The children of Madagascar / by Herbert F. Standing.

THE CHILDREN OF MADAGASCAR

HOW CHILDREN ARE PUT TO SLEEP IN MADAGASCAR.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

[*See page* 53.

THE CHILDREN

OF

MADAGASCAR

BY

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WITH A MAP AND MANY ILLUSTRATIONS

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

56 PATERNOSTER ROW AND 164 PICCADILLY

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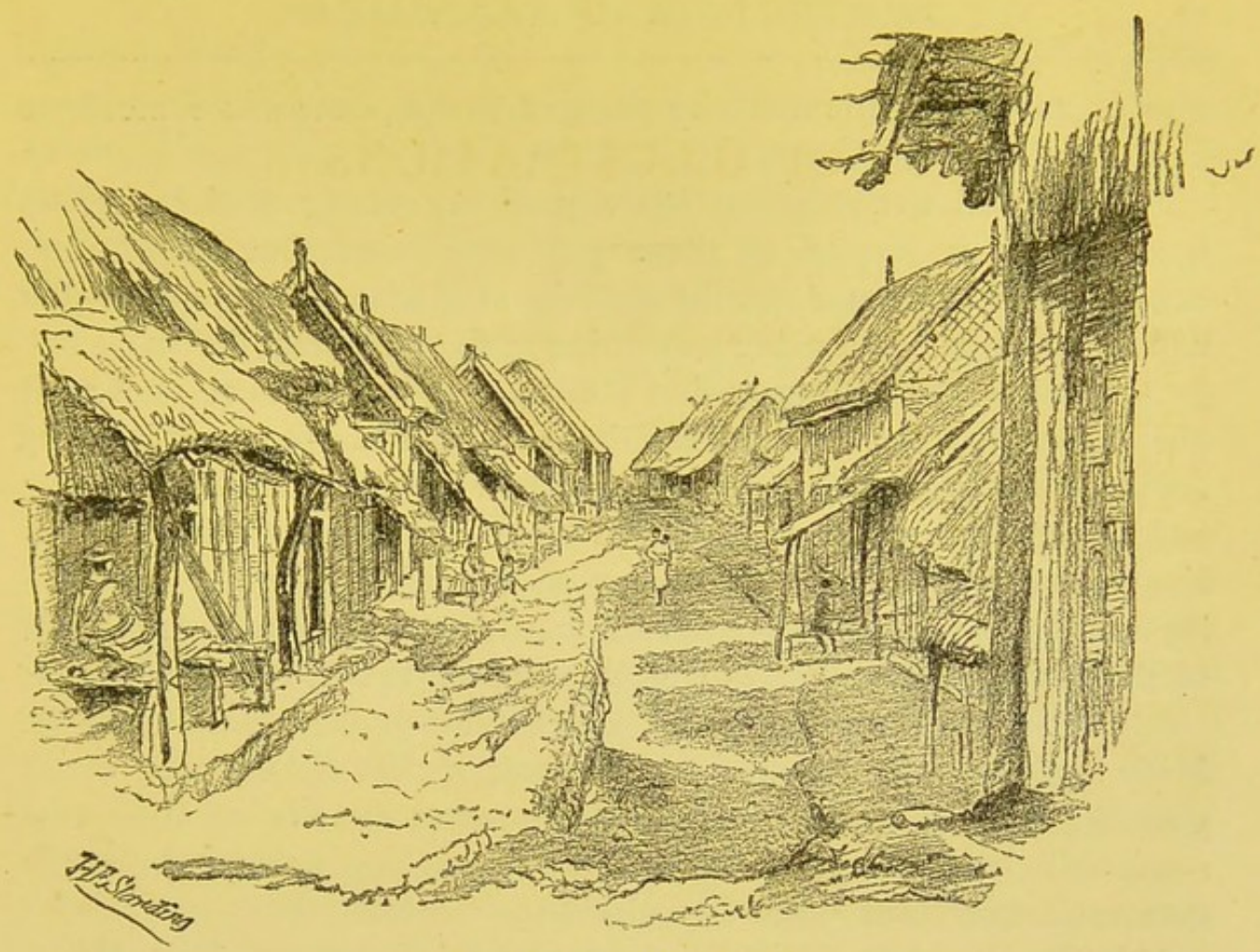


A STREET IN MADAGASCAR.
(*From a Pencil Sketch by H. F. Standing.*)

THE CHILDREN OF MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND THEY LIVE IN.

A MISSIONARY from Madagascar, who had come over to England for a year or two on furlough, was one day talking to some gentlemen in an omnibus about Madagascar. 'Madagascar,' said one of them; 'let me see, that is in the United States, is it not?' I have heard

also of another gentleman who thought Madagascar was somewhere in Russia!

Now I will not suppose that any of my young readers are as ignorant of geography as these gentlemen were, but still, before beginning to tell you about the children of Madagascar, I expect you will be interested in hearing something of the land they live in.

Of course you will know that Madagascar is an island—but as it always appears on the map by the side of the great continent of Africa, you may never have understood how large an island it really is; and it may surprise you to hear that you might lay down the whole of England and Wales four times over on its surface before you covered it; and if you were to start from Cape Amber, the northernmost point of the island, and walk south at the rate of twenty miles a day, it would take you just about seven weeks to reach the sea at Cape St. Mary in the extreme south; and for most of that distance you would pass through country where the people stand exactly on their own shadows twice every year, which is the same thing as saying that the greater part of Madagascar lies within the tropics.

Until quite recently very little was certainly known about Madagascar, though wonderful stories used to be told of the great wealth of the country, and of the strange plants, animals, and people to be found here. Now, however, many English, Norwegian, and French missionaries are at work teaching the people in various parts of the island, and travellers have crossed it in different directions, and written interesting accounts of the country they have passed through, and of the tribes they have met with by the way.

For though all the natives of Madagascar are called Malagasy, and speak varieties of the same language, they are by no means all united into one kingdom, but are split up into a great number of little tribes and principalities, very many of which are still sunk in heathen darkness and degradation, worshipping idols and trusting in charms and divination, and constantly fighting and quarrelling with each other.

But there is one tribe living in the hilly country in the middle of the island who, as you have probably heard, have burnt all their idols, and whose rulers have agreed to trust in the one true God and to accept the religion of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men. These are the Hovas; and it was among them that the early English missionaries, who first came to the country in the year 1818, laboured so devotedly, sowing the seeds of that religion which not all the bloody persecution of the heathen Queen Ràvavàlona I. could crush out or uproot, but which has ever spread and gained strength, till now the people professing the religion of Christ are to be counted by tens of thousands. More than 52,000 children were present last year at the examinations of the 935 schools under the care of the London Missionary Society and the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association alone.

A century ago these Hovas differed little from the other tribes surrounding them; they were scarcely more than barbarians, divided into a number of petty chieftaincies constantly at war with each other; and their sway extended no farther than their own little province of Imèrina. Now, however, all this is changed; for about the beginning of this century there arose a powerful king, with a long name—Andrìanampòinimèrina—who, after subduing the rival chieftains of Imèrina, began the conquest of the neighbouring tribes. His successors continued this work of subjugation, until now the young Queen Ràvavàlona III., who rules at Antanànarìvo, is considered sovereign of the whole island, though as yet many of the more distant tribes render her a very grudging and partial allegiance, and a few are still quite independent.

Hitherto comparatively few English missionaries have settled among the coast tribes, for as yet sufficient work has been found in teaching and enlightening the people of Imèrina: very many of whom are still really heathen at heart and only follow 'the praying' because it is fashionable and the Queen approves of it. So you will see that much of what I shall have to say about the children of

Madagascar will chiefly refer to the boys and girls of Imèrina ; among whom I have lived and worked since I came into the island.

The Malagasy seem to think that their island is the best country in the whole world ; indeed, many of them appear to imagine that there is no other land under the sun worth speaking of beside their 'fatherland,' as may be seen from some of the names they often use in speaking of it, which when translated mean, 'This all' or 'This whole.' And why should not a Malagasy be proud of his island home? He certainly has good reason to be. Let me ask you to accompany me on a journey from the coast to the capital, and after I have pointed out to you some of the lovely scenery by the way, I think you will agree with me that the natives are not far wrong in thinking they live in one of the finest countries in the world.

