the end of your journey safely and happily," &c.; and finally, the expression "Velóma"—"Fare you well"—and "May you live to a good old age," conclude the greetings.

The people are very temperate in their habits, except where they have come into contact with Europeans and Creoles; and their food is principally rice and manioc root, with boiled herbs, or fowl and beef cooked with the rice. Large quantities of gold and silver fish are caught in the streams near the capital, and are sold in the markets for food; but they, strange to say, are not appreciated, as they possess a muddy, insipid flavour. Tropical fruits and vegetables of all kinds abound. The poor people sometimes eat a small species of the locust,

which they catch with their hands, and roast, after blowing away the wings and legs.

There is no coinage in the country; but the currency consists of pieces of American and French dollars, cut up and weighed in tiny scales, a pair of which every person carries with him. The smallest weight represents the money value of one-twentieth of an English halfpenny. The people are very careful in the use of these scales, and sometimes will waste half an hour in arranging a bargain and weighing out the value of the purchase, which may be only a *voaména*, or twopence of our money.

The Malagasy are thrifty, self-denying, and given to amassing wealth, which often is hidden, on account of the grasping character of the central authorities till very lately, who were credited, and with some show of reason, with the detestable practice of fabricating charges against their wealthy subjects in order to squeeze their possessions from them in the shape of exorbitant and incessant fines. Justice, till the rise of the present prime minister, was bought and sold; and the poorest litigant almost always lost his cause. Bribery and false swearing prevailed to a terrible extent; and even now, we may say with abundant truth, that the fountain of justice is not always pure. Lying is a popular weakness amongst the Malagasy, and is too often

indulged in on the side of the strong against the feeble—their natural sagacity and fear leading them to ally themselves rather with the powers that be, or are likely to be, than with the power that was, and is not likely to be able to reassert itself; and this without any regard as to the abstract right or wrong of the matter about which they take sides. But in this unenviable weakness of the national character of the Malagasy they resemble closely all the Eastern nations,—the duplicity and cunning which their best friends have to deplore in them being the natural result of centuries of superstition, ignorance, and submission to the rule of tyrannical despots, with whom the spy system has always been a necessity, and who have thus become responsible for the moral degradation which follows inevitably upon a common disregard for the principles of truth and honour. As the Government, however, has strengthened itself in Madagascar, and has given greater protection and security to property and life, this vice of prevarication and want of veracity has become weaker; and there are hopeful signs on all sides, and among all classes, that truth is being more respected for its own sake, and that the people begin to appreciate the real power and strength and comfort which a mutual confidence in each other engenders.

It may be remarked that in the matter of dress

not much is really required, as the climate is warm, and in some districts extremely hot. One large flowing robe, about the size of a counterpane, and made either of cotton or a coarse kind of hemp, which is formed from the fibres of the *rofia* palm, is, as a rule, all that the men wear, with the exception of a long full girdle of the same material. The women have a skirt, and sometimes neat bodice, in addition to the all-prevailing *lamba*, which is the national dress of the people, and is worn by all sections of the community, varying only in the costliness of the material and the fineness of the manufacture. The cloth is worn very gracefully at all times, and it is put on in many different fashions, to suit particular occasions and places. The upper classes are gradually adopting the European style of dress, with long hats, and even dress-coats for State occasions; but this is much to be regretted, at least on the ground of effect, as the *lamba* of the Malagasy is a most artistic and becoming article of attire, and, when properly put on, is very striking and picturesque.

The amusements of the Malagasy are very simple in character, and few in number. They have no sports in any way resembling the athletic exercises of Europeans; and they seem to prefer sitting at their doors, or in some public place, hearing or telling some new thing,

to expending their energies, or bracing their somewhat attenuated limbs by strong healthy recreation. Formerly they indulged in the pleasures of the chase to a limited extent; and Radama I. was fond of boar-hunting; but the only prevailing diversion appears to be what is called *mamely-diamanga*, and simply consists in kicking at an antagonist backwards, like a mule or horse. A game much resembling draughts is a common recreation amongst the Betsimisaraka. It is played with stones or beans, on a board, or piece of smooth stone or clay, having thirty-two divisions or holes.

The Malagasy are very musical, and singing is a favourite pastime with them everywhere: their idea of harmony is almost perfect; and the wild and often plaintive beauty of their improvised melodies is most affecting. The only instrument they possess is the *valiha*, or native harp. They read music very readily: the tonic sol-fa system seems to be most preferred; and there are some large classes, consisting of hundreds of members, always in full practice at Antananarivo and the larger centres.

The practice of circumcision is universal, and is carried out in its details with great care and festivity, and is another sign of the Asiatic origin of these people. It is, however, a social rather than a religious ceremony amongst the Malagasy,



and is commendable at least on sanitary grounds. The "covenant of blood," already described, is also doubtless of Asiatic origin; at least its existence cannot be traced elsewhere than in Madagascar and Polynesia.

The institution of "taboo" exists extensively amongst the Malagasy under the name of *fady*, and each family has its own particular articles of diet and places of resort which are *fady*, or not to be touched or visited on penalty of death or destruction by some dire calamity. These things were originally forbidden the head of the tribe or clan by the idol-keepers or *mpanao ody*, witch-doctors, and they have ever since been avoided by their descendants. What is *fady* to one family, however, may be quite harmless and even necessary to others. For instance, manioc is tabooed to one clan, beef to another, and to another the use of the foreign or imported articles—and so on. Tobacco is grown and used in the island, in the shape of snuff, which is placed in the mouth under the tongue, and not in the nose, as with Europeans. The powder, after being retained a few minutes, is ejected, and a fresh supply taken.

The subject of domestic slavery cannot be overlooked in treating of the customs of these people. The system prevails throughout the island, and was not affected in any degree by

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the generous manumission of all slaves of Mozambique origin, which took place a few years ago. A great proportion of the whole population of over 4,000,000 are slaves. But the slavery of Madagascar is not to be compared with that of the West Indies or America in years past. The domestic slaves are not torn from other lands by violence, and imported into the markets of the island. They are born on the soil, and now have rights and privileges secured them by legal enactments. The slave is treated often with the greatest kindness, confidence, and respect, and is regarded as a member of his master's family; he is, moreover, allowed to follow his own inclinations, and even to go away for long periods to seek employment in distant parts of the island, provided always that he remits a portion of his earnings at regular intervals to his master. A man may be sold into bondage by his creditors, with his wife and children, or he may be enslaved with his family for some political offences. But the laws and regulations with reference to this important part of the community have been amended frequently in the direction of mercy and justice during the past few years, and the position and prospects of the slaves, as well as their general treatment, have considerably improved. This improvement will, in the natural order of things, continue doubtless till the whole population is

free and slavery entirely abolished. A slave may now redeem himself or his friends by a money payment, and the master is bound to accept a reasonable offer from the man himself for his own or his wife or child's redemption.

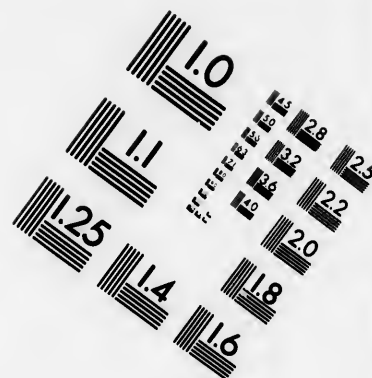
Some interesting particulars as to the condition of slaves in Madagascar in 1702 may be gleaned from the life of Robert Drury, an English lad, son of a London tavern-keeper. The boy ran away from home, and joined an East India-man, which was afterwards wrecked upon the south-east coast of that island. Drury was enslaved by the natives, who kept him in bondage for many years. He at length, however, effected his escape, and was taken off the island by a friendly vessel; but, as is too often the case, his own bitter experience of the miseries of slavery did not seem to develop in him any feelings of commiseration for the sorrows of others, for we find that he afterwards returned to the coast of Madagascar as a slave-dealer himself.

## CHAPTER V.

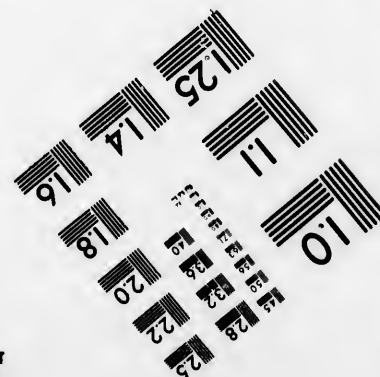
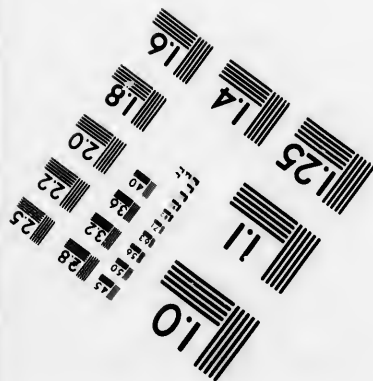
## RITES AND CEREMONIES, CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS.

In describing the rites and ceremonies, civil and religious, peculiar to Madagascar, we have, in the first place, to consider the *fandróana*, the great annual feast of the country, and the beginning of the Malagasy new year. The history of its original institution is lost in obscurity. The year of the Malagasy is about eleven days shorter than our own, so that the celebration of this festival falls in every one of our months, but eleven days earlier each year. The rejoicings and ceremonies continue over a period of five days, and are so arranged that the most important, or sacred day, falls in the middle of the celebration, and must always be either a Sunday or Thursday. During the *fandróana*, all labour of every kind is suspended, and from end to end of the island, even in the remotest villages and hamlets, there is dancing and feasting and exchange of friendly greetings and visits. It is customary for all





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persons at this time to pay a visit of ceremony to parents, superiors, and the palace of the sovereign, with some kind of present, varying in value according to the social status of the giver. Vast herds of fat oxen are slaughtered in and about the capital at this time, and slaves are seen passing in all directions bearing huge masses of beef, as presents of the *fandrôana*, from the palace to the strangers and other residents in the city or suburbs. The scene on the first day of the festival is most imposing. Representatives of all the various tribes and families of the people, arrayed in holiday *lambas*, robes of coloured stripes, and often of silk or other rich material, assemble and proceed in procession to the *rôva*, or palace, and present *hásina*, as a sign of subjection and submission to the central authority. This *hásina* is always presented in interviews with the Government, and generally consists of a new silver dollar or gold piece, which is received and acknowledged by one of the officers in attendance on behalf of her Majesty. Foreigners, as well as natives, follow this custom of presenting *hásina* as a recognition of the sovereignty and protection of the Hova Government. On the first day of the *fandrôana* (1864), when the deputies of the people arrived at the palace, her Majesty Ranavalona II., the late Queen, was seen occupying her usual place on the balcony at



the end of the palace, with the sign of royalty, the red umbrella, extended over her. As the *fandróana* is a peculiarly Malagasy commemoration, it is always directed that everything European should be put aside, and that nothing but native customs and attire should be adopted. The Queen on this occasion wore a native robe of great beauty and simplicity, white, with the royal fringe all around it. Sitting there in state, surrounded by her officers and chief ministers, she received the homage of her people, who crowded the courtyard below the balcony, with their presents of rice, honey, nuts, offerings of money, and immense bundles of firewood. The latter is a sensible provision for the enormous amount of extra cooking which is done at the *fandróana*. On the eve of the great day of the feast, just before sunset, a small fire of dry grass is lighted in every courtyard, and the boys fasten torches of dry grass to long sticks, and perambulate the streets of the city with them. The effect is very pretty when viewed from the higher points of the capital. These fires are apparently a relict of some system of fire-worship, which originated in Eastern Asia, and is still practised by the Parsees.

This is the real commencement of the new year; and amid the firing of cannon and the congratulations of the people, the Queen appears

again upon the balcony of her palace, and cries to her people, "Sám-ba, sám-ba, no trá-tra harí-va, taóna!" ("We have reached the eve of the new year, happy! happy!")—to which her subjects reply by shouts of "Trarantitra!" ("May you reach a good old age!") The Queen then passes along the balcony, and from a horn in her hand sprinkles the crowd, which sprinkling is said to typify an abundance of rain during the coming year. There is much that is Jewish in their observance of this season, and it is evident that many of the ceremonies are derived, if not from Jewish sources, at least from traditions of a very remote antiquity. It may be interesting in this connection to say that there is a tribe in the south, which was visited some years ago for the first time, who are called in Malagasy, "Zanaka-Ibraim" (Sons of Abraham). Many of their words are Hebrew Malagasy, and they also use some of the Hebrew letters in their writings, and retain many Jewish traditions amongst them to this day. The fact, however, that they have retained their name unchanged, is perhaps the most remarkable, as that evidently points to an origin neither Polynesian nor African, but most probably Arabian or Abyssinian. The sprinkling of blood upon the door-posts and lintel of the houses, and, in some cases, suspending a rush or bunch of grass dipped in blood over the entrance

—an observance now almost discontinued—has also a striking resemblance to the great act of the Jewish Passover. The festival of the *fandrôana* used to be marked by great licentiousness; but in this, as so many other matters, there has been a great change in the direction of civilisation and propriety.

Perhaps one of the most distressing sights in the island is the number of lepers upon the road from the capital to the country residence of the Queen at Ambohimanga. These miserable creatures dwell by themselves in villages of wretched huts away from the Hova towns, and they subsist by begging from the passers-by. They are not allowed to approach the *filanjana*, but they place small baskets by the wayside, into which the traveller casts money or food, and these are removed by the unhappy victims of disease after the donors have passed on.

The Malagasy entertain great respect for their dead. They also seem to fear them to a considerable extent; and a great deal of their wealth is often expended, in the case of sickness or trouble befalling themselves or their families, in sacrificing oxen at the tombs of their ancestors, to propitiate them and appease their wrath, as they consider any calamity a sure sign of the displeasure of their forefathers. As with the Jews, an idea of uncleanness is connected with the dead; and it is

unlawful for any one who has been near a corpse to enter a royal palace or to approach the presence for at least a month. The ruling idea of the Malagasy is that the *angatra*, or spirits of the departed, still have power in the affairs of the world and everyday life; and their religious system seems built up in great measure upon this central article of belief. Their view of God is indefinite and vague, and partakes more of the nature of an opinion than a belief, God being to them more a principle than a person perhaps. The spirits of the dead are supposed still to hover about the tombs, and even to revisit their former homes; and it is customary in great floods or downpours of rain for the people to beat the sides of their houses with great violence, to drive away, as they say, the *angatra* or spirits who may be seeking to re-enter and shelter themselves beneath the ancestral roof. They do not appear to have any very definite idea of future rewards and punishments, and there is no national religious idea prevalent amongst the people, but each family appears to have its own peculiar form of belief and set of idols or *sampys*. These, however, are not worshipped as having power in themselves, but are regarded as charms to defend the home or wearer from evil, and are venerated as having been so used by the family for many generations. The first duty of a Malagasy is to be on good

terms with his departed kinsfolk, and it is no uncommon thing to find a native laying out more money upon his family tomb than upon his own house. In some parts of the country the headstones are carefully wrapped year by year with new *lambas* and anointed with oil, and invocations made by the whole assembled clan to the departed. As soon as a man takes to himself a wife, he sets about preparing his tomb, which often occupies him for years. It is usual to bury with the body any articles which may happen to have been particularly valued by the deceased during his lifetime, and clothes, watches, accordions, books, and pictures are often placed upon the coffin before closing the vault. Above the royal tombs a small chamber is erected, and always kept in perfect order, and furnished with a table, chair, and vessels containing rice, beef, and wine. These are replenished at intervals by slaves whose duty it is to attend to these matters. These provisions are thus arranged in readiness for the refreshment of the spirit of the dead monarch, which is supposed at intervals to seek rest and refreshments in this chamber. Years ago it was the custom, on the death of a chief, to keep the corpse unburied for sometimes thirty days, or as long as the relatives could afford to sustain the funeral ceremonies. The body was then wrapped in numerous folds of silk or cotton

*lamba*, and placed in the *fasana*, which on the coast consists of a hollowed tree. The coffin is then conveyed to the forest with shoutings and tumult, and placed beside the remains of the deceased relatives upon the ground. No grave is dug, but a fence of stakes is erected around the spot to preserve the remains from the attacks of wild animals. In the central province the tombs are of stone, and more elaborately prepared and garnished.

Upon the death of a sovereign the whole nation goes into mourning, and every person has to shave his head and uncover the shoulders, and wear a blue or dark-purple *lamba* for a long period. The people are expected to assume a dejected appearance, and to meet daily at the house of the chief man in every village and town throughout the island to bewail for a stated time the departure of their king or queen. Upon the decease of a man of wealth, all his slaves repair to the courtyard of his residence and wail for hours, with streaming eyes and flowing hair, uttering most melancholy cries, expressive of bereavement and despair. At a given signal these cries are hushed, and are quickly succeeded by shouts of laughter and glee, as all prepare to partake of the funeral feast.

The serpent is honoured by the people in some parts of the island with a superstitious

awe, founded upon the extraordinary belief that the spirits of their fathers often inhabit the forms of the reptiles after they leave the body. This horrible idea is very strong amongst the Betsiléó; and not many years ago a Roman priest, in the excess of his zeal, and to show the people, as he thought, the folly of this idea, visited a house in which a large serpent from a neighbouring forest was a daily and a welcome guest. The creature used to come to the door of the dwelling at regular periods of the day and receive its meal of milk. It was addressed by the family it visited by name, and, in fact, treated as one of themselves. The good priest presented himself at the house one day just as the serpent was creeping up to the door. Seeing the infatuation of the people, he seized a stout club and struck the hideous beast a deadly blow. The whole country rose against him, however, and he had to flee for his life. Many of the Betsiléó families have small enclosures near their dwellings, where they maintain numbers of these reptiles, and regard them still as being in a way family connections.

The natives are very reticent as to the practices of the country in former years, and it is exceedingly difficult to get at the facts with regard to the idols which were publicly destroyed in 1869 by royal decree. These people

were never idolaters, probably, in the sense in which the term is applied to the Hindoos or the Chinese. There is an absence throughout the land of temples dedicated to idol-worship, or of signs and marks of the prevalence of outward superstitious observances upon a large scale. Their idols, so called, were not images; they had no organised worship, no definite ritual, no settled priesthood. There were no pilgrimages, penances, self-mortifications, or costly sacrifices. There were ten or twelve principal idols held in respect by the Hovas and the people of the central provinces, and of these, three were regarded as chief. One, Kelimaláza, was considered the guardian of royalty; then came Ramahavaly, the benefactor of the sick; and Rafantaka, the special protector of the royal palaces and family. As to the forms of these idols it is difficult to speak, as they were never exhibited in public, but when carried out were always covered with a red cloth, and it was considered wrong even for the people to look at this. It is believed, however, that some of the idols had some rude resemblance to the human form. They were of no great size, and were kept in boxes of about a foot long, which were placed in the houses set apart for the idols. It is supposed that one of the gods was an insect of some kind, or an imitation of one, and another



was said to be a meteoric stone. Whenever brought out in public the idols were fixed to the top of a long pole, and carried beneath a covering of velvet. These coverings were often ornamented with silver chains and objects in the shape of crocodiles' teeth. As the idol passed along, the people stood by the roadside with bared heads, in an attitude of respect. An eyewitness of one of these processions says: "In the latter part of the way I was behind the idols, and at one time quite surrounded by them. They were about thirteen in number, and were carried on tall slender poles, about ten feet high. There was in most of them little resemblance to anything in heaven or in earth; dirty pieces of silver chain, silver balls, from the size of a marble to that of a hen's egg, pieces of coral or bone, or silver ornaments, intended to represent sharks' teeth, with narrow strips of cloth, one or two feet long; some of them half concealed under what might have been a cap of liberty or an old red night-cap, and others tied up in a bag of native cloth or small rush-basket. Such were the objects on which the security and prosperity of the nation was formerly supposed to depend."

These are now, however, numbered amongst the things of the past. An attempt by the keepers of these objects of superstition to assert

their authority at the palace during the raging of an epidemic brought about their final destruction. Whilst the keepers were kept at the palace, whither they had gone to present their complaints in person of the growing neglect of the ancient deities, the prime minister ordered certain officers to ride off to the villages round the capital, where the idols were kept, and destroy them by burning. This was done, and on the return of their keepers they found no vestige of either idol or house remaining. Experience teaches that ancient superstitions die hard, and there are frequent instances of this in Madagascar, as in distant parts of the island and in obscure corners of it there are yet to be seen the lingering remains of these old systems of belief. But, with the progress of education and the influence of European example and intercourse with other nations, the death-blow has been given to idolatry in Madagascar.

Upon the west coast, amongst the Sakalava, a Mohammedan propaganda has been at work for some years, and with a considerable amount of success. Numbers of the Malagasy have adopted the faith of the prophet of Mecca, and there are several mosques in the large towns. This singular circumstance is worthy of note, in that it is almost the only instance in these days in which Mohammedanism comes before the world

as an aggressive system. The influence of the Arabs has always been extensive, however, on the west, and to this it is probably due that the people have embraced the faith of Mohammed in considerable numbers. In the early days of Radama I., the Arab influence at the capital was very considerable; and when Europeans first arrived in 1818, they found that several of the Malagasy had already learned Arabic, and Radama I. had some idea of making that language the medium of communication between his people and the outer world beyond the seas. Thus by the timely arrival of the English artisans and teachers with the first English consul, at that period Madagascar was in all probability saved from becoming a Mohammedan power.

In February 1863, a remarkable mania broke out in the south-west of the island, called the *imanenjána*, or dancing mania. It gradually approached Antananarivo, and in March of the same year it became quite common. A kind of infection for dancing seized the people, and this spread to the remotest villages, and even to solitary cottages in the most out-of-the-way places in Imérina, to which province, however, it was confined. The public mind was greatly excited at the time by the acts of Radama II., who had placed himself and the country almost altogether in the hands of the French. A strong

anti-Christian and anti-foreign feeling had arisen, and this strange epidemic was looked upon by the native Christians as a kind of demoniacal possession. The lower classes were chiefly, but not solely, affected by it, and the great majority of victims were young women. There were, however, many men amongst the dancers, but mostly of the lower orders of society. Scarcely any of the native Christians came under its influence—no doubt, partly because the general spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction and fear did not disturb them so much. The tombs or sacred places were favourite resorts of the dancers, who kept their bodies in motion for hours, to the music of a low monotonous chant. Sometimes great excitement and muscular agitation accompanied the exercises, leaving the patient afterwards exhausted for days, and in some cases permanently prostrated. This disease, known as choreomania, is familiar to physicians, and is the result of pent-up passion and excitement. The child-pilgrimages of the thirteenth century in Europe, towards the end, began to assume some of the characteristics of choreomania, and the visitation may always be connected with the disturbance of national prejudices—political or religious. Few really fatal cases resulted, however. It is possible, and indeed it is allowed by an eyewitness of the

whole progress of this strange epidemic in Imérina, that a certain amount of imposture was practised. But the eminent physician who supplied the facts upon which these references are based, and who had to deal practically with the sufferers from the mania, maintains that there could be no question as to the serious reality of the whole phenomenon.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A CANOE VOYAGE ALONG THE EAST COAST LAKES.

THE entire absence of roads in Madagascar makes travelling a matter often of danger, but always one of inconvenience and difficulty, especially to Europeans. The native Government have neglected to open up, or in any way provide means of access to the interior, as they consider that to facilitate the admission of large numbers of foreigners to the seat of power would prepare the way for aggression and ultimate conquest of their island. The inhabitants are very tenacious of their right to be considered the supreme and sole possessors of the whole of Madagascar; and they have again and again repeated of late their determination to submit to any privations or suffering rather than yield up one foot of territory to the French or any other nation.

There are two means by which persons or merchandise can be conveyed in Madagascar—

viz., the canoe or *lakana*, and the *filanjána* or palanquin.

Walking for any distance is almost impossible to foreigners, on account of the intricacy of the paths, which wind in and out through the forests, across the beds of rivers and mountain torrents, and along the sea-shores—and also on account of the extreme heat of the climate in the lowlands. The *filanjána* is the more pleasant vehicle, and consists of a chair slung between two stout poles about eight feet long, and carried by four sinewy *borazana*, or bearers. Each *filanjána* generally has two sets of bearers, and they pass it from one to the other at intervals of about ten minutes. They keep up a good swinging pace for hours, and seldom seem much fatigued, even after a journey of thirty miles. The *lakana*, or canoe, is a heavy “dug-out,” and is not so agreeable, on account of its narrowness and slowness of motion. These are, however, the sole means of transit which are available for the natives of the east coast for the navigation and passage of their beautiful lakes, which reach from Tamatave to a distance of about 300 miles south of Andévoranto, the ancient capital of the coast tribe, which stands at the mouth of the noble Ihároka, one of the largest and most important rivers on the coast, and along which all the traffic has to pass from

Tamatave and abroad to the capital. This chain of lakes is one of the most peculiar and interesting physical features of the island, as they follow from end to end the line of the sea-shore; and whilst at some points they are four or five miles distant from the coast, at others only a few feet of sand separates their waters from those of the Indian Ocean. The lakes have not, however, an uninterrupted course, and stretches of land intervene, varying from a mile to a hundred yards across. Over these the *lakana* has to be carried, and this frequent change from the *filanjana* to the boat makes this mode of travelling tedious at times, especially in the wet season. It was one of the great schemes of Radama I. to dig through these obstacles, and thus complete an uninterrupted communication; and he visited the coast in person at the head of a vast concourse of people to carry out the work. Crowds of natives from all parts assembled in obedience to his command—each furnished with a considerable store of provisions, and the rude implements used by these people for agricultural purposes. He directed that no one should be permitted to return home or leave the locality on any pretence till the projected cuttings were finished. The plan was a bold and at the same time sagacious conception, and worthy of the practical and energetic mind of the founder of



the Hova dynasty. There can be no doubt as to the enormous impetus and encouragement which would have been given to commerce and trade in the island, and especially in the inland provinces, at present so difficult of access, if this project of uniting these lakes had been successfully carried out, as a convenient outlet would thus have been provided for the rapid and cheap transport of produce from the more remote districts to the seaports and the various home and foreign markets, which is now not of sufficient value to bear the exorbitant cost of transit.

Radama had been at work some time when the whole undertaking was suddenly abandoned. It is a matter of tradition that one day, as the people were digging, human cries issued from the trench, and blood was seen to ooze forth at the same spot. This was reported to the king, who took counsel with his idol-keepers. They declared—as the native oracles had, and still have, an eccentric habit of doing—that this idea of a canal being new was therefore undesirable, and that these were unmistakable signs of the anger and disapproval of the gods; and he, rather weakly we think, decided to proceed no further at that time with his project of uniting the lakes.

The scenery around these magnificent sheets

of water resembles very much the glades and shady nooks of an English park, and in passing along beneath the ample foliage and through the sequestered bits of forest, it is difficult at times not to imagine one's self in Devonshire or the Chatsworth district. In journeying down south along these lakes it is always necessary to make careful and even elaborate provision for food and shelter *en route*, before commencing the journey. The villages are few and scattered, and the supplies to be obtained in them scarce or inferior, and one or two days are generally occupied before starting in engaging bearers, repacking baggage, storing canteens, and looking to the cords of hammocks, and the supplies of light, salt, and flour,—three indispensable requisites for a Malagasy tour. These preliminary and necessary arrangements have to be made at Tamatave, and present no features calling for special remark, if we except the all-important and most perplexing item of choosing your bearers. In this matter there is often a sharp, and, to the onlookers, amusing contest between native wit and European obstinacy. The traveller offers a sum per day per man, which is probably quite fair and reasonable enough, and may even in some cases be considerably in advance of the usual *karama*, or wages; but from sheer love of bargaining and debate, the offer is at

first refused with some show of indignation and scorn, and one by one the crowd of *maromita* (bearers) rise with solemn face, and casting their ragged hempen *lamba* about them with all the air of an old nobility, they stalk off and disappear, and the newly arrived and terribly anxious visitor to the island thinks, doubtless, that he has achieved his first false step, and failed utterly in his method of dealing with the native character. Nothing of the kind. In Madagascar the virtue to acquire is patience. There it is doubly true that "everything comes to the man who waits." But it is just this waiting for everything and everybody which annoys and exasperates the ever-active and volatile foreigner, especially for the first few months of his life amongst the Malagasy. And in his innate disposition to press forward and be doing something, and his strong disinclination to wait, he is at a great disadvantage in all his dealings with the natives. They tire him out, and gain their point, and he succumbs at length, although he despises himself for so doing; and the light-hearted and mirthful manner in which the *maromita*, having gained the victory in the matter of pay, begin to carry out their part of the contract with a sudden display of good feeling which is overwhelming to the uninitiated, is doubly irritating to the superior intelligence of the *vazaba* (stranger),

who has, however, to accept the inevitable with the best grace he can, and proceed on the initial step of his first journey in the new country, haunted by the humiliating consciousness that he has been outwitted by the dark-skinned and unclad, but clear-headed and good-tempered barbarians, who trot cheerfully by his side, and whom he has previously been disposed, perhaps, to despise. But these men, although keen enough in making contracts, are, as a rule, thoroughly honest, and true to the terms of agreement when once made. They are faithful to their temporary masters, and render them all kinds of little services outside the usual duties of a *maromûta*. To ladies and children they are especially well-mannered ; and it is very pleasant to see a rough sturdy fellow come up to the side of the *filanjâna* of some fever-worn and weary lady on the journey down from Imérina, and hand in a magnificent bouquet of orchids and lady-fern, which he has gathered along the forest paths, with all the grace and courtesy of a high-born gentleman. Goods or money intrusted to them are always safe ; and a poor native will travel hundreds of miles of trackless country with a parcel of specie or other valuables without any danger of the loss of the property, so careful are they in the carriage and disposal of it during an occasional rest or stoppage for refreshment.

As probably nothing in the way of food will be available but rice and very tough beef on the journey, the traveller lays in a good store of tea, biscuits, and preserved meats. For those who require something stronger in the way of refreshment, a very inferior kind of rum, and the native beer, may be had at any of the villages at a very cheap rate ; but in most cases it is wisest to carefully and firmly avoid indulgence in these luxuries, as they are almost always heavily adulterated, and therefore contain incentives to fever and debility. The start is usually made in the afternoon from Tamatave, as it takes some time to get the bearers together at the last, and to send off everything in the way of baggage well on ahead of the traveller himself. The rule in Madagascar is, always to keep your belongings in front of you. No amount of persuasion, or specious promises on the part of his bearers, will induce the old campaigner to start until he has seen all his luggage carefully packed and sent off, and then he himself mounts his *filanjana*, and gives the word to depart.

About eight miles south of Tamatave is the busy and thriving town of Ivondrona, where a considerable trade is done between the up-country Hovas and the east coast merchants, who come down here to meet the sellers and get an early choice of the market. The mouth

of the Ivondrona river is wide and open to the winds, and it is often a task of considerable peril to cross it in the miserable native boats, which are simply the trunks of large trees hollowed out by burning, and are easily swamped, and sink like lead in a moment when the water gets into them. They possess no buoyancy, on account of the iron-like texture of the wood from which they are made, and having no bulwarks, the waves easily wash over their shallow sides and produce a catastrophe. It is very necessary that all the details of the passages of these rivers should be seen to by the traveller himself, as the *maromita* are careless and venturesome, and all as a rule good swimmers, and are therefore indifferent to the dangers which surround them at these times.

On the arrival of a traveller at the Ivondrona ferry, a noisy scene of animated confusion arises ; and amid the fierce gesticulations and deafening clamours of rival ferrymen, he selects the craft which seems most likely to bear him safely over, and then allows himself to be carried in the arms of his bearers, and placed gently in the bottom of the seatless boat. To the stranger on his first visit to Madagascar, the whole scene is a novel and very interesting one. The canoe is probably twenty or thirty feet long, and about three feet wide. Into this narrow vessel some

twenty-five persons or more will put themselves in a crouching position, each armed with a wooden paddle shaped like a tea-spoon. At a given signal the paddles are dashed into the water, and the boat shoots forward with an enormous jerk on her way across the stream. Every one on board the crazy craft is obliged to preserve his equilibrium, as the slightest deviation, or movement even, is often sufficient to precipitate the whole party into the water, and send the empty "dug-out" to the bottom. The motion of the canoe is not, however, disagreeable, and the way is enlivened by songs and laughter from the boatmen, who keep up an incessant round of jokes and fun to the end. Some of their compositions are impromptu, and embrace the probable history of their master for the time being, who sits amongst them in perfect ignorance all the while, it may be, of the fact that he is the theme of their adulation and the cause of their hilarity. One of them will lead off with a glowing description of the stranger, his personal beauty, his prowess, his magnanimity and moral worth, calling upon his companions from time to time to support him in his description, which they do most heartily by a rousing chorus, in which they declare their unfeigned belief that the gentleman is full of generous impulses, has plenty of money, and that they are certain he

will give them a splendid and substantial present, over and above the usual fare, when they arrive at their destination. Of course all this is lost upon the passenger who may be unacquainted with the vernacular; but to those who understand the language, these sly hints or more open suggestions as to the ubiquitous *backsheesh* are as amusing as they are clever.

The waters abound in crocodiles, and it is no rare thing to see the brown-crested log-like head of one of these "fathers of the waters" following the canoe for miles along its course. They may frequently be seen also lying on the banks in the full blaze of the sun, with their offspring, in a deep sleep, which the *maromita* disturb by uproarious shouts, and cries of contempt and derision, which disturb the monsters, and cause them to slide quickly down into the depths beneath. The Betsimisaraka have a great horror of these reptiles, and propitiate them sometimes by addressing them in terms of friendship and endearment, which reminds one very much of the alligator-worship of the Ganges. At a certain spot in the river, which is the known haunt of one of these brutes, large pieces of beef are thrown in daily for food, and occasionally a goose or fowls are also offered to satisfy the voracious appetite of the horrible monster. The people have a very ingenious way of securing



these creatures and destroying them, as they often do on account of the ravages they commit. A ball of dried flax is covered with a thin layer of beef. This is dropped into the water near the lair of the crocodile. In due course the bait is swallowed, the flax expands with the water in the stomach of the beast, and he is effectually suffocated. His carcass is then drawn to land, amid universal rejoicing, and treated with the greatest contempt, and then consumed by fire. To the vast herds of oxen which are continually being brought down to the coast for deportation, these reptiles are a frequent source of annoyance and loss. The natives are also often seized and taken down by the wary brutes, if they are foolish enough to wade into the rivers, as they often do, in search of fish. A few years ago a valuable horse, which was being taken up the country for the use of the prime minister, was caught by a crocodile in one of the streams on the way to the capital, and dragged under water and killed.

In journeying along the coast a halt is usually made each day just before noon, and the crew, after having drawn up the boat under the shade of a tree by the water-side, proceed to prepare their first meal. Their passenger has, however, partaken in the early morning, if he is wise, of a cup of good strong coffee, with the smallest par-

ticle of quinine in it as a preventive and necessary stomachic. The meal of the men consists merely of a good supply of boiled rice, and some herb which they have gathered in the woods (often common grass), and a few fish, with which these lakes abound. An awning is spread for the stranger, beneath which he partakes of his repast, which is rather more elaborate, and then he snatches a few minutes' sleep during the enervating and almost overpowering heat of the day. And when we remember that the journey commences each day soon after four o'clock, this break will not appear unnecessary or out of place. About three o'clock in the afternoon all the party rouse themselves again and start onward; and as the boat glides over the smooth surface of the sparkling waters, the rowers relieve the monotony of the way, and amuse themselves by racing with any canoes they may happen to be near, or exchange salutations with the crews of the numerous and heavily laden boats which are constantly passing up and down with passengers, Government messengers, traders, or merchants' wares. Now and then a stately Arab passes in his boat with a cold suspicious salutation, and a splendid and fully loaded rifle across his knees, with his hands always upon the lock. These men are not liked by the people, on account of their share in the slave-trade in

the past, and their known disregard for human life. Then perhaps, by way of contrast, we notice the placid features and genial bearing of an Indian or Parsee merchant, who looks the very personification of confidence and repose. These men are British subjects from Bombay, Madras, or Mauritius, and are generally respected and trusted by the native population, on account of their natural ability as men of business, and their benignity to those whom they employ. As we get further south, we notice amongst the passers-by a wilder look, and marks of a decided downward progress or falling off in civilisation. The grotesque appearance and the almost incomprehensible dialect of some of the people who return our greetings, mark our approach to the borders of a less known and less cultivated class, the Antimora, already referred to.

The dreaded Malagasy fever is supposed to be most fatal in its effects along this coast. Beautiful as the lakes and river deltas appear to the eye, they are the real sources of danger, and a swift death to the unwary and the fresh comer. This fever, about which so much has been said, is little understood, and consequently persons land in the country entirely ignorant of its peculiar character, and of the proper means to employ to check its ravages and to neutralise its effects. That it is one of the worst and most

fatal forms of miasmatic disease, there can be no doubt. It prevails in a modified form in all tropical countries where there are swamps and damp low-lying jungles and forests, and the water is the channel through which the insidious poison is conveyed into the system. Few persons entirely escape its attacks, and many Europeans have from time to time been swept away with awful rapidity before it. But a somewhat lengthened experience in one of the worst localities in the island, confirms me in the opinion that much suffering and ultimate injury to the system may be prevented by the simple habit of taking an infinitesimal portion of a grain of quinine with the first cup of coffee every morning without fail, from the day of one's arrival in the country. The attacks will come, but they will be weakened by this simple expedient, and less virulent and certainly less harmful in their ultimate effects. And this last consideration is perhaps the most important one, since the Malagasy fever finds out any weak point of heart, or lungs, or liver, and fastens upon that, and effects there a chronic lodgment, appearing and reappearing years after the patient has left the country, and probably almost forgotten it. Long intervals between meals, or excessive fatigue, or wet feet, invariably bring on the attacks, which are preluded by pain in the legs and back, and

loss of sleep. The most distressing and painful feature of the disease is, however, the demoralising effect that it has upon the individual, intellectually and physically, after the acute and critical stages have safely passed. The brain, nerves, and muscular system are entirely upset and weakened, and the powers of thought, decision, and even of self-preservation, overturned; and the abject misery which follows upon all this to the bewildered and solitary being whose lot may be cast in the remoter districts is so complete that insanity often follows.

A lamentable story was told me by the natives of a Roman priest, a good man, who had been sent down considerably to the south of Andévoranto, to a small settlement on the banks of one of the large rivers. He worked on zealously for a time, but at length he fell a victim to the fever, and the fearful natives, much as they loved him, failed to keep him under due restraint during the crisis of his malady; and breaking out of the hut in the night, parched and burning with the wasting plague, he wandered up and down the banks of the flowing stream, and at length, in a sudden paroxysm of despair, cast himself into the surging waters, and thus ended once for all a valuable and heroic life.