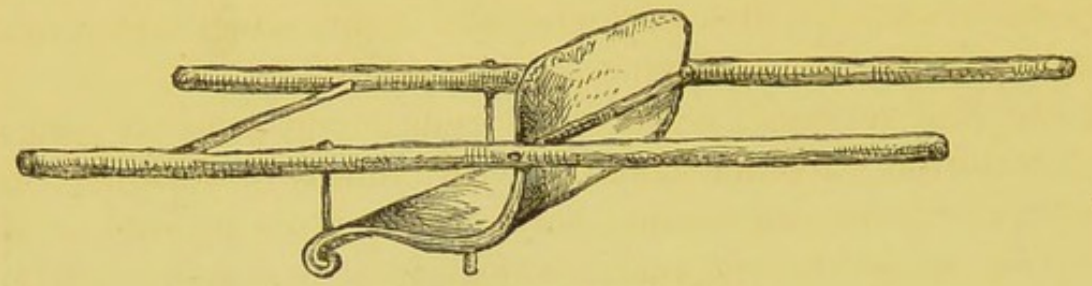
Well, here we are at Tamatave, the largest town on the east coast of Madagascar. The voyage out from England to this place used often in the old days of sailing-vessels to occupy three or four long months ; but now, by taking our passage in one of the large ocean steamers which leave London every month for the Cape, we may reach Tamatave in five or six weeks ; or by crossing France and taking steamer at Marseilles, we may perform the journey in less than one month. This town is the most European-looking in the whole island. A great proportion of the houses belong to English, French or Creole traders, for during the late war with France the native part of the town was entirely burnt down. Within the low curve of sand mounds on which the town stands, nestles the calm water of the harbour, where trading vessels from the neighbouring islands of Mauritius and Reunion as well as European men-of-war may often be seen riding at anchor ; and bounding it on the outer side runs a long, low line of coral reef, on which in rough weather the surging waters of the Indian Ocean lash themselves into white foam.

But we must engage our bearers for the journey up-country, for we are going to leave the region of steamships, locomotives, and wheeled conveyances far behind ; and for 150 or 200 miles our

TAMATAVE.

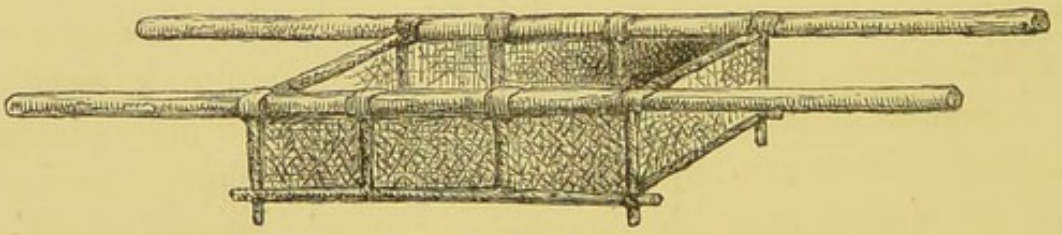
(*From a Sketch by Mr. Shaw.*)

palanquins, carried on the shoulders of strong *màromìta,* or bearers, will be the only carriage we can avail ourselves of.



A GENTLEMAN'S PALANQUIN.

These palanquins, or *filanjàna,* as the natives call them, are of two kinds. That used by gentlemen consists of two slender but tough wooden poles, nine or ten feet long and about fifteen inches apart, fastened together by a light iron frame-work, over which is stretched a comfortable seat of canvas or leather. The *filanjàna* used by ladies is of a very different construction, consisting of a sort of shallow



A LADY'S PALANQUIN.

oblong basket of strips of leather woven on a wooden frame, and fastened beneath two long poles made from the midrib of the immense leaves of the rofia-palm.

For short distances the palanquin is carried on the shoulders of four men, who step along with a quick easy gait, changing the poles over from one shoulder to the other every two or three minutes. On long journeys eight bearers are employed, who relieve each other in relays of four every few minutes. (*See* picture on page 132.)

You don't like the idea of being carried by men as though they

were beasts of burden! Well no, perhaps it is not very pleasant at first, but you will soon get used to it; and certainly the men do not object; they are very glad to be employed; and a merry, light-hearted set of fellows they are, who will stride along with you and laugh and joke for hours together.

For the first day or two our road runs along near the sea, now through beautiful park-like country, with clumps of traveller's trees, pandanus, casuarina, sago-palms, and many others, as well as occasional cocoa-nut palms, and plantations of oranges, lemons and limes, and with a soft green carpet of springy turf beneath our feet; now again along the sandy beach, where the blue waters of the ocean lie basking in the heat of the tropical sun, or come rolling in in long lines of white breakers, as the south-east trade wind urges them on to the shore. Here innumerable little crabs have their home, who, on being disturbed by the crunching noise of the men's feet in the wet sand, hurry into their houses with the greatest consternation.

Now again for several hours the track lies along the shores of the lagoons. These are long lakes of brackish water running parallel with the sea-coast; and we have our choice whether we will go by land, or in one of these immense canoes which lie waiting for us at the water's edge. The calm, smooth lake looks so invitingly cool with its fringe of pandanus, gigantic arums, and other tropical plants, and mirroring the blue of the sky and the forms of the fleecy clouds far down below its tranquil surface, that we decide at once to take the water route. Our men forthwith carry us, palanquins and all, into one of the biggest of the canoes, which are each hollowed out of a single giant tree, and having safely deposited us, each seizes a queer little spade-like paddle made out of a flat piece of wood, the canoe is pushed off, and away we glide over the bosom of the lake. The men soon strike up a weird native song or chant, to which the plash of the paddle-blades in the water, and the 'click click' of the handles as they strike against the sides of the canoe, keep perfect time. You would

laugh if you could understand what they were singing about. Very likely it is about you and the money you are going to give them to buy beef with on getting in this evening.

A little before nightfall we reach a native village, and our bearers, having set us down at the door of one of the best houses they can find in the place, hurry off to buy rice and cook their evening meal.

And while our cook is preparing our *sakàfo* (the word used for any meal in Malagasy), we will step out of doors in the cool evening air and stroll along to the end of the village. Here our ear is saluted with a chorus of deafening sounds in which we can distinguish the shrill treble of multitudes of cricket-like insects, and the bass accompaniment of hundreds of frogs who are croaking out their delight in the cool, damp vegetation of the neighbouring swamps; while to and fro among the thick bushwood around us flit myriads of tiny fairy lamps—the fireflies, or 'red-mouthed spirits,' as the natives call them; and far above our heads, in the deep clear blue of the tropical night, gleam those other glorious lamps—the stars, which shine out with a lustre unknown in our hazy English atmosphere.

After two days our route turns suddenly inland, and for many miles we pass over bare undulating hills covered with coarse grass. Often in the valleys grow clumps and groves of the graceful rofia-palm, from whose immense fern-like leaves a tough fibre is obtained. This the native women weave into a rough kind of cloth, of which many of the shirts worn by our bearers are made. Here too may be seen the beautiful traveller's tree, from which we may obtain a copious draught of cool, sweet water by piercing it with a spear or knife at the base of its fan-like leaves.

At length we reach the summit of a high hill, whence our men tell us we shall get the last glimpse of the sea, now lying a faint streak of blue far away on the horizon. This spot is called 'The weeping-place of the Hovas,' because in former days, when gangs of Hovas were frequently taken down to the coast and sold into captivity, it

was here that the poor creatures caught their first glimpse of the sea, and, feeling that they were leaving their highland home for ever behind, broke out into bitter lamentations.