The native mode of treatment for fever, with the addition of constant doses of quinine, is

to be preferred to any European expedients, in my opinion. The natives use the hot bath and copious douches of hot water in the feverish stages, and these they render fragrant by the use of the leaves of aromatic plants. They then crush and squeeze the muscles of the patient, and stretch the limbs at frequent intervals, and at the same time rub all the joints of the body firmly, and thus assist the circulation of the blood and vital energy throughout the system. When the period of convalescence ensues, great care is required, and a generous diet, without excitants, is necessary, as collapse may intervene, and the life may ebb away in a few hours. Some years will pass before the effects of this fever leave the system entirely, and then the permanent result upon the brain is often most deplorable and sad, inasmuch as no one is so conscious of the depression and loss of mental energy as the sufferer himself, who can never hope, unless blessed with exceptional recuperative powers, to entirely recover his usual strength and vivacity.

The full virulence of this dread visitant may be better understood when it is stated that even animals shun the spots where it breathes forth its deadly vapours, and the natives themselves fall before it, if unaccustomed to life on the coast, even more readily than Europeans. The natives chew the bark of the cinchona tree, which is a

natural product of the country, as a protection against the insidious inroads of the disease ; and even when taken in this crude state, the marvellous and rapid effects of quinine are marked and certain. The mortality, however, amongst the Hova garrisons is very great, and whole regiments have been decimated by the fever within a few months of their arriving on the coast from the interior.

The lakes of Nosive, Irangy, Rosoobo, and Ivavongy, between Tamatave and Andévoranto, are well supplied with delicious fish of several kinds, and rude weirs are constructed at frequent intervals across their broad waters, to retain the finny harvest which, at stated seasons, is brought to land by hundreds of *lakana* and crowds of excited fishermen.

At Vavony, on the lake Ivavongy, a curious sight may often be witnessed. As evening draws near, in the season, numbers of canoes put off from the landing-place, each carrying a fire at the bows, and filled with boys and men armed with sharp long spears. Immense shoals of fish dart up in the direction of the blaze, and by the dexterity of the fishermen these are caught upon the spears, and so secured. Fires are kindled along the shores, and rude racks erected over them, upon which the fish are rough-dried and smoked, after being split open, and the roes,

which are considered a great delicacy, extracted. Vast numbers of these fish, which resemble large haddock or ling, are thus prepared at Vavony for the distant coast and inland markets, and the roes are specially treated, and command a ready sale. We were more than once offered eggs of crocodiles at this village, but declined the luxury. The eggs of the turtle are also sold, and much appreciated by the poorer classes. They watch the animal coming up from the sea and the process of depositing its eggs, and afterwards go to the spot and disinter the eggs, which have been carefully buried by the creature in the hot sand. Crocodiles' eggs are also eaten by the natives, and may always be purchased in any of the country markets.

The passage from Andavakaménarana (the place of serpents), to Andévoranto, the slave-mart, by canoe, is very striking, and altogether tropical in character. The stream is so narrow that there is not room in places for two canoes to pass, and the overhanging vegetation reaches so low that it is constantly necessary to bend one's self to avoid contact with the branches. It is in the depths of these woods that the rarest specimens of the orchid plant have been obtained, and it is here that the famous Malagasy lemurs hold their revels, darting in and out amongst the branches, and playing their odd tricks in the



presence of the passengers in the canoes. Some of them are very attractive, and they form quite a distinct class in the natural history of the world.

It was melancholy to see on all sides, as we passed along on our journey, the signs of suffering and distress which these woods and thickets presented, and which accompanied a most appalling outbreak of the worst kind of small-pox, which was at that time raging in the district. Vaccination had up to this period been practically unknown amongst these people, and consequently the epidemic had free course. The insanitary condition of the villages, the intense heat of the coast climate, and the habits of the people in the more remote districts, all combined to spread the ghastly visitation and to increase the area of its operation. Whole families were stricken at once, and a panic ensued. The people fled as from the face of an invading army; villages where the plague had shown itself were immediately deserted, and the unfortunate beings upon whom the complaint fastened were treated as cursed of heaven, and were driven out by their own flesh and blood from their homes into the forests, where the unhappy wretches made themselves huts of leaves and branches, or more often sat upon the ground exposed to the pitiless torrents, and waited for death, or

plunged into the streams and put an end to their miseries. If they attempted to return to their homes and families, their relatives drove them away with stones and weapons. Some in their delirium wandered through the woods, unclothed and raging, and at length lay down to die. We noticed several unburied corpses lying amongst the foliage, and more than once went out of our way to avoid contact with infected bodies floating down the streams.

The real want of these people on the east coast is medical help, and a regular system of cottage hospitals in the chief towns, where medicine and advice can be given at a fair charge. There need not be any eleemosynary character about this work, as the Malagasy are not poor, or unable to pay for such real assistance as a medical dispensary would allow them. On the contrary, they are, as a nation, remarkably free from debasing grinding poverty, and there are few amongst them who have no shelter or food even in their worst times of depression. The time has come, therefore, when they should no longer be allowed to draw largely upon the alms and offerings of philanthropic societies for the purpose of educational or hospital work in the island. They now know full well the value of both these great, and, to them, invaluable blessings; but they are not above taking advantage of the lavish

kindness of good people at home. It is hardly creditable to them, however, as there are so many poorer communities to whom the help which England now affords them would not only be acceptable, but more righteously given. When we consider the amount of labour and money expended upon the erection of the royal palaces and house of the prime minister, it seems strange that constant appeals should be made in England for means to build places of worship for these people.

It is always customary in Madagascar to send a notice on before of the intended sojourn of a stranger, if only for a few hours, in a native town or village. This is not only done as a mark of respect to the *mptansaïna*, or chief man, but also in order that the Queen's house—a place set apart for Government purposes in each town—may be got ready for the visitor, as the native theory is that every foreigner is the guest of the sovereign whilst in the country. Just before entering any place of importance, the bearers rest for a short time and gird themselves up for a sharp effort, and carry the visitor at a smart trot through the streets up to the door of the Government house at the foot of a tall staff, from which floats on Sundays and days of national importance the royal standard of the Queen of the Hovas, with her name and style,

Ranavalona, Queen of Madagascar, emblazoned across it in scarlet letters upon a white ground. On the arrival of the guest, the head-man, attended by his lieutenant, and often half the village, pays a formal visit and asks after the welfare of the traveller, at the same time presenting fowls, rice, and fruit in the name of the Queen. The visitor responds, after a becoming interval, with an inquiry as to the welfare and prosperity of the kingdom, and the personal health of the Queen and her chief Ministers of State. It is considered a mark of great courtesy and politeness amongst the Malagasy to ask such questions over and over again; and we were very much amused as well as flattered by the persistency with which the Governor of Tanimandry, a genial old Hova, repeated these inquiries as to our comfort, the conduct of our bearers, and the attention we had received in our journey down, on the occasion of our first visit to him.

At Andévoranto, the chief town of the Betsimisaraka tribe, we observed three flagstaffs, and also a special residence for the Hova governor. This town, standing at the mouth of the Ihároka, is a place of considerable antiquity, and, as its name implies, was formerly the great slave-mart of the east coast; and it is regaining its former importance, not only on account of its present position with relation to the capital, but also

because it is destined in the near future to take the place of Tamatave as the chief seaport of the island.

The only obstacle to this change in its prospects is the shifting sand-bar which exists across the mouth of its splendid river ; but this, we are convinced from personal inspection, could be easily removed by the use of the ordinary dredging appliances available in the present day, and the whole stream of commerce would be at once diverted from Tamatave to Andévoranto. The position of the latter town would shorten the journey to Imérina by three days for goods and passengers, and this would bring down the total cost of freightage and portorage considerably. When the present crisis is past, and they have time and opportunity to give due attention to internal improvements and developments, in all probability the pressing question of opening out this river to the sea will receive careful consideration from the chiefs of the native Government.

## CHAPTER VII.

## VISIT TO THE COURT AND CAPITAL OF THE HOVAS.

INTERESTING as the provinces and outlying districts of the island are to the traveller, it is impossible to get any adequate and correct ideas of the capacities of the Malagasy, of their real condition, powers, and resources, until he visits Imérina and its hill city of Antananarivo, the capital of the island. Here only, at the centre of social life and of judicial power and authority, a careful observer can perceive the real measure of progress which this obscure nation has made in the past, and of the future greatness and honour which is in store for it, if this progress continues. It is to the capital that the face of every native turns, no matter how far distant he may be at the time, whenever the name of the reigning sovereign is formally mentioned in public *kabáry* (meeting); and Antananarivo is very much to these people what Jerusalem was to the Jew, and Mecca is to the followers of Mohammed.

In all cases of appeal against the decree of the provincial courts, the final decision is given at the capital; and each officer, even from the most distant parts of the country, has to go up to Imérina to receive his credentials and to be invested with authority.

Justice is slow and tardy still even at the capital, and suitors have often to wait months, and even years, before a decision is come to in matters in which they are concerned. But a gradual reform is evident in the legal and judicial arrangements of the Hova courts, and things are confessedly much better than they were only a few years ago in this respect.

Reforms in the administration of law and equity are, as we have found by experience in England, the most difficult of all reforms to effect speedily and thoroughly. It takes years to sweep away the mass of vested interests, precedents, prejudice, and superstition which cling around any established and venerable system of justice, however corrupt; and the Hova Government deserve credit for the courage with which they have grappled with flagrant abuses, and at least secured protection and a hearing for both parties in a suit. This is not much, but those who know anything of Madagascar will gladly allow that it is a considerable improvement upon the former state of things.

However difficult it may be to get bearers on the coast for journeys in other directions, and even for short distances, on account of the difficulties or the danger which attends, or is supposed to attend, the opening up of new tracks, along which the men have never before travelled, there is no such hindrance in the way of a visit to Antananarivo. The men are always delighted at the prospect of a journey up to Imérina, and as they are certain to have plenty of society on the well-known path, they start up the river from Andévoranto, where the road strikes inland from the coast, and where the actual journey to the capital commences, with an alacrity as amusing as it is often inconvenient. Utensils for cooking on the way; bedding, or, better still, a strong grass hammock; spare clothing for a change after being drenched, as often happens during a sudden storm; and all the odds and ends which an explorer gradually gathers about him,—have to be packed securely in handy deal cases, and lashed firmly to stout bamboo poles, for portage upon men's shoulders. Stores have to be overhauled, necessities replenished, and the bars, bolts, and straps of the *filanjána* have to be thoroughly overhauled at the first halting-place, Maromby,—as, once on the way, there is little possibility of renewing anything which may be exhausted, or of supplying anything which



may be lacking in the commissariat department, or of making good any damages which the baggage or palanquin may meet with in crossing the rivers or scaling the ravines which intersect the road at frequent intervals for the whole of its length.

The first few miles of the land journey after quitting Maromby are most refreshing and enjoyable. The fresh keen air on the rising ground begins at once to invigorate and stimulate the depressed spirits of the travellers, who have been enfeebled and distressed by the fetid atmosphere and warm damp air of the lakes and marshes along which they have been passing for some days. The broad grassy pampas or undulating plains on the way to the first halting-place, Ranomafana (hot-water springs), are well adapted for the indulgence in that favourite recreation of the *maromita*, a *filanjana* race. Utterly heedless of the incipient terror depicted in the faces of their trembling burdens, they dash along at break-neck speed, over hill and dale, and through the smaller streams, with shouts and peals of ringing laughter, until thoroughly wearied out by the violence of their fun. There is really no danger, as these fellows are as sure-footed as the chamois-goat itself, and with their naked feet they will climb the sides of steep rocky passes or slippery slopes of clay with the most perfect certainty and coolness.

They take every care of their passengers, and are as gentle and tender as children, and are very proud of the commendation which it is always right and wise to bestow upon them at the end of a day's journey, if they have deserved it. They are, however, very sensitive to rough or unkind treatment, and amusing stories are extant of cases where they have not been properly used by foreigners, when they have offered no violence in any form in return for violence to themselves, but have just put down their burden quietly in the midst of the sombre forest, and retired until their fare has come to a better mind,—which he very quickly does, as the prospect of being deserted under such circumstances is by no means flattering or agreeable.

At Ranomafana a halt is generally made, and a visit paid to the celebrated hot springs near the village. These waters are medicinal; and on the occasion of one of our visits, numbers of the natives were bathing in them, as they are considered very efficacious for skin affections and other complaints. They contain a large quantity of sulphur, and would naturally, therefore, be beneficial in most cases of cutaneous eruptions, from which the natives suffer almost universally.

These waters were visited in 1867 by Queen Rasohérina, the chief members of the Hova

Government, and several thousands of her Hova subjects, and it was at this time that the English fleet, under Commander Brown, manœuvred off Andévoranto. She viewed the ships from the coast at Tanimandry with astonishment and delight. At Ranomafána may be seen in profusion in all the streams the beautiful and delicate lace-plant, now familiar to English botanists, by reason of the care and success with which the specimens taken from this neighbourhood to Kew Gardens have been reared and multiplied. The pitcher-plant, that curious contrivance of nature for condensing the vapour and storing it for the refreshment of the thirsty wayfarer, and the traveller's tree, from which a copious draught of cool water may at any time be drawn, are natives of this locality.

Leaving the hot springs, the journey is continued over an irregular and tortuous path, and over the range of hills which forms the first of a series of terraces, the highest of which, nearly two hundred miles distant, is crowned by the tombs and palaces of the royal city. The road is by no means without its peculiar objects of interest; and the stone placed upon the spot from which the first view of the distant sea is obtained on the downward journey from Imérina, is worthy of notice as commemorating the abolition of the exportation of native slaves for sale.

It is called the *fitom'ian-kóva*, or weeping-place of the Hovas, because the wretched captives here took leave for ever of their native province, and prepared to descend to the maritime plain, along which they were driven to the port of embarkation. Groups of bearers are met coming down from the interior with native produce, or driving herds of bullocks to the coast, for transport to the Mauritius and elsewhere,—and between these and our bearers continual questioning went on as to the news, the state of the road, the health of friends, and the general condition of affairs in Imérina. It is when traversing this route that the visitor to Madagascar is really impressed with the vast food-producing capabilities of the island; and it cannot but be regretted that its wonderful powers of production should be allowed to remain dormant for want of energy and a larger population to give them an opportunity of due development.

The personal experiences gained in these journeys are not always pleasant, however, for the houses in which one has to rest are not at times so thoroughly in accord with European tastes and ideas as one would wish. Rats, mice, and fleas abound, especially in the forest villages and the poorer Hova towns; and when these are absent, as is generally the case on the coast, their places are supplied by the ever-restless and san-

guinary mosquito,—so that the sensitive and rather nervous alien suffers from frequent sensations of utter discomfort and disquiet, which do not appear to afflict the prosaic and uncomplaining Malagasy.

The great forest of Alamazaotra has to be traversed, and it generally takes three days to pass through it and to reach the edge of the interior elevated plateau which comprises the great central province of Imérina. In the forest of Alamazaotra gigantic trees abound, and orchids of rare beauty and delicacy occasionally attract the eye; whilst such novelties as large trees in flower and lofty ferns of many feet in height, add freshness and grace to the somewhat sombre colouring of the dense woods and thickets through which the passage winds often for considerable distances. The fauna of the country is limited, and almost altogether unimportant, if we except the lemurs. There are no large quadrupeds or huge reptiles, as in most tropical lands; and there is a strange silence in the woods, broken only by the occasional note of a bird, or the melancholy cry of a solitary lemur; and there is even an absence of the hum of insects to break the death-like silence.

At Beforona, on the edge of this forest, an important stage of the journey is reached. This is supposed to be one of the most unhealthy towns

on the road, and the stay here is usually made as short as possible, to escape the effects of the malarious waters by which the place is surrounded. We, however, found no ill effects from a sojourn of several days on more than one occasion. The house and courtyard which we occupied through the courtesy of the then French consul, M. Laborde, were of ample dimensions, and were surrounded by a strong fence, and had a large coffee plantation at the back, which had at one time been a source of considerable revenue to the proprietor. But it was gradually going to decay, and had been very much neglected of late years, in consequence of a dispute with the native Government as to the actual ownership of this and other estates of M. Laborde. The consul claimed right of ownership by virtue of a concession made by Radama II.; but the Government, whilst allowing right of occupation, were not inclined to give up all title whatever to the property. During the late consul's lifetime the controversy was never pursued with malignity, but his heir claimed the sole right at his death to occupy, sell, or otherwise dispose of these estates; and his action being supported by the newly appointed consul in 1880, was really the source of all the grievous misunderstanding between the two Governments of France and Madagascar, which resulted in the bombardment, in June

1883, of Mojanga and Tamatave, and the occupation of portions of the island by the troops of the Republic. It appeared to us that a very valuable addition to the exports of the country would be found in the mahogany, camphor-wood, ebony, and rosewood which abound in the Alamazaotra forest, if once a good road could be opened up between the sources of supply and the harbours on the east coast.

The last place of importance before entering the capital is Amorománga, a busy town which stands in the centre of a broad and level plain of that name. The Tankay, a harmless and industrious, but still densely ignorant and superstitious tribe, occupy the district around and along the basin of the Mangoro river, which flows through the plain. They are rather lighter and more refined in features than the provincial Malagasy generally, and wear silver dollars in their ears and strung about their necks and wrists. They come up in great numbers to the weekly market, *Alakamisy*, held at Amorománga, and appear to possess all the genial qualities of the other tribes, without their sagacity and wearisome duplicity and cunning. It was a great relief to find ourselves once more on level ground, after days spent in ascending and descending, and precarious journeying along the edges of jagged ravines and precipitous mountain-passes ;

and our bearers as well as ourselves enjoyed the rest and refreshment tendered us by the poor people of Amorománga.

After another progress of a day, a halt is made at Ankerimadinaka, just beyond the lofty peak of Angavo, to enable all to prepare themselves for a formal entrance into the chief city of the Hova kingdom. There were unmistakable signs on all sides that we were in its vicinity, in the appearance of greater neatness and care about the houses and dress of the people; and we could not refrain from bearing testimony to the change for the better which was visible in the language and manners of the natives, as well as in their material surroundings, even within a few years. There is, however, with all this progress, a supercilious air prevailing amongst the younger and more educated class of the community, which we found afterwards at the capital as painful and annoying as it was general. The self-conceit and even foppishness of some of the native teachers and preachers we noticed; and the obviously mercantile spirit with which they entered into the work of evangelising their fellow-countrymen, as well as their eagerness to grasp the temporal advantages, whilst being sadly slow to accept the self-denial which the new system of faith and morals offered for their acceptance, is a trait of Hova



character which has caused their best friends much distress ; but all this will in time be toned down and crushed out, we are convinced, as deeper knowledge and really solid attainments take the place of what, from the circumstances of the case, must be at present scarcely more than a superficial glance through such subjects as chemistry, classical languages, mathematics, and Christian ethics. We are quite certain that a little more frankness on the part of their friends and counsellors would be very useful, especially to the coming men of the country, as to the solid advantages of thoroughness and plodding and patience with themselves, as there appears to be a tendency to push on with too great an eagerness towards the goal of perfection, which we all heartily desire to see them eventually attain.

The site of the capital has been remarkably well chosen. Like the stronghold of the redoubtable Theodore of Abyssinia, the great city, founded by Radama I. to perpetuate his name and the inauguration of his supremacy, is built upon an eminence that can be seen at long distances, and from various points of the surrounding country. The approach to it from the coast is an ascent from the time of leaving Biforona, and the occasional glimpses which the traveller obtains of Antananarivo, as he draws

nearer and nearer to it, are very striking and picturesque. The town stands upon an elongated hill or ridge about a mile and a half in length, and is plainly visible at a distance of about fourteen miles. When the first view is caught of the lofty buildings which comprise the *rova* or royal precincts, shouts of exultation burst forth, and even tears of joy are seen upon the faces of the bearers, who now suspend their labours for a moment to congratulate the strangers and each other upon the successful accomplishment of their long and toilsome journey. The city presents a very imposing appearance when seen from this point, with the sun lighting up its spires and palaces, and gleaming upon the windows and glass decorations in the balconies of the residences of the nobles and the various buildings of state grouped about the *rova*, which itself occupies a wooded knoll almost in the centre of the hill upon which it stands. The irregular outline of the still distant but strangely familiar capital, the mixture of old and new materials and styles in a peculiar harmony of colour and design, the towering roofs and the huge dome of the prime minister's residence, with the towers of the churches and the white cliffs and crags towards the south, gave to the view quite a majestic and regal appearance, which surprised and pleased us. As we drew nearer, the view was lost at times in the descent of the valleys,

and again it burst upon us each time with greater distinctness of detail, revealing new objects of interest, to which our attention was constantly being called by the natives about us. Perhaps the great impression that Antananarivo makes upon the visitor on his first arrival is in a measure due to the squalor and discomfort which prevails in so many of the Hova villages on the borders of the province, and some experience of which the most complacent and good-tempered traveller can scarcely altogether avoid. But however this may be, we one and all felt devoutly thankful when at length there was a prospect of our sitting down again at an English table and sleeping in a bed. The bearers, too, whose wives and children are generally resident in the capital, are glad to get home for a few days' rest before again returning to the coast in search of fresh employment, and the final rush of the palanquin along the narrow paths and across the muddy rice-fields that surround the town is therefore unequalled by anything of the kind that has hitherto been experienced. But this method of "bringing one in with a run" has its inconvenient side, for if one is fortunate enough to have friends in this out-of-the-way corner of the world, and they have come out to greet us, as is customary, the chances are that we shoot clean past them, or through them, and they have to

defer the hand-shaking till we meet them upon their own thresholds.

The road onward now presents a very animated appearance, as group after group of native civilians or soldiers pass and repass us, either going to or returning from the great centre of Malagasy life and commerce. Friendly salutations are exchanged between the occupant of the palanquin and the passers-by, and at length the actual ascent into the city begins. There are no roads or streets laid out on any orderly system, and huge boulders block the way or fill up the gaping watercourses here and there, exactly as they did probably in the days of the first Radama. The less dignified but still sacred cities of the country which cluster round Antananarivo are pointed out to us, and the quarter of the city whence so many hundreds of the populace were hurled in the days of the first Ranavalona, for political and other offences, upon the sharp rocks below. The entry into the capital may be best described as a succession of climbing operations, varied by undignified scrambles on the part of the bearers over the rocks and gullies that choke the road upwards to the centre of the town; and the aspect of the new arrival is that of a man who has undergone some struggle of an exhausting nature, in the course of which he has suffered damage to his

personal appearance and attire. The entire hill is covered irregularly with houses and buildings of various sizes and kinds. They are principally constructed of dark wood, square, high-pitched roofs, thatched with *herána*, or rush, and with the inevitable Hova projecting horns at the point of each gable. The principal buildings are built of stone and brick, and the European residents have comfortable villa-like residences on the outskirts of the town, built of brick and wood, with deep verandahs, venetian shutters, well-kept gardens, detached kitchens, and all the accessories which modern ideas of comfort and repose in a tropical climate suggest. The frank and generous hospitality dispensed at these houses to casual visitors to Imérina is a matter of history, and has been commended by all who have ever had occasion to visit the place either for business or pleasure. The presence of these well-appointed houses, and the happy phase of pure family and social life that they have for years shown to the Malagasy, have had a most beneficial effect upon the domestic habits and ideas of these people, and they have indirectly exercised a very great civilising and elevating power throughout the land. The sharp lines of social and political differences that unfortunately divide us at home are lost out here, and the smaller matters of controversy and debate are forgotten or put

aside in the general desire to live in harmony and good-fellowship, which happily prevails in the European colony.

The population of Antananarivo is estimated at about 90,000 people. The court and royal palaces are near the centre of the city, and are surrounded by the houses of the chief officers of the sovereign. Within the courtyard is the royal chapel, a new building of good style, with clock-tower, organ, stained glass, and beautiful carving. Near this are the tombs of deceased monarchs. The state residences are themselves buildings of large size, and at an angle of the largest—Manjakamiádana—is a square tower with a fine clock and bells. Over the roof, with outstretched wings, is an enormous eagle, the crest of the reigning family, of copper gilt; and a similar figure adorns the chief gateway or entrance to the *róva*. From the balcony of the great palace the Queen grants audiences to her subjects, and it was here that she sat to witness the review of her troops during our stay in the capital. The palace is constructed of wood, and painted white, but showing signs of decay. It was some years ago encased in stone, and it now presents a very massive and substantial appearance, being surrounded by stone arcades of classic design, with a row of columns for the upper stories. Its height is about one hundred and twenty feet, the

slant of the roof being quite fifty feet. It is one hundred feet long and about sixty-five feet broad, and is in three tiers or stories. This enormous house was built by *fanampōana*, or enforced gratuitous service, and many lives were lost in the operations necessary to bring the huge timbers of which it is composed from the distant forests, and up the hillsides to the site. The ground floor is divided into two immense rooms. The ceilings and walls are painted and adorned with curious designs of a Moorish or Persian pattern, and the lower parts of the walls are covered with gaudy wall-papers of French manufacture, representing hunting and battle scenes. The floors are beautifully inlaid with varieties of the hard woods of the island, and the only furniture is the Queen's throne, a small table for the crown royal, and side-tables bearing silver vases of native workmanship. There is a garden behind the building for the private use of members of the royal family. At the south-east of the great court is the *Tráno Vóla* or "silver house," so called from the fact of silver nails only being used in parts of the fabric. This building is also of great size, but is dwarfed by its gigantic neighbour to the west. It is in this palace that audiences are granted by the prime minister upon matters of state, and it was here that we had a conversation with his Excellency upon the

affairs of the kingdom in general and of the east coast in particular. Having several matters relating to the civil government and the tenure of land on the coast to arrange and discuss with the central authority, we sent a notice of our arrival to Rainilaiarivóny, and requested an interview at his convenience.

This was readily and courteously granted, and as we represented the interests of the whole Bet-simisaraka population, we looked forward with much interest and some anxiety to this meeting. A time was fixed by letter for the meeting at the palace, and at the hour chosen one of the secretaries of the Government conducted us to the first floor of the Tráno Vóla, where Rainilaiarivóny was awaiting us, surrounded by his attendants and officials. The amount of real hard work that the chief minister of Madagascar gets through daily is enormous. He is virtually the supreme authority in the island, though not so nominally. He is a man of untiring energy and devotion to his country, and it is to his influence that the new departure which the Government took some years ago in throwing open the country to foreigners is to be attributed. He is never familiar, but very genial, easy in manner, intelligent in appearance and address, quick in reply, and untiring in questioning his visitors, yet without rudeness or presumption in any way.



He is of short stature, spare figure, has grey hair, a keen eye, and martial bearing, and at once gives one the idea of great bodily and mental vigour; and although he has never been beyond the borders of his country, he has the manners of a polished and well-bred gentleman. He is exceedingly desirous of obtaining information from all sources as to the customs and usages of foreign countries, and especially as to the way in which social and commercial problems, such as education and the collection of the revenue, are worked out amongst European nations. He complained bitterly of the forcible importation of rum into the island against his wishes, and of the terrible devastation the spirit was working amongst his people. The sale of intoxicants by white traders was, he said, weakening and debasing the youth of the country; and, as far as his Government was concerned, it would gladly prohibit the admission of a single bottle into the island, but the British Government would not allow this. We think it rather hard upon these people that they should have no control whatever over this matter of strictly domestic policy; but as a considerable revenue is reaped yearly in the Mauritius from this rum-trade, of course there are conflicting interests, and the question becomes difficult and complicated. And so the same vessels which take over the cases of Bibles and parties of

missionaries in their cabins, are generally well freighted and ballasted with casks of rum in their holds. We may remark that the prime minister was dressed in handsome European clothing, and is very neat and agreeable in his general appearance. He is a capital horseman, and looks remarkably well when riding at the head of his staff in his capacity of commander-in-chief of the native army.

After this brief personal intercourse with the Malagasy prime minister, it is not difficult to read the secret of his elevation to his present high and responsible, and at the same time precarious dignity. There is in him that innate depth of thought and width of grasp of any subject that makes in every age and country a successful statesman. That he is far ahead of his day and generation in thought and aspiration there is no doubt, and in this fact lies the one element of danger to himself and the steady development of the country. There is a large and influential old national party who have tacitly resisted the advanced policy of Rainilaiarivóny, especially in regard to the abolition of the old customs and the liberality extended to foreigners. Should this party ever gain temporary popularity, the fall of Rainilaiarivóny is certain, and for a time anarchy and retrocession would ensue. That there could be any per-

manent check to the present progressive spirit of the Government, however, is not at all likely, or even possible. The material advantages that have resulted from the efforts of the prime minister to bring his countrymen into friendship and communion with foreign Powers are too substantial to cause any fear on this point; but a crisis might be brought about and a panic result, during which useful institutions might suffer, and much good work that is now bearing fruit might for the time be disorganised or overthrown. The prime minister is, however, remarkably reticent and self-restrained, and quite realises that his mission is not to accomplish everything that will be requisite for the entire regeneration of his country. His self-abnegation in this respect is as noble as it is rare in men of his type and surroundings. He is ready and willing to prepare the way for other workers, and more complete measures of reform. He will not lay a burden upon the shoulders of his people which they, in their present condition of semi-civilisation and imperfect education, are not able to bear. Some who have been deeply interested in the prosperity of the country, and who have in a thousand ways shown that they have had the true interests of the Malagasy at heart, have blamed him for at times pursuing what to them even appeared a vacillating and nervous line of policy, and have

urged him to more rapid changes and advances in his system of government. But he has had the marvellous and rare gift of being able to move only with the progress of his people. He is a man who can wait. Solid advance, however slow, is what he demands, before agitating the country with new measures. He showed this in an unmistakable manner in his masterly dealing with the reorganisation of the army, and in his action in conjunction with our late able consul, Mr T. C. Pakenham, on the question of native slavery. In the impartial manner, too, with which the whole vexed question of the rival communions and Churches in the island has been approached by the Hova Government, much real sound wisdom and statesmanlike ability has been shown, that would have done credit to the chief minister and advisers of any European sovereign. Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties of Rainilaiarivóny has been to hold his hand when almost overwhelming pressure has been brought to bear upon him, through foreign consuls and others, to whom the country is deeply indebted for much good done, to force him on. But again and again during the past few years, even those who have been for the time annoyed at his seeming hesitancy have had to acknowledge, with admiration and enthusiastic respect for his abilities as a politician, that he was after all right in waiting,

and that they were wrong in urging him to a course of action that would have been dangerously premature, and would have brought on a catastrophe and deluged the land with blood.

The reception-room in the Tráno Vóla presents a somewhat incongruous appearance, in consequence of the varied nature of its contents, and the peculiar taste with which they were displayed. Clocks of different makes, pictures, a small organ, with side-boards, tables, and sundry articles preserved under canvas covers, make up the appointments of the apartment, in one corner of which we had our interview with one of the most eminent men Madagascar has yet produced. It is customary on these occasions to present *hásina*, a new silver dollar, as a mark of allegiance to the Queen, and as a tribute of respect and an acknowledgment of the supreme authority of her Majesty within her dominions. Having performed this pleasing duty, we took our leave, and in a few days left the capital again for the coast.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## IN PERILS BY SEA.

LITTLE of importance was known about the language or habits of the people, or the island of Madagascar itself, before 1702, when a fine East Indiaman was wrecked upon the south coast near Fort Dauphin, and the ship and valuable cargo entirely lost.

The progress of scientific knowledge in relation to nautical matters has of late years rendered the navigation of the South-East Indian Ocean a comparatively easy task, but formerly it was an enterprise full of danger and difficulty. One can only admire the wonderful energy and patience of the old navigators, who opened out the water-way by the Cape to India, and who had to thread their path across the then unknown ocean, in fear and doubt, yet full of hope and high endeavour. Amongst such men the names of Lawrence Almeida, Vasco de Gama, and others, will ever remain as

examples of true heroism and patriotic devotion to duty.

The dangers which then had to be encountered were rendered more formidable by the absence of any correct chart or map, either of the coasts of Africa or Asia, or the numerous currents—such as those of the Mozambique Channel and Agulhas—which have a great influence, and must always be taken into account in approaching these seas.

The most useful addition to modern atlases is the *Wind map*, upon which is shown with almost unerring accuracy the direction and force of the various atmospheric currents, and by the use of which the seaman of to-day can find in any quarter of the world the prevailing wind, and avail himself of its help to go a straight course to his destination, without having to wait, as formerly, till he found it, or drift aimlessly about the ocean seeking for it, or perhaps beating up against an adverse blast, whilst, only a few leagues off, had he known it, he could have found a “trade” that would have carried him literally on its wings to “the haven where he would be.”

This wider knowledge of the winds and currents has already considerably shortened the passage to India and Australia, and has very much reduced the risk of the Eastern passage.

Dangers, however, sufficiently serious, remain to make a voyage in the Indian Seas at any time a serious and even hazardous affair ; and in the "hurricane season" a passage between the various islands is almost out of the question, so sudden and so violent are the storms that burst over these waters, and sweep away to almost certain destruction anything in the shape of a vessel that may happen to come within the vortex of the tempest. The cyclone, or circular storm, is perhaps the most fierce and relentless of all these visitations. It literally falls out of a clear sky, the only sign of its approach being a painful silence and an absence of all movement in the air : a sense of depression amounting almost at last to suffocation hangs over even the minutest forms of animal life, the flowers droop their heads, the leaf hangs listless upon the branch, nature seems to sink down into a fit of sullen stupor, a pale red haze shimmers everywhere, the sun loses his colour, the birds hide themselves away and their songs cease, till the silence of night seems to have fallen upon all things. The boughs of the gigantic forest trees do not even vibrate, the slender ferns and graceful palms look limp and weary, and a strange gloom prevails everywhere.

Old Easterns read quickly enough these warnings, and at once take precautions for the pro-



tection of themselves and their homes by putting up hurricane shutters, fastening doors with planks roughly nailed across them, and securing all the movable timber about the premises. A sensation akin to awe steals across the mind, as the now imprisoned family sits wrapped in a silence which is not peace to catch the first murmurings of the rising wind. In harbour a rapid clearance has been effected, and every ship which could be got ready has already been taken out far off to sea, to avoid the frightful havoc which a crowded port involves at such a time.

At Port Louis, a few years ago, an eye-witness records the effect of a sudden visit from one of these circular storms. There had not been sufficient warning to enable the vessels to get free from their moorings and to stand out from the shore, and in a few hours nothing remained but a crowd of broken and dismantled wrecks, flung hither and thither, as balls are tossed by a child, and crushed and battered by contact with one another in the midst of the hurricane. The scene resembled most of all the gathering of a noble fleet after a severe naval action. The town also appeared as if it had been swept from end to end by a bombardment. Houses were overthrown or unroofed, gardens were uprooted and bared of every vestige of form or beauty,

whilst many lives were sacrificed both on land and in the harbour to the irresistible fury of the gale. So fierce was the power of the wind on this particular occasion, that a group of pines were observed to bend almost double and to maintain a constant series of bowings nearly to the ground, which were curiously suggestive of the noddings of a set of hearse plumes.

When the hurricane has spent itself, the trees regain their former uprightness, the flowers rear their heads, songs burst forth from the groves, and sounds of life again fill the streets; but, alas! the damage and loss wrought by a single cyclone are sufficient to ruin often very wealthy planters of sugar or coffee in such colonies as Mauritius or Reunion, and to throw the whole community back and cripple its resources for many years to come. Every man has one event, which he regards as the event of his career. On one occasion in discussing the subject of "cyclones" with my "hurricane" friend referred to on page 19, he related to me what he always considered the event of his life. His story was briefly as follows:—

He had taken ship in a northern port of Madagascar for the Mauritius, having managed so far to delude the captain, I presume, as to convince him that the fatality as to hurricanes had left him. However that may be, we know

not, but having secured his passage, he congratulated himself upon a speedy deliverance from the terrors of these seas, and a happy reunion with his wife and friends in the more congenial and always hospitable colony of Mauritius. The first and second days passed in happiness and serenity, but soon the signs, at first obscure, but gathering in definiteness with fearful rapidity, of an approaching storm began to manifest themselves to the wrath (at first unexpressed) of the captain, and the dismay of his unhappy passenger. So dark became the face of the worthy seaman, as the sky began to darken, and the first breathings, low but heavy, of the cyclone began to toss the waters, and disturb somewhat roughly the tackle of the vessel, that his trembling guest began to fear that the tragedy of Jonah would certainly be enacted afresh. The storm burst with more than usual vigour, the ship began to leak and fill, and our friend found himself at the pumps knee-deep in water, taking his turn at the by no means easy task of keeping the ship afloat. After many weary hours of suspense, land was made, and an anchorage found under the lee of one of the islands of the Comoro group. Here the crew, exhausted and scarcely alive, made a landing with alacrity, and were well received by the native chief and his family, who were in some way connected with the Malagasy, and under-

stood their language. Our "hurricane" friend, who was an excellent speaker of Malagasy, became so popular, and made himself so useful to the insular potentate, that when he eventually announced his intended departure for England, home, and duty, the dark monarch pressed him to remain as his counsellor and friend, and not only promised, I believe, to give him the half of his kingdom, but also to permit him to enter the royal circle as his own son-in-law. These honours, overwhelming and flattering as they were, were graciously declined, however, and it was with some amount of inward congratulation that our friend at length found himself again at sea, as these island kings and courts lag somewhat in their manners and customs behind the times, and have an unpleasant way of forcing distinctions and hospitality upon those visitors who are likely to further their prospects or increase their prestige, but who are, nevertheless, themselves anxious to get away and back to home and civilisation.

I will here recount some sea experiences of my own of a month's voyage between Tamatave and Reunion in 1879. We had been waiting for a passage for some weeks at the beautiful little Malagasy harbour, but no ship had arrived. At length, on a Sunday afternoon, May 18, we left the island on board a roomy and pleasant steamer

which had been sent from Mauritius to pick up an English barque wheat-laden from Adelaide for Liverpool, and which had been caught in the hurricane and left dismasted.

Taking this vessel in tow, we stood out to sea, and had a fine passage and capital weather for several days, and we had reached to within about fifty miles of Port Louis. Suddenly matters changed with us at this point, and a strong wind swept down upon the steamer and the barque, which drove up the seas so that we were obliged to cast loose the hawsers, and leave the dismasted vessel to save ourselves. We signalled however from time to time to the captain to keep in our wake as far as possible.

The vessels remained in this position till the morning of the 27th, when soon after daybreak a large steamer was descried in the offing, standing in for Reunion. She appeared to us to be the mail steamship Duplex, and we telegraphed our name and position ; but on nearing her, signal guns were heard, and flags of distress were seen displayed in the rigging, whilst it was very evident that the rudder had been carried away, and that the ship was in a sinking condition. When within hailing distance, the captain of the distressed ship (which proved to be a man-of-war belonging to the Khedive of Egypt, and bound to Mauritius with machinery, &c.)

asked to be towed into Reunion, but this could not be done, as we were already in charge of one disabled ship.

The captain of the man-of-war lowered his boat and came aboard our ship, and then ensued a scene which defies description. The crew of the sinking vessel, 104 in number, lost all self-command, and immediately lowered the boats, which they filled with clothing, boxes, &c., till they were nearly level with the water's edge. They then scrambled into the boats and made their way to us, and our deck soon became a scene of excitement and confusion, as we were already full of Creole and Malabar passengers to Mauritius. One boat with twenty-eight persons sank from overloading, and although life-buoys were thrown from us to the men struggling in the water, we were only able to save one of them. Amongst the persons still on board the foundering ship was a Scotch gentleman and his wife and three girls. It appears that these people were at breakfast below, and knew nothing of what was actually going on upon the deck of their own ship till the lady came up to speak to the officer in charge about some trivial matter. She then saw that they were deserted, and that they, with an old Arab doctor, and a sick sailor too ill to be moved, were the only persons left on board the doomed vessel. A lifeboat was

quickly let down, and the wreck boarded by our chief engineer, who brought off the whole family and the other two men who had been left behind, and placed them on board our steamer in safety.

It was most painful to see the poor fellows from the sinking boat strike out for us and go down without any possibility of succour; but as the sea was rolling to a great height, and a strong wind was still blowing, it was with the greatest care and caution that we were able to extricate the steamer from the wreckage, and prevent a collision with the disabled ship. We landed the survivors the same evening at Reunion, and with thankfulness looked back upon our own preservation in these "Perils of the seas."

The following is another illustration of the dangers of Madagascar coast life, written by a gentleman who, at the very outset of his life in the island, had a rather alarming experience of the thousand and one vicissitudes of foreign travel:—

"On Sunday morning, 19th October, about four o'clock, I was awoke by a little disturbance on deck, and on getting up and looking out was rather startled to see that we were close to land. There was then no wind to speak of. After a little time, as we were only drifting nearer to shore, the captain anchored, but the

heavy swells dragged the anchor every now and then. Soon after six o'clock, however, a slight breeze sprang up off shore, all sail was set, and we began slowly to creep away. I thought we were safe then; but in a very few minutes (even then we were only about a ship's length from the breakers) it fell calm, then the wind came from the N.E. Unfortunately the ship's head was pointing the wrong way to take the wind, and I saw at once that nothing but a miracle could save us from going ashore. We dressed as quickly as possible, but had barely got on our clothes when the first bump came, then another, and another. We went ashore stern first, as the captain was trying to wear the ship, and had just got her half-way round, when, however, the stern stuck fast, the anchor (which had been let go) soon broke, and we went broadside on. The ship was on a sandbank about sixty yards or so from shore: luckily there was not much sea, but the usual ocean swell was rather heavy. We were told to go forward to the fore-castle, where all the crew were, and wait until something could be done to get us ashore. It was rather an anxious time until the topmast went, but then the ship was lighter, and something could be done. The long-boat was broken by the fallen mast, so the first idea was that some one should take a rope ashore and so tow the small boat in. None of the sailors could swim much, so I tried; but the cross currents were so strong that I could not manage it, and was obliged to be pulled back, very much done up. Finally the boat was got ashore, and a rope fastened to each end of it, one on board and one on shore; and in this way, two at a time, we all reached land safely. It was pouring with rain, so that we were pretty well drenched.



Mary luckily had her waterproof on, and so kept her shoulders dry. My trousers were torn somehow, and my waistcoat fell overboard, so that I landed in Madagascars with a coat, a shirt, and a pair of shoes and socks."

The crew of the Indiaman already referred to were fortunate enough to reach the shore, and were kindly received by the natives of the south coast. One of these was Robert Drury, the son of a London inn-keeper, about whom something has already been said in a former chapter. For some months everything went on pleasantly, and the wants of the white strangers were anticipated and generously supplied in every respect. In fact, so kind was the treatment Drury and his companions in misfortune received on all sides, that they began to suspect the natives of a design to secure their goodwill, and then ultimately reduce them to slavery. The crew therefore arranged a plan of attack, and, suddenly turning upon their hosts, made the chief of them a prisoner. The white men were, however, quickly outnumbered, and the Malagasy began to treat them with great rigour. The foreigners soon fell sick for want of food and water, and from the constant assaults made upon them, and their numbers were at length reduced to two or three, about whose ultimate fate there has always been some degree of uncertainty. Drury, being then only a lad, was spared and made a slave. As he

was the first Englishman who had had any acquaintance with the natives of this, at that time almost unheard of, country, his experiences of the place and people, which were afterwards published, are very interesting and instructive. He frequently fell into errors in the spelling of the native names, and in his explanation of the *rationale* of native ceremonies and customs; but he was fairly intelligent and gifted with great powers of observation, and the information he brought to England concerning the island was eagerly sought after, and created quite a sensation at the time. His narrative is very pathetic in places, and the records of his own personal sufferings and privations are very touching and sad. He at length effected his deliverance by attracting the attention of his friends in England and elsewhere by an extraordinary and very clever device. He wrote his name and a brief sentence describing his deplorable condition upon a leaf, and sent it down to the coast by a friendly native, to be delivered to the first white man who should by chance be seen there. After some delay, the captain of a European vessel received the strange missive, and quickly grasped the purport of the message it carried. Ultimately Drury was able to reach the sea-coast, where he was gladly welcomed, and enabled to leave the country (1717). He did not penetrate to An-

tanamarivo or the districts of Ankòva, nor does he appear to have heard of either the one or the other. Indeed, at that time the present capital was a place of no importance, being merely one of many small towns in Imérina. Judging from his journal, he never probably passed beyond what is now known as the Province of Anosy, at the entrance to the south-eastern corner of the island.

Drury's account of the southern tribes, amongst whom he passed the time of his captivity, makes no mention of the gods which were at that period revered as the deities of Imérina; but his description of the religious ceremonies of the tribe with which he dwelt is very interesting. Their chief object of worship appears to have been what he calls an *owley*. It is not clear what this word means. Perhaps it is a provincial corruption, or rather variation, of the Hova word *ody*, a charm. He says:—

“The inhabitants have all in their houses a small portable utensil, which is devoted to religious uses, and is a kind of household altar, which they call the *owley*. It is made of a peculiar wood, in small pieces, neatly joined, and making almost the form of a half-moon with the horns downward, between which are placed two alligator's teeth. This is adorned with various kinds of beads, and such a sash fastened to it as a man ties about his waist when he goes to war. I observed that they brought two forks from the woods and fixed them

in the ground, on which was laid a beam, slender at each end, and about six feet long, with two or three pegs on it, and upon this they hung the *owley*. Behind it was a long pole, to which a bullock was fastened with a cord. They had a pan full of live coals, on which they threw an aromatic gum and planted it under the *owley*. They then took a small quantity of hair from the tail, chin, and eyebrows of the ox, and put them on the *owley*. Then my master used some particular gestures, with a large knife in his hand, and made a formal prayer, in which the people joined. In the next place, they threw the ox on the ground, and my master cut his throat; for as there are no priests amongst them, the chief man, whether of the country, town, or family, performs all divine offices himself."

Poor Drury, then a mere lad, narrowly escaped being killed by his master for refusing to join in this ceremony or repeat the prayer or invocation used by the people; for he remarks: "As I thought this kind of worship to be downright idolatry, and that they paid their adorations to the *owley*, I resolutely told him that I would sooner die than pay divine homage to any false deity whatsoever." It was only at the intercession of his owner's brother that his life was spared.

In a conversation with one of his masters some time after this occurrence, the Malagasy chief told him: "It is not the wood nor the alligator's teeth that we worship, but there are certain

guardian demons who take care of all nations, families, and private persons; and should you be possessed of one of these *owleys*, and give it the name of some guardian spirit, it will undoubtedly attend you."

The patriarchal element in Malagasy idolatry is distinctly recognised in these early accounts, and confirms what was ascertained by the first Protestant missionaries. There has apparently never been a priesthood properly so-called, nor anything like an organised worship. Drury remarks: "There are no people here who pretend to be greater favourites of the Supreme Being than other men, and to have a particular commission to interpret and declare His will. No one has as yet been so presumptuous as to attempt this, and if any one should be so hardy, he would meet with but few to credit him. Every man here—the poor man as well as the rich lord—is a priest for himself and his family." The political power of the numerous petty chiefs having been absorbed in the one sovereign of Madagascar, their sacerdotal office was naturally transferred to the same supreme ruler; so that since the commencement of the present century the king or queen has acted as the national high priest at the *fandrôana* and on other solemn occasions. Reference to some of these customs has already been made, in describing the New Year's

festival and the sacred character of Malagasy royalty.

The different tribes with whom Drury lived during his stay in Madagascar seem to have been frequently at war with one another, but more for purposes of plunder and cattle and slave dealing than for conquest. Their expeditions were not accompanied with anything like the cruelty and cold-blooded atrocity which marked the march of Ranavalona's armies, disciplined and armed with European weapons. The Malagasy tribes appear to have lived much in the same way as the freebooting Highland clans of that very time, with their frequent raids into their neighbours' domains to carry off sheep and cattle, or like the border chiefs of England and Scotland at an earlier period.

The generally kind treatment which Drury received was not an exceptional case. From the earliest date of their intercourse with Europeans, the Malagasy have shown a friendliness and a wish to conciliate, contrasting strangely with the disgraceful conduct of those who visited them, both Portuguese and French. From the first they were remarkably scrupulous in keeping to the engagements which they entered into with Europeans, and it was not until they learned by frequent experience how so-called Christians were not ashamed to deceive and injure them, that they

began to use the same weapons in self-defence, and thus acquired a reputation for duplicity which was owing in great part to those who should have set an example of honesty and truthfulness.

The original state of the different tribes inhabiting Madagascar, as seen in the accounts of Drury and other writers, seems to have combined the patriarchal and feudal elements. A chief of courage, ability, and personal bravery would attract around him more followers than one of inferior qualifications ; while a reverence for authority by hereditary right gave to all chieftains a claim upon the services of those connected with their clan. Practically a large amount of personal liberty seems to have been enjoyed, each warrior of the tribe having the right of free speech and expressing his opinions upon any measures proposed. This relic of earlier freedom survives in the *kabárys*, or national assemblies, still called together by the sovereigns of Madagascar, where the right of free utterance is theoretically allowed, but which in many cases is of little avail against the modern arbitrary government, unless it is backed by a very general and strongly felt opinion amongst the people at large.

The Malagasy possess no navy. They have lately acquired a small vessel, however, to act as a means of communication between the various

ports of the coast. Till very lately it was extremely difficult to pass from one point to another of the island by sea, and long and tedious land journeys were the only practicable methods often by which the explorer or trader could get to any particular place. The east coast is worse off in this respect than the western seaboard. The tiny vessels which collect the rubber, hides, gum, and bee's-wax for the Tamatave merchants seldom venture far in the stormy season, and it is extremely difficult to prevail upon the captains to accept a passenger on any terms. The accommodation on board these craft is of the most meagre condition, and a passage in them, even under the most favourable conditions of wind and weather, is far from enjoyable. The seamen who command them are, however, kindness itself, and the writer of these pages cannot refrain from putting on record here his gratitude to those gallant sailors, with whom he has voyaged, and whose society, under a variety of circumstances, he has been privileged to enjoy.

On the west coast the traveller finds himself much better off with regard to means of transit. He can at almost any port secure for a reasonable sum the services of an Arab dhow or a sail canoe, that really skims the waves like a thing of life. These canoes are long and narrow, without gunwale, and are sailed with an enormous sheet, which



appears somewhat carelessly slung upon the mast, that bends and cracks in a most threatening manner in a furious gale. The Arab skipper sits silently upon a coil of rope or bundle of cloths in the stern, with a large paddle, shipped so as to act as a rudder, and with the rope of the sail twisted round his arm, or even held sometimes in his teeth. The passenger is mounted dangerously high up in the centre of the canoe, and is charged earnestly and often to keep exactly in the position appointed to him, or the whole affair will suddenly heel over and disappear beneath the waters. Hour after hour the canoe drifts onward before the wind, at a magnificent speed, and amid a silence broken only by the plash of the waves, or the cry of a startled seabird overhead, or the muttered devotions of the Moslem crew, who, if it happen to be their sacred month of Ramadan, will remain without food or water beneath the burning sun throughout the day, and only refresh their parched throats and bleeding lips when the sun has at length fallen into the western sea. At all times abstemious, these men during Ramadan barely touch food even of the simplest kind, and one cannot but admire their strength of principle and self-restraint, while pitying their intellectual and moral darkness. To them "Azrael," the angel of death, is an indescribable terror. The mention

of his name will often blanch the cheek of the most stolid son of Ishmael, who may have had to face the bayonets of an English company or the cannon of a British fleet, and has done so unmoved. Fearless, and without dread in the face of human foes, they are powerless and un-hinged in an instant at the whisper of the one dreaded name, and when upon the water they seem to have a special dread of his power. In the lowering cloud, or the rustle of the rising storm—in the sudden leap of the sea-dolphin at the bows, or in the scream of the night birds, they appear ever to hear the motion of his wings; and in the presence of death their cries and utterances of despairing horror are heartrending in the extreme. The Mohammedan creed contains much that is only a species of veiled fatalism, and the Arab is constantly endeavouring through life to cheat his destiny.

I had a considerable knowledge of many of these men, old slave-traders, and former commanders of dhows which had been swept from the Mozambique waters by the activity of the British cruisers. Having eluded the vigilance of the English blockade, these people had settled down in Madagascar as planters or traders, and occasionally it was possible to get from them some account of their former nefarious and often murderous exploits, when engaged in the slave-

traffic between the east coast of Africa and the land of the Hovas. All that has ever been printed upon this subject has hitherto failed to convey anything like an adequate picture of the atrocities and horrors which surrounded this particular and most disgusting phase of commercial venture in its palmy days. There can be no doubt about the excellent effect of our slave policy so far, and of the good results which have followed from our friendly relations with the present Sultan of Zanzibar; but the evil is only "scotched, not killed." A brisk traffic in former times was carried on in East African slaves, between the Hova princes of Imérina and the ports along the coast of the continent, and the Arabs of Muscat and Johanna were the merchants by whom it was directed. These men landed in the night from their swift-sailing dhows, and shipped off cargoes of wretched creatures of all ages, with which they made for the unfrequented harbours and inlets of the Sakalava country, which extends from Imérina along the whole of the north and west coasts of the islands. When pursued, the miserable freight was cast overboard and drowned. If the slavers were successful, on the other hand, in eluding the vigilance of the boats of her Majesty's cruisers, their unhappy victims were sold at the landing-place to traders from the capital, or agents of the great nobles, who were

sent down to secure the hardest and most likely bargains.

Many exciting scenes have been witnessed from time to time in the channel of the Mozambique, when a band of these sea-brigands have been perhaps surprised suddenly in some quiet bay by a detachment of blue-jackets (anxious for some relief to the usual monotony of naval life on the Zanzibar station), before the human cargo could either be thrown into the sea or hidden in the recesses of the forest. The Arabs seldom showed any disposition to fight or resist authority; but usually either tried to escape, or if actually secured, to incriminate one another and to prove that any one but themselves was the originator of the slave-hunt and the owner of the slaves. The calm, placid self-assurance of these sons of the desert, however, generally gave way at the sight of the ominous rope suspended from the yard-arm, which was the inevitable fate of all those caught red-handed and with slaves actually in their possession. Cruel and rapacious by nature, and in their dealings with the weak and dispirited and unhappy beings who fell into their power, though they were, they themselves could not face certain death, and to be hung by the neck was to them the most frightful of all the visitations of their dreaded Azrael.

The condition in which the slave cargoes were

often found can scarcely be realised. "The gaunt skeleton forms, the abject apathetic looks of the miserable captives, and the utterly hopeless aspect of the various groups as they sat about the feet of their deliverers, and scarcely had strength left to realise that they were free, reminded the spectator often of Charon and his crew of slaves." Sickness, disease, hunger, and the brutality of the treatment they had received on board the dhows, where they were sometimes found packed in layers, in numbers amounting to 200 or 300 in a space only sufficient for 100 at the outside, often induced insanity, and they have been known to throw themselves into the sea in their paroxysms of mad despair. The melancholy duty of gathering up the corpses of the dead from the loathsome hold can only be performed after the living have been drawn up to the fresh air on deck. The mangled bodies of the feeble children and women who sank down and were crushed to death in the fearful struggle, only add another and more repulsive feature to the already overwhelming horrors of life on a slave-ship.

It has been stated, on good authority, that 30,000 slaves were annually landed, a few years ago, by our cruisers at the Seychelles alone: these islands, which are very important by reason of their geographical position, forming a convenient rendezvous for her Majesty's ships which are em-

ployed in the South Indian Ocean in the suppression of this hateful traffic. The real difficulty of the friends of the slave, however, commences with the release of so many thousands of helpless beings in an alien land, far away from their homes and old associations. The question is, What is to be done with and for them after they have been delivered from the bands of their captivity? Successful attempts have been made by good people to solve this knotty problem, both in St Helena and Sierra Leone, where cargoes of liberated negroes were till very lately constantly being landed from the boats of her Majesty's men-of-war. But so far on the east coast nothing in the way of an adequate provision has been made for the education and industrial training of liberated Africans. This appears to be the weak point in what is certainly the most humane and noble of all our national enterprises—the abolition of slavery. It is to England that the eye of the oppressed turns from every quarter of the world,—it is to her that the outcast appeals, no matter where his domicile may happen to be : it is her proud and glorious prerogative that she is the fountain of liberty, of mercy, and of justice—the arbiter of the nations, the nursing-mother of the races—and it is for her to continue to maintain this great position, to accept her magnificent destiny, and

to finish the work which has been placed in her hands, by securing for those who are freed by her efforts from the grasp of the oppressor, that moral and physical instruction and enlightenment which will enable them to become capable and useful citizens, and thoughtful and honest men.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE GREAT NORTH-EAST.

THE north-eastern province of Madagascar is less known than Imérina; and until very recently our information as to the physical conformation of the territory, or the peculiar manners and habits of the population, was very limited. This absence of information may partly be accounted for by the difficulty of access to the district—there being no known way through it except the direct route from the capital. Traders and adventurers have from time to time touched at some of the seaports, but have not penetrated many miles into the interior. The European name of the province is Vohimare; but the Malagasy call it Vohimarina (from *vohitsa*, village, and *marina*, level). The whole of this region is well supplied with streams, which flow eastward from the central range of hills, as is the almost invariable rule of all the great rivers of Madagascar.

The general aspect of the north-east of the



island is mountainous ; but there are rich and fertile valleys enough here, which abound in masses of unrestrained tropical vegetation, and which present very favourable conditions for settlement and industrial colonisation. With a little expenditure of ingenuity and money, the streams, which are seldom, if ever, quite dry, could be turned in any direction ; and the vast fields, which are so unproductive solely for want of water, by a simple system of irrigation could be made to yield an enormous and profitable return in the shape of abundant crops of rice, coffee, or sugar. Splendid timber for ship-building or other purposes abounds in the forests around the bay of Diego Saurez ; and there is also a very useful kind of stone, and unlimited deposits of iron. Coal has long been worked in the region of Nosibé ; and beautiful specimens of rock crystal have been brought up to the capital from time to time by the natives of Vohimare ; whilst quartz is also found in great quantities.

The principal harbours on the north-east coast are the Bay of Vohimare, Port Leven, Port Luquez, and the Bay of Diego, or British Sound. An attempt was made in the beginning of the last century to found a British settlement in Port Luquez, and great care was taken to send forth an expedition, suitably equipped for the purpose by Sir R. Farquhar, then governor of

the Mauritius; but unfortunately the settlers were murdered in cold blood by the ferocious Sakalavas, who were then even more warlike and savage than they are now. The harbours of Vohimare and Diego Saurez are the chief centres of a limited but active commerce with Mauritius, Reunion, and even more distant islands. The neighbourhood of these ports is quite uninhabited, except by the members of a half-savage tribe, who spend their time in hunting the herds of wild cattle which roam at will over the grassy plains, and share the cool shade of the verdant banks of the innumerable streams which intersect the meadow-land with the crocodiles which abound. These men intercept, in a clever manner, the calves of the herds, and cut them off from the parent stock, and then drive them away to some secluded spot, where they are tamed, and at length placed with the domestic cattle.

The harbour of Vohimare is a broad and noble expanse of water, running inland in a westerly direction, and, as is often the case on these coasts, shut off from the full sweep of the Indian Ocean by a sunken coral reef, which rolls back the enormous breakers which burst upon it, and affords a welcome and secure shelter to the vessels which frequent it. The passage, however, between the reef and the mainland is very narrow, and great care has to be exercised in entering,

especially with a south or south-west wind, or in a few moments you may be on the reef and in peril of death. The danger is not so much on account of the depth of water, however, in case of wreck, as on account of the sharks which infest these harbours. These insatiable monsters have no mercy: they are extremely agile in their movements; and natives have been known to be drawn under and devoured by them only a few feet from the custom-house landing-place. The view on entering this harbour is very pleasing. On the left appears the little settlement of the Creole traders, and others engaged in the commerce of the port; while on the west and north-west the bay is shut in by hills; and a fringe of tropical shrubs and trees adorns the extreme edge of the shore. The Hova authorities, having learned wisdom from experience, generally erect their forts some distance inland, to escape the guns of European war-ships. Few Hovas are, therefore, to be seen in the harbour itself, except when friendly ships are in port, and they come down to receive the dues on behalf of the Queen—their stronghold, Amboanio, being some miles away to the west.

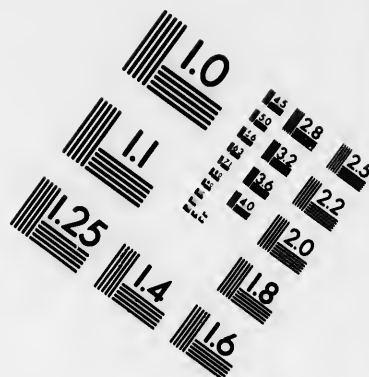
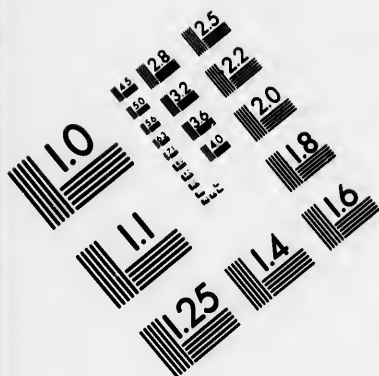
The scene is generally an exciting and a busy one when a Mauritius bullock-ship is taking in her cargo of live cattle. The cattle are brought down from the country districts by the native drivers

to the shore, where they are conveyed on board in a very primitive fashion. A rope is fastened to the horns of the captive, and several scores of Malagasy tug and strain at the rope, with a view to induce the stubborn and often enraged animal to take to the water. A frightful din is kept up on all sides by the drivers to frighten off the sharks; and when at length the bullock begins to swim, a canoe full of men take charge of the rope, and steadily steer the helpless animal towards the vessel, into which he is duly hoisted, and takes his place alongside some hundreds of companions, duly staked and foddered for the often difficult and perilous voyage to the Mauritius. Often, however, the cattle are by no means tractable. They resist, by all means in their power, this enforced expatriation, and rush upon the men who have charge of them with ungovernable fury; or occasionally the rope breaks by which the bullock is held, and then for the time the released and bellowing brute has it all to himself. A general stampede takes place; and half the morning is sometimes wasted in that, to the Malagasy, most exhilarating of all pastimes, an "ox hunt." Boys, men, and even girls and women, join in the pursuit, over field and stream, and up the hillsides, now chasing and now being chased, roaring with delight, and utterly indifferent to the passage of precious moments,

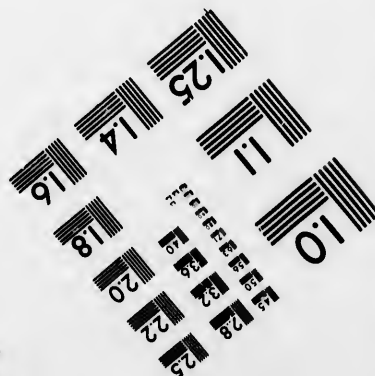
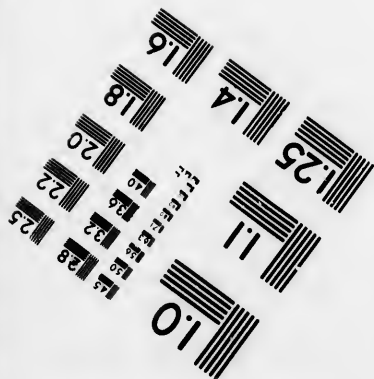
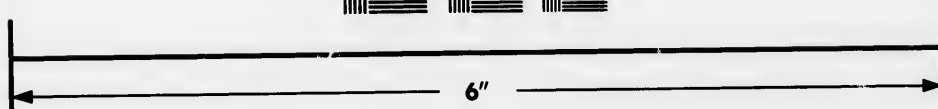
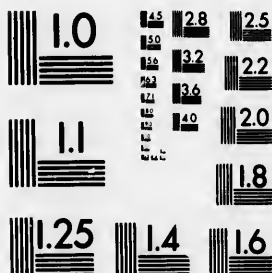
or the rapid ebb of the tide, which will detain the already irate skipper of the still unfilled "bullocker" perhaps for another day or two. At length, bleeding and panting, the poor beast is again secured, and led in triumph to the landing-place, whence he is dragged, heartless and weary, to the vessel's side, up which he is lifted more dead than alive, probably only to survive the brutal treatment he has received during the "hunt" a few hours, when his lifeless carcass will then be flung overboard, as a feast for the crowd of sharks that always follow perseveringly in the wake of these vessels, on the chance of what they may pick up.

The bullocks of Vohimare are the finest in the island, and are much prized in the markets of Mauritius on account of the quality of the beef. This superiority of flavour is doubtless due to the quantity of rich grass with which the downs and valleys in the north-west are clothed. The Sakalava in this neighbourhood have never taken kindly to the Hova rule: they take every opportunity of resisting their authority; and they seldom appear at Amboanio, the local seat of the central Government, except at the annual festivals, or to exchange or sell rice or other produce. The Betsimisaraka of the Vohimare province are very clean and neat in their dwellings, which compare most favourably in this respect with the





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houses of the Sakalava, and even of some of those of the Hova officials. They usually erect their houses a few feet from the soil,—a plan that is generally followed by the Europeans on the coast, and which affords some degree of protection from the damp and malaria.

In former days this corner of the island used, it is said, to be infested by pirates, who afterwards settled down amongst the inhabitants; and the remains of many foreign tombs in various parts of the country, and the existence of traces of European names amongst the people, testify to the fact that a considerable colony of white strangers once existed there.

Perhaps the most remarkable town in the north-east of Madagascar is Antomboka. It is the stronghold of the Hovas in this locality, and has a somewhat eventful history. Like the capital, it is built upon a mountain, and thus presents a striking appearance when approached from the plain by which it is surrounded. A visitor to the fortress a few years ago thus describes its situation and means of approach:—

“We then left Antananarivokely, and after travelling across a plain, ascended the mountain on which Antomboka is built, and entered the town. Antomboka, properly speaking, is the name of a very small village of ten or twelve houses, situated close to the Bay of Diego Suarez;

but the name is given by some natives and Europeans to the town or citadel of the Hovas, called sometimes by the Hovas Vohimarina, and by the Sakalavas Antsingy. It is a fortress of the Hovas, built on the top of a mountain, which on all sides is defended by projecting and precipitous rocks from invasion. There are only three ways by which the top is reached, all of them exceedingly difficult. One is on the south, one on the west, and one on the east. I first ascended by that on the south side of the mountain. Just before coming to the top, the only means of getting up is a ladder of from 15 to 20 feet—a favourite device of the Malagasy in all their fortified strongholds. Having mounted that, a plateau stretches itself out before you, on which is built a Sakalava town—*i.e.*, the Sakalava portion of Antomboka. Higher up is the town of the civilians, and higher still is the residence of the governor, officers, and soldiers. This town is so naturally and almost invulnerably defended, that it forms the key of the whole north of Madagascar. The Hovas quite regard it in this light; so that while scarcely a hundred soldiers are stationed at Amboanio, quite a thousand are quartered at Antomboka."

The Bay of Diego Suarez is beginning to be known as one of the finest in the world. It comprises five large harbours, and is completely shel-

tered from the Indian Ocean. The scenery around it is extremely beautiful, the climate is healthy, and the soil black, rich, and fertile, and at the same time well watered. The whole of the north-east will ultimately, and probably at no very distant period, become one of the most important districts of Madagascar. The abundant materials which it possesses for a large and lucrative trade in its cattle, timber, and mineral deposits, are sure to be developed by the enterprise of the present Government; and the vast resources of this region will be poured out upon the world, in return for useful imports and articles of domestic comfort, which are everywhere so much needed, and for which there will be an increasing demand as the people become more enlightened, and as the country advances in civilisation, and in the knowledge of its own splendid endowments of power and wealth. There is a great lack in the native mind of that peculiar energy which is the chief element in the success of a commercial nation, but this defect is almost altogether confined to the subordinate tribes. The Hovas, on the other hand, show marvellous signs of the mercantile instinct, which, if rightly directed and encouraged, will be the means and instrument of their eventual and not remote elevation to a position of political power and dignity on the East African seaboard, that will be as unrivalled

as it will be creditable both to themselves and to all those who have befriended them. A natural indolence oppresses the other races in the island, and they are quite satisfied with producing sufficient rice for the day's requirements, and sufficient sugar-cane for the manufacture of their favourite drink, called *toaka*, without being in the least impressed with the lavish prodigality with which Providence has blessed their beautiful country.

It is feared that there is still a leakage in the matter of the slave-trade in this particular corner of the territory of the Hovas; and gum, copal, and other productions of the locality are occasionally sold for cotton prints, gunpowder, and *slaves*, introduced stealthily by the Arabs, with whom kidnapping appears ever to be a pleasant as well as a profitable employment. Under pretence of being sailors, and mere servants of the owners of the Arab dhows, miserable Africans from the Mozambique have been introduced into the island and sold to Hova officials up to very recent times, and it is to be feared it will be years before the traffic can be said to be for ever put an end to.

The influence of these Arabs of Johanna and the Comoros is anything but salutary. I heard of one, who frequently called upon me during my residence at Andévoranto for medical treatment, who carried on a system of

most unblushing body-snatching under our very eyes for some time there, and which we were powerless to stop. He usually went to some mother with a large family, or some poor Betsimisaraka chief who had a large number of slaves, and under pretence of hiring a likely lad or youth, would engage his services for some weeks for a rice-collecting voyage up one or other of the rivers towards the interior of the island. All would go well till some obscure town or village had been reached, when the rascally Arab would then proceed to hawk the boy about for sale. Of course the wretched victim of the plot denied bitterly that he was the slave of the Arab. But this was of no avail in most cases, as it is not an uncommon thing for slaves to deny ownership if they do not want to be sold away from their home and kindred. The miserable lad would be parted with for half his value probably, and in due course the Arab would reappear at Andévoranto with the blandest of faces, and the most sympathetic of voices, and handing the mother or the master a dollar, would say that, alas! for poor *boto* (the boy), he had been eaten by a crocodile, after repeated warnings from him as to incautious bathing in the streams. Sometimes the tale was varied to *tazo* (fever), or *latsak in drano* (drowned); but unfortunately on one occasion the youth himself reappeared, after

about two years' absence, and exposed the whole transaction, to the horror of the relatives of those who had been taken away by the Arab, and to the complete confusion and utter consternation of this worthy son of the Prophet, who said that there had been some mistake somewhere, and that he would go and inquire into the matter. His departure from amongst us was, to say the least of it, abrupt, and when I heard from Andévoranto and from our people there, he had not returned. Perhaps he has found the problem he set out to solve more complicated than he anticipated!

A little north of Imérina lies the *Antsihanaka* country, a district inhabited by a small but interesting clan of people called the Sihanaka. Little was known about this tribe till recently, and the information which has come to hand is quite of a nature to make us wish to have a more extended knowledge of the place and its population. Antsihanaka may be described as an undulating oval plain about forty-five miles in length from north to south, and twenty-five miles broad from east to west. Many of the villages stand on the extreme border of the plain; but a few are found in the very centre of the swamp, which is chiefly made up of large tracts of rice-field and enormous marshes. The oval plain of Antsihanaka may be divided

for consideration into (1) The forest district ; (2) The open country ; (3) The marshes.

Of the forest district the most interesting products worthy of notice are the magnificent timber woods to be found on all sides. One of the trees is called the *voamatahobaratra* (the fruit afraid of the thunderbolt), because the tree is said to shed its leaves at the approach of a thunder-storm. Mahogany, rosewood, and ebony are represented by various close-grained woods of the same family, which are capable of taking a very high polish, and of being worked up into beautiful articles of useful and ornamental furniture. There are also white and yellow woods, resembling maple and box, and numerous specimens of the *pandanus* and the palm, which latter are not however of much value as timber.

India-rubber is also obtained in the forests around Ant'sihanaka, from what appears, by its name, to be a kind of creeper or climbing plant rather than a tree. Honey is very plentiful ; and there are some wild animals which are the largest known in the island. Of these the most notable are the forest dog, the *barbay*, the *fosa*, and several species of the lemur. The *barbay* is a kind of wild cat, very savage ; and the *fosa* is a kind of dog with black fur, strong muscular claws, and with the contracting pupil of the eye seen in the felidæ. There is also a mythical

creature known as the *songom*, about which much has been said, but little really known. It is described as a creature as large as a donkey, spotted with red, and dwelling in the forests to the north. A recent traveller speaks of the native report of a remarkable spider in these regions, which constructs a web so strong that birds are caught in it, and he says that he had no reason to question the truth of the report.

There are numerous serpents in the Antsihanaka marshes, but none of them are venomous. An entirely new species was obtained by the late Mr Crossley (an English naturalist). The body was only a little larger than a spear-shaft, its length was about six feet, and its colour perfectly white. Twenty different species of birds were collected from these woods by M. Grandideir—one about the size of a pigeon, and of a beautiful blue colour, resembling the finest silk, attracting considerable attention.

The open country is covered with vast herds of cattle, which are partly owned by the Sihanaka and partly by the Hovas. Rice is extremely cheap, and bananas and mangoes are very plentiful. Geese and ducks are kept all over the district in great numbers; and in this part of the country there is said happily to be no fever. The plains of the Antsihanaka are



liable to be overrun at any time by the Sakalaka, who delight, as is the case with the Bára in the south, to descend upon the fruitful fields and well-stocked meads of their neighbours, and carry off all that they can possibly lay hands upon. They have been known to carry off two hundred head of cattle at one swoop; and consequently the Hovas have erected a belt of small forts along the western side of the plain for the protection of the district. The herds cover the plains, and cattle-tending is the chief business of the people, and probably in no part of the island are there so many cattle as in the Antsihanaka. The oxen are used extensively for treading the rice-fields. They are driven to and fro over the mud, and thus reduce it to a state exceedingly well fitted to receive the seed grain. Guinea fowls abound, but as they are very shy, it is difficult to get at them with the gun. The yearly tribute to the Queen is paid by these people in chillies, geese, mats, and quills for pens. The civet-cat is also known, and a kind of hedgehog which is considered very good eating indeed.

Two-fifths of the district is marsh or boggy land, and is the great source of supply for the reeds and rushes which are worked up by the Sihanaka women in useful mats and baskets, these being sold in Imérina, and especially at the

capital, in large numbers. A plant also grows in these marshes which, when burnt, supplies a kind of potash, much used in the place of salt.

But the most striking physical feature of the Sihanaka country is the Lake Alaotra, which is a noble expanse of perfectly clear water, spreading twenty miles in length from north to south, and about four miles broad, perhaps, from east to west. It is bordered with mango, citron, and other trees, in rich profusion; and on a bright day, as the traveller climbs the side of one of the neighbouring hills and looks for the first time across the placid bosom of Alaotra, the view is enchanting, for the limpid surface glimmers in the light of the bright sunshine like an enormous and beautifully polished mirror of burnished gold, while the tiny towns built along its shores stand up from the lake and are thrown into a bold relief, which, reflected in the clear water, is very pretty in its effect. The shores are further enlivened by the herds of cattle grazing amongst the luxuriant tropical foliage; flocks of birds skim the surface of the lake; the children laugh and play with their toy boats on the edge of the water; and the constant passage to and fro of parties of men and women in their canoes, completes a most attractive and agreeable picture of life in Madagascar. At the northern end of the lake is a small island, which

is no longer allowed to be inhabited. It was there that the old Sihanaka chiefs made their final stand against the Hovas, and bravely and successfully resisted them, until Radama I., having placed a cannon upon a raft, finally destroyed the stronghold. The birds which throng the lake are very numerous, and at evening, when they settle down along the shore, one cannot walk along, and the ground is black with them on all sides. The *vivy* (diver) and the *fumakisi-fotra* (breaker of a land-shell) are the most important amongst the feathered denizens of Alaotra. The latter is like a small heron, but its beak is quite the length of one's hand, and at the same time small as a penholder in length and diameter. A bird called *mlonibonkomana* is worthy of notice for its good manners, as it always, when feeding, covers up its head with both its wings till it has finished. Fish abound in the waters of this lake, and the inhabitants of the surrounding villages carry on a very lucrative fishing trade with Imérina, and even more distant provinces.

Crocodiles are to be found everywhere, and on the small rocky islets they may often be seen on a fine afternoon snapping and struggling for a place to bask in the warm rays of the sun. The people seldom cross the lake except in companies of two or three *lakana*, as they are in great

dread of being upset by these huge and hideous brutes. One of the bearers used to tell a curious tale of a fight between a wild boar and one of these horrible monsters. The boar was approaching some shallow water, and the crocodile drew near to seize him. The boar saw the crocodile, and accepted the battle, which soon waxed fast and furious. The boar ripped up the stomach of the crocodile with his terrible snout, but the reptile succeeded in dragging the boar into deep water and drowning him. The dead bodies of both came to the surface, and were secured by the natives, who preserved their heads. There is a bird of the cormorant type which always attends upon the sleeping crocodile, and is often seen perched upon his head or back in perfect security. At the approach of danger, the bird utters a peculiar cry, which acts as a signal to the startled beast, who immediately glides off the rock into the water, and sinks below the surface.