But we must hurry on. Two days after leaving the coast we reach the broad belt of dense forest which runs round the greater part of

THE BROWN-MOUSE LEMUR.

the island. The country here is very hilly, and for mile after mile the road zigzags and winds about up and down the steep wooded hill-sides ; now through gorges worn in the soft rock by the summer rains, which during a storm turn the mountain path into a rushing torrent ; now running along the bed of a small stream at the bottom of some

dank valley; then up again and along the edge of a precipitous slope where at times our bearers can hardly find room to walk abreast, and where one stumble might send us rolling hundreds of feet below. Here fern-like palms and feathery bamboos interlace their delicate tracery overhead, and giant creepers hang like great ships' cables from tree to tree, while lovely orchids, ferns, and mosses cling to the rough bark, or hang out their tufts of fronds and leaves from the forks of the branches. Gorgeous butterflies flit leisurely to and fro, as if desirous of attracting our attention, and on the ground beneath our feet, and on almost every branch and twig we examine, myriads of ants are to be seen hurrying hither and thither in a most business-like manner. Sometimes as we pass along, the silence of the forest will be suddenly broken by the wailing cry of a lemur, a curious monkey-like animal with soft thick fur and a long bushy tail. If you keep a good look-out, especially in the early morning, you may often see these pretty creatures bounding and swinging from tree to tree, the mother lemur carrying her young one on her back, just in the fashion that the Malagasy mothers carry their little babies.

It takes from two to three days to cross the great forest; and two more days' travelling across the wide plain of Ankày and through another smaller belt of forest brings us to the village of Ankèramadìnika, which lies at the edge of the highland district of Imèrina. Now the country gradually changes in appearance; the green forest land gives place to bare rolling prairies of coarse brown grass, which gets drier and drier and more and more scanty as we approach Antanànarìvo. Now too we shall see no more houses of wattled bamboo, but nearly all are of mud or sun-dried bricks. All this red earth is very tiring to the eye; the houses are red, the high walls round the enclosures are red, the roads are red, and the bare hills are red! Where, however, the monotony of this ever-present red is relieved by contrast with the vivid green of the young rice-plants in the valleys, or broken by clumps and groves of mango, peach and Indian lilac-trees, or where its

brightness is toned down by distance to rich purple and madder tints, the effect is often very fine.

Two or three hours' journey after leaving the forest, a shout from our bearers announces the first glimpse of Antanànarìvo. It is still far away to the west of us, and we soon lose sight of it again as our road winds down along the edge of a broad fertile valley ; then, as we cross ridge after ridge of the high undulating land, we get nearer and still nearer views of the capital, until we reach the brow of the last hill overlooking the town ; and here let us stand a minute or two, while I point out to you some of the chief buildings and places of interest. That tall erection of white granite standing on the very summit of the hill, with its four square towers and treble tier of arches one above another, and to which the Malagasy look with such pride from all the country round, is the chief royal palace. A curious thing about this palace is that the stonework we see is only a shell, for the original wooden building is still standing inside this stone casing, so the present royal palace is really a wooden house within a massive stone one. That large building with the glass dome, lying to the north of the palace, is the Prime Minister's house ; you must not, however, imagine that His Excellency dwells there ; for being the Queen's husband he lives with her in one of the small palaces which you may see surrounding the great stone building before mentioned.

At each end of the long hill on which the city is built you see a very English-looking church ; these are two of the 'Memorial Churches,' built on the sites of old execution grounds, and it was exactly where they now stand that at the time of the terrible persecution in the reign of Ràvavàlona I. the Christian martyrs were speared and burnt, because they would not renounce their faith in Christ and worship the national idols. The one at Fàravòhitra, the north end of the town, was built entirely from money collected by English children, and the cost of the big bell in the steeple which calls the congregation together on Sundays, and the school children on week-days, was raised

by allowing English boys and girls to pay sixpence each to ring it before it was shipped for Madagascar.

Here at Fàravòhitra live many of the English missionaries, whose houses you may see nestling among the lilacs and gum-trees along the ridge of the hill, or on the slopes to the north and east. That large ornamental red-brick building, exactly opposite where we stand, is the London Missionary Society's College for training evangelists and preachers, and immediately below it, to the right, is the Normal School, where teachers are educated and sent out to all parts of Imèrina. Further south still lie other schools—the large Boys' School of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, and the High School of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

But let us cross over the rice-fields and go up into the town. 'But where is the road?' you ask. There is no road; we must cross the muddy rice-field on these little banks of earth which form the boundaries between the rice-plots, and which are so narrow that there is barely room for our carriers to plant their feet without slipping off into the mud.

After crossing the rice-fields, we turn up a narrow passage between dilapidated mud walls, and again you will ask 'Is this the road?' Yes; this narrow path, which serves the double purpose of road and watercourse, being all worn into holes and gullies by the summer torrents, is the main entrance from the east into the northern suburb of the capital. And you will find that, with the exception of one or two tolerably broad highways by which the Queen travels when entering and leaving the town, almost all the roads throughout the city are nothing but rough footpaths. Over many of these it is quite impossible to take even a horse or mule, and in the rainy season they are rendered extremely dangerous by the falling walls and embankments, which, loosened by the soaking rains, come down and lie across the path in all directions.

And now let us take a stroll along one of the main thoroughfares of the town (or rather, a palanquin-ride, for one does not stroll much over

these roads), and as we go along I will tell you about some of the sights we see and the people we meet. One thing which you are pretty sure to notice as you pass along is the almost total absence of shops, for with the exception of a very few kept by Europeans and Creoles in certain parts of the town, shops such as we understand by that word are almost unknown. Their place is supplied, however, by these curious little stalls which you may see perched about in various places by the road side, or arranged in long rows and irregular groups in the markets and chief places of resort. These stalls are nothing more than a rough framework of bamboo or light wood, roughly thatched with reeds or covered with rofia-cloth as a protection from the sun and rain ; very many of them are even less pretentious than this, consisting merely of an immense rofia-cloth umbrella stuck into the ground. They are generally too small to stand up in, and the occupant, in his broad-brimmed straw hat and white lamba, patiently squats on the floor all day long with his little stock of wares spread out around him—meat cut up into little pieces on a dirty board, little squares of black strong-smelling native soap, baskets of shrimps, dried locusts, salt, earthnuts, fruits of various kinds, &c.

Playing around these little stalls you may generally see a group of dirty slave children, the smaller ones toddling about quite naked, and the older ones with nothing but a small strip of dirty cotton cloth about their loins. Often while the stall-keeper is busy haggling with some customer over a tiny piece of cut-money, one of these little slave lads will steal up quietly to the side of the stall, and when he thinks he is unobserved will snatch away one of the little scraps of meat from the man's board. Sometimes, if he and his companions can succeed in getting several pieces in this way, they will take them off to another stall and exchange them for a piece of sugar-cane or some fruit, and will then have the impudence to come back and stand munching what they have thus obtained before the eyes of the man whom they have robbed.

As you pass along the streets of Antanànarivo, you will be sure to

notice the very irregular way in which the houses are built. You do not find rows of buildings along the sides of the streets, as in England and other countries, but every house appears to have been placed by its owner just as seemed right in his own eyes, or according as the shape and slope of the piece of land at his disposal allowed; so here you will find the wall of one house coming close up to the road; here a high embankment with a house perched on the top several yards back from the road; while here again the earth has been cut away by the road-side and the houses built many feet below, so as you pass along you might easily jump on to the thatched roofs. Twenty years ago all houses within the old city gates were built of wood and thatched with grass or reeds; now, very few of the old wooden houses remain, nearly all being made of sun-dried or burnt brick or mud, and many too are roofed with tiles.

But now we will turn our attention to some of the busy foot-passengers, who are meeting us every moment as we are carried along the narrow lane. Here is a well-to-do Hova gentleman, with light olive-brown complexion, black straight hair, and well-cut features. He wears a finely woven broad-brimmed grass hat; a clean white or print lamba, gracefully thrown over his shoulders, and underneath a white shirt and trousers—the shirt, however, often outside the trousers. Behind him runs a little slave, who carries his umbrella, and, if the road be muddy, his boots and stockings or any small article his master may wish to take about with him. Here again is a merry group of slave girls, who have been down to the springs at the foot of the hill to draw water. Their gait is very steady and their figures are erect and graceful, and it is surprising to see the wonderful way in which they balance the large *sìny*, or water-pots, on their heads.

Now we hear a strange clanking and sounds of rough voices approaching us. As we turn a corner in the road we soon see what it means: it is a gang of *gàdra-làva*, or chained criminals, who are staggering along under the weight of great stones slung from strong poles. These stones are probably being taken to build some great

man's house up in the town. But it is not only criminals who have heavy work of this sort to do, for here we see strings of women, with great piles of bricks and tiles on their heads, toiling up the steep road in the glaring heat, the perspiration streaming down their faces. These poor women are slaves, and for all this hard work they will of course get no pay.