The burial customs of the Sihanaka differ considerably from those which prevail in other parts of the island. When any one falls ill amongst them, the relatives immediately convey the sufferer with the greatest privacy into some secret place in the forest, where no one is allowed to see him except one or two persons who are appointed to nurse him. If he dies, the corpse

is brought into the village with great ceremony, and it there lies in state, probably for some weeks.

“ A number of women, both old and young, sit in the house containing the corpse, and the chief mourners weep, but the rest sing and beat drums. The funeral dirge they call *sàsy*, for it cannot be properly called singing; and all the customs together are termed *undravuna*; and there is no cessation in them day or night until the burial, although that sometimes does not take place for some time in the case of wealthy people. The dirges sung on these occasions are distressing and strange to hear, and show plainly their ignorance of the future state and of what is beyond the grave, for the dead are termed ‘lost’ (*véry*),—lost as people are who are left by their companions, and do not see the way to go home again; and death they look upon as the messenger of some hard-hearted power, who drives hard bargains which cannot be altered, and puts one in extreme peril (lit., ‘in the grip of a crocodile’), where no entreaties prevail. The dead they call ‘the gentle (or pleasant) person’; and they will not allow his wife and children and all his relatives to think of anything but their bereavement, and the evil which they have to expect from the want of the protection they had from the dead; for now the pillar of the house on which they leant is broken, and the house which sheltered them is pulled down, and the town they lived in is destroyed, and the strong one they followed is overcome. And, after that, they declare that the living are in trouble, and seem to agree that it had been better not to have been born.

"While they are yet singing, in the manner just described, a man goes round the house and sings a dirge in a melancholy tone; upon hearing which those in the house stop suddenly and are perfectly still. Then the one outside the house proceeds rapidly with his chant, as follows:—

" 'Oh, gone away! oh, gone away, oh!  
Is the gentle one, oh, the gentle one, oh!  
Ah, farewell, ah, farewell, oh!  
Farewell, oh! farewell to his house!  
Farewell, oh! farewell to his friends!  
Farewell, oh! farewell to his wife!  
Farewell, oh! farewell to his children!'

"Then those indoors answer, 'Haie!' as if to say, Amen. Then they inquire and reply as follows, those outside asking, and the others in the house answering:—

" 'What is that sound of rushing feet?'  
'The cattle.'  
'What is that rattling chinking sound?'  
'The money.'  
'What is making such a noise?'  
'The people'—

referring to the property of the deceased. Then the one outside the house chants again:—

" 'Oh! distressed and sad are the many!  
Oh! the plantation is overgrown with weeds!  
Oh! scattered are the calves!  
Oh! silent is the band!  
Oh! weeping are the children!'

"Then those in the house answer again, 'Haie!' Then the one outside the house begins again:—

" 'Oh! gone away, gone away is the gentle one!  
Farewell, oh! farewell!' &c. &c.

"Then the one outside goes away, and those in the house begin again. Meanwhile the men remain in another house called *tráno lahy* (men's house, or male house), and continually bring *toaka* (rum) and cooked meat for the women to eat, and there is a great noise and disturbance. And every evening they kill a number of oxen and buy quantities of *toaka*; but on the final days of watching the corpse they bring up into the village a great many oxen, and all the men take their spears and spear the animals to death all over the village; and every one takes what meat he pleases, except the head, for the heads of all the oxen killed are collected together and placed one over another on long poles.

"And when the corpse is about to be buried, the widow is decorated profusely with all the ornaments she possesses, wearing a scarlet *lamba*, with beads and silver chains on her neck and wrists and ankles, long ear-rings depending from her ears to her shoulders, and silver ornaments on her head. Then she is placed in the house so as to be seen by every one, so that (they say) it may be seen how her husband adorned her while he was yet living; and when the people go away to the funeral she remains still in the house, and does not go to the grave. And all the cattle which were the property of the deceased, together with those of his family as well, are brought up near the village, so that people may see their numbers. Some of the oxen are taken to the path by which the corpse is to be carried, and, when the corpse approaches, men go before it to spear the oxen and lay the carcasses on the road, so that they may be stepped on by those who carry the corpse. If the grave is at some distance, this is done a

good many times before the procession reaches it. And one man following the corpse carries on his head an earthen dish filled with burning cow-dung, and when it is deposited in the grave the dish containing the burning cow-dung is placed at the headstone. They say that the reason of this is that the dead person may be able to get fire should he chance to be cold.

"When the corpse has been placed in the grave, a man knocks at the door of the tomb, or on the stone covering it should there be no door, and calls out: 'O thou, such an one, whoever it is that has bewitched you, let him not hide, let him not be concealed, but break him upon the rock, that the children may see it, that the women may see it;' and all there also join in this adjuration. And after that the earth is filled up against the door of the grave.

"And when the relatives and friends have returned home, and see the widow sitting in her grand clothing and ornaments, they rush upon her, tearing her dress, and violently pulling off all her adornments, so as to hurt her, and say at the same time: 'This is the cause of our not having our own' (meaning, that she has caused the death of their relative); for they believe that the luck of the wife is stronger than that of her husband, and so has caused his death. And so when all her ornaments have been stripped off, they give her a coarse *rofia lamba*, and a spoon with a broken handle, and a round dish with the foot (or stand) broken off, and her hair is dishevelled, and she is covered up with a coarse mat; and there, under it, she remains all day long, and can only leave it at night; and whoever goes into the house, the widow may not speak to them. This broken dish and spoon, already mentioned, is what she



eats with; and she is not allowed to wash her face or her hands, but only the tips of her fingers. She endures all this sometimes for a year, or at least for eight months; and, even when that is over, her time of mourning is not ended for a considerable time afterwards; and she is not allowed to go home to her own relatives until she has been divorced first, like all wives who are divorced, for the relatives of her husband divorce her.

"The children of the deceased fetch wood from the forest, choosing a durable kind, with a tall straight trunk, with two branching forks like the horns of an ox, and this they erect on an open piece of ground or by the roadside, as a remembrance of the dead, just as an upright stone (*tsangam-bato*) is erected in Imérina. This tall post thus set up they call *j'iro*. [In Hova *j'iro* means a lamp.]

"And the house in which the deceased died they leave, and no one occupies it again; they do not pull it down, but let it fall to pieces of itself; but they do not go away from the village [as do the Sakalava]. They called such houses 'broken houses' (*tráno fólaka*); but the custom is now falling into disuse."

## CHAPTER X.

## NEW GROUND.

UNTIL very recent times all that has been written or told concerning Madagascar has had reference almost entirely to the Hovas and the Betsimisaraka, and to the province of Imérina, and the east coast of the island. Some knowledge, far too meagre to satisfy scientific minds, has been gained of the north-west, it is true; but south-western Madagascar, the country of the Bára, the Tanála, and a part of the district peopled by the Betsiléo, has so far been to Europeans a mysterious and dark region, which no traveller had ventured to explore, and whose secrets had yet to be brought out into the light of day.

The turn of the south has come at length, however, and through the energy and perseverance of my old friend and fellow-voyager in past days, the Rev. W. Deans Cowan, F.R.G.S., the rich treasures which it has long kept securely hidden from the naturalist and the man of science are

now being brought to light, only to increase our interest in, and admiration for, this vast and at present almost unknown island. For, after all, to speak of Madagascar as a country with which the geographer even is familiar, is surely a serious error. Perhaps hardly one-third of the area has yet been seen or examined by Europeans. The flora and fauna we know, so far, are those only of a very small portion of the country, chiefly the eastern division; and it was with a delight akin to enthusiasm that the tidings reached England a year or two ago that at length "new ground" had been broken, and a fresh departure made in the history of Malagasy travel and discovery.

South of Imérina, and at a considerable distance from the centre of Hova power, lies the town of Fianarantsoa, already spoken of as the chief city of the BETSILÉO people, and the second largest town in the kingdom. The aspect of the country round the southern capital, as Fianarantsoa is usually called, is very attractive. Vast and elevated mountain-peaks and lofty hill-tops mark the sky-line in every direction, and are the distinguishing features in the scenery of the province.

The Betsiléó are a homely pastoral race, having few large towns, and preferring to live in innumerable small villages scattered up and down

amongst their pleasant hills. The simple, farm-like homes in which they reside are peculiar to the people, and are seen nowhere else in the island. The inhabitants of some of the more remote villages were found to be very shy, and fled at the approach of the white stranger and his retinue. The climate on the higher terraces of the district is cold, and hoar frost is not unfrequently seen on the ground in the early morning. It appears that of the twenty-nine different tribes which form the Malagasy nation, several are comprised under the title of the Betsiléo.

These people acknowledge the supremacy of Ranavalona III., and are governed by chiefs, who are descendants of the old independent princes. These have, however, to swear fealty to the Hova sovereign. In this the dominant Government shows a sagacious spirit, as it thus secures the allegiance of these distant clans by means of the very men who would otherwise probably only incite to rebellion and disorder. As to the question whether a Hova supremacy over the entire island would be a desirable condition of things, opinions are divided. I give mine in favour of the supreme authority being vested in the Hovas, as they are undoubtedly the most intellectual and competent of the native races. It is supposed that at present the Queen

only really exercises undisputed authority over one-tenth of the soil, the remainder being quite independent of her rule. But if the people are eventually to hold their own, and to retain possession of the homes of their ancestors, nothing will avail but consolidation, a total cessation of internecine strife, and a concentration of all their powers for the protection of the coast-line, and the development of their internal resources.

The Betsiléó are decidedly of African origin, as is shown by their language, customs, and outward appearance. It has been thought by some, whose knowledge of the subject is evidently superficial, that the Hovas and the other tribes were identical in origin. But the Betsiléó are clearly as distinct from the people of Imérina, as are the Hindoos from the inhabitants of China or Japan,—and no satisfactory account can be obtained of the origin of the Malagasy, unless consideration for the character of the Betsiléó as well as that of the Hova enters into the inquiry.

But it is rather of the TANÁLA country, perhaps, that we have most to say in this chapter on “new ground.” The meaning of the word describes fairly well the general appearance of the country, which lies between  $47^{\circ} 30'$  and  $48^{\circ} 30'$  E. long., and between  $20^{\circ} 15'$  and  $22^{\circ} 30'$  S. lat. ; and is almost entirely covered with a vast forest which stretches out towards the east in irregular

and broken patches. Few persons are located in the forest, and the chief population appears to be settled in the low-lying valleys to the east. The abrupt wall of the great eastern terrace of the island is strikingly picturesque, on account of the enormous height to which it reaches here; and the lofty peaks of Ikongo, Ivohibe, and Ambohitrandriana may be seen from the coast. Water abounds, and the soil, as in the north-west, seems to be capable of producing very abundant crops—flourishing sugar-cane and rice fields appearing throughout the district, and well-kept and productive coffee plantations covering most of the hillsides.

Many of the towns are occupied only for a time, as the Tanála appear to be nomadic in their habits, and to go forth from place to place in search of fresh rice-grounds as soon as the crop has been gathered in from the old fields. They simply burn the brushwood before the season of the rains, and sow their rice upon the ashes and soil thus prepared. They hardly ever remain longer than a single season in any particular spot, and the same custom prevails all through the district with few exceptions, and these near the residences generally of the chiefs.

“From the river Faráoney southward the country is virtually independent, and is under the rule of the Zafirambo chiefs. The head of this family long resisted

successfully the attempts of the Hova authorities to subjugate him, and was able for a considerable period to defy a large and ably directed army, from the almost impregnable mountain of Ikongo, where the doughty chieftain sat like an eagle in his nest and defied the Hovas with bitter taunts and gestures. On the summit of Ikongo, which is tolerably level, there is a large town, and many rice-fields watered by a stream of some size. There are, however, no residents, it is said, but the guards, who for some reason are changed every year. The only means of ascent and descent are supplied by ladders of fragile creepers, which are dropped and drawn up as occasion demands by the soldiers of the garrison within. No foreigner is permitted to see Ikongo, over which the Tanála watch with the greatest jealousy. Strange to say, in the centre of this district is a small republic, governed by a number of petty chiefs, who have managed to throw off the yoke of the Zafirambo dynasty and declare their independence.

"The country of the Tanála consists of undulating hills, for the most part covered with trees, bamboo, and the cardamom plant; the valleys between the hills are often marshy, but in many places they afford pasture-land for the herds of cattle. Towards the south, more especially near the Ampelapá and Taivóndro, the country is comparatively free from forest, and from the hill of Isanaráha it has the appearance of undulating grassy hills, and this is the reason why these tribes are not properly considered as Tanála, or forest-dwellers. Those who have settled in the great forest, such as the Imahasíla and those about Anjólobáto, are wood-cutters, while those on the western edge of the great forest are for the most part workers in iron, which is found in great

abundance all along that district. Those in the low country have no particular occupation other than the formation of their rice-grounds, hunting the wild boar, and collecting honey with which to make their native beer. The whole country, from the north to the south, is remarkable for the beauty of its scenery. The deep valley of Ivohitróso is perhaps the grandest and loveliest of all. Here the principal feeders of the Matitánana emerge from the forest into the low country, forming in their descent cascades and waterfalls of great grandeur and beauty; and the main stream of the Matitánana itself bursts from the green shades of the forest with a perpendicular fall of 500 or 600 feet, its dense columns of water being broken into clouds of misty spray long before the deep pool at its base is reached. Over this pool, sacred to the natives from their superstitious ideas, there is spanned many a gorgeous rainbow, born of the bright sunlight and the misty vapours of the fall. These falls are named the Victoria Falls; those at the head of Faráony river, near Anjólóbátó, the Cecil Falls. Near the eastern base of the hills, near the Inamóróna river, there is a hot spring, close to the falls of that river, which at the time of my visit had a temperature of  $112^{\circ}$  F., as compared with the atmospheric temperature of  $70^{\circ}$  F. On the north of the Matsiátra, near Ivchibóla, we have another hot spring, and close to the village of Imanámpy there is a third, and in the Bára land we discovered another about five miles east of the Government town Tompánandrarána. The precise situations of these hot springs are:  $47^{\circ} 38' \text{ E. by } 21^{\circ} 10' \text{ S.}$ ;  $47^{\circ} 18' \text{ E. by } 22^{\circ} 16' \text{ S.}$ ;  $47^{\circ} 5' \text{ E. by } 21^{\circ} 47' \text{ S.}$ ;  $46^{\circ} 23' \text{ E. by } 22^{\circ} 20' \text{ S.}$  Notwithstanding these springs, I was unable to discover any distinct traces of volcanic action. The



hills of Betsiléó and Tanála are largely marked with seams of white quartz and patches of decayed granite of milky whiteness. The western edge of the great forest is a deposit of iron ore, and I have no doubt that gold exists in great quantities in the beds of the Tanála rivers. All the iron and pottery work of the Tanála people is manufactured in Betsiléó, and is obtained in exchange for soft rush mats and bark cloth, the latter of which bears hammer marks similar to those seen in the same material from Central Africa. The Tanála houses are made of bamboo, split and flattened. They are generally a few feet above the ground. All the Tanála proper content themselves with folded leaves of the cardamom plant for spoons and drinking cups, this being one of the peculiarities which distinguishes them from the Ampelafá and the Taivóndro. They are a peaceful and hospitable people, kind and bounteous towards the stranger. They have but little knowledge of money, and prefer an exchange for their produce, beads or calico. Like most of the tribes in Madagascar, they practise the rite of circumcision, and trial by ordeal is very common. Serious crimes are rare, and within the last twenty or thirty years few if any have occurred. Capital punishment is almost unknown. In the northern Tanála the seat of justice is Ambohimánga, and to this place all cases must be taken. In the southern Tanála, however, Ratsiandraófana himself, with his judges, visits the place where the crime has been committed, and there pronounces judgment. The Tanála is the richest district in Madagascar, and presents a magnificent field for European enterprise in the cultivation of coffee, sugar-cane, vanilla, and even tea. The rivers are generally much impeded by cascades and boulders, and

are only navigable for canoes or small boats for twenty or thirty miles inland. They generally flow into the lakes, with outlets to the sea full of sand, and only suitable for lighters."—(Rev. W. Deans Cowan, F.R.G.S.)

The BĀRA people are closely connected with the Tanála both by situation and origin. They are the occupants of the southern portion of the central plateau, and are still in a very unlettered and somewhat degraded condition, much given to cattle-raising and to "borrowing" the possessions of their neighbours for an indefinite period of time. The slaves, also, appear to regard their situation with a somewhat "liberal" view as to relationship between master and man, and they absent themselves for long periods, and even for many years, during which they go away into distant parts of the island, and hire themselves out for employment in the fields, and so enjoy the fruit of their own exertions in a sense in which they could not be said to do at home. The ready wit of the slave is very often refreshing, and it is pleasing to find by one's experience of them that bondage of body does not always mean intellectual inferiority.

The following story was told me by a master on one occasion, who came to me for counsel as to the best way to deal with a slave who had been absent for a very long time from his service, and had sent no tidings of his whereabouts, or

remitted any portion of his earnings to his owner, as is the usual custom in the case of those who are employed in distant places for a weekly or monthly sum of wages. The master had long given up all hope of seeing the "runaway" again. He had duly execrated him, and then dismissed him from his memory possibly. Months and years passed away, and he was filled with the thoughts and cares of other things. His children grew up about him, his fields and orchards flourished, honours came to him from his sovereign, and the name of the deserter was seldom or never mentioned in the household. It is the custom of the Government to send officers sometimes on secret official business, to detect frauds in the revenue collectors, or to carry the wishes of the Queen to distant places and outposts of the army. My friend was called up to Imérina on one occasion, and entrusted with a mission of this sort. Having made his preparations, he started in due course upon his embassy, accompanied by a following suitable to his rank. The town he had to visit was in some out-of-the-way part of the Bára country, and he reached it in due course, and was hospitably entertained by the great people of the district, according to the custom of the land. One day, in making an excursion with some of the local grandees in his *filanjána* through one of the woods in the vici-

nity of his temporary residence, he happened to meet the long-lost fugitive face to face in a very narrow path, from which it was not possible for either to diverge. The master looked steadily and sorrowfully into the unabashed countenance of the "runaway," and sternly demanded to know "where he was going?" "He was just then on his way back home," the deserter replied. "The remembrances of all his master's former kindnesses had come home to him of late, and he had determined at all risks to go back to his owner as speedily as possible; in fact, it was this anxiety that caused him to be without any baggage of any kind at that particular moment"!!

We have already hinted that the Bára do not live at all on good terms with their neighbours, and they have sometimes been compared to the freebooters of the northern borders of our own country, who, in old times, were constantly embroiled in petty feuds with the chiefs of the Scottish lowlands. To the Bára, a sudden descent upon the pastures of the adjacent country, in the bright light of a tropical moon, is of all things the most enjoyable. Secretly and silently the lawless band makes its way, with spear and shield, through the forest glades in the night hours, and many miles are traversed without a word or sound of any kind to break the stillness of the woods. The troops of lemurs, or the birds which are nest-

ling in the branches, will utter a startled cry, and flee from the presence of the swarthy invaders, who press on, however, heedless of all except the felonious errand upon which they are bound. When the scene of action is at length reached, the looters lie down for a short period for repose, whilst one or two members of the party patrol the spot and guard against surprise. The ground has already been carefully surveyed, perhaps weeks before, by scouts sent out by the invading clan, so that the number of cattle and their disposition, as well as the exact position of the village and the location of the owners, are well known to each member of the party. At a given signal they rise, and at once surround the herd to be "lifted." They are not driven violently off, but drawn gradually away from the pastures, in a clever and dexterous manner. Once fairly on the road, cross tracks are abandoned, and the property is boldly driven off to the Bára stronghold, where feasting and rejoicing celebrates the success of the foray.

But such operations sadly interfere with the cultivation of the soil and the development of the vast natural resources of the district. Recriminations and small wars inevitably follow these expeditions, and the consequence is that always in some quarter of the south-west a struggle is going on between some of the king-

lets, either in the way of retaliation for injury sustained, or for the extension of territory, with a view to personal aggrandisement. This fact alone points to the principle of a central and single supreme authority at Antananarivo, as being the only hope for the country and the people.

The Bára country, which to-day is almost without inhabitants, will, in time to come, be one of the most important of the southern provinces, as the people are capable of better things, and the land itself would easily sustain the burden of a large and thriving and industrious population. Here, as in every part of Madagascar, there is abundant evidence of the capacity of the country, and one can only hope that the Government will soon see its way to utilising the enormous wealth which lies buried beneath the surface of the soil, and which will supply the means necessary for a system of roads and railways throughout the island, which will place the now inaccessible districts in easy communication with the seaports, and thus open out the path for a large export trade, as well as for the importation of European manufactured goods. Even forest and fever cannot eventually protect the country from the aggression of rapacious adventurers or the attacks of ambitious and unscrupulous Powers; and the Malagasy must learn

to trust to a well organised commerce, a strong and patriotic army, a people enlightened and bound to the rest of the world by civilisation and international and reciprocal obligations, rather than to the mere physical accidents of their geographical position, for real security and peace.

Military science no longer hesitates to deal with the most difficult problems of physical obstruction to the onward march of victorious armies, as the recent campaigns in Afghanistan and Egypt have clearly demonstrated. But, by securing the unity and friendship of the great nations of the world, Madagascar will enjoy a security which she has never yet experienced, and will have ample leisure for that internal reform and reorganisation which she so much desires. Isolation and insularity in these days are only synonyms for weakness and failure. The strength of a people depends entirely on the spirit with which it enters into the community of the nations, and discharges its obligations as one of that community. The boast, therefore, of the Malagasy, that they have in the "fever and the forest" an unassailable defence against foreign aggression, is getting a little old-fashioned as things are. Times change, and conditions of life change, and these are days when, for countries as well as for individuals, worth and usefulness, and a deep sense of responsibility to the age in which they live, will avail

them as a protection, whereas the mere resources of craft or duplicity will only disappoint and destroy.

Madagascar lies in a region of the earth that is almost entirely within the influence of the south-east trades-wind set of the atmosphere for at least a considerable portion of the year. Nor is this the only source whence the constant land breezes which sweep over the island are derived. For a considerable period every year the sunshine falls upon the great land terraces and slopes with a force which rapidly heats the air, which expands as it heats, till the thin air is driven backward by the stronger and heavier atmosphere which is constantly rising and flowing inland from the comparatively cool surface of the Indian Ocean. This deduction is a matter of scientific observation, and not a mere hypothetical statement; and it has been established, from exact data taken on the east coast, that the winds blow *inward* from the sea very much more frequently than *out* to the sea. The proportion is about three times to once. Now, when this sea-wind comes in upon Madagascar from the broad sweep of the Indian Ocean, it is necessarily laden with pretty nearly as much vapour as it can carry. With this burden it rushes along the land, and, as it rushes, it also glides up the terraces which have already been described. It then



finds itself freed from about a sixth part of the load and downward pressure which it has sustained at the sea-level. Being freed from the pressure, it expands, and becomes intrinsically rarer, and, being rarer, it is incapable of supporting its original burden of vapour. Accordingly, the vapour first gathers as mist, then thickens as cloud, and finally deposits as rain,—the deposit being accompanied by electrical disturbances and thunder. After a time this disturbance so drains the air of its superfluous moisture that the atmosphere clears, and the sunshine resumes its fervent sway, when the same state of affairs is brought back, and the same course is again entered upon. Hence the conditions of the west and east coast are essentially different; and whilst the east coast is humid, exposed to storms, and always under the uncontrolled blasts and gusts of the Indian Ocean, the west coast is sheltered, dry, and more equable in temperature.

Few Europeans have settled in the western division of the island, which is chiefly peopled by the *Sakalava*, who have never really been brought within the softening influences of civilisation. The French have always had considerable influence with these people, with whom they have entered into treaties, and carried on commercial relations for a number of years past. The *Sakalava* are less kindly disposed

to foreigners than any of the other great tribes, and they have a very unpleasant way of exacting tribute from all traders who settle within their borders. The chief within whose particular district the trader may have established himself, has a practice of perpetually levying *back-sheesh*; and it is no uncommon occurrence for the great man to walk into the store and help himself to any articles which may appear to suit himself. The traders for a long time tolerated what they could not well prevent. But the climax was reached a few years ago on this coast, when a very powerful and arrogant chief, having been invited to a ceremonial repast by a well-known Norwegian merchant, near St Augustine's Bay, proceeded, with the help of his attendant slaves, to clear off from the table the remains of the feast, and also the spoons, glasses, knives, plates, and linen cloths, which they were carrying away with them when their host expostulated, and at length positively refused to allow them to remove. The guests went away in a state of great excitement at the insult which, by a curious process of reasoning, they considered had been offered to their chief. Nothing further took place, except an occasional bombardment of the store with bullets for a few days; but in the absence of the merchant for some hours shortly after, his son was

seized by the Sakalava, stripped to the skin, and placed out in the broiling tropical sun upon the sea-shore, where his father found him on his return in a state of terrible suffering.

This coast has been imperfectly surveyed as yet, and the navigation is therefore very dangerous; whilst the natives are by no means well disposed or to be trusted in cases of shipwreck, as they are unscrupulous and cruel, and cowardly and treacherous in the extreme. It is very pleasing to have to explain that this is by no means the character of the Malagasy generally. They are mild, inoffensive, affectionate, and faithful,—a little suspicious, perhaps, of strangers at first, but ever sensible of kindness, and ready to reciprocate all good services rendered them by others. I can only say that, as far as my personal experience goes, I never met with greater attention or kinder treatment than that which I was fortunate enough to experience during my sojourn amongst this people as “a stranger in a strange land.”

The most striking mountain range in the Bára land is that of Menaráhaka, which, rising into prominence in 22° lat., runs southward as far as 22° 30'. These mountains are unlike any other that I have ever seen on the central plateau. They present nothing of the rounded forms which characterise the mountains of Betsiléó and Imérina, with

their sharp and rugged peaks rising thousands of feet almost perpendicularly. They form a grand and awe-inspiring sight. The principal mountains in this range are Iváravárana, Imaroáfo, Itoitrano, Iaritséna, and Ivohibé. This latter is the most southern part of the range, and on it Raibáha, the king of Isántsa, has his stronghold, from which he has on many occasions defied the Hova power. The rivers which rise near this mountain-range are the Manambôlo, the Tsimandáo, the Menaráhaka, and Ranoména on the west, the Irianánana and Manambáva on the east. With the exception of the marshes of Menaráhaka, and those of the valley of the Ihósy, the country is composed of dry barren uplands, in some places entirely desert.

The Bára towns are built chiefly upon the plains, and appear to be arranged more with a view to accommodate the cattle than for the comfort of the people. Each town is surrounded by a defence of prickly-pear, which sometimes reaches a height of sixteen feet; and every town has one or more gateways, with avenues of prickly-pear leading up to them, while some of the more important towns are separated by walls of the same material into twenty or thirty divisions. The fruit of this pear is eaten with avidity by the inhabitants. The construction of the gateways of the Bára towns is curious.

They usually consist of two upright posts, into which a number of stout cross-bars are inserted at night or in case of attack. The cattle are accommodated in the centre of the town, often on a higher level than the surrounding houses, the elevation being caused by the accumulation of refuse for years past. Outside the gates, under the shelter of the spreading tamarind trees, the women and girls assemble morning and evening for the preparation of the rice for the two principal meals of the day, and to talk over the scandal or news of the district. Here, too, stands the altar of the tutelar deity, who is supposed to protect the town from calamity, and upon which an image of the deity itself is generally placed. In the very heart of the town, and in the most secure position to be found, the king's house is placed, surrounded generally by its own particular fence of prickly-pear. The thickness of this protecting rampart of nature's own devising is an indication often of the importance of the king and the town. In the royal compound there are generally about a dozen houses, where the king, his wives, and children reside. Another altar usually occupies the north-east corner of the compound.

The houses are always built with the doors facing west: they are four-square, with gables, so that the roofs are of the simplest description.

The wood used in their construction is undressed, and fastened by bark or wooden pegs, but no iron nails are used. The kings build larger houses for themselves, and in some cases these have an outer and inner wall. The inside is plastered with cow-dung and roofed with very long grass. The Bára never use a north door while the father or mother of the couple who inhabit the house are alive. Every house has its fowls, and in some places there are geese and turkeys, and even pigs. Every man has his oxen, and there are sometimes as many as a thousand oxen in one town.

The so-called kings are also very plentiful; in fact each Bára town possesses at least one, and the tribe has boasted in great *kábarys* of its "thousand kings." These chiefs are perpetually at war with one another, and so long as they acknowledge Ranavalona as their head, and do not molest the Betsiléo and Hova garrisons, they are allowed to fight out their own quarrels. This state of things is, however, not at all conducive either to the prosperity of the people or to the satisfactory development of the resources of the country, and one can only hope that in time a stronger power will be exercised from the capital over the turbulent and irrepressible Bára, for their own benefit as well as for the common weal.

*Polygamy* still prevails throughout the south-west, and one chief, "Ivoatsa," is credited with one hundred wives, whilst every king has from four to a score or more : and every man has as many as he can maintain. The wives do all the service of the royal house. They build the "palace," cook the food, plant the rice, and serve up the meals.

*Infanticide* prevails to a shocking extent amongst these people. Should the wise men declare the child to be *ombiäsa*, or born on an unlucky day to the father only, its life is spared for the mother's sake ; if on a day unlucky to the mother only, the child is spared for the father's sake ; if on a day fatal to both, it is *buried alive in an ant-hill*. Unlucky children are called *nebo* ; and the strongest language for a father to use in correcting his child is to say, " Had I thought you would be a *nebo*, I would have buried you in an ant-hill."

The *Bára warrior* is thus described. The hair is fastened up in rows of little hard balls all over the head, the knobs being hardened and decorated by a very plentiful admixture of fat, wax, and whitening. These balls number from ten to perhaps one hundred and twenty. On the crown of the head is a chignon of the same materials, a little larger than a tennis-ball. Each knob is impacted against the other, and all have

the ring of a good-sized globe of wax. On the forehead or the temples our hero carries his *fetish*, which consists of a shell about the size of a five-shilling piece, called *felana*. About his throat are wound a number of strings of beads of various sizes, intermingled by a not very artistic collection of pellets of wood, sometimes rudely carved. But the adornment of the ears is a sight to see. In the holes which penetrate the lobe he thrusts a large ring, or a thick piece of wood, which he allows to depend in the form somewhat of an eardrop. Round his neck again, and crossing the breast, he bears a round *fetish*, or charm about half a foot in length, covered with numbers of tiny sparkling beads or buttons, with two or more longer ones at the end. The stock of his gun, as with the Sakalava, is an object upon which the Bára lavishes the greatest adornment and care. He covers it with brass-headed nails, and ornaments it with stars and triangles made of pewter copper wire, according to his taste. He carries a sheaf of spears, the heads of which are of the finest and best-tempered metal, and which he keeps always beautifully bright of surface and keen of edge. The shafts of these weapons are often embellished with rings of brass-work, highly polished and let into the wood. Tinder-box, powder-horn, and cartridge-belt, which is often half-a-foot wide, he adorns in like manner.



Over his shoulder he bears his "scarf of charms," which always rests on his right side. Wrapped about his body he carries a few yards of cloth, coloured or plain, and slung on his gun are a pair of sandals; and thus equipped he goes forth into the battle or foray with a light heart and a deadly aim which the Hovas have learnt to dread. He has no thoughts beyond his gun, his spear, his balls, and his powder. Give him his wives, his *toaka*, his oxen, and his king; let him go forth when he wills to the fight or cattle-lifting he so dearly loves, and let him rob, plunder, burn, or destroy all that comes in his way, and he cares not who reigns in Imérina, or who has nominal power in the land. The whistle of the bullet, or the sudden war-cry of his clan, are music in his ears. And as he springs panther-like upon his enemy in the depths of some lonely forest or at the solitary and shallow ford of one of his beautiful mountain-streams, he realises to the full his one idea of happiness.

But what shall we say of the *Bára belle*? We will leave our readers to form their own opinion as to the impression she creates, after we have attempted a slight word-portrait of one of the *Bára* ladies as she appeared on an occasion of state. Her toes were each set off with from two to ten pewter rings, and her ankles with numerous brass and pewter rings, which made music

wherever she went. Over her shoulder were from two to twenty strings of very small black, white, or blue beads, but about her throat were wrapped strings of huge porcelain or coral beads, interspersed with some in silver. This adornment reached to the chest. Her not particularly clean fingers were furnished—I cannot say adorned—with brass and pewter rings in profusion, sometimes having as many as ten on each finger. Wrists and forearms were also bedizened with brass armlets, twenty-four in number, and very heavy (the heavier the more highly prized), and twisted much after the fashion of the lightning conductor, this special pattern having become quite the correct fashion. She wraps four or five yards of calico or print about her, reaching nearly to the knees.

But how shall I describe the artistic finish of the head? “Knobs” is the prevailing fashion, as in the case of the men; but with an originality which is as fresh as it is charming, little brass oxen are fixed by means of pins at unstudied intervals all over the chignon, which is also bedecked with beads, and glimmers and shimmers in a truly wonderful fashion when the proud possessor condescends to appear for a moment in the full light of the sun. But a special feature of the feminine toilet is another large knob of hair exactly over the centre of the fore-

head, round which three armlet rings are fixed in concentric circles, and a few brass-headed nails and large coral beads inserted here and there by way of completing the effect. A band decorated with white shirt buttons is drawn across the forehead, and her ears are adorned with rings, whilst in the middle of the forehead is the inevitable *felana* or charm. It is quite possible to find a Bára matron wearing ornaments of the value of nine dollars say, whilst the remainder of her wardrobe would be dear at one shilling! But the fashionable young Bára lady "paints." She touches up her eyebrows very skilfully with *tany fotsy* (chalk) or yellow earth; and when intending to be absolutely overwhelming, she covers her face with a white coating, leaving her nose and eyelids only in their natural condition.

Money is of little value in the south-west, but beads (the very small ones, or the oblong white with a blue or red stripe, the coral of all kinds, and silver), brass, pewter, and copper rings, for ears, arms, fingers, toes, will always purchase food in any locality. The long red beads (not coral), blue, yellow, and brown, are not much sought after. But looking-glasses are here, as in most other places, eagerly bought. The Bára like to see themselves, and with all their seeming neglect of appearances, there is a personal vanity

and love of display amongst them, which is as ludicrous as, perhaps, it is human.

The people are scattered, dwelling for the most part in the valleys by the river banks. Rice is cultivated to some extent in the eastern part of the province; but in the west the food of the people consists of a kind of arrowroot obtained from the root of the *Tacca pinnatifida*. The principal river in the Bára country is the Menaráhaka. It takes its rise in the hills of the same name, and flows into the valley of Iroká in a succession of marshes, where it receives the small river of Ibehásy; it thence winds round to the north-west as far as Iváto, and afterwards southward for about twenty miles through a lovely valley as far as the mountain of Imenavála, where it receives the large river of Isahambánga, and those which drain the eastern side of Ilamboánana. The course is now south-east for about thirty miles, through a wide plain, until it enters the mountains in the south of Isántsa, where it receives the Ináivo, a large and important river, and Ranoména, which rises very close to the source of the Menaráhaka, and flows directly south round the mountain of Ivohibé to its junction with the main stream entering the forest. This magnificent river takes the name of Mananzára, and flows eastward to the sea near Vángaindráno.

The distinguishing features of the Bára country are the extensive plains, which are traversed by magnificent rivers, and which are remarkable for the solitary and deserted aspect that they present, which aspect is broken somewhat, however, by perhaps the most absurd and grotesque of Dame Nature's most whimsical productions, as if she, in sheer pity for the dolorous traveller, had placed this quaint object in the very heart of this unattractive country to cheer and amuse him on his lonely way. I refer to the *bontana* (baobao) tree. It is impossible to approach it without laughing outright at the ridiculous appearance which it always presents. There is nothing like it in the vegetable world. The height of the trunk is about twelve or fourteen feet, while its girth about six feet from the base is over twenty feet; its branches are insignificantly small, and it has the appearance of a fat gallon bottle, the neck of which has been knocked off, and a few birch twigs put there instead. These trees are generally found quite singly, and at long distances from each other. One specimen recently seen in the Bára country measured over thirty feet in circumference, whilst its branches scarcely reached as many inches.

Fossils have been found on the western encampment of the great central ridge of the island, and the signs of long past but once active

volcanic action are also traceable in the same region.

The tops of the mountains are popularly supposed to be a favourite retreat for the spirits of deceased chiefs and kings, and are consequently, in a measure, held sacred, and are seldom if ever approached by the natives. The crashing peals of thunder, bursting from the cloud-capped summits of the Isalo, strike terror and dismay into the hearts of the valiant but superstitious Bára. Amongst their craggy peaks, it is thought that the spirits of the old Bára kings still meet in council, and debate the affairs of the people; and the vivid zigzag flash of the lightning, which blasts and scorches a track for itself down the rugged sides of the Isalo, is to them a message from the ghostly conference. Ploughed and rent by the storms of centuries, they still cast their deep shadows over the adjacent country, and are never absent from the sky-line, no matter from what quarter you may chance to be looking. Wind and rain and sunshine have all contributed to score and stain and disintegrate these mighty hills, and to produce that strange and grotesque effect, which is a striking feature of the peaks of Isalo, and which gives them that unique grandeur which is possessed by no other range in the island. The gloomy fierceness of the Bára who dwell in the

region of the Isalo is doubtless fostered by the perpetual presence of these magnificent but awe-inspiring hills; and we can without difficulty trace an affinity between the jagged hard peaks of rock, which thrust themselves up in all directions, and which would seem to defy the powers of the world to destroy or even to soften them, and the dark gloom of the Bára mind, with its love of blood, its thirst for rapine, and its impenetrable superstitions and fetishism, which have so far proved impregnable to the assaults of civilisation or moral influences.

There is, however, I am persuaded, a rich harvest to be reaped by the philanthropist and social reformer even amongst the Bára tribes of south-west Madagascar. The process of elevating and improving them may be a long one—doubtless it will be; but when once the work has been begun, results will follow which will amply repay those who may devote themselves to the good of these warlike, but fearless and chivalrous, Highlanders of the south-west.

*Circumcision* prevails amongst these people. Strange to say, all the operations connected with midwifery are carried out by the male members of the family, the husbands or elder sons; and the mother is kept closely shut up after the birth of her child for four days, at the expiration of which period she goes about her usual duties.

For sitting or reclining on another person's bed, these people fine an offender an ox, or condemn him, in default, to be shot. For striding over a person, or even over the foot of any one who may be asleep, or merely lying upon the ground, the same. For brushing a person's face, or any part of his body, with a corner of the robe, even by accident, the same. For using spoons, plates, or drinking-vessels belonging to another person, the same fine is exacted. The children are of course exempt from these penalties till they arrive at an age when they are able to carry a spear, when they are taken into solitude for a month by their mothers, and instructed in these matters; and on their return to social life, if any of the children should afterwards commit any of these offences, the father will pay the fine but disinherit the child, and on a second offence will banish him from the place.

The king, in going into war, must go into the battle at the head of his Jan, and not till he is wounded or exhausted will any one come to his aid. At a death, guns are fired, and a horrible wailing is set up; a third of the oxen of the deceased are killed, for the purpose of gratifying the vanity of the departed one, and "laying his ghost." When a king dies, the ceremonies are more elaborate and on a larger scale. His wives must cut off all their hair, half his cattle are



killed, and his "ghost," being of a more unappeasable turn, is not satisfactorily laid till his successor has either captured a town or shed some one's blood—friend or foe, it matters not. No graves are dug, but the corpse is placed on the ground and surrounded by stones, which are heaped about and above the body till it is completely covered. The ghastly custom, so popular some years ago amongst the Betsimisaraka on the east coast, of keeping the corpse unburied, and suspended from the roof of the house till it fell in a mass of putrefaction into a hole dug beneath it, does not appear to have been observed by the tribes of the south-west, at least to any extent.

But their language and customs are horribly indecent and degraded; and it is no uncommon thing to come upon a village where the whole population, without exception, is intoxicated. There can be little doubt as to the terrible hindrance to the real prosperity and progress of the people which exists in the universal drinking customs of the dependent tribes; and already, as has been mentioned previously, the attention of the Government has been called to the havoc which is being wrought throughout the island by the national curse of "strong drink." North, south, east, or west, the experience of the traveller is the same, and one cannot but deplore

the sad waste of life and energy which this unhappy liking for *toaka* is causing, even amongst the most genial and innoxious Malagasy races—*e.g.*, the Hova and the Betsimisaraka—as well as the Creole populations of the seaboard towns and villages of the east coast.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MEDICAL EXPERIENCES.

THE great enemy of the European in Madagascar is the subtle and enervating *malaria*, a severe form of intermittent fever, which prevails at all seasons along the coast of the island. The higher terraces of country are almost free from its ravages, or at least the worst forms of it; but in the lovely lowland groves, where the rarest orchids bloom in the richest profusion, and round about the region of the prolific river deltas, where the bright waters course along in the tropical sunlight, there lurks often unsuspected this malignant and deadly enemy alike of the native-born as well as the stranger, of the constant dweller as well as of him who "tarries only for a night," filling the atmosphere with its pestiferous and fatal vapours, and scattering on all sides the seeds of weakness and death. The strongest succumb to its fatal touch, and a journey to the coast at certain seasons of the year is as much dreaded by the Hovas

or other of the inland tribes as it is by the most nervous European. One of the most dreaded forms of punishment in past times was the banishment of the criminal to the coast in the unhealthy season, which begins about November and extends to April. This is the period of the annual rains, and the damp warm moisture which exudes from the soil rapidly induces a chill, and brings on the inevitable visitation of intermittent and violent shiverings, and intense burning sensations, which are the chief characteristics of miasmatic poisoning. Added to these is a painful relaxation of the muscular system, and utter prostration of the physical and mental powers, to such an extent that the frequent result is life-long debility, and, in some cases, chronic deterioration of the brain and partial paralysis of the intellectual faculties.

One of the most painful experiences on the coast is to note the havoc which the Malagasy fever works amongst the Creole and "poor white" population. The gaunt features, staggering gait, yellow complexion, trembling hands, and inarticulate utterance of the poor feverish wretch, who constantly pursues his daily toil in the cane-field or coffee plantation with an attack of the disease either impending over or just leaving him, are piteous to witness. And it is sad to have to confess, after much thought has been expended

on the subject, that practically there is no infallible remedy for or defence against this scourge. No visitor to Madagascar ever escaped altogether from the baneful influence of the malaria. Its effects, however, may be weakened, if not entirely counteracted.

In the first place, a correct idea of the best manner of treating a fever patient may be of use. I always found it best, when the first symptoms of the approach of the dreaded but silent foe manifested themselves, to put myself at once into the hands of my native servant, a fine specimen of the Mozambique African, strong as a young lion, but tender and devoted as a child. When the violent shivering fit which introduced the attack came on, he immediately placed me in a bath filled with hot water and perfumed with aromatic plants and flowers. He held me beneath the water, and then proceeded to pound and crush every bone and joint and sinew in turn in his enormous hands. The next process was to stretch the limbs as far as possible, and even the fingers, and then to remove me quickly back to bed, where I was buried beneath the accumulated blankets of the household, and sometimes, when I was on a journey, of the entire village. But no sensible raising of the temperature proceeded from all this. The teeth rattled, and the very framework of the native house would be shaken by the

involuntary quakings of the patient. The bright sunshine, lighting up the hills in the distance with floods of golden brightness, or bathing the very verandah of my house, a few feet only from my pillow, with an intensity suggestive of the furnace "heated seven times hotter than before," only appeared a garish mockery and delusion of the senses. I crouch down beneath the mass of coverings for warmth, but in vain; no relief comes to the terrible iciness which seems to have penetrated to the very marrow of the bones. Then follow hours of burning and consuming heat. The blankets have been cast off; a sense of suffocation oppresses the victim, who feels as if his poor body is undergoing the initial stages of cremation. Utter prostration now intervenes, and the weary sufferer is blessed perhaps with a few hours of fitful and uneasy sleep, broken by incoherent mutterings and constant changes of posture. Then again comes the cold stage, during which anodyne and purgative medicines are freely used, and quinine administered frequently, and in doses which an English doctor would, I fear, think dangerously liberal. This goes on for weeks, or even months, and at length, the fever having worn itself out, quits its miserable and dejected subject, who has probably become prematurely aged and even grey in a few weeks. This is really the critical period in the life of the patient,

for everything now depends upon his rallying power. Generous food, a change of air, and cheerful society, are the vital factors in any system of cure. A move from the coast to the capital should be immediately determined upon, and thus the life may be spared and future suffering avoided.

The first foreign settlers in Madagascar were swept off in such numbers by the malaria, that the Isle of S. Marie was called the "Grave of the French," and "the Churchyard," and the "Dead Island," by Dutch and other sailors who visited the harbours of the east coast. Careful habits of life, abstinence from the use of spirits, and the regular use of the *tepid* bath, will always mitigate the virulence of the fever, however, and prevent that utter wreck of the system which so many visitors have to deplore. On no account should the head or back of the neck ever be exposed to the sun, and it is a wise and even necessary precaution never to go abroad, even for a few minutes, without a helmet and thick two-fold umbrella.

There is still a lingering superstition amongst the Betsimisaraka, and other tribes remote from the capital, as to the powers of the "medicine man," and he is occasionally consulted in cases of virulent epidemics, or unusually severe visitations of disease. In the years 1876-77, a terrible

wave of small-pox epidemic swept down the eastern coast of the island, from the province of Vohimare in the extreme north. It was supposed to have been introduced from Mauritius in a cargo of old uniforms. The natives, who have always fled before the dreaded *nendra*, as it is called by them, terror-stricken, endeavoured to elude its grasp, and to escape from its effects by burying themselves in the recesses of the forests and mountain-glens of the interior. But the devouring pestilence would not be satisfied. Village after village was depopulated by it: the dead were left unburied upon the floors of their huts and by their own hearthstones. The sick were forsaken by their own kith and kin, so hopeless did the struggle against this most loathsome and relentless disease appear to them; and in some cases relatives were taken out and cast into the forests, with a little water and a bag of rice for sustenance, and stoned unmercifully by their children or parents, as the case might be, if they ventured to return to the precincts of their homes, or even to stand afar off and cry aloud for succour. During this time our hands were fully employed; and I found the medical knowledge which I had gained in England of great service when alone in the midst of these vast and perishing multitudes. I happened to be in Tamatave about the time that the small-



pox first began to reveal its presence there, and I found the native authorities, as well as the various consuls of the European governments, were taking every precaution to protect the various families of the white as well as coloured people from the scourge.

The question of vaccination had already been forcibly brought before the Hova authorities at the capital; and the Queen and prime minister had submitted to the operation, in order to encourage the Malagasy generally to avail themselves of the protection which Dr Jenner's famous discovery affords. The native mind was, however, some time before it grasped the importance of what appeared to it a somewhat trivial and childish surgical experiment. The only medical practitioner that Tamatave possessed had left for a holiday in Reunion, and I found myself, somewhat to my dismay, installed by the consul medical adviser and public vaccinator for the town and district. However inefficient I might have felt for such a responsibility, I determined to put a good face upon the matter, and I set to work to prepare my temporary surgery, and to obtain the necessary articles for the faithful discharge of my novel duties. The good consul supplied the lymph, which had originally reached him through the Governor of the Mauritius, and which was so precious that two tubes only were

sent off by special messenger to the capital for use in the royal household. I was not quite so fortunate in my lancet. The only instrument worthy of the name was so overlaid by the rust of years, that when I proceeded to sharpen it, it broke in my hands. My last resource was a *steel pen*. With this very efficient substitute for the lancet, I operated upon some hundreds of the native population day after day, until fairly wearied with the incessant presentation of dusky arms for the all-saving puncture. As soon as one or two of the cases showed abundant signs of success, I had sufficient lymph for all our needs. It was doubtless due to the entire absence of vaccine matter in the system that these periodical outbreaks of small-pox created in time past such devastation throughout the country. In this respect, however, matters are improving; and the extremely fatal phase of the complaint, known amongst the natives themselves as "black small-pox," is now less frequently met with.

In spite of all our efforts, however, the summer of 1877 was a terrible time for the east coast tribes, and the ghastly scenes of that sorrowful year will never be forgotten by those who had to be witnesses of them. My reputation as a successful operator soon spread; and as I passed from village to village, little crowds of

anxious mothers awaited us with their infants, bared as to the arm, and ready prepared for the life-preserving incision. The real secret of the "good arms" was, however, not so much connected with the skill with which the operator used his improvised lancet, as with the real excellence of the lymph with which the consul supplied him.

It is well for all who visit this island, whether as travellers or to reside for longer or shorter periods, to provide themselves with copious supplies of quinine, and such preparations as Eno's Fruit Salt or Lamplough's Pyretic Saline. The use of these latter will often ward off, or considerably weaken, an attack of fever; and as remedies for the abnormal heat of the blood, which inevitably results in the case of fresh arrivals in the tropics, they are, as I can testify from long experience, an invaluable, and, as far as I know, a unique specific. I also found a frequent demand for common court plaster, which, with lancets, a supply of vaccine, and plenty of bandages, as well as a good surgical knife or two, and a quantity of nitrate of silver, and a well-filled case of Brown's Chlorodyne, for use in any emergency or sudden visitation of dysentery or spasms of the bowels, the result generally of drinking immoderately of cold water infected with fever germs, should form the chief

items of every travelling outfit. The brighter the water the more injurious it is in the tropics; and although the self-restraint which the wayfarer has to impose upon himself when he comes upon a sparkling stream, bursting out of the rock in some shady forest nook, is very painful, yet it is absolutely necessary. The safest drink is obtained from the puddles on the road, as these are only replenished by the rains of heaven; and by dropping the charcoal-ball of one's pocket-filterer into them, a pure if not very refreshing draught may be obtained. It is often advisable, however, to avoid smelling the puddle, or even scanning it too closely, as both odour and appearance are often very much against it.

My daily life at Andévoranto usually began about 6.30 in the morning, with attendance upon the verandah for the distribution of medicine, consultations, and investigating fresh cases. The physical troubles of the Malagasy are numerous and complicated. They are very much subject to scrofula in various forms, and to all kinds of skin complaints, some of a very loathsome description. The sulphur ointment of the British pharmacopœia I found the only specific in most of these cases. Many of my patients were sufferers from the bites of the crocodiles which infest all the rivers throughout the island. The danger of these bites is that the teeth of the

hideous beast carry with them a virus which quickly causes the wound to inflame and mortify. Strange to say, women and children are more frequently attacked than men, doubtless on account of the greater care which is exercised by the latter when they approach the vicinity of the reptile's haunts. The subtle brute lies in wait, at the village watering-place, for the girls or women who go down to the brink of the stream morning and evening to fetch the daily supply of water for the household. They go barefooted some little distance into the river to dip their vessels for filling, and this is the moment when the crocodile seizes upon them. The sharp teeth are closed in a moment about the naked limb of the victim, and in many cases she is dragged under the surface, and disappears for ever before any assistance can be rendered, or even before her peril is known.

One of the Hova governors on the coast came to me one day with a serious cancer in the tongue, which I inspected with some dismay. However, I felt that I must do my best for him, and with much inward fear I applied a solution of nitrate of silver to the place. This simple remedy effected a gradual and permanent cure, and brought about a friendship between my august patient and myself which has remained unbroken up to the present time.

On another occasion I found a vast and excited crowd approaching my residence at the close of a rather fatiguing and anxious day, and I was somewhat curious as to the cause of the intense excitement which evidently possessed the shouting and clamouring multitude. As they drew nearer, I found they were bearing along a poor fellow, who, by his dark skin and unkempt head, I at once perceived to belong to the tribe of the Antimora. His mouth literally extended on one side right to his ear. He had been attacked by a wild ox in the forest, and the furious animal had actually torn open his cheek by a thrust of its horn. Several teeth had disappeared, and the poor Antimora was in a pitiable condition,—more from fright, however, than from the actual hurt. The Malagasy always express their sympathy by noise and tumult. The injured man was laid at my feet, and each of his attendant friends and acquaintances proceeded to explain the nature of the hurt, and the circumstances under which he had met with the accident. Calling my faithful Mozambique to my aid, we swept the frantic multitude off the verandah, and away across the grass of the compound to a spot at a considerable distance, which we allowed them to occupy, and from which they continued to shout their advice or doubts, as occasion offered. I had never before performed the very useful operation of

sewing up a torn wound, and the public scrutiny, the barbarous jargon, and the cries of some hundreds of excited men and women and children, might have unnerved even a skilled *alumnus* of St Thomas's or Guy's. But at length the delicate and troublesome task was satisfactorily accomplished, and when the Antimora rose up from the floor, where I had kept him during the sewing process, with his mouth the usual size, and in its proper place again, there were cries of delight and admiration, which fairly carried me away with conceit of my rapidly developing surgical powers. My Antimora friend in due course was able to dispense with bandages, and the cheek healed; but I was much chagrined to find that some of the stitches had slipped, and that the proportion of the mouth had been spoiled, as one side remained, and will for ever remain, considerably longer than the other.

There can be no doubt whatever as to the incalculable advantage of even a slight medical training to any one who goes to foreign parts, either as a missionary, explorer, or naturalist. Apart from the protection which such knowledge affords to the fortunate possessor, it is useful at every turn in helping to alleviate the painful sufferings of the native population; and a cure effected, or a pain relieved, is a certain passport to the affections of even the most hostile tribes

through whose territory it may be necessary to pass.

The Medical School and Hospital, attached to the palace at the capital, is one of the most striking evidences of the far-sightedness and accurate knowledge of the wants of the country which has distinguished the supremacy of his Excellency the present prime minister, Rainilaiarivóny. Several native youths have even distinguished themselves in the famous medical classes at Edinburgh; and the foundation, indeed, of the whole hospital system in Madagascar is due to the energy of Dr Davidson, a distinguished member of the faculty of medicine of Edinburgh University, who has done good work in his time for both the Government and people of the island.

The remedies in the native pharmacopœia are extremely limited, and consist chiefly of charms, bits of bone, feathers, grass, twisted silk, and some herbal preparations. They till lately believed strongly in what is generally designated as a *sampy*, or charm, each family having its own, and each person also having some particular object which he regarded as of peculiar virtue. For instance, one family would revere the Indian corn stalk, another the fowl, and a third the water, and so on. A few grains of rice, or some powdered coffee, have been found tied about the necks of children, to shield them from the



blighting influences of "the evil eye," or the bad wishes of enemies ; and in many instances a bit of blue cloth tied about the ankle or wrist was regarded, during the raging of the small-pox epidemic, to be a safe protection against the disorder. But all these ideas belong now rather to the inhabitants of the more distant parts of the country, and to a condition of things which is rapidly passing away, thanks to the spread of education, than to the majority of the people, or the actual present. But there is a dangerous knowledge of virulent vegetable poisons existing amongst even the most ignorant classes, which is very painful, and which is used with frequent and frightful effect in cases of family disagreement or dispute. The absence of any formal inquiry into the causes of sudden death, and the difficulties that prevent any scientific investigation in cases where strong suspicion attaches, render secret poisoning a very safe method of getting rid of an obnoxious life. The greatest care is therefore exercised by the chiefs and others as to the food offered for their repasts ; and all members of the family, and even the slaves, partake of one common dish, which is certainly one of the best preventive measures against secret poisoning which could well be devised.

The marvellous beauty of the teeth of the

Malagasy has already been referred to. A dentist would scarcely find remunerative employment amongst the natives, as they seem to have a secret of preserving their teeth white and sound even to a very advanced age. They carefully wash their mouths after every meal. They scarcely ever smoke, and the only deleterious habit they have is one of sucking powdered tobacco or snuff, which does not, however, appear to damage the whiteness of the enamel to any appreciable extent. The women, and even young ladies of the court, so elegant in other respects, indulge in this very unpleasant usage, and it does not add by any means to their attractiveness. The poorer slaves, in default of any other dentifrice, use the common sand, with which they rub and scour their mouths. A strip of sugarcane is also used, and common salt, and generally with the best results as far as appearances go. So novel is the idea to them of failing teeth or empty gums, that they still regard the latest achievements of European dentists in the way of false sets as in some way "uncanny," and allied with the powers of evil.

A friend of mine, who was always remarkable for his readiness of resource in emergencies, was once on a journey from the coast to the interior. He had to pass the night at a village on the road that is famed for the rough boisterousness of its

inhabitants, and which is generally towards evening filled with the bearers of *entana*, or baggage, who halt and rest there for the night, as it is one of the regular stages on the main road. As evening drew on, the village became very full, in consequence of the unexpected arrival of a large contingent of native Government bearers from the far south, many of whom had never seen a white face before, perhaps, in their lives. My friend, being of a fine robust figure, and adorned with a flowing beard, and otherwise distinguished, naturally attracted the admiration and provoked the amazement of some of these guileless "sons of the south." They peered in at the door of his temporary quarters; they peeped through the chinks in the frail leaf and bamboo walls; they passed to and fro in endless procession to catch a glimpse of the *vazaha be*, or "great stranger." He at first felt flattered, then amused, and as these attentions became indefinitely prolonged, wearied, and at length a little annoyed. Free comments in the vernacular, which he understood perfectly, as to the faulty shape of a nose, or want of symmetry about the shoulders or legs, carried on in an audible tone before his very face, did not improve matters; and as the night grew on and the crowd increased, and my friend wanted to retire, he closed the door of his hut as a gentle hint that the *levée* was over. But the Malagasy

have no idea of being thus peremptorily dismissed from audience. Their capacity for "hanging on" is marvellous. Hints are so much waste of effort; actual "turning out" even has been known to fail; and the calm manner in which a Malagasy will come back to the dwelling from which he has been forcibly, if kindly, ejected a few minutes before, and ask for some fresh favour, or some special mark of your regard for him, is as delightful as it is inimitable. The natives, on the occasion which I am describing, finding my friend's domicile closed to them, simply sat down in concentric rings, as is their custom, and proceeded to discuss the enclosed "foreigner"; and as the walls of the native dwellings are formed only of *zozoro*, or rib of the broad leaf of the palm-tree, with various convenient gaps up and down, the weary stranger had the satisfaction of listening to the various details of a discussion of his character, appearance, want of good manners, &c., which would be more likely to promote wakefulness than sleep. At length an idea dawned upon his troubled brain, the resources of dental science came to his rescue, and he sprang to the door with a terrific bound and hideous howl. There was a beautiful moon shining at the moment, and to the horror of the watching and breathless crowd, my friend put his hand to his mouth, and in a moment held

up to the gaze of his troublers his two rows of false teeth. The spectators were aghast. They gazed for a moment at the empty and distended mouth, and then at the results of his dentist's skill, which he held at arm's-length in his fingers, and then fled one and all, as fast as their legs could carry them, from the presence of a "man who could take himself to pieces."

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE CORONATION OF RANAVALONA III.

ANTANANARIVO, the city of a thousand, as the word implies, was founded by the first monarch of the present reigning dynasty, and endowed with many peculiar and royal privileges. It contains, as has been already said, the palaces of the Queen, the courts of justice, and the residences of the nobility and princes of the court. Scattered about also on its northern spur are the beautiful villa homes and important public institutions of the various missionary societies which have made the pleasant Hova city the centre of their work and the sanatorium for those of their body whose lines are cast in less agreeable but equally important places—for instance, in the distant stations and Hova outposts, or amongst the tributary tribes of the Betsimisaraka or Betsiléo. The capital is naturally adapted for the purposes of a national pageant, and has, at a distance especially, an air of grace and majesty which is

partly due to its exquisite situation and partly to the handsome proportion of the state buildings, which have of late been erected upon its heights. There is nothing of that air of unsavoury tawdriness about the Hova capital which mars the attractiveness of most Eastern towns; and when the streets are thronged by courteous crowds of well-conducted and nicely dressed natives on a holiday, I know of no scene which presents so many points of interest. The extreme cleanliness of even the poorest slaves, both in their personal habits and attire, is very refreshing, and is a characteristic of the island which has gone very far to elevate the people in the eyes of casual visitors as well as in the estimation of those who have resided amongst them for lengthened periods.

The roads into the city are extremely tortuous, but when once access has been gained to the upper terraces and gardens, the views on all sides across the verdant plains of the central province, and away towards the blue peaks of the Ankaratra range, or northward in the direction of the sacred city of Ambohimanga, are simply grand. The bright sun, the bracing temperature, and the genial atmosphere, with the strange animation and merry laughter of the passing crowds, the respectful greetings which are most carefully tendered on all sides to their superiors in rank by the Malagasy, and the rapid

utterances of gossip or news in the soft modulated tones of the native tongue, all combine to form a very pleasing picture of Eastern life, which is rendered more striking by the feeling that it is neither quite Indian or African or Polynesian, but a remarkable combination of the characteristics of dress, demeanour, and physical peculiarities of all these three great nationalities, blended into one perfect and harmonious whole.

On all state occasions the capital is the centre towards which the nation turns, and representatives from the tributary clans are met weeks before the appointed time for any particular demonstration, wending their way across the vast plains or through the dense forests, with their faces set towards Imérina, where a part is assigned them in all the festivities or business of importance that may be the object of their being called together. The last day of the journey is spent at some village in the neighbourhood of Antananarivo, where the stains of travel are carefully removed, new and brilliant garments are produced from the carefully packed *entana*, or baggage, which has probably formed the burden of the little band of slaves who usually accompany their masters on these visits to the capital, and every effort is made to present an appearance worthy of the occasion and the place.

In the centre of the city lies the triangular



market-place of Andohalo, across which ever and anon throughout the day may be seen little companies of bearers swiftly hurrying with their master or employer, who is leisurely seated in his *filanjana* on his way to or returning from an audience at the *rova*, or court. At the bottom of the hill upon which the city is built lies Imahamasina, where all great state ceremonials are carried out, and where the coronation rites of the successive sovereigns of the island are completed in the presence of the assembled multitudes of the people. At various times in the history of Madagascar both these places have witnessed some strange and painful scenes, and have often echoed with the cries of terror-stricken crowds, as well as with the plaudits of rejoicing and peaceful assemblies. But few of those who met at Andohalo on the morning of the 22d of November 1883 will ever forget the circumstances of bright and happy augury which surrounded the coronation of her Majesty Ranavalona III., the reigning sovereign of the island and people of Madagascar. The actual assumption of power had already taken place immediately on the decease of the late much-lamented and most beloved and amiable Queen. The circumstances of the country and Government, and the fact that the Malagasy were at war with a foreign enemy who had landed upon their soil, and were at the moment

blockading their chief ports, rendered expedition necessary as well as expedient, and the period of mourning for the death of Ranavalona II. was in consequence very much shortened. At the death of Queen Ràsohèrina in 1868, however, the old customs prevailed ; and as that was probably the last occasion of their observance, it will be interesting to notice briefly some of the details of the funeral ceremonies which at one time accompanied the interment of royalty amongst the Hovas. An eye-witness of the remarkable scene, who with his brother has for many years resided at the capital, and has been of great service to the native Government, says :—

“The late Queen died on Wednesday night, the 1st of April 1868, and from that time until the following Tuesday week the excitement was very great. It was announced to the people the following morning that Ràsohèrina had *niambdho* (‘retired,’ or turned her back), and that her cousin Ramòma had succeeded, under the title of Ranavalona II. The capital was crowded with people from the country, both men and women—the men having to work in the preparation of a new tomb immediately north of the first Radama’s, in the royal courtyard, and the women having to sit in crowds in the chief apartment of the great palace, Manjàka Miàdana, to mourn day and night.

“On Friday morning the people presented a very strange spectacle. They looked as if they had been suddenly transformed into Hindoos. It is customary

here when a sovereign dies to cut off the hair, and consequently we found a nation of bald heads, some of them quite glossy. It was amusing to meet our friends, as in many cases we did not recognise them until they spoke to us. A man walked up into the town with me in the morning, and from his familiarity I conclude he was a man I had known very well, but I did not recognise him, and have not been able to recall his identity since. The strangest part of the business was that the clipping was all done at once, for on Friday morning the entire country around Antananarivo was clean-clipped, except some score or so of privileged Malagasy and the Europeans. All the people also went about with their *lambas* down below their shoulders, and without the usual shirt generally worn underneath.

"While the tomb was being made, cannon and musketry were fired all day long, the chief road through the city up to the palace being lined with soldiers.

"On Friday afternoon we went to the palace to take our present (60 dollars) towards the funeral expenses, and also to present a dollar as *hásina* to the new Queen. We were taken all over the palace-yard to see the arrangements that were being made for the funeral. In one part were the silversmiths, with their upright bellows and charcoal fires, all busy transforming dollars into small plates, each plate formed of 50 dollars riveted together in a rough style. These were to be made into a coffin about eight feet long and three and a half feet in width and depth. In another part of the ground men were busy making the foundations of the stone tomb. Numbers of women were bringing water, and in the large palace were two or three hundred women sitting with bare shoulders, and all making a low moan as a sign of

grief. In one corner of the large room where they were all seated was a small state bedstead with scarlet hangings, and richly ornamented with gold. Of course the mourners were to weep as if the deceased Queen were really lying in state, but it was known that the corpse was in another building. Round the bedstead were about a dozen women with fans of scarlet and gold, in appearance very much like small ornamental fire-screens, and with these they kept up a constant fanning. There was a constant coming and going all the time, as the women took turns in the weeping, and relieved one another. They look upon this merely as *fànompòana*, compulsory Government service, and their grief was not so violent as to prevent them stopping to have a good stare at the English ladies who went to see the ceremony.

"One palace in the courtyard, called Bè-sàkana, an old and sacred building, was draped with scarlet cloth, and the palisades round the palace-yard and some of the buildings were covered with white calico. The soldiers on guard were allowed to keep their hats on, and had white bands on as a sign of mourning. All other people were prohibited from wearing hats, and also shoes. The use of music, singing, looking-glasses, bedsteads, and articles of luxury generally, was also forbidden.

"After a week we went again to the palace, and saw the tomb, which was then nearly finished. It is a raised mound faced with granite, and having on the top a small timber house, surrounded by a verandah, with a curved zinc-covered roof, very pretty and somewhat Eastern in style. It is painted red, with gilding here and there, the roof being coloured white. We went up and saw the internal arrangements, as far as they were

completed. The place where the body was to be deposited is a large square vault, with an uncovered wooden bed inside it, both open, and on this was placed the silver coffin, which took as many as 22,000 dollars (£4400).

"We were also taken into *Bé-sákana*, in which house the corpse of a sovereign must rest during one night previous to burial. The building was then being prepared for the reception of the corpse. Not only was the roof completely covered with scarlet cloth, but the inside walls up to the roof were hung with expensive silk *lumbas*, some of them most brilliant in colour.

"On Tuesday afternoon the funeral took place. We were nearly all present, as were also the French, about forty Europeans altogether, and an excellent position had been provided for us by the officers. No description could convey a just idea of the whole scene. We reached the palace at about three o'clock. The whole court looked black with the cropped heads and bare shoulders of the people, who to the number of several thousands crowded the area. Soldiers were placed round the yard, and also to keep paths open where required. From the door of the large palace to the bottom of the incline which had been made in front of the tomb was a line of women about three deep, with their heads bent quite down, and only their bare backs showing. They were to all appearance weeping—at least many that were near me seemed to be.

"At half-past three the body was brought out. It was inside the scarlet bedstead I have already described, and was carried by officers in uniform. On the bier was placed a crown, and round it were hung some of the late Queen's state robes. The prime minister, in a gold-

embroidered velvet tunic, went before the bier, carrying a reversed rifle. Several other high officers were with him, and as they came to the front of the tomb they discharged their rifles. The corpse was raised and placed on a stage covered with carpets, that had been prepared for it immediately in front of the wooden building over the tomb. The officers again discharged their rifles, and then retired to the Silver Palace. The prime minister was apparently weeping bitterly as he retired. Some said he was really touched with sorrow, and others that his excessive grief was only got up for the occasion.

"The body remained in front of the tomb until sunset, the splendid cloths and gold ornaments glittering in the sunbeams which fell full upon them. The band was playing old English tunes nearly all the time, and now and then in the intervals a native drum was beaten, accompanied by the blowing of large hollow shells. During this time a company of fifty young men, chiefly nobles, were busy carrying articles of dress, &c., to be buried with the body of their late owner. They made six separate journeys. More than two hundred dresses of silk, satin, and velvet were placed in the tomb, and amongst other things I noticed a lady's saddle, two chests of drawers, some water-coolers, decanters, a large glass and silver epergne, a small dressing-table, a *papier-mache* work-table, several lamps, a large arm-chair, some gilt chains, and lastly a chest of money (11,000 dollars), which took twenty men to carry.

"When the sun had set, the prime minister came back, no longer in his state robe, but in a simple *lamba*, and after staying a short time, he and the other officers went away, and left the placing of the body in the tomb to a class of nobles who consider it their

special duty to bury kings and queens. The bier was soon dismantled, and the royal corpse laid in its last resting-place; and after this had been accomplished, a message was sent from the Queen to the Europeans, saying she had relations and friends indeed in them, who were ready to sympathise with her in her sorrow, &c., to which we made a suitable acknowledgment, and then retired home.

"After we had left there were other ceremonies to be performed, and the cannon did not cease firing until past midnight. Amongst other things, some one had to go to the door of the tomb after it was closed, and call out to Ràsohèrina's spirit, asking her not to send disease or enemies. For some days after the funeral all the people were much excited over the distribution of bullocks, about three thousand of which were, according to the national custom, divided amongst them."—(Rev. G. Cousins.)

With an attempted revolt in the north of one of the most powerful of the Sakalava tribes, fostered and encouraged by the French, who are seeking to obtain possession of a district near Amorontsangana, which would be valuable to them on account of a rich coal-field which it contains, and with a foreign occupation of their chief trading harbours, the native Government were in a position of great perplexity at the time of the death of the late Queen in 1883. They wisely determined, therefore, to devote as little time as possible to a public mourning, especially as the entire male population was under arms for the

defence of the fatherland. A gentleman who was in the capital during the whole of this period of distress and anxiety, writing in the beginning of the year, thus describes the state of affairs in January 1884 :—

“Details have come to hand of the fighting near Amorontsangana, and of the occupation of Fort Dauphin. The former place is on the north-west coast, and is one of the Hova towns first assailed by the French. Being only some 35 miles south of Nosibe, their island headquarters, the people have been open to Gallic influences for many years, and it is not surprising that a few of the tribes in the neighbourhood should have been led to take arms against their Highland conquerors. At present, however, their taking sides with the foreigner has done them more harm than good. After making them believe that the hour of their deliverance was at hand, the French suddenly withdrew their ships, and left them to the tender mercies of their enemies. These have not been slow to take advantage of the opportunity. Immediately the news of the bombardment and consequent Sakalava rebellion arrived, the central Government sent down to the scene of operations a well organised force, which is apparently succeeding in making the rebels regret the day that they cast in their lot with the foes of Madagascar. According to the Hova accounts, they have been beaten in five engagements, and many of their towns and villages destroyed. In the beginning of last November the Hova commander, hearing that the Sakalava were gathering together and fortifying themselves near Bemanevika, sent out an expedition to disperse them. Their whereabouts were



pointed out by a leper, but it was not until after a few days that their main body was discovered, strongly posted in a thick wood.

“ ‘Whose are you ?’ said the Sakalava scouts.

“ ‘We belong to Ranavalomanjaka. Whose are you ?’ was the reply.

“ ‘Oh, we belong to Benao, son of Ranavalomanjaka, and are her subjects,’ said they.

“ ‘Then,’ rejoined the Hovas, ‘come and submit yourselves to her authority, for she and the prime minister have sent us to say that if you do this no harm shall come to you,—none of you shall be killed, none of you shall lose your wives, your children, or your property, although you may have been fighting for the French.’

“ On hearing this the Sakalavas asked them to wait there for the answer from their chief. They did so, but made preparations for the attack. An unsatisfactory letter came down the same evening, and on the morn the rebels tried to put them off with excuses whilst they secured advantageous positions for the coming fight. On seeing this, the Hovas raised the standard and began the advance. The conflict lasted for about three hours, when the Sakalavas beat a retreat. They made their last stand in a very difficult pass, which might have been held for days by a few brave and skilful troops. But the Hova spearmen ‘rushed’ the position, and then it was bad luck to the hindmost. The Sakalavas left sixty-eight dead on the field, besides many wounded ; whilst their opponents report a loss of three killed and nineteen wounded. The defeated troops were pursued as far as Amorontsangana. The usual burnings and plunderings followed the battle, the dreadful details of which may be left to the imagination.

"The French appeared before Fort Dauphin, or, as the natives term it, *Faradofay*, on the 16th of November, and demanded the surrender of the place.

" 'This land is ours,' said the officer in command of the boat that approached the shore; 'and we intend to erect our flag here. If you won't receive it, we shall speedily attack you.'

" 'No,' replied the Hova messenger, 'this land belongs to Ranaivalomanjaka. She is the only sovereign here. We will neither receive your flag nor give you a rice-grain's width of country.'

"They had five hours given to them to think about it, and at the expiration of that period the two French vessels opened fire, and very soon made the place too hot for the patriotic defenders. According to their own account, much damage was done, though no life was lost. The naïve way in which the Malagasy write about their returning the French fire and their evacuation of the fort is somewhat instructive:—

" 'Our soldiers fired the cannon at the ships; those on board were immediately startled, and began to direct their fire to the west. About four o'clock we drew back a little (the firing began about eleven), for we could scarcely see the ships because of the smoke from their guns, and we don't know how many were hit on board. As for ours, there was not one killed or wounded.'

"The worst news from this part of the country is that some portion of the Tanosy tribe have risen against the Hovas, so that the late garrison of Fort Dauphin must be in a precarious position. It is said that they have been for some months in correspondence with the French, and perhaps it was their willingness to render help that decided the latter to take possession again of their old

position in the south-east. But if they do not mean to land a sufficient force to hold all the country round, it will be as bad for their native allies there as it has been for those in the north-east. They have been worsted already by the Hova soldiers, and a strong expedition is being prepared to compel their submission to the central Government.

"The course of events is causing the people here to place more reliance on their former weapons than they were doing some time ago. Before this reaches you, it will be no secret that the Hovas have failed to secure a large supply of arms from Europe, through the blundering of some of those commissioned to do the business. This has been a great disappointment, but the Government are making the best of the circumstances, and are stimulating the warriors to confide in the weapon that won for their ancestors the land. In the last *Gazety Malagasy* there is an article on 'Our Ancestors' Weapons,' in which the assegai as a weapon of offence is highly praised. Reference is made to the battle of Isandwhlana—by-the-by, this is the anniversary of that dreadful day—in which more than one thousand of our own brave English troops, besides numbers of their native allies, were done to death by the fatal thrusts of the spears of the Zulus. 'We see, then,' says the article, 'that the gun does not equal the spear if it be wielded with power. We won't be discouraged because we haven't breech-loading rifles. We still have the weapon of our forefathers. We are fighting for our own, and we have right on our side.'

"The authorities, however, are not so foolish as to disdain the use of superior weapons when they can get them. Their workmen are manufacturing, as fast as

they can, a rough kind of Gatling or mitrailleuse, which is considered a serviceable article by Colonel Willoughby, who is now installed as military adviser to the Government. Only the other day he and the prime minister were out testing the powers of this new instrument of destruction. Whether it will be practicable to make it really effective in the field remains to be seen.

"The Vice-Consul has been honoured with a banquet, at which representatives from various classes of British subjects were present. Everything passed off very pleasantly, and many good wishes for the prosperity of England and Madagascar were expressed. At the public reception which had been previously given him by the Queen, her Majesty, speaking through her Prime Minister, used these words—'I am very pleased that my friend Victoria, Queen of England, has appointed you to be Vice-Consul here in Antananarivo, and I greatly rejoice at seeing the representative of Great Britain coming to dwell in my capital, for that shows to us again the amity and good friendship there is between the two kingdoms.'

"As one result of the coming of the Vice-Consul, the Association of Foreign Residents, which was formed when danger appeared to be imminent, ceased to exist. It held its last meeting yesterday in the lecture-hall of the London Missionary Society's College, and decreed its own dissolution, in consequence of our now being under the official protection of her British Majesty's representative.