But who is this riding towards us at such a rate with his three or four relays of bearers, and followed by a company of slaves and attendants? It is one of the government officials of high rank who is probably going off into the country on some important business, or perhaps taking a run out to his country residence in the suburbs. All these followers running behind him are a sign of his high rank, and the more wealthy he is, the greater their number. When the Queen leaves the capital for a few weeks, hundreds and even thousands of the people leave their homes, and follow her about wherever she goes.

A MALAGASY CRIMINAL IN CHAINS.

Now we meet a number of men with spears carrying some baggage on a pole, and our bearers step on one side and take off their hats while they pass. You wonder at first why such a mark of respect should be

shown to them, for they seem but little more than ordinary porters. You see, however, that wherever they go, the people all hurry out of their way as quickly as possible. On asking the meaning of this, you are informed that these are the Queen's baggage carriers, and, whatever they are carrying, water or rice, or goods of any description, free course must be given them ; and if any one presumes to get in their way, he is in imminent danger of being speared. A missionary once was riding on horseback in a narrow lane, and his horseboy running in front of him, when some of the Queen's baggage carriers suddenly came in sight, approaching in the opposite direction. There was no room for the poor lad to stand aside, and to run back would have brought him face to face with the advancing horse. Before he had time to consider, or the missionary to interfere on his behalf, the men were upon him, and wounded him with their long spears. The missionary, however, wrote to the Prime Minister about him, and a present of money was sent down to him as compensation.

Passing on, we soon see a very different sight ; the road is filled with a throng of noisy children just let loose from school. They are shouting, laughing, and playing, and looking as happy as any English school children. But we will let them pass for the present, hoping to learn more about them and their surroundings in the succeeding chapters.

BABY'S FIRST OUTING.

(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

See page 31.

CHAPTER II.

BABYHOOD.

'HAIL! God has blessed you! God has given you a successor, so we are come to bring you a little money to buy shrimps for the baby's mother.' This is the salutation with which the friends and neighbours greet the father and mother of a new-born baby in Madagascar. The baby's friends reply: 'May you live long, may you long be protected from witchcraft, may you too have babies born to you! and as for the money you have brought, what is that to us? It is your coming to visit us that makes us glad; but since it is customary, we thank you; may God bless you!' None of these visitors who come crowding into the house when a baby is born ask to look at the little new-comer; that would be considered quite improper; but after asking whether it is a boy or a girl they sit and chat for awhile, and then take their leave, the women often carrying off a quantity of dried beef in their lamba, a present from the baby's father.

While the baby is still little, the bed on which his mother lies is hung with large rush mats above and round about, as a protection from draughts, and sometimes even a fire is kindled under the bedstead itself, so that the poor mother is nearly suffocated with the smoke. Usually, however, a fire is kept lighted very near the bed, and from this fact the mother is called the *mpifàna, i.e.* 'the one who is being warmed;' and the little presents of money brought by friends are often said to be 'to buy firewood for the one who is being

warmed.' It used to be a common practice to place some prickly plant at the foot of the bed and along the eastern side, to keep away evil spirits.

On the day of the baby's birth, if it be a boy, the father will sometimes take a hatchet and go out of doors and begin felling a tree or chopping wood in the enclosure round the house, and when those within hear the noise of the axe they call out: 'Who is that?' Then he from without answers: 'It is I, Raìnikòto,'—Raìnikòto being one of the commonest men's names, and meaning 'the father of a little boy.'

When the baby is about a week old its parents send for a diviner, who, on being told the day of its birth, makes an elaborate calculation, depending upon the time of the year and the age of the moon, and then tells the expectant parents what the child's *vìntana*, or fate, will be. Since Christianity has made such progress in Imèrina, the business of these diviners has greatly fallen off, indeed, many of them have given it up altogether; but even in the capital and among people who ought to know better, we still hear of those who go to consult the diviners; and probably in out-of-the-way country places, where the light of Christianity has as yet scarcely penetrated, nearly all the old heathen practices are still followed.

The diviner, after predicting the future of the child, advises the parents as to what they should do to make the fates more propitious. They are to buy a hen, varying in age and colour according to the month, and this they are to hold by the legs and shake about over the baby's head, and while it cackles and flaps its wings, all in the house are to exclaim, 'May this remove all ill-luck and cause of disease!' After this the hen is either killed and eaten, or kept alive and considered the special property of the baby.

If nothing worse than this came from a belief in the diviner's power, we might be inclined to think that no great harm was done; but when nations forget to love and fear the one true God and sink into the darkness of heathenism, Satan always leads them into cruel

and inhuman practices, for 'the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.' And here in Madagascar thousands of little innocent babies have been put to death by their own parents, because they happened to be born on a so-called unlucky day. These specially unlucky days occur at the beginning of the Malagasy month called Alakàosy, and it was formerly believed that all children born at this time were likely when they grew up to bring evil upon their fathers and mothers, or, in the case of slaves, upon their masters: so it was thought that the surest way of averting the evil was to put the baby out of the way by taking its life. This was often done by pouring warm water into a *sahàfa*, or large round wooden tray used for winnowing rice, and then turning the little one face downwards into the water and leaving it there until it was drowned.

Sometimes, however, the child was not put to death at once, but placed out at the village gate, or at the entrance of an ox-pit in the yard outside the house, just at the time when the cattle were being driven home for the night. If the oxen all passed by without touching it, the evil fates which had hung over the child's life were supposed to be removed, and it was taken home again with great rejoicing; but if the huge animals happened to tread on the soft little naked thing lying in their path, it was of course crushed to death at once, and its mother took up its poor little bruised body, wrapped it in a piece of dark-blue or unbleached calico, placed it in a large earthen pot and buried it.

A very interesting story was told me by one of my scholars how on one occasion a little child belonging to a slave woman of theirs was placed at the gate of an ox-pit, when seven oxen were being driven home in the evening. The first, on coming to the place where the baby lay, put its nose down and smelt it, or as the Malagasy say 'kissed' it, for their kissing consists in nose-rubbing, then at one bound jumped right over it and down into the pit below. The second came and smelt it and leapt over it in the same way; the third came and did just the same, and the fourth, and so

on until the seventh, and it too jumped right over the little one without harming it in the least. How the poor mother's heart must have beat with hope and fear as she saw one after another of the huge beasts come up and thus take compassion on her little child! It is said that the present Prime Minister of Madagascar was put out in this way to be trodden by the cattle, but he likewise escaped, and has lived to rise to great power and has been the husband of three Queens of Madagascar.

But do you think it was because the Malagasy mothers did not love their babies that they treated them so cruelly? No indeed, for mother-love is the same all the world over, and these poor women loved their children as dearly perhaps as your mothers love you; but they feared to break through the cruel custom, and they were afraid too lest what the wise diviner said should come true.

There were, indeed, those who could not find it in their hearts to kill their children in this way, and these used to take them out on some well-frequented road and leave them there by the wayside. Often some kind-hearted person coming by, perhaps a woman who had no children of her own, would have pity on the little outcast and take it home and bring it up as her own. If, however, no one happened to pass that way, or if no one was willing to adopt the child, it was simply left to die of cold and hunger, and its little body was eaten by the crows and wild dogs.

Others, again, used to hide their children away, and as they grew up send them off to live in some other house away from their parents and friends, thus averting, as they thought, the evil influence that the child would have had upon them.

Sometimes, again, the father and the mother of a child born on this unlucky day, or his owner, if he happened to be a little slave, would employ a man to make an incantation which was supposed to be effectual in changing its evil destiny. This man would get a banana, and having cut it up into small pieces, would fling it away from him, repeating a form of words something like the following, 'Begone, ill-

omened month with your bad luck, bringing evil to father, brother, mother and relatives. May the rushing waters carry you off in the morning! may the wind blow you away! May the evil go, but the good remain; may no ill-luck befall the child's father, mother, elder brother, or relatives!' Then, after spitting (which the Malagasy often do when they come across anything with a very bad smell), he finished up by going out of doors and washing his hands.