"The sixth monthly meeting of the Congregational Churches in Imérina has just been held, and was as crowded as ever with pastors, deacons, and delegates

from every part of the central provinces. The chief feature was the delivery of a long and powerful address from Ravoninahitriniarivo, chief of the late embassy to Europe and America, on some of the things he had heard and seen in the course of his travels. He was cheered again and again as he told of the vast strides in political, social, and religious progress the great nations of the west had made, and wound up each reference with a heartily expressed wish—‘Oh that we were like them!’ But what made most impression was his bold though cautious stroke at slavery and forced labour, when laying repeated emphasis on the assertion that every one across the water is paid the full value of his work. We who heard it could not but hope that the days of the neighbouring slave-market, still as brisk and lively as ever, were numbered. Slavery has fast hold of poor Madagascar. But when one of its rulers ventures to have a quiet cut at it, the friends of humanity may surely begin to think that it will one day be a thing of the past.”

It was in the midst of such a condition of affairs that the youthful and inexperienced princess, Razafindralàhèty, was called to take the helm of the State, and to guide her country through the cloud and storm which have of late enveloped it. The check which the industries of the people and the commerce of the country have sustained by the unwarrantable landing of a strong and alien force upon their shores has only so far resulted in fresh outbursts of patriotism and loyalty, and expressions of devotion to

the throne and constitution of their country on the part of all classes of the Malagasy ; and the calm and dignified manner in which the obsequies of the late Queen were conducted, and the arrangements made immediately for the enthronement of her successor, point to the settled determination of the authorities that the security of the kingdom and the protection of their territory is to be the chief object of their solicitude, —at least, till the clouds lift and the present difficulties pass away.

The throne of Madagascar, to which the princess has been called at such an early age, has already its traditions and its history. The dynasty, of which she is the youngest representative, may begin to be regarded, in every sense of the word, as illustrious, and no small additional significance is added to the full force of the recent coronation by the fact that Razafindrahety has received an important part of her education at least in the excellent schools of the London Missionary Society at Faravohitra, where, as well as in her private instruction, the greatest care has been exercised to fit her for the exalted position which, years ago, it was seen that in the natural order of things she would one day be called to fill. She is the second Christian sovereign of the Malagasy, as has already been stated, and great care appears to have been

exercised on the day of her public acceptance of the regal dignity to remind the spectators of this fact. Although adopting the once execrated name of "Ranavalona," the people no longer feared the revival of those fatal scenes, which the name was likely to recall to the memory of some of the older inhabitants of Antananarivo. The last bearer of the title had shown that it could be adorned by one who was remarkable for tenderness, and love, and sympathy for her people, as it had formerly been degraded by one who was the scatterer and destroyer of her children; and the sweet, gentle remembrance of the second Ranavalona had already eclipsed and overshadowed the recollection of the Jezebel who had reigned as Ranavaiona I. A graphic letter from a spectator thus describes the recent enthronement or *fisheoana*:—

"The ceremony of crowning the third queen of this name was considerably affected by the peculiar position of the country at the time, and it was made the occasion for a vast and imposing military display, all the men bearing arms, from the Prime Minister, who has married the young queen, and who is commander-in-chief of the army, down to the youngest school-boy, with his sword and gun, or spear and shield, as the case might be. The royal guard, indeed, for the occasion, consisted of five hundred picked boys from the high schools of the town: it seems probable that this is but preliminary to their being permanently placed in the army, together

with many of their companions. The proceedings really commenced on the 21st, at noon, when thousands of people, principally school children, from all parts of Imérina, assembled on the large plain of Imàhamàsina, where the chief acts of the ceremony took place. This extensive plain, about a thousand feet long by as many wide, is immediately at the foot of the high hill on which stands the royal palace; and as the young Queen appeared on one of the balconies of this palace, in full view of the multitudes below, she was received with frantic enthusiasm and excitement, whilst at the same moment a salute of twenty-one guns, reverberating over the hills of Imérina, announced to all that the first part of the important ceremony had taken place. On the morning of the 22d, at five o'clock, another discharge of twenty-one guns awoke us out of our sleep; but before this many thousands had already taken their places on Imàhamàsina. The official 'Gazette' had announced that the Queen would leave her palace at eight o'clock A.M.; and for once we hoped that punctuality would be the order of the day, but it was not so to be. A few of the foreign residents had been invited to meet the Queen at Andôhàlo, in the centre of the city, where is one of the sacred stones on which the sovereign must stand. She was to have arrived at half-past eight, but it was nearly eleven o'clock before the guns announced that she had left the palace. At Andôhàlo comparatively few people were assembled, strict orders having been issued for them to proceed to Imàhamàsina. The sacred stone was guarded by a smart troop of boy-soldiers, from the schools of the capital, formed into a square of two deep; the regular troops who accompanied the Queen formed another square outside this



inner one, and then the Queen, alighting from her royal palanquin, was led by the hand by Ravoninahitriniarivo (fifteen honours), head of the late embassy to Europe and America, into the centre; and by special command at once given, the few foreigners present were admitted, and took their stand immediately at her majesty's left hand.

"Her Majesty is quite young, of a most pleasing expression of countenance, singularly dignified and lady-like. The command of her features was perfect—they might have been of marble: not so her hands, which trembled like an aspen leaf, and it was easy to see the strain she was imposing upon herself. She wore a dress of ivory satin with much gold embroidery. She had a train two or three yards in length of handsome dark crimson velvet, spangled with gold, borne by six officers of state. The gold crown was already on her head, and thus she stood upon the stone. The prime minister, who is an excellent rider, accompanied the royal palanquin on a splendid Arab horse. As the Queen took her stand on the stone, her hand still held by Ravoninahitriniarivo, the prime minister, in a clear resounding voice, called for a royal salute, he himself kneeling before her with a manner perfect in gallantry: he is her wedded husband, and old enough to be her grandfather. Then came a curious ceremony. A young prince, certainly not more than seven years of age, made a speech to the Queen, welcoming her to her kingdom, &c. The speech was given with as much *sang froid* as if by a man of age and experience; he then presented the usual *hasina* money as a token of allegiance. This over, the foreigners were informed that the Queen was going to Inàhamàsina, where they

were invited to precede her, and join their companions already assembled there.

"The scene before us, as we slowly descended the steep paths from the city to the plain, was of surpassing interest. The roads on either side were crowded, but there was no confusion; the women and children were gently clapping their hands, keeping time in so doing. Half way down another troop of school-boy soldiers were awaiting their young Queen; and as we got fairly in view of the plain, and were descending the last hill, the view was almost overpowering. The prime minister told us that there never had been such a large assemblage of people in Madagascar. The plain itself was closely packed with people; the hills to the north, south, and east were also crowded. Counting all these, there could not have been fewer than half a million of people present. It was about one o'clock when the Queen arrived under the last triumphal arch in the centre of this vast assembly; the foreigners who were collected close to this point giving her three ringing English cheers, which seemed considerably to astonish her.

"Preceded by four hundred girls, scholars from the principal schools in the town, all joining in singing a pretty song of welcome to their new queen, she was conducted to a large stage in the centre of Imàhamàsina, the prime minister leading her up the steps to her chair of State, which was placed on another large holy stone, over which there was a splendid canopy. On a small table by her side was a large, handsomely bound Bible, whilst overhead were inscribed in letters of gold such texts as 'God is with us;' 'Peace on earth,' &c. Immediately after the queen had taken

her seat, the foreign residents were invited to the stage, seats being given them almost close to her Majesty, amid all the great officers of state, ladies of the court, princes and princesses. It was a striking scene, and one ever to be remembered. As soon as silence was restored, a grand salute was given to her majesty; the cannon fired, the trumpets sounded, and half a million people gave their peculiar shout in saluting their sovereign, the whole producing a scene to be gazed on with wonder, but hardly to be described. It is much to the credit of the Government that every precaution was taken for cases of sudden indisposition amongst the people. A tent was set apart for such cases; medical students with remedial applications were distributed through the crowd, their presence being known by a white flag.

"After this, the Queen arose and addressed her people in a remarkably clear and sweet voice. She said briefly, that she had succeeded to the throne with all its duties, which she engaged to fulfil. The people, on their part, were to fulfil theirs. She had received the whole island, not part of it. Its boundary was the ocean on all sides; not a bit of this would she give to any one—no, not the breadth of a hair; and woman though she was, she would be like a man in the defence of her kingdom. Then, turning to the people, and striking the ground with her golden rod of state, said—'Is this not so, oh my people?' Then came a mighty answer as if of one voice from all these people—'Izay!' ('it is so!') And then followed a scene baffling all description—the shouts of the people, the clashing of spears and shields, the firing of cannon in various places among the crowd, whilst precisely at the same moment several vivid

flashes of lightning in the far west lent a still more impressive air. Her Majesty went on to say that the foreigners who were *tsara fihovanana*, 'on friendly relations with them' would be well treated; and, finally, she declared that she only recognised Jehovah as her God. Upon Him also she rested her kingdom; and the fear of Him was the beginning of wisdom. These last words were spoken with a deep pathos, and evidently came from her heart.

"By this time it was raining fast. The representatives of the various tribes came up to present *hasina*—the dollar—in token of allegiance; but this was done amid infinite confusion, two or three speaking at the same time, and the rain falling smartly. The various missionary societies did the same through their various spokesmen, but it was an uncomfortable proceeding.

"A wonder was expressed by some whether one chief part was to be omitted this time—the speech of the eloquent prime minister. But no, it came; and though he is not so young as he once was, and has been the husband of two queens before the present one, his eloquence seems to have lost little of its true fire. He took up the principal points of the Queen's address, and thanked her on behalf of the people. Alluding to her saying that, though a woman, she would be a man in defending her land, he provoked, if possible, more enthusiasm than she did, as he said they were all willing to sacrifice themselves for their country. After this the Queen descended from the chair, entered a pony phaeton, and was taken round the plain that she might be seen by her people. On her return the prime minister, at her command, dismissed the people. A message of thanks was sent to the foreigners for their

attendance, and they left in their palanquins; but even now it seems a wonder how they got through the tremendous crush of the home-going crowds. The Queen left directly after, but it was two hours after that, at about half-past five P.M., before she re-entered her palace. Thus closed what must have been a very trying day. The only refreshment the Queen was seen to take was a drink of cold water out of a gold teapot. Her attendant, as he handed it to her, poured some into his own hand and drank it off.

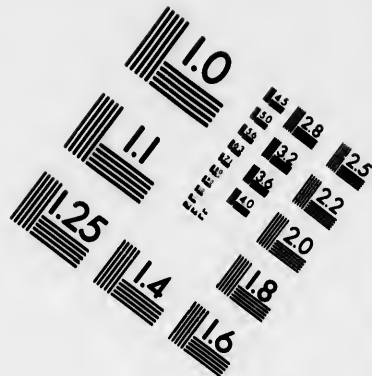
"On the evening of the next day the Queen gave a grand banquet to a very large number of her subjects, and about twenty-five foreigners. The guests included members of the royal family, the ministers, most of the subordinate officers of the government, heads of the various tribes, and teachers of the principal schools in the capital. The Queen was present, though she did not partake of the banquet. The prime minister, assisted by Ravôninàhitrinirivo and Ramaniraka, the late embassy to Europe, and other high officers, personally waited on the guests. A few days later another grand banquet was given in the royal palace to the principal officers in the army, as well as to many of the privates; and thus commenced, with appropriate surroundings and festivities, a reign which cannot fail to be the dawn of a new and brighter era for the country over which the young Queen has been called to exercise authority. May length of days be hers, and peace and prosperity the inheritance of her people!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

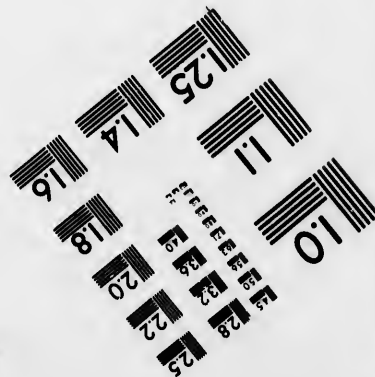
PROGRESS IN THE PAST—PROSPECTS FOR THE  
FUTURE.

THE history of Madagascar, more especially during the past century, is essentially a history of progress. Ever since the remote period when the adventurous and valiant Venetian landed upon its shores, and described its wonders to his astonished and incredulous countrymen, the great African island has advanced, it may be slowly, but yet surely, in its national life. From an almost contemptible position of obscurity and insignificance, this isolated community has emerged, and, by its own strong efforts in the path of social and intellectual improvement, has secured for itself at length a place amongst the lesser but still important nationalities of the east. Unlike many other peoples who have fallen and disappeared before an aggressive civilisation, the Malagasy have welcomed the new state of things, and thriven and grown strong under the new condi-





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tions of policy and manners which civilisation and a higher mental culture demand. The native of Madagascar has little or nothing in common with the Maori, the Zulu, or the Indian tribes of America. Much less has he anything in common with the fierce clans which people the countless isles of Polynesia either in disposition or manner of life. The Hova has no characteristics of the coarse and vulgar savage, but, on the contrary, his mind and ideas appear to have reached a higher intellectual plane, far above the level of any of these uncivilised or semi-civilised nations or fragments of nations.

The remarkable "imitative" faculty of the people of Madagascar long ago led them to observe closely the political conduct and status of other and more powerful kingdoms; embassies were sent to European courts as early as the reign of the first Radama; and native youths of parts and promise were sent to other countries for education and instruction in the useful arts and sciences. These young men on their return would tell of what they had heard and seen, and thus would plant the seed of fresh ideas, and lay the foundations of new methods of doing things, which would in due course become assimilated by the people, and gradually adopted as part of the national code of law and morals. The fact of the existence of Madagascar as a power to-

day is a triumphant vindication of the possibility of preservation and elevation of the so-called inferior races, as against the cruel theory of necessary annihilation. One such race saved, as the Malagasy have been, and so far already asserting their national vitality and independence as to be able to send an embassy of native nobles of liberal education and excellent manners to the chief capitals of Europe, is, side by side with the preservation and protection of the native races in India, one of the greatest triumphs of the modern and somewhat novel method of treating the less-favoured branches of the great human family. By the adoption centuries ago of a judicious policy of protection and sympathy, in the place of gunpowder and the bayonet, and the fearful evil of introducing everywhere cheap and deadly spirits, might not many of the aboriginal tribes whom we have dispossessed and swept out of existence have still been holding and enjoying in peace and security the lands and homes of their fathers? Let us remember that.

The first great civilisation of the Greeks was one which delighted only in art and the pursuit of the beautiful, whilst the second great civilisation of Rome was bloody and aggressive, self-indulgent and overbearing, insolent and unrestrained. Both these systems failed, lasting only for a time, and it is for the third great civilisation

of the world, that of these times in which we live, to show a grander ideal, and to realise the elementary but essential truth that to be real, and worthy of its mission, and to secure for itself a stability which shall compare favourably in the future with these ephemeral systems of the ancient world, it must be humanitarian, and have for its foundation-stone a supreme love for and faith in the capacity for improvement of all the multitudinous varieties of the human family.

The first outcome of the pathetic appeal of Radama I. to Great Britain for assistance and advice in reorganising his kingdom, and limiting the miseries, and if possible putting an end altogether to the hideous traffic in slaves which then was at its height, was the despatch of a formal mission to Antananarivo by the governor of Mauritius, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty of friendship and commerce between the Hovas and the English authorities. The success of this mission was complete, and the good understanding which was then inaugurated between the two countries has never been permanently disturbed. Skilled artisans were sent out from England by some wealthy friends of the country, who had been led to take an interest in the island by the favourable reports which had been sent home by the members of the special mission ; and Mr Hastie, a wise and amiable man, and a

true friend of the people to whom he was accredited, took up his residence at the capital as British consul in 1820. The influence of this worthy man was very great, but to the regret of the whole nation, and especially of his friend Radama, he succumbed to the native fever, and died in 1826.

But many industries had meanwhile been established in Imérina ; and Government factories for making gunpowder, and numerous printing-presses, a dispensary, and schools, were soon in good working order. By the aid of the first, the Government was enabled to hold in safe subjection the less advanced tribes of the island ; and by the help of the latter, knowledge was gradually spread abroad, the ways and thoughts of other countries were introduced, and the study of history, that most powerful of all instructors, began to create a desire amongst the subjects of the Hova sovereigns for a better state of things amongst themselves, and an honourable ambition began to possess them to attain a name amongst the kingdoms of the world.

The first material signs of progress began naturally to appear in their domestic arrangements, the style and structure of their houses, and the decency and comfort of their personal attire and habits. Cleanliness and order began to be regarded as virtues, and although there is

ample room for improvement still in this direction, the advance in the way of social refinement and home comfort has been marked and satisfactory. From the hides of their oxen they soon learned to make useful and even elegant boots. Cotton, hemp, and flax, as well as a certain quantity of silk, were cultivated with success, and made up into cloth of great durability and cheapness. Of course these productions lack the finish of Manchester cloths, and also that deceptive lustre, I may remark, which is imparted to this class of goods by some English firms of high standing in the social and even religious world at home, *by the use of China clay*. The Malagasy have not yet reached that stage of civilisation which enables them to palm off inferior calico, deftly loaded by a special process with this chalk or clay, as a superior and high-priced article. The native iron is worked up in a variety of ways, and in the markets specimens of Malagasy cutlery may now be purchased. The food-supply is more than ample for the needs of the inhabitants, and a considerable revenue is derived by the native Government from the export of rice, hides, and formerly india-rubber.

The great stride, however, has been taken in the matter of legal reform and the treatment of criminals. Co-extensive with the progress of the

great educational work of the central authority, a natural feeling of dissatisfaction arose as to the basis of the legal and constitutional code. The old disregard of human life, and the terrible oppression exercised by corrupt and rapacious administrators, were dealt with summarily, and we have good authority for saying that the statute book of Madagascar will now compare favourably with that of many European countries. Capital punishment, only two generations back so fearfully frequent, is now restricted to those crimes for which alone it is decreed in our own country, and the slave even has rights now which are secured to him by judicial authority. The entire constitutional proceedings have been so modified, that the Government may be really described now almost as a "limited monarchy." The will of the sovereign is respected, and even revered; but the old idea of "the divinity which doth hedge a king" no longer influences the Malagasy, although once so strong with them as to amount to a kind of superstitious adoration of even the belongings of their monarch, or the utensils from which he ate. The people have a voice in all great national questions, and the person of the king or queen is accessible at all times to the higher authorities and officers of rank, who enjoy the royal confidence, and are always consulted in matters of State.

The mode by which the popular vote is taken is peculiar. A summons is sent with great formality through the provinces to the remotest corners of the island for representatives of the people to assemble at the capital. A vast concourse in the environs of Antananarivo is the result, and on a given day the prime minister, in full uniform, and attended by a brilliant staff, goes forth to address the assembly in public *kabary* in the name of the sovereign. The scene is an animated one, and to a stranger full of interest. The noble voice of Rainilaiarivóny is heard appealing to the feelings, or rousing the ardour of the thousands of the *ambany lanitra* (under heaven), the name for the people, who hang breathless upon his lips. He then puts to them the question as to whether certain measures are to be adopted or no. The popular response to this appeal is taken as an indication of the nation's will, and the law thus acquiesced in by the assembly is added to the national code. Thus, when the prime minister, on June 7, 1883, at the vast *kabary* held to consider the *ultimatum* received from the French commander Pierre, demanded the opinion of the people as to the yielding up of territory in response to the French demand, a universal shout went up of "Sanatria izany!" God forbid that; and with one voice they demanded rifles and ammuni-



tion, that they might face the enemy of their fatherland.

It may be interesting to state, in a sketch of the progress in the past, that there are now more than 100,000 pupils under instruction throughout the country; the number of publications issued from the presses at the capital during the past few years cannot be much less than 2,000,000; whilst one periodical, 'Good Words,' in the native language, has a monthly circulation of 2700 copies. But we must not overlook the important fact that French and English are also taught in the best schools at the capital, and amongst the Betsimisaraka, and many of the native officials and others can now use either language with great facility, and are able to avail themselves of the vast stores of literature of both countries, which must exercise a strong influence for good upon them in time to come.

The change that has passed over the natives in reference to slavery, presages a complete and early extinction of even the modified form of the evil which now prevails in the island. The purchase and sale of slaves even by their owners is now not permitted, and the "slave market" of the capital has ceased to exist.

The invaluable educational work effected at the hospitals and dispensaries of the capital has had a remarkable effect upon the people of Madagas-

car. Native students have passed with great credit through the wards, have mastered the mysteries of chemical analysis, and have gone forth north and south, east and west, to apply the blessings of the healing art to their afflicted and suffering fellow-countrymen. Diseases once considered as without remedy have yielded to scientific treatment, and the horrors of periodic visitations of smallpox in its most loathsome form have been lessened, and life preserved, by the introduction of vaccination and the European system of treatment. A large and well attended class of women who were to qualify for nurses and midwifery cases has been a great success; and even the most dreaded of all native affections, the leprosy, has been arrested in its earlier stages by aid which thorough medical knowledge and the resources of higher civilisation supplies. There are three well-furnished hospitals at Antananarivo, one founded by the late Queen Ranavalona II., in a portion of one of her own palaces, and supported out of her private purse, and several dispensaries on the coast and in the distant parts of the island. The old system of treatment of the sick, which was a mixture of charms and incantations, and the use of herbs and simples, has quite given way before its more potent and scientific rival.

In conversation with a chief of some intelli-

gence on the east coast one day, I asked him to give me one real proof of the progress of this country, and his reply was as prompt as it was conclusive. Fifty years ago, he said, it was the custom for every person to travel armed through the woods, and never to go forth without spear and shield, even the women carrying a weapon with them if only going to draw water or husk the rice. At nightfall the oxen were brought in from the fields, and carefully folded *beneath* the houses of the owners, and the village gates closed and carefully guarded. Now, he says, the carrying of weapons is exceptional, and confined to the guards of baggage, or special messengers of Government; whilst the cattle are allowed to roam the forests and fields, and are only called in once or twice a-year for marking, or for selection for the markets. This is evidence of the highest kind, and testifies in the directest way to the security, improved morality and honesty, and the greater strength of right principles in a country which a century ago was regarded as "barbarous," and which was spoken of a few months ago by a flippant official of a great foreign Power as "a nation altogether uncivilised."

The prospects for the future are most cheering and full of hope. Judging by the past, "the Great Britain of Africa" must continue to go

forward. The intensity of her national aspirations cannot be restrained. So much progress in the past can point only to greater advances in the future, if time and opportunity are given to these people.

But their one chance of prosperity lies in the preservation of their independence. To subjugate them now would be to crush out their best energies, to frustrate their greatest hopes, and to paralyse the arm of power which is lifting them up and guiding them onward. As a conquered people their worst characteristics would most probably reappear, and become strengthened by the bitterness of soul engendered by a sense of the great and irremediable wrong done them.

They are conscious of their defects, and are anxious to remedy them; they are aware of their present inferiority, and are doing what lies in their power to elevate themselves, and thus remove this inferiority. What more can be expected or demanded of them? They may be exterminated by a slow process of cruel oppression, and they may be transformed into savages by inhuman and unholy invasion and sheer brutal conquest, but it is doubtful if modern ideas of international equity will permit this. We may safely say, I think, that this will not be.

The commercial resources of the island, under a wise and well-ordered system of administration,

are great, and will be greater. The sugar industry on the east coast, for instance, employs machinery, &c., to the value of over one million dollars about Tamatave alone, of which the British share alone is valued at 80 per cent; and a claim has been recently sent in for compensation to the French Government by a planter near Ivondrona, who estimates the value of his last year's canes at £10,000. The soil favours the production of such valuable commodities as cinnamon, cloves, tea, vanilla, coffee; and the vast field for enterprise which the island offers to the sugar-grower has already been dwelt upon.

All that is required is capital, energy, and a fair security for life and property. A company has been talked of for making a railway to the capital, but as the absence of roads has so often proved the one remaining source of security and safety to the Malagasy in times of invasion and attack, it is doubtful whether this scheme will receive popular support, at least for some years to come, and till the memories of recent events have become somewhat weakened and modified by the passage of time.

The lakes on the east coast are to be united, and the necessities of the increased traffic will demand the completion of this great design of Radama I. as soon as possible.

Labour is cheap and easily obtainable in the country, and crowds of the inland natives flock down to the coast and offer their services at very small wages for the heavier work of the plantations. But the curse of the whole coast is the cheap rum which is often used for the payment of wages in the place of cash, and for the purchase of bullocks for the Mauritian markets. The Betsimisaraka tribe is perishing through the effects of this spirit. It is estimated that ten thousand barrels are imported yearly amongst a population of about half a million. The result of this traffic can be easily foreseen. The late Queen of Madagascar long mourned over this desolation of her people, but she was not allowed to forbid the introduction of the cursed thing, or even to put a much higher duty upon it, although it was killing off one of the strongest, most interesting, and most industrious of the native tribes.

The causes which have combined to bring about the good results which we have noted in these pages are many, and first and foremost we place the labours of such men as Sir Robert Farquhar and Sir W. Stephenson, former governors of the Mauritius, and our two consuls, Mr Hastie and the recently deceased Mr T. C. Pakenham. In the officials whose duty it was to represent this country in matters relating to Madagascar, the natives were particularly fortunate, for they

had to deal with men who were in every sense of the word Englishmen and men of integrity, who were as true in their friendship to these humble allies of Great Britain as they were loyal to their sovereign and the trust committed to them.

In the various philanthropic societies of England and the Continent, too, the Malagasy have found excellent and unswerving friends, who have sent them help both in money and men and material to assist their own efforts, and to put them in the path which makes for honour and prosperity.

The patience and learning displayed by the various members of the organisations which have been established at the capital at the invitation of the Government in the compilation of grammars and dictionaries, and in bringing the language into shape and proper scientific form, are worthy of all commendation. Nor can one nation happily claim the great honour entirely on its own account, for French, English, German, and Norwegian, as well as American scholars of no mean linguistical attainments, have all contributed to bring the literature and language of the country to their present state of perfection.

The state of the *currency* must sooner or later receive the attention of the native authorities. The present system of employing cut dollars as the medium of exchange for business purposes is

antiquated and inconvenient. The necessity for the constant use of scales and weights, even in the most insignificant transactions, is annoying, and causes great delay and loss of time. The Indian rupee has been suggested as the most useful coinage for Madagascar, not only on account of the extensive trade which is carried on between the island and the Mauritius, but also, perhaps, for the convenience of the numerous Indian subjects of England who have found their way to and established themselves as traders amongst the Malagasy ; and these men deserve consideration, as they are not only industrious and frugal, but they have also a considerable stake in the country, and a large proportion of the business of the coast towns is in their hands. This section of the alien population has, perhaps, profited more than any other by trading in Madagascar, and many of them have returned to their homes in Bombay or Madras after a few years with large fortunes. On the other hand, the American dollar has been suggested, as it would have the advantage of steadiness in value, and an equivalent in the silver dollars of France, Spain, Italy, and, in fact, all countries using this coin in any form. The American influence in Madagascar has been steadily increasing, and on the whole has been useful to the best interests of the country.



The amount of United States capital employed in trade in the island is very large, and the cotton goods of our cousins across the Atlantic are here, as elsewhere, pushing our own goods firmly but quietly out of all the native markets. The secret of this is that the Americans make a good, useful, and undressed and unadulterated cloth, not so showy, perhaps, as the fabrics of Lancashire, but sound and serviceable. The decline in the English trade in this particular class of manufactures throughout the east, and the constantly increasing demand for the American calico and sheeting in preference to English make, is simply due to the fact that the secret of the *China clay* process is out, and the sagacity and experience of the native population leads them of course to buy in the cheapest market the article that is most useful and of best value for the money. Will English friends take the hint before it is too late?

The alliance between the Government of the United States and the Hova power is being drawn closer each year, and the evident Americanising of the people and island is an interesting feature of its present condition. The strength and moral power of such an intimacy will be invaluable to the Malagasy, as, for obvious reasons, a close alliance with any European power for offensive and defensive purposes is out of the question.

The advances of the great western nation into the eastern world, with its coinage, its ideas of progress, its manufactures, and its successful competition in the open markets with the long-famed productions of Lancashire looms, are facts which give weight to the conviction of a gradual confederation of nations, and afford ground for hope that the time will come when universal interests will dominate and direct the policy of all civilised communities. In this extension of the peaceful and civilising operations of legitimate commerce, we see the partial solution of the problem of vainglorious and unjust wars, and of ruthless invasions of territory and unjust oppression of the inferior races.

It is to be regretted, however, that England, so long the great commercial centre of the world, should appear to be obliged to give place to another power, even though it be a federation worthy of that honour and respect with which every Englishman must regard the United States of America. "There is a great deal of human nature in people," even English people; and this prospect will scarcely be pleasant to the majority of my readers, especially amongst the industrial and toiling classes of the north.

It is impossible to treat of the history and present condition and future prospects of Madagascar, without bearing testimony to the remark-

able energy and enterprise of those English and other firms who have for years been engaged in opening up the country and in developing its resources. Their chief object, of course, has been material advantage and commercial success in establishing agencies around the coasts of the island; but they have gladly recognised at the same time their responsibilities as the representatives of a higher condition of civilisation, and have often proved themselves the true and unflinching friends of the Hova Government and of the native tribes.

It is satisfactory to record this fact here, as too often the aims and proceedings of traders have been antagonistic, and in the highest degree embarrassing to the local authorities of small and obscure states. It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the question of the Churches. A large and daily increasing literature upon the subject of the progress of Christianity amongst the Hovas and some of the outlying tribes is in existence, by means of which the various societies at work in and about Imérina keep their special efforts before the various sections of the religious world at home.

Madagascar can never rightly estimate the debt it owes to these. All that it has achieved, and all that it will achieve in the future, which lies before it so full of hope, indirectly or directly

may be traced to the noble and disinterested work which good men of various schools of thought, as well as of many nationalities, have ungrudgingly bestowed upon the Malagasy, with a fearful loss of life and of health, and an enormous expenditure of time, and patience, and means. The generous sympathy and heroic devotion of some of these friends of the country, the sufferings they have undergone for its enlightenment and advancement, the ready sacrifice they have made for its highest interests, and the special marks of friendship and goodwill which it has received in rich abundance from the leading Governments of the world, have all combined to place upon the sovereign, the Government, and the people of Madagascar an obligation to persevere in the course of self-emanicipation from the trammels of lingering superstitions, and the imperfect realisation of their capacities and responsibilities which still cling to them; and there is every reason to believe that the time will come, and that not in the far future, when this solemn obligation will be nobly and honourably discharged.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## HINTS TO TRAVELLERS.

As to the question "What shall we take?" which we are beginning to hear on all sides from those who are intending to visit the great African island, we at once frankly reply, "*The first necessity is a good constitution.*" There must be no weakness of any sort in the physical system if a visit to, or a sojourn in, Madagascar is contemplated. It is not a place for invalids, or persons with weak lungs, or in fact with any chronic complaint or ailment of any kind or degree of intensity. The strong and robust can live in the country and brave the inevitable attacks of malaria, but if there is a weak place in the system the fever will find it out, and fasten upon it with fearful malignity. Whilst New Zealand, or the Cape, or Australia, may in some cases be extremely beneficial to persons who cannot endure the climate of the north temperate zone; of the climate of Madagascar

as a desirable change, with a view to renewing lost energy, or recovering one's former physical or mental tone, one cannot speak at all favourably. To men of good bodily powers, and very careful, not to say abstemious habits, the island offers a charming home, with fair prospects of useful and remunerative employment, if they go out with a determination to work, and take some amount of capital. The entire non-use of any intoxicants is perhaps the right thing to recommend, but if some slight stimulant appears absolutely necessary, then a good claret is the only wine which should be touched. Spirits are to be avoided, especially on the coast, by all means, and above all the rum which is used so freely by the natives. That Europeans can live pleasantly and happily in Madagascar has been shown over and over again. Next to a good constitution, perhaps the most important requisite for a traveller is a strong and serviceable *sleeping apparatus*. Carelessness in this respect is sheer folly, and invariably results in a break down. The "Marlborough" camp bedstead and chair combined, of Silver & Co., is the finest and most durable thing of the kind. It was the one thing we desired on our protracted journeys through the island, and we are pleased to find that such a boon to travellers has at length been brought out by this eminent firm.

The weight is only 20 lb., and the cost absurdly cheap for such an invaluable adjunct to the *impedimenta* of the "globe trotter." The next article of necessity is a hammock, for use in coast travelling, &c.; it is advisable to take no poles, stakes, or flooring, as the one thing above all things to remember is, that every single article, including one's self, has to be carried on human shoulders, and therefore it is necessary that the baggage should be severely restricted to the simplest necessities. It is a mistake to have elaborate travelling trunks of large size. Stout deal cases, about one foot and a half square, are best, with plain hinges and a good lock. Pack everything into these; and two of them will just be about a load for one bearer, or three may be slung between two men. The simplest canteen—*e.g.*, the camping canteen (Silver & Co.)—is the most convenient I know, and is everlasting wear.

The chair for camping use should be a "Churchill," as it collapses and folds up easily for portage. Sitting on the ground, or sleeping for a few seconds, even, on the grass, is a most reprehensible practice, and however apparently refreshing, is certain to be followed by undesirable results. Avoid Mackintosh coats or leggings: they induce profuse perspiration and surface-heat, which will in turn lead on to

fever. Have a *waterproof coat* of the lightest texture consistent with utility, as rain is frequent in the forest journey. Take good lace hide boots: brown grain are best, but avoid all elastic sides. The hot sand and sun melt the springs, and the boot is soon useless. Do not use india-rubber soles: they dissolve in the heat, or at the best only sustain an unpleasant warmth, which is very injurious. A good sole is necessary, and plenty of room. The *head* is the chief consideration in this climate, and nothing offers a better protection than the pith helmet, or ordinary military tropical helmet. The back of the neck is the vulnerable spot, and this must be kept most carefully protected by a *puggaree* or deep extension of the helmet brim. The face and temples are not so assailable as the nape of the neck; and it is at this spot that sunstroke is generally taken. Shirts and all underclothing should invariably be of flannel or serge. Quinine, ipecacuanha (to be used in frequent doses in attacks of fever as an emetic), and rhubarb in tincture or powder, with some ammonia for insect bites, are almost the only medical preparations required. In any case, a very cumbrous medicine-chest will only be in the way, and often a hindrance rather than a help to the traveller. An india-rubber sheet is very useful to throw over the *flanjàna* in



heavy storms of rain. Nothing should be carried on any account which is not necessary or useful. In the early morning start, before daylight, nothing is more vexatious than to have to collect a thousand and one articles and pack them away, only to be taken out and repacked at every stage of the journey. The bearers are scrupulously honest, and they will take the greatest care of anything expressly entrusted to them.

It is always wise on landing at Tamatave to go to Messrs Proctor Brothers, and secure from them advice, and a trustworthy guide and *dragoman*. Having got your man, place the details of the journey in his hands and hold him responsible for everything and everybody. Messrs Proctor, at the Malagasy Consulate in East India Avenue, E.C., and at Tamatave, have been connected with Madagascar as the chief English mercantile house since 1862, and their knowledge of the best men, bearers, routes, business details, wages, &c., is always at the service of visitors to the island. Passages, and all information as to the voyage out, may also be had through their consulate office in London, as well as notes of credit and circular notes for a temporary tour through the island, or to the Mauritius and Zanzibar.

To those who are going to remain for a lengthened period in Madagascar, and who are anxious

about household furniture, I would say, take out as few and as good articles as you can. Iron bedsteads are best, as they are difficult to get in the capital. Oetzmann & Co. supplied those we took; and we disposed of them when we left the island, after six years' use, at the price we originally gave for them in London. I have not mentioned the matter of *firearms* and ammunition, as on these points I scarcely consider myself entitled to say much. I never carried an offensive weapon of any kind for protection, even in my most isolated journeys, neither did I ever feel the need of any. Occasional sport, however, may be had along the road, and for this purpose a good gun will not be out of place. The forests abound in some districts in game of various kinds; but I never approved of shooting either birds or animals for sheer love of "killing something." I fear this characteristic love of sport is far too strong at present to encourage a hope that we shall soon cease to be known as the somewhat reckless wasters of life in foreign lands. I am somewhat of opinion that life in any form is sacred, and that it is for man to protect rather than destroy it, even in its minutest form, wherever he may find it. This may be said, I think, entirely without entering upon the wide field of controversy as to the animal kingdom being provided to afford food for man, or other

qualities cognate to or arising out of this one. We did miss very much the music of our English homes at the capital. A Smith's American organ had been successfully taken up, and some smaller instruments; but the greatest treat of all was to hear old familiar strains from Chopin or Schubert touched off upon one of Brinsmead's iron Grands, —certainly the only instrument of the kind that would bear the journey across the mountains, and up the defiles of Imérina, to the magnificent city of the Hovas, without straining or losing the fineness of its tone in any way. Lawn-tennis clubs are now flourishing at Antananarivo, and croquet is not unknown, so that a supply of racquets, &c., for these games will be useful.

A good organ is now placed in the church in the royal courtyard. The natives can make a fairly useful harmonium, and have even tried their hand at violins amongst other things; but I should advise the enthusiastic amateur not to depend upon the Malagasy for an instrument, but to take one with him.

One word of warning I would give in concluding these notes and hints to travellers. Never let a native touch your watch, if you value it or your own peace of mind for ever after. Draw a line at your watch if it is worth anything. Send it to Mauritius, or home to England even, but

beware of the Hova watch repairer. I do not say this out of want of respect for these good people. I say it from deep conviction of the fact, that if you have a friendship for any of these men personally, and wish to preserve it, the only security is in keeping your watch out of his hands. The Malagasy succeed in most things they undertake : they are clever and painstaking, as I have already said over and over again, but they cannot repair your watch. Entrust them with your clock if you like—they may improve it : the chances are they will ruin it, with the best intentions. This is the provoking part of it. They rush in where others fear to tread. They try their best, they desire to succeed ; but two valuable, but now, alas ! useless presentation chronometers here before me to-day, tell a *silent* tale of Hova zeal misdirected, and of a stranger's confidence misplaced. There is no cause for reproach. I trusted them with my delicate property out of respect for their perseverance and love of overcoming difficulties, and mastering new accomplishments. They failed to complete the task, miserably and completely, and in bitterness and sadness I can only deplore—well, let us say, my over-estimation of their powers. But still the day will come, I feel, when they will master even the intricacies of a watch, and be able to return the pieces to the

exact places inside the case from which they take them. But they must have "experience" ere that desirable condition of things is reached, and in this matter "experience" means, I fear, the destruction of many more watches, and their reduction, as in the case of my own, to hopeless chaos. But why complain, if only the Hova rises upon our ruins, as it were: the loss of individuals is the gain of the nation, and it will be some satisfaction for us to see some day, as the result of all these disarrangements of our property, and perhaps in some cases our tempers, an accomplished band of artisans at the capital capable of repairing the watches and clocks of those who shall come after us. I must confess, however, that I still regret oftentimes that I had in this particular matter thought less of the technical improvement of my devoted friends the Malagasy, and more of the beautiful instruments, which were specially made for me when I went out to the island, and which now lie before me with pale and motionless faces, as if appealing to me, and saying, "Why did you let the Hovas dismember us and slay us in love, when a few extra shillings, and a month or two of waiting, would have secured the happy restoration of our powers at the hands of a competent English workman?" The moral of this reflection, then, is, "Send home your watches when they get out

of order, and get them repaired by experienced hands."

I found that the natives could make very good wood furniture, such as tables, cupboards, and ordinary chairs, &c.; but the well-finished and at the same time portable bedsteads supplied by Oetzmann & Co., were essential for comfort and health. Cheap articles, as a rule, should be put aside for quality and finish, especially where things have to be repeatedly taken to pieces and put together again. An iron folding portable bedstead, with good joints, I found they supplied to us which could easily be carried, with mattress, &c., by one man. A good spring mattress is far better than a feather or flock bed in the tropics. The patent wire-wove spring mattress is *the* thing for repose and cleanliness. Cutlery in Madagascar is very valuable. The local supply is inferior in quality and limited in quantity; and no one should leave home without a good stock of real English made table cutlery, &c. One or two well made lamps, to burn vegetable or mineral oils, should also be taken, with short and strong chimnies, and a good box of spare ones, as these simple adjuncts to comfort are exceedingly difficult to replenish in distant places. Of course, no sensible traveller will think of leaving home without an approved filter, the size to suit circumstances, and a pocket filterer to use

on *al fresco* occasions. No water should ever be taken which has not first of all passed through a filterer. These rules may appear a little vexatious at first, but I am convinced that practical experience will reveal their stern necessity. In fact, a careful attention to the chief of them will be obligatory, if life is even to be possible, in some particular spots in the island; but by careful adherence to the chief restrictions here laid down, and with a good deal of self-restraint, a residence in this delightful island, which has been described as "an emerald set in a silver sea," will not only be tolerable, but sweetness and happiness itself.

The markets for the purchase of the daily necessities of the household are generally held in the towns in some central position in the open air, each trader being protected with his wares from the glare of the sun by a huge white umbrella. The meat is cut up in small pieces and strewn upon a mat on the ground, and the rice and other commodities exhibited in small round baskets for the inspection of the buyer. The gate of the village is generally chosen in country places as the spot where all business, legal or commercial, is carried on, and where the gossips or the wise men meet to discuss "the new or the wonderful." The Malagasy enters upon the preliminaries of bargain-

making, even in so small a matter as the purchase of a fowl, with the greatest solemnity and profoundest deliberation. There is no hurry or excitement either of speech or gesture: on the contrary, all the early stages of the negotiation are carried through with courtesy and gentleness. Arrived at the market, the native purchaser seats himself beside the vendor, and the two begin to discuss the affairs of the State, or the general condition of things, without the remotest reference to the subject of purchase or sale. Gradually, however, the conversation veers round to the fowl lying before the parties, and the owner is asked the price of the bird. Both persons assume an air of indifference as to the completion of the bargain, and again the talk wanders to other and entirely fresh subjects. But both buyer and seller are keenly alive to the business in hand all the time. They watch each other as the price, the article, and the surrounding circumstances of the transaction, are calmly but earnestly discussed between them.

It is always safe to offer about one fourth of the price asked for any particular article in the Malagasy markets. For instance, if a small sack of rice is offered at four shillings, you may at once suggest one shilling as your offer. The custom of the country is for the vendor to ask a very high price, and for the buyer to



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make a very low bid; and the matter is fought out by the one gradually coming down and the other sometimes, but not often, increasing his offer, till a satisfactory arrangement is come to. The foreigner must be on his guard in this particular, as the native trader does not feel at all aggrieved if a fourth of the price asked is offered for his goods; and I have seen him eagerly close with such a bid before now without further holding out. These people dearly love bargaining—it is as the “breath of their nostrils” to them; and they spend hours in this way over their improvised stalls beneath the white umbrellas of the Malagasy village marts. Sometimes the wordy conflict waxes strong and vehement, and the gateway rings with the protestations of the seller, or the expostulations of the buyer, as the case may be; but once the affair is arranged, all settle down amicably and good-naturedly enough again to their accustomed placidity of mien and feature, and become again the best of friends, as has been already stated.

The commonest coins are the French dollar, or five-franc piece. These are cut up with shears into bits of various sizes, and these bits are weighed out in the scales (*mizana*), which every one carries, according to need. The relative value of a dollar in Madagascar is, of course, greater than in Europe, as its purchas-

ing power is considerably increased. Wages are lower, and the usual monthly pay of a labourer is two shillings and his rice, which amounts to a little over three halfpence daily. House rent is very cheap; and food is plentiful and of good quality at marvellously low prices. Of course European clothing and luxuries are scarcer, and consequently more expensive; but these can in a great measure be dispensed with without much detriment to health or comfort, as the native manufactures are rapidly being brought into the market, and are found to be extremely durable as well as so varied as to supply almost everything necessary now for life in Madagascar.

One great want of the country, doubtless, is a regular coinage. And we hope that this will be one of the minor blessings which the present prime minister will shortly see his way to bestowing upon the country. Of course, in such matters, old usages and prejudices have to be taken into account. The opposition to the penny post in this country, and the open derision of even the educated classes to the scheme when it was first proposed, is sufficient to show that reforms of a social nature are often even more unpopular than sweeping political changes; and the wise sagacity of His Excellency is shown in not harrassing and irritating the population by attempting too many novelties at once in the

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way of even progressive legislation. But the time is coming when something will be done to introduce a national coinage. In fact, so far back as the days of the second Radama (1862), dies were prepared and sent out to that monarch, but were never used for minting purposes. As I have before hinted, I think, for practical purposes, the rupee and our Indian currency generally would be best adapted for these people. They have already a considerable experience of the use of the rupee, &c., which they have gained through their constant intercourse with the numerous Indians and free coolies who pass over to Madagascar, and settle there, from the Mauritius, year by year; and with a fuller and freer development of coolie emigration to the east coast, for the working of the sugar and coffee plantations, which are now spreading on all sides, the Indian monetary system will be best adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the community, especially in the great centres of trade. Doubtless the English Government will see the wisdom of enlarging the facilities for the importation of coolie labour into Madagascar, on the same footing as that upon which it has been introduced, with so much success, into the Mauritius. The surplus population of many villages in India could thus be assisted to keep themselves in comparative comfort, whereas now

they are in many cases almost destitute. The traffic will require to be carefully guarded, and the rights of the emigrants secured, by a firm administrator on the coast; but there can be no fear as to their treatment by the Malagasy authorities and people, who are famous for their hospitality and kindness to all who dwell within their borders. In fact, in the introduction of coolie labour lies the secret of the commercial success of the whole of the new and promising industries of the island, as the scanty native population will never be able to do the work which requires to be done, as soon as the works and schemes which are on foot in Betsimisaraka country have entered upon the productive stage.

The abstemiousness of the coolie labourer, and his capacity for the work of the cane plantations and coffee gardens, will render him a most useful auxiliary in the utilisation of the resources of the soil and climate of Madagascar. There are vast tracts of magnificent planting ground in all parts of the island, waiting for occupation by industrious persons with a small capital, which would render in a few years a rich and plenteous return for the labour bestowed upon them. It is not likely that the native authorities will alienate the soil in perpetuity in the future; but long leases on very favourable terms may be had from the Government, which contain clauses amply

protecting the occupier from any loss for improvements, plant, or other expenditure. All these contracts should, however, be registered at the English Consulate before the purchase money is paid ; and some pressure is generally necessary to get them completed, as delay at present impedes so much of the routine business of the island. These delays are due, however, not so much to supineness or want of interest on the part of the Hovas, as to their imperfect acquaintance at present with the working of the new order of things which is gradually being introduced amongst them.

Here, as in New Zealand, South Central Africa, and in fact every place where the original inheritors of the soil are the weaker race, the "Land Question" is a "burning one." It is the source of endless complications and disturbances, and it is most important that a speedy end should be put to this very undesirable condition of things, by a well considered scheme of long leases, duly authenticated and registered. Unprincipled men have been known to dispose of the same plot of ground over and over again, and of course such roguery can only be checkmated by all transactions connected with the purchase, hire, or sale of landed property passing through a regularly constituted Government department. Nevertheless, our sympathies in this matter are

entirely with the Malagasy, who have often suffered great hardships in their relationship with foreigners as regards the land. Short leases, however, are to be deprecated, although just now popular with the authorities at the capital, for the simple reason that they will conduce to the limitation of expenditure and the investment of capital. The investor will naturally demand some guarantee that he shall reap the fruit of his labour; and a long lease is the only arrangement which fairly secures that return which he has a right to expect. The foreigner must yield the point of perpetual alienation of the soil, and the Hovas must yield the point of short leases; and I think an amicable solution of the question will be arrived at in the long-period lease, with protective clauses, and a security for losses by internal dissensions or revolutions or tribal disturbances. I do not maintain that it will never be possible again to buy land right out in Madagascar, but I think that for some time at least the only possible way, and in fact the wisest way, of acquiring property in the island, will be by securing it on as long a registered lease as possible direct from the central Government at the capital.

The geographical details of a great portion of the island are at present very imperfect, and each traveller can add something to the steadily ac-

cumulating store of useful knowledge as to the physical conformation of the country, and the manners and habits of the people, by taking notes, and preserving a record of his observations. The maps which are at present available are in most cases unreliable; and, in fact, till a carefully constructed chart was put out at the capital in 1877 by Mr Johnson, based upon the excellent map of M. Grandidier, the explorer was without any really trustworthy guide to the various districts and points of interest up and down the country. A cursory examination of some of the earlier maps of Madagascar reveals an amusing disregard, on the part of the first delineators of the physical features of the island, of distances, or facts. Provinces are marked out with the greatest precision, rivers are drawn, hills are noted, and mountain-ranges with striking regularity intersect the country in all directions. One can only at first wonder at and admire the marvellous energy and detailed knowledge of the island which such maps seemed to imply on the part of their constructors. But should any unfortunate traveller have followed the guidance of any of these remarkable charts, he has soon found, to his cost, that they are rather imaginative than true. The Antsihanaka (north-east central) would be found on the north-west coast, near Mojanga, the chief port on the channel

of the Mozambique ; and, in fact, all the positions would be more or less "out." That one of these maps, which professed in its title to be drawn "on the spot," was the creature of a fond imagination, rather than a laborious traversing of the district, which real map-making necessitates, there could be little doubt, as the author was known for certain never to have quitted the east coast. Many of the details of these old maps were doubtless gathered from tradition or the reports of the people, or from the notes of a casual trader or priest.

M. Grandidier, speaking of this subject before the Royal Geographical Society of Paris, says concerning the work of Mons. de Lacombe, entitled '*Voyage à Madagascar*'—"This writer relates that he has at different periods traversed the island from north to south, from east to west : he gives the most precise details of his journeys. M. de Lacombe has told me, and I am myself well assured of it, with his book in my hand, that he has never left the east coast ! It is from his imagination that he has drawn the accounts to which geographers have attached so much importance, that the maps of Madagascar have to the present day been constructed upon the topographical data taken from his work."—(See *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, 1871, p. 82. Paris.) The sketch-map of M. Grandidier him-



self, who explored the country from 1865 to 1870, and which he published in 1871, is by far the most accurate general map of the island produced up to that date. It is a rough lithograph, but it has already done good work in clearing up many doubts, and in sweeping away a number of traditional errors as to some great facts in the physical geography of the island.

The central mountain-chain, a once familiar idea with reference to the country, is now known to be a mere notion of the map-makers. There appears, however, to be an elevated region occupying the greater portion of the central and interior provinces, but not reaching the west coast, and leaving the whole of the southern portion of the island below the 22d parallel of S. latitude. In this southern district, occupied by extensive plains of the *secondary* geological formation, M. Grandidier found the fossil remains of hippopotami, of two species of *Epyornis*, of gigantic tortoises, and of other long extinct animals. M. Grandidier has established also the existence of a ring or belt of forest, extending completely round the island, except in one place on the north coast, where the wood-lines overlap each other about one hundred miles, leaving a passage of seventy miles between them.

An *azimuth compass* is a very necessary article in Madagascar, and no traveller should be with-

out one. The roads are not always well known to out-of-the-way places, but if the bearings of the point which it is intended to make are carefully noted beforehand upon Mr Johnson's map, there will be no danger of missing the direct route, or wasting time in fruitlessly tracking unknown paths—a process which is as exhausting to one's strength as it is damaging to one's temper.

A well-made *filanjana* is essential for comfortable or even safe travelling in any part of the island. This vehicle is very simple in construction, but extremely useful, and should be made in England, as it is very necessary that the iron work and the poles should be of the best quality and finish. A breakdown in the middle of a plain or on a forest journey may involve the traveller in a serious difficulty as to locomotion, as it is almost fatal to a European to walk any distance in this climate. On a long expedition spare poles should be taken, and spare bolts as well, as the constant strain upon the *filanjana* in going up steep mountain-passes, or descending the slippery mud-banks of the rivers, sooner or later proves too much for the Malagasy-made article. The *filanjana* is very comfortable if made expressly for the rider, and is really only a strongly-made wooden chair fixed upon two poles about six feet long. A rest

for the feet is desirable, and a hood may be added to draw over the head as a protection from the sun or rain. The Hovas use a pole, carried by two men, with merely a strong cloth attached at each end, and hanging down, upon which the passenger sits. For ladies a very comfortable willow or cane conveyance has been invented, very much in appearance like a square cradle, in which the passenger lies at full length. This, however, is not so popular as the simple chair arrangement referred to above, which can be made very well by Silver & Co., who will furnish designs of various kinds of *filanjana* for Malagasy travel. These are all made so that they can be taken to pieces and packed in a very small compass on board ship, and refitted on arrival at Tamatave or any other port in the island.

Horses do not live long on the coast, but they are rapidly coming into use at the capital.

The projected telegraph wire to the capital will be a great convenience both to the native Government and officials, as well as to the European community at Antananarivo. It will also be the means of saving a large expense for messengers and letter-carriers when once it gets into working order. There will be very little difficulty in its construction, and doubtless it will be taken in hand very soon. The tram-line along the east coast for the conveyance of the produce

of the numerous coffee and sugar as well as the rice plantations, is also an imperative necessity, and we are glad to hear that the subject is receiving careful consideration at Antananarivo. The time is evidently near when the rulers of this people will see the wisdom of moving on with increased energy in the path of civilisation and progress, and thus hasten the coming of the time when commerce shall throng its marts and crowd its ports with shipping from every land; when the noise and stir of busy factories and industrial activities shall resound through its now silent valleys; when its broad pastures, now deserted, shall be crowded with flocks, and its fields be covered thick with corn; when justice shall be the foundation of its laws, and the voice of a free and enlightened people be heard in its council chamber "to shape the whisper of the throne"; and when the reign of the great mother of her people, Ranavalona II., and the life of her faithful prime minister, will be looked back upon by a grateful country as an era ever to be remembered in the history of the nation with reverence and abiding gratitude.

## CHAPTER XV.

## FLORA, FAUNA, AND LANGUAGE.

THE Flora of Madagascar attracted the notice of botanists and eminent men of science so far back as the time of Linnæus, and we find Commerson, in a letter to that famous naturalist, testifying to the vastness of the field which the island opened up for the study of plant and insect life; and another well-known authority (Dr Vinson), who went up to the capital in 1864, thus remarks in closing his notice of the flora of this country: "Building timbers, woods for cabinet work and for enrichments; edible and medicinal, textile and useful plants,—all abound in this favoured country, which nourishes at its base all the vegetation of the tropics, and at its summit that of the temperate zones."

Along the east coast the orange and citron are found in rich profusion, and groves of these trees are constantly met with in the earlier

stages of the road to Imérina. The pine-apple is also indigenous to the soil, and flourishes without artificial cultivation everywhere. The banana is the favourite fruit, however, and is not only agreeable but very nourishing, and capable of being prepared for food in a variety of ways. Dried and preserved, it is considered a great dainty by the natives, who can exist upon this edible alone for days if necessary. The yam, or sweet potato, the manioc root, dried or boiled, and the husk of the Indian corn, are all popular as articles of consumption. Tea and coffee also are now being cultivated, and with a considerable measure of success. The sugar-cane, cut up into pieces about a foot long, and simply crushed between the teeth till the syrup is extracted, is much appreciated, and is possessed of great sustaining power; and on long journeys the palanquin bearers will keep up a steady pace for a long time without much apparent fatigue if refreshed frequently with this succulent vegetable. Wheat has been introduced into the island, and flourishes on the high lands in the vicinity of the capital; and the cotton plant, of which one species is found in a wild state in certain districts, could, with a certain expenditure, be made remunerative, and is already used a great deal by the Malagasy for making the native *lambas*, under the

name of *landi-hazo*. Foreign settlers have made one or two attempts to plant cotton on a large scale near Mahonoro, but so far their efforts have failed, chiefly for want of capital and technical knowledge of the work.

The coffee plantations all along the fertile belt of country from Mahonoro in the south to Tamatave are flourishing, and promise to be a new and abundant source of wealth to the island in a few years. Most of these enterprises are in the hands of British subjects, and one or two companies formed in the Mauritius for the establishment and development of coffee and sugar planting in Madagascar. In clearing the low grounds, however, for the initiative process of planting, many lives have been sacrificed, as those spots most favourable for this industry were also too often the haunts of that terrible scourge of all tropical coasts, the miasmatic fever. Absence of all medical aid, and the scarcity of the necessities of life, and of that absolute necessity, quinine, and the eagerness of the planters to make the most of their opportunities, all conduced to bring about the speedy death of numbers of the little colony established on the Ihároka in 1875; and it appeared at one time that it would be necessary to abandon the enterprise entirely, on account of the unhealthiness of the locality selected for the planta-

tions. The gradual clearing of the undergrowth, however, and the improved sanitary arrangements, with the judicious use of quinine, the planting of belts of the Eucalyptus, or blue gum of Australia,—a tree which has the power of absorbing the fever germs, and of rendering the atmosphere innocuous to human beings,—have considerably reduced the mortality of the district; and now that the Malagasy fever is better understood, and proper remedies used, its ravages are not so fearful as at the period of our first acquaintance with the country. There is a kind of cinchona tree-bark in the woods, which has some of the properties of Peruvian bark; and of this the natives take the root, which they chew when attacked with the malady, and which affords them certain relief.

The *rofia* palm is the characteristic tree of Madagascar. It is to them what the banyan is to the Indian, and furnishes them with almost every article of domestic use. The ribs of the branches are used for building the light cool houses, or rather enormous baskets, in which the people live; the leaves form the thatch; the fibres make excellent cord for binding the various parts of the structure firmly together: no nails are ever used. The green leaf is used for spreading on the ground at meals as a table-cloth; small pieces of this also are twisted very



cleverly into spoons and cups, and when once used are thrown upon the fire; and the midrib is used for ladders, palanquin poles—and, in fact, for anything and everything which demands lightness and toughness.

The tree-ferns of the Malagasy forests are very striking and beautiful. To those who are only accustomed to the attenuated and dwarf-like forms of the species of the vegetable kingdom with which we are acquainted in the valleys or glens of our English counties, these towering and majestic specimens of almost every variety of the fern tribe are most pleasing. Belts and groves of these trees are to be seen; and some of them show a peculiar marking of the frond and scalloping of the edge not to be found elsewhere. The reckless waste of such valuable woods as mahogany and teak, and other hard and beautifully grained trees, which is at present going on in the island, is much to be regretted, as in the future, when new means of transit are opened, the revenue derived from the exportation of this natural wealth will form a very important and valuable item of income to the Government. Protests have also been frequently made, in the best interests of the country, against the worse than foolish destruction which has been going on for years of the india-rubber trees throughout the island. The right method by which the resin or

gum is extracted, which is afterwards manipulated into what is commonly known as india-rubber, or more properly, *caoutchouc*, is to bore a small hole in the trunk, and thus tap the tree. The gum then gradually oozes out into a receptacle placed for it, and no mischief is done to the tree. The natives, however, have stupidly cut down the trees merely to get one supply of the resin, and have thus been killing the "goose that laid the golden egg" to such an extent, that the produce of this tree has almost ceased to be obtainable by traders in sufficient quantities to justify any expenditure for its collection in the interior. The mango-tree is held in especial reverence by the natives, probably on account of the majesty of its appearance when it has reached maturity, and also on account of the density and beauty of its foliage. Beneath this tree parties of the Betsimisaraka may frequently be seen sitting and feasting for a whole day, and propitiating the *angatra* or spirit which is their particular deity. Libations of *toaka* are poured out at the roots, and the trunk and stem are often decorated with shreds and streamers of particoloured cotton cloth. Small offerings of money are also carefully wrapped in pieces of rag, and inserted into the crevices or between the forks of the boughs, which are as carefully abstracted by the more enlightened and daring

members of the community after the departure of the credulous and often hilarious devotees. The cactus or prickly pear is planted by the Hovas about their towns and houses as a protection against human or other foes, and a most effectual rampart it makes in a very short time. It is called in the language of the island, "Tsy afak omby," or that which the oxen cannot pass; and against even a hostile attack from another tribe this simple protection has been found quite sufficient, as its long and stiff barbed leaves inflict terrible wounds upon the naked bodies and unshod feet of the enemy. The most attractive plant in Madagascar is doubtless the *Ouvirandra fenestralis* or Lace-leaf plant already referred to, which, with the *Nepenthes* or Pitcher-plants, at once secure the attention of all lovers of the curious and beautiful in nature. Of the several varieties of the orchid family to be found in the woods of Madagascar we must also speak briefly, as of late years these exquisite specimens of nature's handiwork have become known and are very much admired in Europe. They appear to find a lodging upon the larger forest trees, and the contrast between their spotless waxy petals of pink and white and the decayed trunk which supports them is often very striking. There are some plants quite peculiar to Madagascar, and they in consequence are often dis-

posed of for almost fabulous sums to English and Continental florists.

It is probably due to the fact that the island lies somewhat out of the way of the ordinary busy lines of the world's commerce, that so little is comparatively known or understood of the internal condition or special features or objects of interest in Madagascar. Glancing at its position on the map, it might naturally be supposed to have many points of affinity with the neighbouring continent of Africa, especially in relation to their animal and vegetable life. Strange to say, it is quite the contrary, and this fact has been enlarged upon by all naturalists and explorers who have given attention to these things. One authority says that "the island is remarkable as presenting one of the best-known and strangest anomalies in geographical distribution."

There is a striking absence of all animal life, especially in regard to the larger species of mammalia; and this remark applies without exception to the whole island. First of all, we are struck with the entire absence of the lion, tiger, panther, leopard, and, in fact, all the more important flesh-eating animals, there being absolutely no representative of this class larger than a species of wild cat, and a very small animal of the wolf kind. The enormous and thick-skinned animals characteristic of the African jungles and

rivers, such as the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus, or river horse, are absent from the forests and streams; and there are no members of the numerous species or families of deer, antelope, or giraffe to scour its ample plains or shelter in its woody glades. Even the horse has been introduced from Mauritius. This peculiar limitation of the animal inhabitants in a tropical country is without a parallel in the world. The most developed order of mammalia in Madagascar is the four-handed: but this, again, is only represented by one class, the lemurs, which are the most characteristic animals of the island. There are no monkeys or apes, and the gorilla is not found. The Madagascar lemur is distinct from all these, and is a remarkably pretty creature, bearing but small resemblance to the half-human and often odious appearance of some of these ape and baboon tribes.

The face of the lemur is something like that of a dog, but the expression is very mild, and almost pathetic. It has very long, soft, silky fur, and a bushy tail, which it often carries curled round its neck. One variety has a peculiar whisker development of hair upon its face. They are very affectionate in disposition, and are easily tamed. The mammalia of Madagascar consists, as far as is known at present, of

only fifty-nine species,—a very small number for such a large island; and of these it is supposed that twenty-eight, or nearly two-thirds, belong to the lemuridæ. All these animals, it may be remarked, are allied to the Asiatic rather than African forms,—a fact which strengthens the theory that this and the whole of the Masacarene islands were originally connected in some way with Asia, probably by the extension of the Indian peninsula. All the animals found in the island are small, with the exception of the ox, which has a hump between the shoulders, a species of wild boar, and the goats and sheep. There are several species of bats: one the dreaded vampire, much feared by the natives, is found in the north; and there are many varieties of the parrot, owl, and smaller birds, but the eagle and the vulture are unrepresented. Our knowledge, however, of much of the country, and of some of the most important forests, is at present superficial, and probably more complete research will reveal many new features of animal life. The insects obtained from time to time by travellers are of great interest to the entomologist; and some rare and valuable specimens of butterflies have been secured and sent to Europe from the central provinces. There is a useful silk-worm moth, from which the natives procure their supplies of silk for weaving the *lamba* or State

robe, a very beautiful and creditable domestic production, much admired by European ladies; and there is also a small spider called *foka*, the bite of which is fatal. This is the only dangerously venomous creature in the whole country. Scorpions are found sometimes, and centipedes, but nothing in the shape of reptiles of the cobra type are known.

The largest form of the lemur is known as the *babacoote*, or old man, and is found only in the densest parts of the forests and glades on the road to Imérina. He is the object of much superstitious regard by the Malagasy, and his grave aspect and sedate manners certainly give him a venerable appearance, which it is difficult at first to associate with a mere denizen of the trackless woods. The creature is found reaching 33 inches in height, with a thick fur coat and placid demeanour. Some of the tribes hold these animals in very high esteem, and will often expend large sums in securing the freedom of a captive *babacoote* which may have fallen into the hands of a European hunter. They also honour them with a careful burial if killed. The explanation of this is that a certain tribe at war with its neighbours fled for safety into the forest. Their enemies, in pursuing them, led by the noise of what they took for human voices, found before them a troop of

*babacootes*, by whose appearance they were instantly struck with such terror that they fled, persuaded that the fugitives had been changed into these chattering creatures. They, on the contrary, on witnessing the confusion and retreat of their enemies, vowed eternal gratitude to the quadrumana who had saved them.

The most graceful butterfly known belongs to this island; and the Malagasy lepidoptera are very varied and numerous. There are several varieties of the beautifully marked lizard of small size, also of chameleons included in the larger species. One of the largest of the genus, the warty chameleon, is a native of the island, as also the large elephantine and the box tortoise. The land shells are much admired, and very rare.

The Malagasy have no outdoor sports or pastimes of any importance or special interest, if we except occasional expeditions from the capital to hunt the wild boar in the forests of Imérina. These really partake more of the nature of a court pageant than of real sport; and the object is not so much to secure recreation and healthy exercise, as to afford an opportunity for the display of hospitality, and to give visitors and the queen's guests a view of the *ambany-vohitra*, or country districts in the neighbourhood of the capital.

Many years ago considerable sensation was



excited amongst the savants of Europe, by the communication to the Academy of France of the discovery in 1850, in Madagascar, of a bird's egg, the capacity or contents of which was equal to those of six ostrich's eggs or of 148 eggs of the common fowl. Some remains of the bones of a huge bird were also found about the same time, and the scientific and learned world were for some time perplexed with the natural-history problem which these presented. Some gave it as their opinion that they were the remains of a gigantic penguin; others, amongst them Professor Bianconi of Bologna, sought to prove that they were parts of a bird of prey of the "roc" genus, of Arabian romance,—an eagle large enough to carry off a bullock or young elephant in its claws. Marco Polo mentioned a report of the people in the island that, at a certain season yearly, a large bird appeared from the south, which they called the *ruk*. That the Epyornis, a bird of large size and power, did exist in Madagascar at the time that the Dodo was flourishing in the neighbouring island of Mauritius, is tolerably certain. Many remains of this gigantic bustard or cassowary have at different periods been secured, and may now be examined in the Jardin des Plantes and elsewhere.

The language of the Malagasy is peculiarly sweet, and is easily learnt. It is very soft and

pleasing to the ear, and, like the Italian or Spanish tongues, it is especially adapted for musical exercises. A vast change has, however, passed over it during the past fifty years: new words have been introduced, fresh constructions and idioms invented, and the whole language scientifically arranged, and a grammar and dictionary compiled according to the most modern ideas in such matters. Many English words, especially in connection with military tactics, are in common use, and as we pass through the gates of the capital we are startled somewhat to hear the words "present arms," "rear rank take open order," &c., given in loud but very imperfect English. The articles used in education, such as *pensily*, *salaitra*, *boky*, *pinina*, and the word *sekoly* itself, are all obviously English in origin. To the French the Malagasy are indebted for words to designate articles of domestic economy, such as *lakosy*, the kitchen; *la moutard*, mustard; *depay*, bread; and *soavaly*, horse; but there has also been a considerable infiltration of Arabic and Indian, as well as Sanscrit and Polynesian words, into the tongue from time to time.

The people have no primitive literature or ancient books of any kind, as they have only had a written language since the time of Radama I. They have, however, a large store of folk-lore and proverbs, which are curious and

often instructive, as showing the mind of the people before their contact with European civilisation and modes of thought. Their national songs are scarcely worth preserving, however, as they consist chiefly of repetitions of obsequious terms of adulation of the sovereign, which are now considered by the natives themselves not to be in perfectly good taste. They had no form of mythology, or any traditions or fables of divinities or gods and goddesses, such as are found amongst most heathen people.

Some of the colloquial expressions we heard again and again reminded us of those quaint ideas which are common to our humanity, and are found embodied in every language—as, for instance, *Mitsipi-doha-laka-mitana*, “to kick the head of the canoe that crosses the water,” contains the same idea as our “to speak ill of the bridge that carries you over.” Again, *Manao-ariary-Zato-ampandriana*, “to make a hundred dollars on his bed,” is evidently the embodiment in Malagasy of the exact point of our expression, “to build castles in the air”; and *Mitsamboki-mikimpy*, “to leap without winking,” is a simple paraphrase of our “to take a leap in the dark.” These facts will doubtless be of interest to the philologist, as adding considerably to the indirect evidence of one common origin and subsequent divergence of speech, which is now the theory generally ac-

cepted by the most distinguished linguists. It is interesting, however, to notice the considerable Malayan element in the Malagasy tongue, and that many words used by the Dyaks on the seaboard of Borneo are identical with those used to distinguish the same objects in Malagasy. Humboldt, influenced by these facts, does not hesitate to class this language amongst the family of the Malay-Polynesian, which increases the interest of the enigma as to when and how the population of the Indian Archipelago first made its way to, and established a colony in, the remote island of Madagascar.

As has been previously remarked, the language used throughout the island by the various tribes is one and the same, although subject to variations of accent and spelling. The Antimora, a tribe some distance south of Imérina, speak a very strong dialect of Malagasy, and use a modified click in their speech which resembles the Kaffir expletive, and they also insert an *l* before the vowels, which gives a ruggedness to their speech, and renders it difficult of comprehension to the stranger. These people speak with a velocity and loudness which is very amusing, as contrasting strangely with the usually placid utterances of the natives of Imérina; and the first impression on hearing two Antimora in ordinary conversation is that they are engaged

in a fierce quarrel. There are differences of opinion as to the elasticity and expressiveness of the Malagasy tongue. My own experience was that it was well adapted for public speaking, and for conveying impressions to large assemblies.

It was my good fortune to witness the remarkable spectacle of the prime minister addressing the assembled states and tribes on the occasion of a great reform in the army. The persuasiveness, the courage, the argumentative power, and even the mild jocularity of each point of his speech, appeared to me inimitable and perfect, and the result justified my appreciation of the effort, for the whole assembly, consisting of tens of thousands of the youth and flower of Imérina and the central provinces, reaffirmed their loyalty to their great leader, and accepted his decree with ready and joyful acquiescence. Oratory and rhetoric are natural accomplishments of these people, and the beauty and effectiveness of the vernacular when well spoken is very striking. Like all Eastern tongues, the address is rather oblique than direct. The subject for discussion is gradually introduced after a long preamble, which is generally sufficiently full of compliments on both sides. The Malagasy have abundance of time on their hands, and they never press as we do for immediate decisions or opinions. They wait patiently, and prefer the subtle excitement

of prolonged discussion and gentle debate to the ready and off-hand manner of arranging matters which prevails amongst European nations. The boisterous and openly fair business manner of the Englishman disturbs and annoys the Malagasy, who look upon candour as a species of rudeness to be resented, or at least, if possible, repressed. The insidious and sinuous policy and manners of the French are more in accordance with original and genuine Malagasy ideas, although their confidence in the English people is greater than they themselves would care to express. They are masters of the art of concealing their real feelings and motives: there is much of the tenacity of the sleuth-hound with the sudden ferocity of the tiger in their nature; and their language affords an excellent means for disguising their feelings. They want moral courage and strength of purpose, and power to decide firmly and independently in matters. There are still signs of the old fear of treachery and uncertainty about them, which show themselves in their mode of speech, and it is exceedingly difficult for a stranger to get a straightforward expression of opinion from them; for they almost invariably shelter themselves behind the ambiguous and often irritating *angamba* (perhaps), when asked a direct question, or interrogated as to any matter of fact.

## CHAPTER XVI.

AN OUTLINE GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY OF  
USEFUL WORDS AND TERMS.

THOUGH there is one language spoken throughout the whole of the provinces of Madagascar, yet of course, as in England, there are various local and tribal differences of accent and pronunciation, which are in some instances so marked as even to suggest to the unpractised listener an entirely new tongue altogether. The purity of the language is preserved by the Hovas, who have within the last half-century considerably extended it, and brought it within the lines of true scientific and grammatical method. It is an easy tongue to acquire, and is, as has been already stated, a very beautiful and pathetic medium for the expression of ordinary ideas. It fails, however, when we endeavour to use it for the purpose of conveying philosophical or abstract truths, and in this direction it can only be enriched by copious gleanings from the classic and

European tongues. It has all the soft liquid flow of Italian, and is especially adapted for setting to music. In the old songs of the people one has often been struck by the plaintive wildness of the phrases, and the sympathy of the strain to which they have been set. In the new order of things, the improved music at the capital, for which the Malagasy are indebted very much to Mr Richardson (who was till lately the energetic head of the Normal School there), is a matter of congratulation and delight.

The growth of the language, here as elsewhere, has been coextensive with the progress of the nation. The introduction of European or other foreign ways and thoughts has been followed by an extension of the vocabulary, till now perhaps nearly one-third of the words in daily use in the country are of foreign origin, and are either boldly transplanted into the language, or slightly transformed to suit the Malagasy mode of spelling and pronunciation. Nearly the whole of the theological terms now in use are imported, and are embodied almost literally in the Malagasy; and the military tactics of the native army, as well as the civil administration, are all directed in words and phrases borrowed from English or French sources. To illustrate this, we may mention for example *kemistry*, *la farine*, *boty*, *dekana* (aide-de-camp), *Baiboly*, *soavaly* (cheval), *Gazetty*,



*borezana* (bourgeois), *lakosy* (la cuisine), *forsety* (fork), *lasety* (plate), *commandy* (commander). But perhaps it is in the direction of higher knowledge that the strengthening of the language is most clearly seen. Great care has been exercised by those who have had charge of the educational institutions at the capital to secure, as far as possible, a uniform method of spelling and pronunciation in all the publications issued for teaching purposes, so that now the language may be said really to be consolidating itself, and taking permanent form and sound.

The natives are extremely painstaking and persevering in acquiring the arts of reading and writing. They attend the schools in great numbers, and it is no uncommon thing to see grey-headed men and women patiently mastering the difficulties of the alphabet, or struggling to secure the approbation of their teachers for their "pot-hooks and hangers." One dear old Malagasy friend of mine used to recount the story with no common pride, of his having taught himself to read and write after he was sixty years of age. The children learn very quickly, and soon speak English or French fairly well. They are beautiful penmen, and as a rule write a clear and very graceful hand. But "speech" is after all the great strength of a Malagasy. He is a born orator. The most trivial circumstance is introduced to

your notice by a speech. But with these people it is not merely "Talkee, talkee." They have a clever way of expressing their ideas in an impersonal sense, which is very amusing. For instance, if they wish for anything you possess, not by any means an uncommon circumstance, they come to you and begin by expressing a feeling of anxiety as to whether there is another hat, or coat, or book, or watch, in the world so nice, or exactly like the one you have. And so on, till there can no longer be any doubt as to the occasion of the visit and the drift of the remarks.

The Malagasy orator never approaches his subject directly. He sweeps round and about the main topic of his discourse for some time before he approaches it directly. This is a little tantalising at first; but by degrees it gets somehow to appear more in harmony with the climate and the surroundings, with the leisurely manner of life of these most affable and courteous people. Eloquence is a great power amongst the Malagasy; and one often feels, in reviewing the marvellous career of the present prime minister, that he owes much of his extraordinary success as a politician and a statesman to his grand command of stirring language, and his graceful attractiveness as a public speaker. Those who have the honour of his acquaintance will, I think, readily agree with

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me that some of the richest and most touching sentences in the language have been uttered by his Excellency in the public *kabarys* of the nation at Imahamasina. I shall never forget the impression he made when he delivered his famous harangue to the army on the occasion of a reform in the military arrangements of the country in 1877. We were looking down upon Imahamasina from the terrace of one of the villas above the plain when he rode upon the parade-ground, splendidly dressed, and mounted upon a perfect Arab mare, which he rode with masterly grace and dignity. He commenced his speech to the soldiers, with whom he is extremely popular, upon horseback, and continued to ride up and down the ranks as he spoke. He then dismounted, and continued his address, now and then appealing to the assembled thousands to assent to what he had been saying. This the soldiers did with an *Izay!*—"That is it!"—which fairly thundered up to us from Imahamasina. At one particular point of his speech he suddenly drew his sword, and waving the gleaming blade over his head, he turned to the balcony of the royal residence, upon which the Queen was seated, and bowing profoundly, offered her the devotion and allegiance of her loyal troops. Then, turning again to the assembled regiments, he proceeded with his oration, which lasted over three hours,

and which was considered a triumph of oratory and shrewd common-sense. In this way he is credited with having on more than one occasion saved the country from anarchy and confusion, and possibly also his own life.