Besides this day at the beginning of the month of Alakàosy, certain other birthdays were also considered unlucky, though not sufficiently so as to make it necessary to put the baby to death. Sometimes when it was believed that the child's destiny would lead it when grown up to bring evil upon its father, he would disown it entirely, and send it away to some one else, calling its name *Razànak'òlona*, which means 'somebody else's child.' And if, on the other hand, its fate was adverse to its mother, another woman was often hired to nurse it.

Twins too were also considered unlucky, and one would often be sent off in the same way to be brought up by some one else, or even put to death as soon as born.

It is customary on the birth of a first child for the friends and relatives of the family to make presents of considerable value to the baby. In the case of well-to-do people, money, oxen, and even slaves, are given. And if the baby's grandparents be still living, they will often adopt it as their own.

The first important event in the child's life occurs when it is about a week old. This is the ceremony of taking it out of doors for the first time. Nothing is allowed to be removed from the house until this event takes place; even if there should be something there which is very specially wanted elsewhere, it may not be carried away unless in exchange for something else; and the person taking it then says, 'There is no lock which cannot be forced, and it is because we are in great need that we make this exchange with your baby-boy.'

When a propitious day has arrived, a person is chosen to carry the

baby; she must be one whose father and mother are still living, and is generally a young woman who has no children of her own. If the family be well-to-do, she is dressed up in a robe of black Malagasy silk and a coloured silk lamba, and a long bone stiletto, such as the Malagasy women use for parting their hair, is stuck into the hair on the top of her head.

Beneath the raised beam at the threshold a small fire of dried grass is kindled, over which the woman carrying the child must jump on her way out. If the baby be a boy, some or all of the following articles are carried after him :—a gun, spear, bill-hook, hatchet, chisel, spade, knife, sword, and a rope. These are typical of warlike prowess and manly employments. The rope is taken because the Malagasy name for that article has the double meaning of 'able to bear' and 'able to rule,' and is intended to express the wish that he may be able to rule well his own household. If the baby be a girl, the following articles are carried after her :—a box, basket, silk cocoons, cotton, needle, and all the instruments used by the native women for spinning and weaving. If the child's parents be wealthy, he is followed by a great number of slaves, while some one walks in front carrying dollars, which he chinks and rattles before the child as he goes along.

In a Malagasy village there is often a large open space or court-yard where the inhabitants assemble on public occasions. On reaching this courtyard a little earth is rubbed on the child's head, and all present express the wish that he may be preserved from illness or harm when he shall hereafter travel in strange parts of the country.

Often the child, instead of being carried to the great courtyard of the village, is taken to one of the large ox-pits, 'to look at the cattle,' though the youngster, being only a week old, can hardly be supposed to understand much of what he sees. On arriving here his father addresses him as follows :—'May you have many oxen, may you have much money, may you have many children and successors!

BABY'S FIRST HAIR-CUTTING.

(From a Native Pencil Sketch.)

May you be blessed by God, God the Creator!' In the case of a daughter, he says :—'May you have many oxen, much money, many slaves; may you reach old age, may you live long, have many successors and children, and be blessed by God, God the Creator!'

Another amusing practice in connection with a young child is that the first who makes it laugh,—not merely smile, but laugh right out, and give three good chuckles,—is expected to make it a present. This is generally a fowl (which in Madagascar is worth about threepence). If the person whom the baby thus honours happens to be wealthy, she will sometimes make it quite a costly present of money, cattle, or even a slave.

Another great event in baby's life is his first hair-cutting. This generally takes place when he is about three months old. If from any cause, however, the ceremony is then omitted, it is left till he is five or seven months old, that is to say, the hair-cutting must take place at one of the odd months dating from his birth.

This first hair-cutting is made a great time of rejoicing; notice is given beforehand to the relatives and friends of the family; and at the time appointed, generally about eight or nine in the morning, all the invited guests assemble at the house. The parents have meanwhile been making active preparations. If they are sufficiently well-to-do, one or two or more oxen have been killed, and part of the meat put on the fire to cook, and part cut up ready to be given away to each guest on leaving. If, however, the parents are poor, they buy at the market a smaller quantity of meat, including an ox's hump, and also fruit and sugar-cane or honey, to be given away to the guests.

In addition to the meat, a quantity of rice, yams, and herbs are also cooked, and milk and honey are likewise provided. When all these preparations are complete, seven or fourteen little mounds of rice (irrespective of the number of guests) are arranged on a large flat wooden winnowing tray, a piece of half-cooked ox-hump, together with yams, herbs, honey, milk, and cow-dung being piled up on each mound of rice. Then two pairs of scissors are brought, and the

person who is going to act as barber (who, by-the-way, must be some one whose father and mother are still living) takes one of the pairs of scissors in his left hand, and with it first cuts off a little hair from the left side of the heads of the father and mother of the baby. Then a little is also cut from the left side of the baby's head, and a small strip is torn off from the left side of a banana leaf which has been provided for the purpose; this having been twisted up into a spoon, is taken in the left hand and filled with honey, to which is added the hair just cut off. The scissors are then put on the top of the spoon, and the whole carried off to the doorway, and placed underneath the threshold, the barber exclaiming, 'This removes all ill-luck and all that would cause illness to the child.' The ill-luck being thus disposed of, the same person then takes the other pair of scissors in his right hand, and again cuts off a little of the parents' hair, but this time from the right side of the head; then taking the right side of the banana leaf he makes a spoon of it as before, which he again fills with honey and hair. This too he takes to the doorstep, now exclaiming, 'May good luck to the child come with this!' After this a man, whose father and mother are still living, takes a little honey in his mouth (to sweeten his words, I suppose), and invokes a blessing on the child nearly as follows:—'May this child, whose hair we are cutting, not be foolish, not be obstinate and ill-tempered, not leave his father and mother, not forsake his relatives, but may he be blessed by God!' Then all present cry out, 'May God bless him, God the Creator!'

After this, the hair on the top of the child's head is cut off and divided into fourteen portions, and these, with a little of the mother's hair, are added to the heaps of rice before mentioned. Meanwhile all the girls and young women present have arranged themselves on the floor round the tray, and are looking on in eager expectancy. Then, after the child has been given a little food three times over, the tray is lifted up as a signal, and a regular scramble ensues, each of the fair young ladies sitting round trying to get as much as possible of the

inviting mixture, hair and all ; their idea being that the more they get, the more likely they are to have little babies of their own. Then all present join in a scramble for sugar-cane or fruit, and after this the rest of the baby's hair is cut, and a good meal finishes up the proceedings.

There are other curious superstitions connected with this first hair-cutting. Thus, it is thought undesirable that a person with short frizzy hair should be present on the occasion, for fear the child's hair should likewise grow short and frizzy. Again, if the baby's elder brother has died, the festival is omitted altogether ; frequently in this case the grandfather of the child, or some other old relative of the family, will get the baby on the sly and cut all its hair off unknown to its mother ; the reason being that it is feared the baby will die like its brother if any fuss is made of it, so it must be *angalàrin-kèty*, as they say—that is, 'stolen by the scissors.'

The first hair-cutting is sometimes made the occasion for giving the child a name, and I expect you will be interested in hearing what kind of names Malagasy parents give to their children. In the first place, I must tell you that among the Malagasy there are no family or surnames, such as are common in England and other countries. As a matter of course, a child in England will take the name of its parents, but in Madagascar the practice is often reversed, for a father will very frequently take the name of one of his children, with the prefix *Raini* (which means 'father of') attached to it. Thus, if the first-born child is called Koto, the father might take the name Rainkoto (meaning the 'father of Koto').

You can easily imagine that this want of family names in Madagascar is often a great inconvenience, for, since there is necessarily a limited supply to choose from, a very great number of people come to have exactly the same name, so that in one class of fifteen or twenty boys or girls in our schools, it often happens that there will be two or three children of exactly the same name ; and we have to adopt the plan of calling them first, second, third, &c., just as we

distinguish kings and queens of the same name. You may imagine the confusion which would arise if every one in England was known by his first name only—the hopeless number of Johns and Marys there would be! But this is really very much the state of things in Madagascar.

But I think I hear some of you asking, 'But what sort of names do the Malagasy have? and what do these names mean when put into English?' Very often there is no regular 'giving of a name' on the birth of a child, as there is with us; but for the first few months, or even years, of its life it has no other name than *Kòto* or *Bòto*, which merely mean 'a little boy,' or *Kètaka* or *Kàla*, 'a little girl.'

Often some distinguishing epithet is added, generally a word describing the appearance of the baby. Thus, if a little boy has a red skin, they will call him *Kòtomèna*, 'the red little boy,' *mèna* being the Malagasy word for red; similarly a light-complexioned little girl will be called *Kètamàvo* or *Kàlafòtsy*, *màvo* being the word for a light olive-brown colour, and *fòtsy* for white. Often these names are retained all through life, the syllable *Ra* (for which the English Mr., Mrs., or Miss is the nearest equivalent) being prefixed. Thus you will meet quite old men bearing the name Rakòto (which, as I have said, originally meant a little boy); but use makes it familiar, and one does not think of the absurdity of the real meaning.

Very many other names refer to some peculiarity of appearance. Here are a few, with their meanings:—

Ralèsoka = Miss Flat-face.
Rabàry = Master Big-eyes.
Rapàtsa = Miss Shrimp (because so small).
Ikèlilòha = Little head.
Ibìtika = Little tiny.
Ramàivana = Master Light-weight.
Rapìtaka = Miss Snub-nose.
Rabàko = Master Well-shaped.
Ifisaka = Little flat-one.
Rabè = Master Fat-boy.
Isìlaka = Little chip.

Sometimes, again, children are named after the day of the week or the month in which they are born: thus, Iàsabòtsy = Master Saturday, Ilàizomà = Young Friday, are quite common names.

When children have a serious illness and recover, they are often called by names meaning 'Miss Healthy,' 'Miss Well,' 'Master Not-sick,' 'Master Living.' A curious practice is followed by some of not giving a name at all, or at any rate of not mentioning the name while the child is still young, 'for fear of causing illness'! So, too, a child whose elder brother had died used often to be called by some very ugly or revolting name, such as Dunghill, Rat, Dog, &c., and if any one remonstrated with the father for giving such disgusting names, he would answer, 'Let be, can't you? for when he grows up, it will be time enough to think about it; but who would call a little dog like this by a fine name? Why, you'd have the ghosts carry him off at once.'

Many mothers give names suggested by some chance circumstance occurring at or in connection with the baby's birth. Thus a child born at the annual New Year's festival of the *Fandròana* will be called Rasèndranòro, 'Miss Happening-upon-rejoicing.' So too the child of a native doctor well known to the missionaries here, which was born while its father was away on service during the recent war with France, received a name meaning 'Master Campaign.' Here are a few other similar names, with a brief explanation of their meanings:—

Vèlonanòsy	=	Born on an island.
Vèlonantoàndro	=	Born in broad daylight.
Iampòmbo	=	Born among the rice chaff.
Ilàlana	=	Born on the road.
Bèlòhatàona	=	Born in the spring-time.
Bèvalàla	=	Born during a flight of locusts.
Màrozòky	=	Having many elder brothers.
Ièfatra	=	The fourth son or daughter (quartus).
Iènina	=	The sixth (sextus).

Sometimes the relatives seem quite at a loss for a new name, and so apparently call the child anything that happens to come into their heads or to take their fancy ; thus we meet occasionally with such names as *Rubbish, Snail, Pumpkin, Sweet Potato, Goldfish, Drygrass, Cannon.* Other names, again, were evidently given at first as nick-names, but have 'stuck,' as the Malagasy say ; and their owner now is generally known by no other ; thus a palanquin-bearer, who was staying with our family during a holiday spent at the edge of the forest, was called by his companions 'Mr. Standfire ;' and on asking the reason for this, we found that it was because he was able to swallow his rice while it was still almost boiling hot.

Since the introduction of Christianity a considerable number of Bible names have been adopted by the Malagasy, and have now become quite naturalised. Thus Rajàona (John), Rajèmisa (James), Rasamoèly or Rasamoèlina (Samuel), are now among the commonest Hova names.

But the Malagasy seem rather fastidious as to their choice of Scripture names ; some which we might expect them to appropriate do not seem to take their fancy at all, while, on the other hand, you meet with such names as Raboanàrijèsy (Boanerges), Rajafètra (Japhet), Ranòa (Noah), Rasamisòna (Samson), &c. One of the most curious boys' names I have heard of is Ramosèjaofèra, a combination of *Ra,* native prefix, *mosè,* contracted from the French 'monsieur,' and *jaofèra,* a native name.

A considerable number of English and French names too are occasionally met with. Several of these are names of missionaries ; but the rules of Malagasy spelling require such changes that I expect you would hardly recognise them if you saw them written. Here is a list of a few :—

Rasàridisàonina	=	Mr. Richardson.
Raoilisàonina	=	Mr. Wilson.
Rajàonisàonina	=	Mr. Johnson.

Raobinisàonina	=	Mr. Robinson.
Ràliforèdy	=	Mr. Alfred.
Ramilinèra	=	Mr. Milner.
Rakàmaràonina	=	Mr. Cameron.
Ravikitoàra	=	Victoria.
Radèzy	=	Miss Daisy.

I have also had boys in my school bearing the distinguished names of Milton, Nelson, and Roman. On one occasion in a country place a missionary was about to baptize a native child, and, on asking its name, he was somewhat taken aback to hear that its parents wished the child to be called after him !

CHAPTER III.

FOOD, CLOTHING, AND ORNAMENTS.

BREAD and butter, puddings and pies, cakes and preserves, are things undreamt of by most Malagasy children; and I have no doubt my young readers would think it very hard to have to eat, even for a single week, the food upon which thousands of their little brothers and sisters in Madagascar live and thrive from one year's end to another. Boiled rice for breakfast, boiled rice for supper (most people have only two meals a day in Madagascar), boiled rice every day from Sunday morning till Saturday night, and the same week after week, month after month, year after year—this is the Malagasy's chief food from babyhood till old age. Among at least one tribe it is customary to begin the baby's education in rice-eating on the day of its birth, and before it is an hour old boiled rice is pushed into its tiny mouth. Here in Imèrina, however, a somewhat more reasonable treatment is adopted, for the little creature is fed entirely on milk for a month or two after its birth, and then the mother begins to teach it to eat the national food; this she does by pushing single grains of rice between its lips. Now, of course, you think that she would be careful that the rice was soft and well boiled; but no, she says that would make its little body soft and weak; the rice must be *mahèry* (hard), in order that the child may grow up hardy and strong! One would suppose that the same process of reasoning would lead everybody who wished to be strong and well to

eat his rice hard in the same way ; but this is by no means the case, for no one knows better than a Malagasy woman how to boil rice to perfection—just how much water to put into the earthen cooking-pot, and exactly how long to boil it, so that it shall be neither too hard on the one hand, nor too soft and pulpy on the other ; certainly with all the practice they have they ought to be clever at cooking rice.

Another curious practice followed by some mothers is that of giving a young child ox-hump to eat. Ox-hump consists of a tough kind of fat, and the reason why some give it to little children is, they say, 'to make their chests moist ;' if it has any such beneficial effect, one would think it would be at the expense of putting their little stomachs out of order.

In the Bètsilèo province it is customary when a mother is going to feed her baby to make it cry first ; I suppose to 'get up' its appetite. This plan, however, is not followed until the baby is five or six months old.

Now, perhaps, you know that rice, although very wholesome, is not one of the most nourishing kinds of food ; to live entirely, or even chiefly on rice, it is necessary to eat large quantities of it, and I am sure you would open your eyes in astonishment to see the amount of rice a Malagasy will put out of sight at each meal. One result of this is that the little children become rather an ugly shape, their little stomachs projecting in anything but a graceful manner. Sometimes a mother, in order to put some check on her child's appetite, will before a meal tie a piece of string loosely round its waist, and when this string gets tight the child is *vòky*, a very expressive, though somewhat inelegant word, which we can best translate by 'full.'