In reading Malagasy it will be noticed—

1. That all the words end with a vowel.
2. There is no use of the *w*, *q*, or *u*.
3. The vowels are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *y*.
4. *A* is pronounced as *ar*, *o* as *oo*, *e* as *a*, *i* as *e*.
5. *Y* is pronounced with an *e* sound short.
6. Thus *ava* is pronounced *arvar*, *osy* as *oosy*, *fa* as *far*, *ny* as *ne*.
7. The *pronouns* are : Singular—*aho*, I ; *hianao*, you ; *izy*, he, she, or it. Plural—*hianareo*, you ; *izareo*, they.
8. The *verb* precedes the noun, as *marary aho*, I am sick ; *faly hianao*, you are glad ; *tezitra izy*, he is angry.
9. The *adjective* follows the noun, as *ondry fotsy*, white sheep ; *rano mainty*, black water ; *ahitra maitso*, green grass.
10. A statement is emphasised by a repetition of the word, as *sasatra dia sasatra aho*, I am very tired.
11. The *prefix Ra* changes an ordinary word into a proper noun very often, as *Rabodo* (child) ; *Ravonjy* (helper) ; *Ramaniraka* (messenger) ; *Rasampy* (idol).

12. There is no separate form for the *plural*; but it is expressed by the addition of such words as *maro*, many; *vitsy*, few; *roa*, two, &c., to the noun.

13. The most common form of the *possessive* case is the affix *ko* to the noun—e.g., *tranoko*, my house; *damosiko*, my shoulder; *zanako*, my son. *Ao*, your—as *trananao*, your house; *areo*, yours, plural, as *tranonareo*, &c.

14. The initial letter of the present tense of the *verb* is *m*, *milaza* (I tell); of the past, *n*, *nilaza* (I told); of the future, *h*, *hilaza* (I will tell).

15. The French *pronunciation* of the vowels is that which is followed in speaking or reading the Malagasy as nearly as possible.

16. Nearly all the names of persons, places, and rivers in Madagascar have a particular signification; as *Andévoranto*, slave-market, from *andervo*, a slave, and *ranto*, trade—the old slave-market of the east coast; *Matitanána*, the dead hand (two chiefs having quarrelled, according to the old legend, and having grasped hands over this stream, one plucked off the hand of the other and cast it into the river); *Ambohimalaza*, the famous town, formerly a great trading-place of the Hovas.

In speaking, it is always well to be careful to pronounce the vowels correctly, neglect of this rule often producing great confusion and mis-

understanding. The best way to get a good pronunciation is to read a few passages a-day regularly of the 'Government Gazetty,' published at the capital, and to get a well-educated native to listen and correct the accent. One of the easiest and best books in the language to commence with is the 'Mpivahiny,' a translation of Bunyan's famous treatise, made in 1866 by the Rev. D. Johns, the opening sentence of which, with retranslation into English, is as follows :—

*" Raha mainga tety ambony tany aho—As I wandered over the earth ; dia nijajona tany ny fitoerana iray nisy lava-bato—I came to a place where there was a cave ; ary nandry tao aho ka natory—and I laid down there and slept ; ary raha natory aho—and when I slept ; dia nanofy—then I dreamed."*

The secret of speaking the Malagasy language well really consists in giving prominence to the vowels. Facility will come with exercise, but the first things to be aimed at are distinct articulation, and careful enunciation of each word—*e.g., raha—mainga—tety—ambony—tany—aho—dia—nijajona—tany—ny, &c. &c.*

USEFUL NOUNS, ETC.

ant, <i>vitsika</i> .	dog, <i>alika</i> .
ape, <i>babacoote</i> .	servant, <i>ankisy</i> .
to-morrow, <i>rhampitso</i> .	slave, <i>andevo</i> .
to-day, <i>anio</i> .	knife, <i>antsy</i> .
yesterday, <i>omaly</i> .	spoon, <i>sotro</i> .
watch, <i>famantaran-androkely</i> .	salt, <i>sira</i> .
day, <i>andro</i> .	water, <i>rano</i> .
night, <i>alina</i> .	fish, <i>laoka</i> .
morning, <i>marina</i> .	beef, <i>kena</i> .
house, <i>trano</i> .	church, <i>fiangonana</i> .
ship, <i>sambo</i> .	duck, <i>drakadraka</i> .
sailor, <i>matilo</i> .	fire, <i>afo</i> .
earth, <i>tany</i> .	box, <i>vata</i> .
water, <i>rano</i> .	rice, <i>vary</i> .
dust, <i>fitoka</i> .	paper, <i>taratasy</i> .
chair, <i>seza</i> .	fever, <i>tazo</i> .
table, <i>latabatra</i> .	medicine, <i>fanofody</i> .
boy, <i>zazalaky</i> .	tree, <i>hazo</i> .
bird, <i>vorona</i> .	smoke, <i>setroka</i> .
bell, <i>lakalosy</i> .	noon, <i>anto-andro</i> .
bed, <i>fandriana</i> .	breakfast, <i>sokafo-marina</i> .
board, <i>farfana</i> .	dinner, <i>sokafo anto andro</i> .
boat, <i>lakana</i> .	supper, <i>sokafo-hariva</i> .
bread, <i>mofo</i> .	friend, <i>sakaiza</i> .
butter, <i>menakdronona</i> .	enemy, <i>fahavalo</i> .
ball, <i>boribory</i> .	postman, <i>mpitonondra-taratasy</i> .
thorn, <i>tsilo</i> .	sword, <i>sabatra</i> .
hat, <i>satroka</i> .	powder, <i>vanza</i> .
garden, <i>tokotany</i> .	fowl, <i>akoha</i> .
serpent, <i>menarana</i> .	mail, <i>fantsika</i> .
sheep, <i>ondry</i> .	hand, <i>tanana</i> .
goose, <i>vorombe</i> .	head, <i>loka</i> .
money, <i>vola</i> .	mouth, <i>vava</i> .
scales, <i>mizana</i> .	lock, <i>lahidy</i> .
cook, <i>mpahandro</i> .	flag, <i>saina</i> .
cat, <i>ptso</i> .	room, <i>efitra</i> .
coat, <i>akanjo</i> .	road, <i>lilana</i> .
evening, <i>hariva</i> .	cold, <i>mangatsiaka</i> .
foot, <i>tongotra</i> .	maiden, <i>torovavavy</i> .

dish, *lovia*.  
 needle, *fanjaitra*.  
 sea, *ranomasina*.  
 island, *osy*.  
 forest, *ala*.  
 clouds, *rahona*.  
 star, *kintana*.  
 line, *tsipikia*.  
 town, *tanàna*.  
 rice-house, *tranombary*.  
 truth, *fahamarinana*.  
 bath, *fandroana*.  
 leaves, *ravina*.  
 fruit, *vovankazo* (*h* changed to *k*  
 for euphony: this is fre-  
 quently the case).  
 father, *ray*.  
 mother, *reny*.  
 wife, *radỳ*.  
 man and wife, *mirady*.  
 soldier, *maromila*.  
 gun, *basy*.  
 egg, *atody*.  
 mountain, *tendrombohitra*.  
 arm, *rantsana*.  
 finger, *ranstana-tànana*.

teeth, *niñy*.  
 shoulder, *damosiny*.  
 key, *fanalahidy*.  
 conversation, *resaka*.  
 flour, *farine*.  
 youth, *tovolahy*.  
 mattress, *farafara*.  
 cup, *kapouka*.  
 thread, *triaty*.  
 river, *ony*.  
 pig, *kisoa*.  
 eye, *maso*.  
 heaven, *lanitra*.  
 moon, *volana*.  
 village, *vohitra*.  
 corpse, *faty*.  
 ring, *peratra*.  
*lahy*, the male sex.  
*vavy*, the female sex.  
*zazalahy*, a boy.  
*zavavavy*, a girl.  
*lehilahy*, a man.  
*vehivavy*, a woman.  
*ombilahy*, bull.  
*ombivavy*, cow, &c.

## ADJECTIVES.

white, *fotsy*.  
 black, *mainity*.  
 red, *mena*.  
 blue, *manga*.  
 green, *maitso*.  
 bad, *ratsy*.  
 good, *tsara*.  
 tall, *lava*.  
 fat, *matavy*.  
 large, *lehibe*.  
 small, *kely*.  
 few, *vitsy*.  
 many, *maro*.

soft, *malemy*.  
 hard, *mafy*.  
 one, *iray*.  
 two, *roa*.  
 three, *telo*.  
 four, *efatra*.  
 five, *demy*.  
 six, *enina*.  
 seven, *fito*.  
 eight, *valo*.  
 nine, *sivy*.  
 ten, *folo*.  
 eleven, *iraink amby ny folo*.



twelve, *roa amby ny folo*.  
thirteen, *telo amby ny folo*, &c.  
twenty, *roa polo*.  
thirty, *telo polo*, &c.  
one hundred, *zato*.  
two hundred, *roan zato*, &c.

Consonants are often inserted

in the compound numbers  
for the sake of euphony—  
e.g., *roa(n) zato*.  
a thousand, *arivo*.  
two thousand, *roa arivo*, &c.  
two men, *roa lahy*.  
two women, *roa vary*.

# VERBS.

to ask, *mangataka*.  
to sing, *mihira*.  
to pray, *mivavaka*.  
to talk, *miresaka*.  
to walk, *mandeha-tongota*.  
to sit, *mipetraka*.  
to sleep, *matory*.  
to wish, *maniry*.  
to eat, *mihinina*.  
to drink, *misotro*.  
to go, *mandeha*.  
to return, *miverina*.  
to visit, *mamangy*.

to fear, *matahotra*.  
to suffer, *mijaly*.  
to shake, *mangovitra*.  
to hold, *mitana*.  
to flee, *mandositra*.  
to sink, *milentaka*.  
to steal, *mangalatra*.  
to weep, *mitomany*.  
to watch, *miambena*.  
to buy, *mividy*.  
to sell, *mirarotra*.  
to despise, *mahafofy*.

*Andeha isika*, Let us go.  
*Aynto rino*, Bring water.  
*Andriso kely*, Stop a short time.  
*Mandehana fangana*, Go quickly.  
*Antsoy ny vazaha*, Call the gentleman (stranger).  
*Aiza moa ny mofo*? Where is the bread?  
*Aiza moa ny rano*? Where is the water?  
*Aiza moa ny trano*? Where is the house?  
*Aiza moa ny vary*? Where is the rice?

*Aiza moa ny olona hafa*? Where are the other people?  
*Hoa trinona*? How much?  
*Firy moa*? How many?  
*Manao ahoana hianao tompokolaky*? How are you, sir?  
*Tsara hiany tompokolaky*, Very well, sir.  
*Mamangy anao aho*, I visit you.  
*Misaotra anao*, Thank you.  
*Veloma*, Farewell.  
*Aza marofy*, May you come to no ill.  
*Marina izany*? Is that true?

Before the introduction of clocks and watches, which are now becoming very common amongst the younger Malagasy, the *passage of time* was noted by the use of a rude kind of natural chronometer, which was made by the progress of the sun's rays over a particular part of the house during the day. The following list was given to Mr Sibree, jun., by an intelligent friend of his, and illustrates incidentally some of the habits and daily life of the people, especially those living in the country:—

Malagasy term.	Meaning.	Hour of day about
<i>Vaki-maso-andro</i> . . .	Daybreak . . . . .	6
<i>Maim-bohon-dravina</i> . .	Dry back of the leaf . . . .	7
<i>Mamoak omby</i> . . . .	Driving out cattle . . . . .	8
<i>Mitatao-haratra</i> . . . .	To come (the sun) above the purlin . . . . .	9
<i>Mitatao-voronana</i> . . .	To come above the ridge . . .	12
<i>Mitsidik'andro</i> . . . .	The peeping in of the day . .	1
<i>Mena-maso-andro</i> . . . .	The red sun . . . . .	5½
<i>Homam-bary-olona</i> . . .	People eat rice . . . . .	8
<i>Tapi-mandry-olona</i> . . .	Finished—people lie down .	10
<i>Mamatow-alina</i> . . . .	Midnight . . . . .	12
<i>Maneno-akoho</i> . . . .	Cock-crowing . . . . .	3½
<i>Mifohaza atsinana</i> . . .	The east is light . . . . .	5½

The year is divided into twelve months as with us, or moons—the same word (*volana*) being used for both. They are as follows:—

- |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Alahamady. | 5. Alahasaty. | 9. Alakaozy.  |
| 2. Adaoro.    | 6. Asombola.  | 10. Adijady.  |
| 3. Adizaozy.  | 7. Adimizana. | 11. Adalo.    |
| 4. Asorotany. | 8. Alakarabo. | 12. Alahotsy. |

It is supposed that these names are derived from

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e, especially

	Hour of day about
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. . .	7
. . .	8
bove the	9
lge . .	12
day .	1
. . .	5½
. . .	8
down .	10
. . .	12
. . .	3½
. . .	5½

months as  
(plana) being

Alakaozy.  
Adijady.  
Adalo.  
Alahotsy.  
erived from

the Arabic, as several of them have the Arabic prefix *al*. The same names are applied, however, on the eastern and western coasts to months at quite different seasons of the year.

The usual salutation of the Betsimisaraka of the east coast is the beautiful word "Finaritra" — "May you be happy."

The Hovas use the more formal phrase, "Akory hianao, Tompokolahy?" — "How are you, sir?"

If the person addressed is an *Andriana*, or member of the royal family, it is usual to say, "Trarantitra Tompokoê" — "May you live long, sir." The usual reply to these expressions of courtesy is, "Tsara hiany, Tompokolahy" — "I am very well, sir." The natives always address even strangers and passing travellers thus, and it is at least good manners to return their greeting with care, and as nearly as possible in their own formula.

It is usual for a traveller to send notice of his arrival in any village or centre of authority to the chief man of the place. This should be written, or sent with an agreeable message of inquiry as to the health of the Queen, prime minister, and chief members of the Government. Such acts of politeness are due to the Malagasy authorities, whose guest for the time being the stranger is, and they often secure greater comfort and expedition in travelling or purchasing supplies.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## CONCLUSION.

THE day is fast approaching when the chief part of Madagascar will no longer be sealed and closed to foreign enterprise and the useful employment of European capital. The visit of the recent embassy to England and America has already produced marked results, and effected considerable changes in the internal policy of the ocean kingdom of the Hovas. The men who formed the embassy were well prepared, from their previous training, to enter thoroughly into all the social problems which were presented to them in their recent intercourse with the most civilised communities of the world. Ramaniraka, who was the second ambassador last year to London and America, is well versed in English literature; he speaks English fluently, and has all his life been employed in the service of the Government. It was my good fortune to entertain him at my residence on the coast, on the

occasion of his visit to promulgate the decree manumitting the Mozambique slaves in 1877, and I could not but feel interested in the touching address which he delivered on the occasion to a large concourse as to the moral and social advantages of education and knowledge to every man, even if only on the lowest step of the ladder of life.

Of Ravòninàhitrinariivo, the chief ambassador, I have also very agreeable recollections. It happened that I had to go to the capital in 1877 for change of air and rest, after a more than ordinary attack of malarious fever, and for the purpose of conferring with the authorities at the palace as to the educational work on the east coast. I had a very kind message from Ravòninàhitrinariivo, who was then of the rank of fifteen honours,—I believe he has received another since,—and an officer of the palace (one of the body-guard of her Majesty). I replied in suitable terms, and asked for an interview, which was immediately granted. I was very much surprised to find the dwelling in which this officer lived to be a small palace of handsome proportions, well built of carefully dressed stone, and worthy of any English country gentleman. The result of the interview was that considerable impetus was given to the Government schemes for the amelioration of the condition of the Bet-

simisaraka generally down east; and I still have very pleasant remembrances of the manner in which I was welcomed by this young but energetic and rising Malagasy statesman.

There can be no doubt about the strength of the party of which the present prime minister and Ravòninàhitriniarivo are the leaders. Their policy of union with the more advanced nations of Europe, and free access for foreigners to the island, is popular to-day, in spite of the spasmodic efforts of a few of the older and more conservative native nobles. As soon, doubtless, as the French difficulty is arranged, we shall see a great advance made by the Hova Government. The prospect of a railway to the capital is brightening, and is coming within the range of practical discussion. There are no insuperable difficulties in the way, and with British or other European capital and engineering skill the journey from Tamatave to Antananarivo may yet be capable of accomplishment in a day. What the island now requires is capital and enterprise. Dormant resources are lying beneath the surface; vast deposits of natural treasure are awaiting removal to European markets. Rivers, such as the Mananzari in the south, with an estuary half a mile broad and a flow estimated at three miles an hour, must be opened up and cleared from the paltry sand-bars which at present close them, and

effectually destroy their usefulness. The sugar industry on the east coast, the coal and iron ore all over the north-east, and the gold and iron deposits of the south central provinces, already described, are awaiting the attention from capitalists which they must sooner or later receive.

Doubtless the recent disturbances in the island, and the action of the French, have for the moment checked the flow of colonists and outsiders into the country. But the check is only temporary. It is impossible that such a land can much longer be left empty and unprofitable. The five millions of people who inhabit its beautiful valleys and vast plains scarcely know to-day the possibilities of their own country, and the bountiful provision which nature has lavished upon them for the support and enjoyment of life. A railway from the central province would be at once the dawn of a new era. It would be not simply, even from the native point of view, a weakness, but it would also be a source of strength, for if on the one hand it offered increased facilities for carrying a hostile force into the neighbourhood of the capital, it would also enable the native army to be massed at the shortest notice at Tamatave, where the trial of strength could be made; and there is this fact to be remembered in connection with this subject, that the

Malagasy would always have the iron road in their own hands, and that it would never be a difficult task to render the way impassable in a few hours, if necessary, to the strongest force that could be sent against them. The road to Antananarivo presents not one but fifty Thermopylæ, where any native Leonidas might emulate the heroic deeds of classic story with certain prospect of success.

The eastern lake-system must also be completed from Tamatave to Mananzari by a system of canals. The distance is nearly 400 miles, and the boats have now to be carried overland during the whole journey, about 39 miles. This operation of taking out the canoes and transporting them over the intervening ground between the lakes, is very tedious and unsatisfactory. The constant packing and unpacking of the contents often causes injury and loss to the trader, and the whole affair is vexatious to a degree. There is no particular reason why these lakes should not be united by cuttings, except the conservatism of the natives, who have not so far cared to make things too easy for the foreigner. M. Ligie, a gentleman who established a considerable industry at Mananzari, and who employed a large number of natives in his sugar-mill and coffee-plantations, went so far, some years ago, as to offer to make



the attempt to connect the south with Tamatave by a continuous water-way, but permission from Antananarivo for the projected works was refused. The carriage of the grain from the spot where it is produced to the port of embarkation is so excessive, that rice-growing on a large scale is scarcely remunerative; but if the transport once became easier and cheaper, a new source of wealth would be open to the Malagasy, as the rice of the island has a pre-eminent reputation, even as far as India and Ceylon.

To those who think of trying their fortune in Madagascar, I can only say that they will meet with a ready welcome from the people of the island. But it is scarcely the place for any but those with some capital, and with plenty of self-restraint and ideas of frugality and hard work. The one curse to the white settlers as well as the natives is the *toaka*, or native rum. Strictly temperate habits render the climate, however, powerless to work any serious mischief upon the constitution. Great care has to be exercised not to go long in wet clothing, or to take cold in any way. Over-exertion also is dangerous, especially in the sun; and the muscular system should be well supported by good food and frequent changes of diet, plenty of woollen, not cotton clothing, and great care as to the sleeping arrangements of the domicile.

I think that the attacks of fever are generally brought on by carelessness in this respect. A hammock is perhaps the safest arrangement; but this depends entirely upon the bearing power of the house in which it is slung. It is always well to try the posts before trusting one's self to them, as ropes have been known to give way, and hammocks to deposit their unconscious burden upon the floor in the dark hours of the night, in a manner which never fails to amuse the onlooker, but hardly commends itself to the unfortunate subject of the accident. Sleeping on or near the floor is a practice which cannot be too strongly objected to. It is in the night that the ground exhales the miasmatic vapour, which the weary sleeper breathes in copious draughts, until at length the system becomes impregnated with the fever germs, and a severe attack of intermittent is the inevitable result.

The first impulse of the newly arrived stranger is to walk a great deal, and to signalise his first experience of Malagasy roads by some feat of endurance or manly strength. I have heard of an illustrious visitor who waded the muddy roads of the forests in a pair of Brixham fishermen's boots, and of one lady tourist who did miracles in the way of climbing into the Hova capital with men's bluchers and an alpenstock. The experienced voyager, however, dispenses

with these displays of fancy travelling. He is warned by many unpleasant remembrances that strength is easily got rid of, but difficult to regain. He goes warily, and prefers the slow and steady progress to the dashing and disastrous.

Sitting out at night on the verandah is also a mistake. It is enjoyable—nothing can be more so; but it is very perilous, as the instant the sun sets the air becomes charged with malaria. "Early to bed and early to rise" is *the* rule of life for all who wish to enjoy the tropics. The cold bath is also to be eschewed—not the bath, but the cold bath. Water slightly warmed should be preferred at all times; and failing this, it is safer to neglect the bath, painful as the very suggestion of such an idea may seem to many of my readers, than to risk the enormous strain upon the action of the heart which a plunge into spring water involves in hot countries. The feet should be kept out of the sun, and carefully covered when riding in the *filanjána*, and always kept dry and warm. It is a mistake to suppose that thin clothing is the very best wear for tropical climates. On the contrary, it is a source of much ill-health, as it fails to afford that protection from the heat of the sun which is necessary at all times. A stout woollen or serge cloth is best, and certainly most comfortable.

I fear I can suggest no remedy for the ever

active and ubiquitous mosquito. The combined efforts and designs of east and west, of European and Oriental, of all races and languages, have failed to "keep him out," or destroy the malignity of his attacks. "What about curtains?" my reader asks timidly, and perhaps hopelessly. My answer is, that they are really of no avail. They lure you into a feeling of false security: you ensconce your head upon the pillow after a hard day's work, and you prepare to sleep. All is silent as the grave, and the pleasant peace of all things living begins to tell upon the brain and nervous system by inducing a sense of repose in both. The eyes insensibly close, and the world appears to be slowly gliding away out of sight. The curtains have been securely tucked in on this occasion, because perhaps last night it was found that by some neglect of this precaution an entrance had been forced by the enemy, and the temper soured, and pleasant dreams changed into restless watchings by the presence of one—only one—of these dreaded enemies of all repose. But why prolong the story? First the soft buzzing sound of the approaching foe is heard; then follows the attack direct, the repulse, the renewal of the assault, the execrations, the final triumph of the invisible enemy, and the battle only ceases, to be renewed with fresh vigour at uncertain intervals, without any prospect, sad to say, of

any permanent truce, till one or other of the combatants shall cease to be. To the future dweller in these regions I say, Take your mosquito curtains by all means; they at least adorn the bungalow, and make a pretty figure, with their blue or cardinal satin loops. But do not trust to them, and do not be much disappointed if they fail in the hour of need to shield you from your enemy. The native antidote for this domestic trouble is burning cow-dung or other refuse in the middle of their apartments, which I think I have already described as possessing no chimneys. I must frankly say, after one particular experience of this mode of cure, that I infinitely prefer the mosquitoes.



TABLE OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS AND DATES  
IN THE HISTORY OF MADAGASCAR.

	A. D.
Discovered by Almeida, Portuguese Envoy to India . . . . .	1506
French colony formed at Anosy . . . . .	1642
Do. do. St Augustine's Bay . . . . .	1642
Benyowsky landed at Antongil Bay . . . . .	1774
Do. killed by the French . . . . .	1786
Radama I. born . . . . .	1792
Do. succeeded to throne . . . . .	1810
Treaty between Radama I. and England . . . . .	1817
First English Consul and artisans and other European teachers landed . . . . .	1818
Death of Radama I. . . . .	1828
Accession of his wife as Ranavalona I. . . . .	1828
Attempted revolution through French influence . . . . .	1857
Death of Ranavalona I. and succession of her son as Radama II. . . . .	1861
Revolution and assassination of the King, and accession of his wife as Ràsobèrinamanjaka . . . . .	1863
Rainilaiarivóny rose to power as Prime Minister, and inaugurated a new policy of domestic progress and friendship with foreign States . . . . .	1864
Visit of Queen Ràsobèrina and nearly 40,000 people to Rano-mafana on the east coast . . . . .	1867
Death of Ràsobèrina, the last heathen queen, and acces- sion of her cousin Ranavalona II. . . . .	1868
The national idols destroyed by fire . . . . .	1869
Manumission of Mozambique slaves by royal decree . . . . .	1877
French claims revived, and bombardment by Admiral Pierre of Mojanga and Tamatave, and death of Ranavalona II. . . . . June	1883

Death of Mr Pakenham . . . . .	June	1883
Mr Shaw imprisoned by the French . . . . .		1883
Review of Hova army at capital; public <i>kabery</i> by Rainilaiarivony, Prime Minister, and enthusiastic reception of Ramaniraka and Ravoninahitrinia- rivo, on their return from a Special Embassy to Europe . . . . .	Oct.	1883
Coronation of Ranavalona III. . . . .	Nov.	1883
Mr Pickersgill appointed Vice-Consul at the capital . . . . .		1883
Arrival of Mr Graves, successor to Mr Pakenham, at Tamatave . . . . .		1883

NAMES OF THE VARIOUS TRIBES OF MADAGASCAR  
AND THEIR LOCATION, WITH THE PRINCIPAL  
GEOGRAPHICAL POINTS.

Hovas . . . . .	Central.
Betsiléo . . . . .	South central.
Bára . . . . .	South-west.
Sihanaka . . . . .	North central.
Sakalava . . . . .	West coast and north-west.
Betsimisaraka . . . . .	East and north-east.
Tanàla . . . . .	South-west.
Taimora . . . . .	South-east.
Vezo . . . . .	South-west coast.
Antankara . . . . .	Extreme north.
Tankay . . . . .	North and east of Hovas.

*Principal Capes.*

North . . . . .	Cape Ambre.
South . . . . .	Cape St Mary.
South-east . . . . .	Cape Ytapere.
North-west . . . . .	St Sebastian.
North-east . . . . .	Cape Masona.



# ITINERARY FROM TAMATAVE TO CAPITAL. 355

June 1883  
 . . . 1883  
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 enthusiastic  
 nahitrinia-  
 Embassy to  
 . . . Oct. 1883  
 . . . Nov. 1883  
 capital . 1883  
 kenham, at  
 . . . 1883

## *Principal Bays.*

North-east . . . . .	Antongil Bay.
North-west . . . . .	Ambarao Bay.
West . . . . .	Bombetok Bay.
South-west . . . . .	St Augustine's Bay.

## *Chief Ports.*

West . . . . .	Mojanga.
North-west . . . . .	Amorontsanga.
East . . . . .	Tamatave, Mahonoro.
North-east . . . . .	Vohimare, Maranzetra.
South-east . . . . .	Mananjara, Faradofy.
South . . . . .	Port Dauphin.

## *Chief Towns.*

Antananarivo . . . . .	(Hova).
Fianarantsoa . . . . .	(Betsilé).
Ambatondrazaka . . . . .	(Sihanaka).

## *Islands.*

Nosi Be . . . . .	North-west (French).
St Mary . . . . .	East coast (French).
Barren Islands . . . . .	West coast.
Nosi-Mitsio . . . . .	North-west.

OF MADAGASCAR  
 THE PRINCIPAL

ul.  
 central.  
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 and north-east.  
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 a and east of Hovas.

Ambre.  
 St Mary.  
 Ytapere.  
 bastian.  
 Masoma.

# ITINERARY FROM TAMATAVE TO THE CAPITAL.

1. Leave Tamatave about four o'clock in the afternoon.
2. Ivondrona. (Sleep.) Take *lakana*.
3. Ampantomatzina. (Sleep.)
4. Vavony. Take *lakana*.
5. Andévoranto, upon the Ihároka, magnificent river. (Sleep.)  
 Take *lakana* for—
6. Maromby. Disembark and strike due west.

7. Ranomafana. (Sleep.) Hot springs; lace-leaf plant abundant.
8. Ambotoharina.
9. Ampasimbe. (Sleep.)
10. Beforona. 1390 feet above the sea.
11. Analamazaotra. (Sleep.) Forest.
12. Moramanga. (Sleep.) 2888 feet above sea-level. Vast plain.
13. Ambodinifody.
14. Ankera-Madinika. (Sleep.) Send on messenger to announce your arrival to the chief officers at the capital.
15. ANTANANARIVO. 4320 feet above sea-level.

Houses can always be obtained at these places, and it is customary to give a small present to the owner for the use of his domicile. About a *kirobo* (one shilling) is a fair sum.

The water *en route* should be avoided as much as possible, unless filtered or previously boiled.

Early travelling is recommended, as the sun in the middle of the day is almost overpowering, and the bearers suffer considerably. A casual gift of a few shillings on the road for fruit or sugar-cane or beef, will put the men in good heart, and preserve that equanimity of temper which is pleasant both for carriers and carried. The work is terribly hard, and the marvellous patience and sturdy determination of the *maromita* (bearers) is worthy of encouragement.

THE END.

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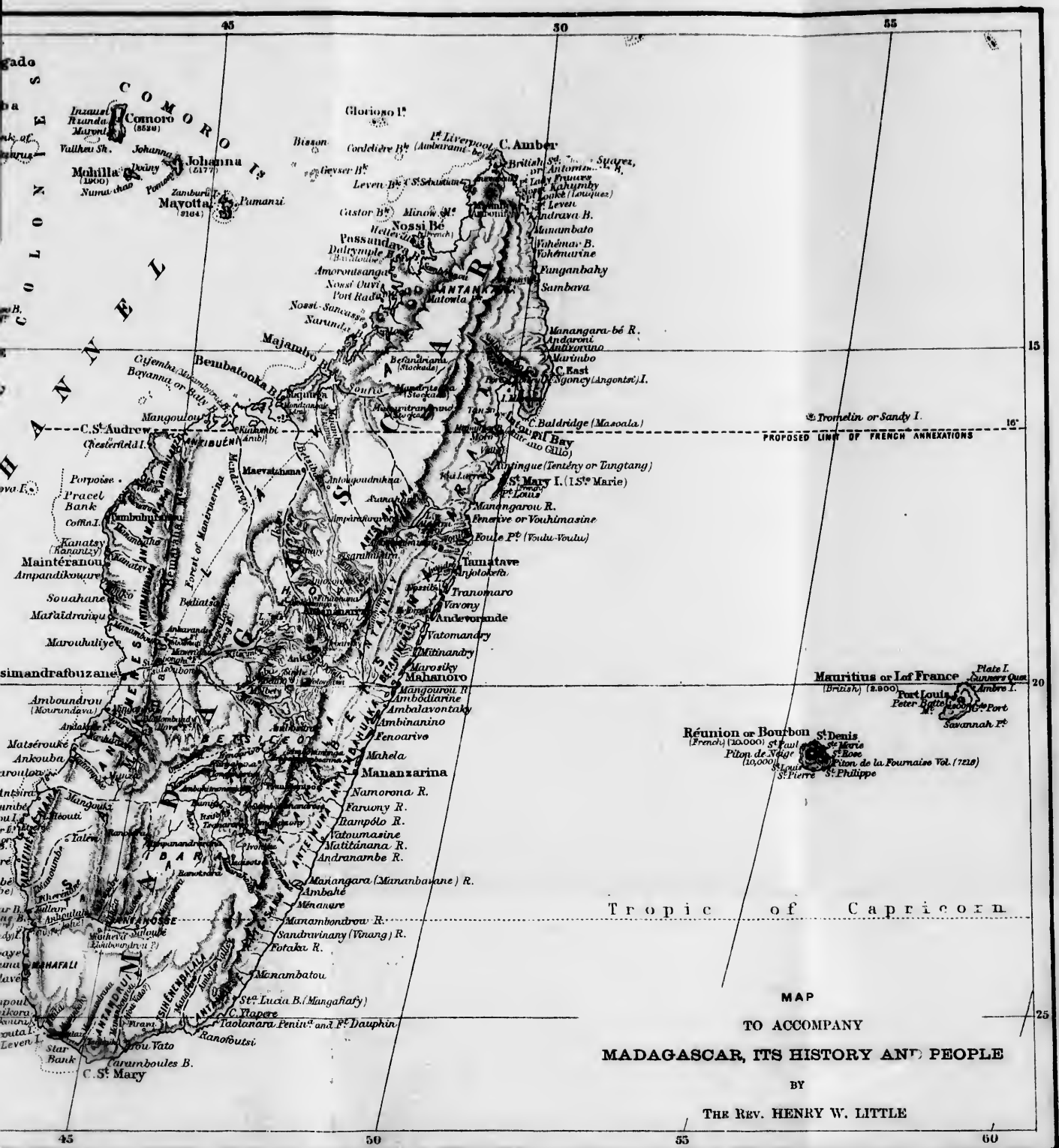
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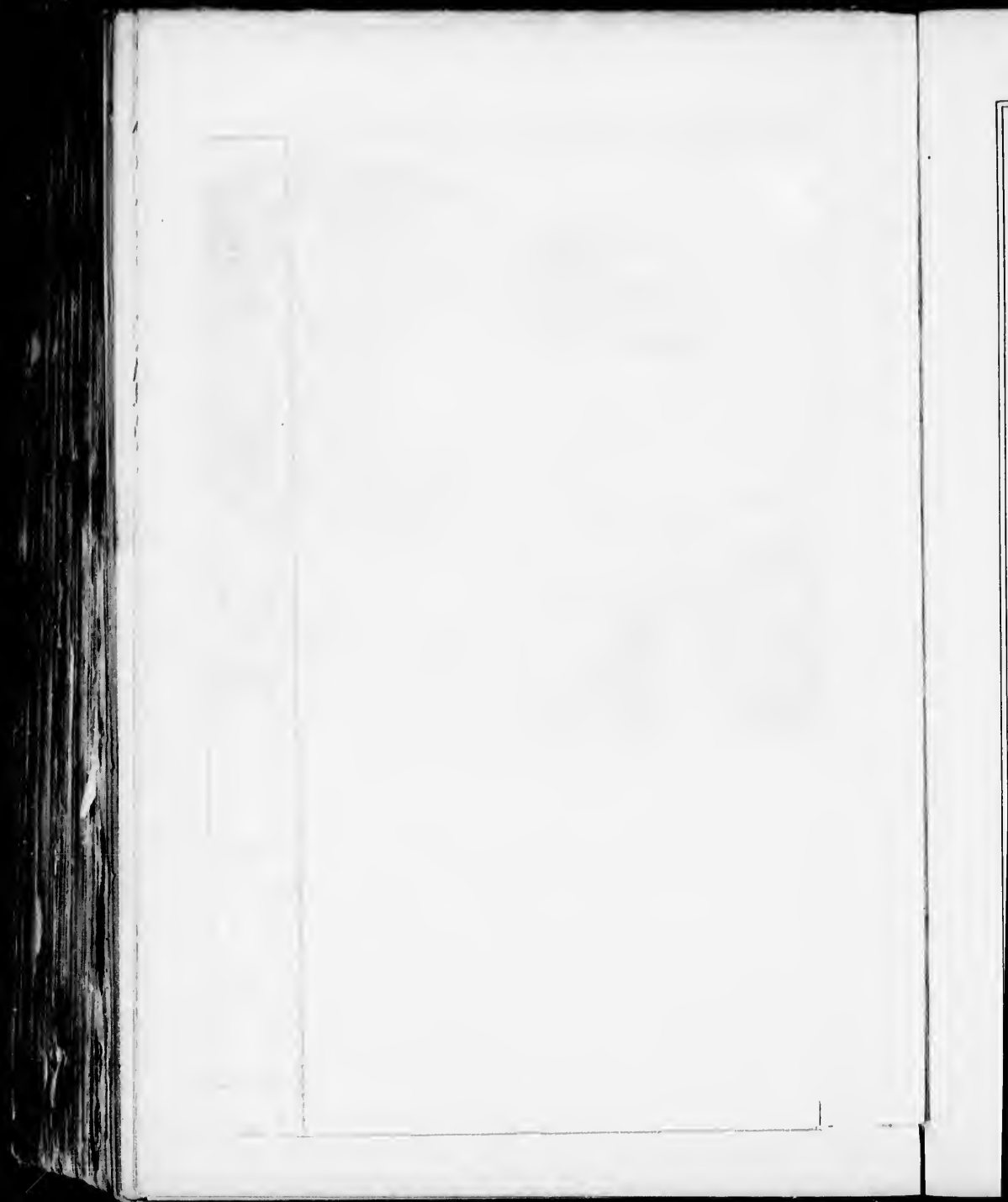
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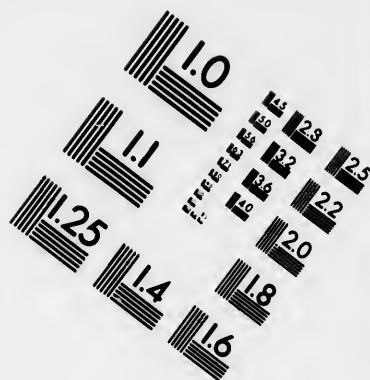
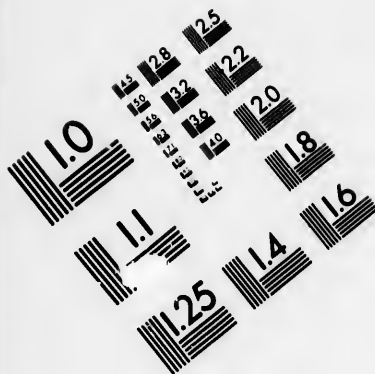




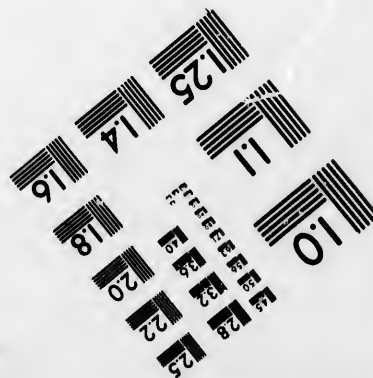
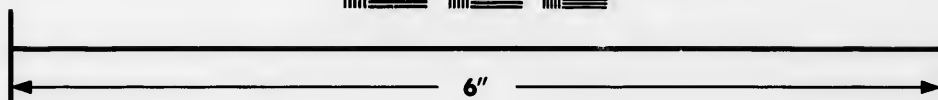
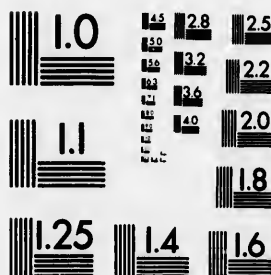
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