Since rice forms such an important article of diet in Malagasy homes, you will be interested in hearing a little about its cultivation. There are several kinds of rice grown in Madagascar ; those most largely cultivated are planted on level land, generally on great plains, which were formerly swamps, or on narrow terraces, rising tier above tier in the little sloping hollows along the sides of the hills. The

kinds of rice grown in Imèrina will not live except in water or on very damp ground, and so you will sometimes see the water from some spring among the mountains carried along for miles and miles in little channels ingeniously cut along the slopes of the hills, and winding in and out with every turn and bend in the hill-side. When the season for sowing the rice arrives, a small piece of level ground supplied with running water is selected, and this having been dug and worked up into a thin mud, is well manured, generally with the ashes of the dried grass used by the common people as fuel. The rice grains are then thrown broadcast, evenly and thickly over the muddy water. This operation reminds one forcibly of the text, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters.' The rice grains, settling down into the rich mud, quickly sprout and take root, and in a few days send up a forest of bright-green little blades. You can hardly picture the beautiful vivid emerald green of these young rice-plants, its contrast with the bare brown hills around is most refreshing and restful to the eye.

The ground for planting out the young rice is meanwhile being prepared. During the long dry months of winter and spring it has caked and cracked and dried up, and looks so hard that you would almost imagine that nothing would ever grow in it again; but the sharp narrow-bladed spades, with handles like broom-sticks, soon break it up into large rough clods. If the owner is a poor man, he will dig up his own rice-field; but usually it is the work of slaves. This digging is very hard work, and is generally done by men, though often boys of twelve years and upwards will take their turn at it. Two men generally work side by side, digging round each clod and turning it over together. A very expressive native proverb describes a lazy man as 'seeking for soft ground to stick his spade into,' and another says: 'That lazy fellow is going to borrow a spade, but saying all the time, "May I not find one!"'

Often this rough digging over of the rice-grounds is done many weeks before the rice is planted out, and the great clods are sometimes piled up in loose heaps and ridges, in order to be thoroughly exposed

to the air. When the right season arrives, the rice-fields are flooded by opening sluices at various points along the river banks. The hard clods very soon give way and become loosened as the water soaks through them; then the next operation begins. This consists in going over the whole surface of the field, and breaking and crumbling up the clods and reducing them to a thick mud. Often in country places oxen are employed for this work. These are simply turned loose into the field and driven about by men or boys, hither and thither, backwards and forwards, and round and round, until all the clods have disappeared. This is very hard work for the poor animals; but their drivers seem to enjoy it, as, bespattered with mud from head to foot, and with no clothes but a small cloth round the loins, they hoot and yell, and make the hillsides echo with their shouts.

The ground is now ready for planting out the young rice. These little rice-plants, now about a foot in length, are pulled up by handfuls from the ground where they have been growing, the earth is all shaken away from the roots, and they are then bound up in bundles and carried off to the fields where they are to be planted. When I speak of fields, you must not picture such fields as we see in England with high hedgerows surrounding them, for the only division between the little rice-plots is a small bank, or raised mound of earth, generally only about two feet high and a foot wide.

It is a very interesting sight to see a company of women and girls at work planting out the rice. Standing almost knee-deep in the muddy water, they hold a bundle of rice plants in their left hand, and bending nearly double, rapidly take them one by one and push their roots down into the deep mud; a quick worker in this way will plant over a hundred and fifty a minute. (*See* picture on page 163.)

His rice being thus planted out, the husbandman has little else to do but wait for its growth and ripening; for beyond an occasional clearing out of grass and weeds he takes no more trouble about it, but leaves the summer rains and sunshine to do their work. Sometimes in seasons of heavy rain the swollen rivers burst their banks, and acres

upon acres of rice are spoilt. At other times, again, storms of hail will make fearful havoc among the ripening grain.

When ripe, the rice is of a mellow reddish tinge; it is then reaped with long straight knives, and carried up in large bundles or sheaves to the threshing-floor. This is often situated just outside the village, and consists of a broad level space of beaten earth, in the centre of which is a large smooth stone. It is on this stone that the threshing is done. This is a very primitive operation: a number of women stand round, and taking up small bundles of the rice with both hands they thresh this great stone with it, thus beating out all the grain. The straw is then gathered up and used either as fuel or for feeding oxen, and the grain is collected in baskets and carried off into the village, where is stored either in the houses or in large circular pits dug in the ground and lined with cow-dung.

THE RICE PLANT.

While a Malagasy child would hardly think he had had a proper

meal unless rice formed the principal part of it, there are also a good many other kinds of food which he is very glad to eat along with it. Of these, herbs, beef, mutton, pork and fowls are some of the commonest. There is a curious tradition among the people as to the origin of the practice of beef-eating. One version of this runs as follows :—In a time of famine during the reign of one of the early Hova kings named Ralambo (The Wild Boar), while every one else was getting thin and miserable-looking, a certain man and his whole family were observed to remain plump and well-favoured : his children were all chubby and healthy-looking, while those of his neighbours were lean and famine-stricken. This came to the king's ears, and he sent for the man secretly and asked him how he managed to keep himself and his family in such good condition. The man at first was afraid, but at length, on being reassured by the king, he confessed that being pressed with hunger he had taken to killing the wild cattle which roamed in large herds over the plains, and had found their flesh good and wholesome. The king then determined to try for himself whether what the man said was true : he got him therefore to cook him some beef, and on eating it he too found it quite to his liking, and, no evil consequences ensuing, he determined to give his subjects the benefit of the discovery ; and thus in time they all came to like the new food. Until the present day, certain parts of every ox killed are not allowed to be eaten by the common people, but are reserved for the Queen and princes.

There is likewise a curious story current among some of the people of Imèrina as to the origin of rice in Madagascar. To the east of the Ankàratra Mountains (the highest group in the island) there is a peak called Ambòhitrakòholàhy (the Cock Mountain). There, says the fable, a daughter of God came down from heaven bringing with her a cock and a hen. 'Let me take down this cock and hen,' said she, 'to wake me up by day and night.' 'Take them then, said the Supreme Being. Then having first given the fowls a feed of unhusked rice, this daughter of God came down upon the Ankàratra

Mountains. After reaching the earth, she killed the cock in order to get the rice out of its crop, and this, on being planted, grew and multiplied, and gradually spread over the whole island.

Many nice fruits and vegetables grow in Madagascar: bananas, pine-apples, peaches, oranges, mangoes, loquats, melons, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes, &c. These are largely used by the people, being cheap and abundant. But besides the various kinds of food which I have mentioned, most of which are also appreciated by Europeans, there are certain other articles of diet which Malagasy children consider very good eating, but which would hardly commend themselves to English boys and girls, such as locusts, cockchafers, grubs, and large-bodied moths.

A flight of locusts is a great event for the Malagasy children. Often, if you happen to be in-doors, the first announcement that the locusts have arrived will be a general hubbub and chorus of young voices calling out, *Valala è! Valala è!* (Locusts O! Locusts O!) Then boys and girls of all ages, and women, and even men, quickly provide themselves with baskets, mats and sheets, and hurry out into the open spaces between the houses and on the slopes of the hills. A most exciting chase ensues. Overhead, and on all sides, myriads of the great grasshopper-like insects are flying steadily past, and the whole air is alive with the whir-r-r and rustle of their wings, while myriads more are alighting on the ground, or hopping about in all directions with awkward irregular motions, the curious clapping noise caused by their hard wing-cases adding to the general disturbance. The scene is all life and motion, for every one tries to catch as many as he can while the flight is still passing. Here you may see women and girls rapidly gathering up the helpless creatures by handfuls from the ground, and putting them into large soft rush baskets; here again two women have got hold of the ends of a large sheet or lamba, which they are carrying rapidly through the air as though it were a net, enclosing scores of flying locusts as they go along. Here, again, are little children, four or five years old, running about with a piece of

CATCHING LOCUSTS.

(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

long stiff grass, on which they are transfixing all the insects they can lay their hands on, neither they nor their mothers apparently thinking of the cruel pain they are causing the poor creatures.

On reaching home the locusts are killed, either by squeezing their heads, or by putting them, hundreds at a time, into large earthen pots and baking them to death, or more mercifully, by putting them into boiling water. As a rule, the Malagasy have very little regard for animal life; they do not seem to understand that dumb creatures can suffer pain, or at any rate they are extremely callous to their sufferings, and are very far from realising the truth conveyed in Coleridge's lines :—

'He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'

I have not myself eaten locusts, but a writer in the *Madagascar Times*, who appears to have done so, describes the taste of them as follows: 'If you cook them in lard, they mostly taste of lard: if you cook them in butter, they taste of butter: I cooked mine without anything, and they tasted of that.'

There is a very large kind of moth which comes about the gardens at sunset. Its body is about as thick as one's little finger, and its proboscis is five or six inches in length. This a Malagasy child thinks a great dainty, and he shows considerable ingenuity in catching it. Having selected a suitable place, he collects a number of sweet-scented flowers and arranges them in a circle. Then at sun-down, taking one of the flowers in his hand, he stations himself in the middle and waits. Soon the moths come flitting round, and he sings to them as follows :—

'Bring your children, Mr. Flit-about,
Here is the sweet, here is the honey;
Lead the blind, poke up the deaf;
Bring them above, bring them below;

Bring your wife and children.
Over yonder to the north (where the boy's companions are) is the bitter;
Over there to the south, to the east, to the west, is the bitter;
Here in the middle is the sweet.'

The moth, flitting about from flower to flower, at last comes to the one he is holding. Now is his time; when the long proboscis is pushed deep into the flower, probing after the sweet nectar it contains, the youngster's fingers close upon it and the poor creature is literally 'caught by the nose.' Having secured his victim, he lies in wait again, and so on until it is too dark to see, then he goes off home with his spoils, and having toasted them at the fire on the hearth, he eats them with as much relish as an English boy would a handful of roasted chestnuts.

The clothing worn by Malagasy children is so scanty that very few words will be necessary to describe it. If its parents are poor, a baby for the first two or three years of its life often wears no clothing whatever during the warm summer months. While still too little to walk, its mother carries it about on her back, covered up in her lamba. This lamba is generally nothing more than a large piece of white calico like a bed-sheet, which is gracefully wrapped round the body, one end being gathered together and thrown over the shoulder. A Malagasy mother is very expert in carrying her little baby on her back in this sheet-like garment. Slipping the lamba down off her shoulders, she places the little one high up on her back, then, passing the lamba up so as to cover it, she stretches it tight round the child's body, grasping the two sides of it firmly in front of her chest, or, if she have no hand at liberty, rolling it up tightly and tucking it in under her armpits. It is not at all an unusual thing to see a woman balancing a large water-pot on her head and carrying a big baby on her back at the same time, while coming up a steep hill on a footpath so narrow and rugged that many an English lady would hardly be able to walk on it at all, even though holding some one's hand.

While still very tiny the baby is entirely covered up head and all,

and you would wonder how the little thing manages to breathe ; but it seems very comfortable, and one of the first things a Malagasy baby learns to say after *dada* (father), and *neny* (mother), is *bàby* (carry me). It is a curious sight to see the outline of the little frog-like form packed up tight on its mother's back. But when baby gets a little older, and is able to sit up, then its head is left uncovered, and it looks wonderfully content, with its little black head perched up behind its mother's, its small beady eyes looking eagerly about as it is carried along. Often, however, it goes to sleep, and as its mother's lamba slips down with the motion of walking, its head will roll back and loll about as if its little neck must surely break ; but its mother goes along taking very little notice of it, occasionally stopping to hitch it up into its place again and readjust her lamba. The children of the European missionaries are carried about on the backs of their Malagasy nurses in the same manner. And very devoted these native *neny* (mothers) are to them, regarding them almost as their own children. The illustration which stands as Frontispiece to this book is taken from a sketch of one of the author's little girls asleep on her nurse's back.

After the child is able to walk, it is often left to run about perfectly naked till about three years old, when it is either put into a single plain little shirt-like garment, called an *akanjo*, or given a small piece of coarse hempen cloth for a lamba. In the case of a boy, as he grows bigger he is provided with a long strip of cloth called a *salàka*, which is worn round the loins ; and thousands of boys here, and men too, have no other clothes but this loin-cloth and lamba, and very often, when working or playing about, especially if the weather be hot, the lamba is left off almost entirely during the day, only being used in the house and to sleep in. The girls and women too wear the same kind of lamba as the men, and generally, in addition, have a piece of cloth fastened round the waist called a *kitàmby*, and frequently a short bodice is worn ; many, too, now wear long loose skirts and dresses of print or white calico.

Among the better classes, especially in the capital, very little girls are also often put into long embroidered robes, which give them a very quaint old-womanish appearance. But very pretty too they look, with their short-cropped or neatly plaited jet black hair above, and tiny little shapely feet peeping out beneath.

Very many of the young men, especially in the capital, are adopting European dress, and trousers, boots, and stockings, which were hardly thought of a generation or two back, are becoming quite common.

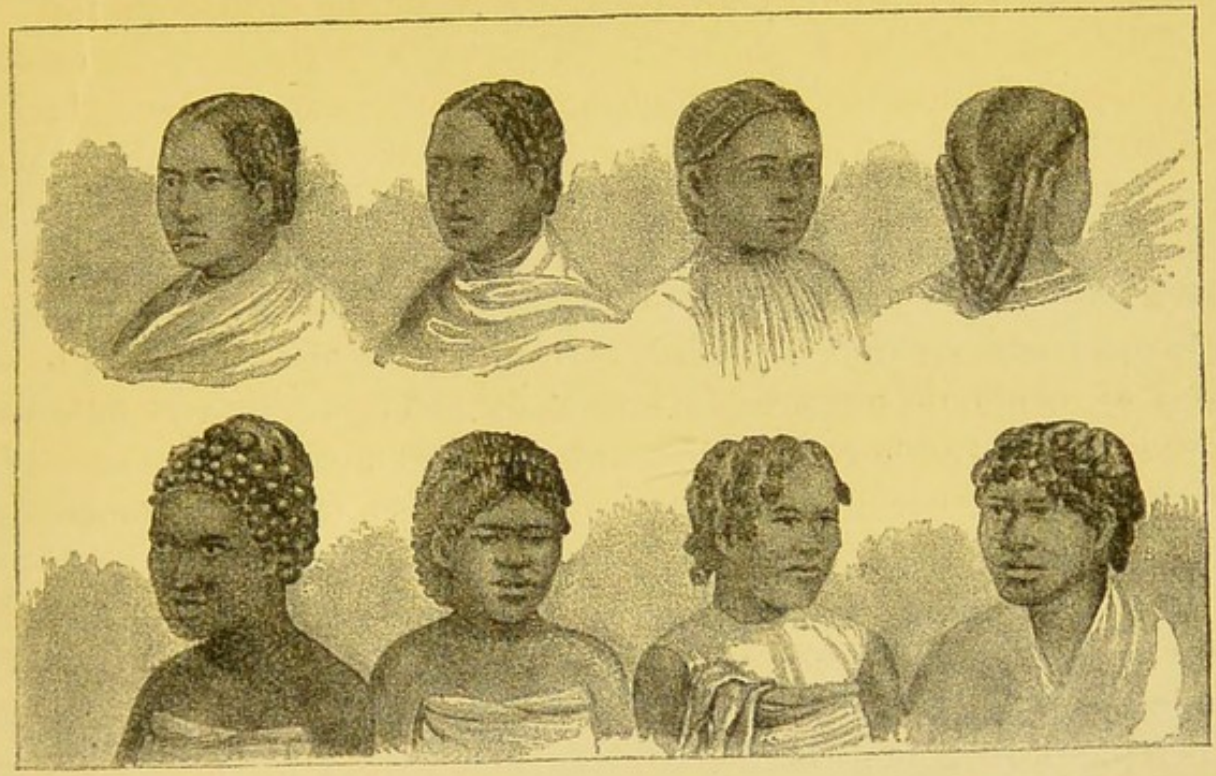
The materials from which the Malagasy's clothes are made are very largely imported by English and American traders, though various kinds of native cloth are made from the fibres of plants and bark of trees. The Malagasy women too are very clever in weaving gorgeously coloured lambas of native silk, and the dull red cloths in which corpses are wrapped for burial are all of this material. Very beautiful hats are made of finely woven grass, and nearly all those worn by men and boys are of native make. These are generally tall in the crown and broad in the brim, and so, until one gets used to them, have a rather ludicrous appearance. As a rule, the women and girls do not wear hats, but nearly always go bareheaded.

The people in some of the outlying provinces have not got so far as the Hovas in the matter of clothing. The ordinary dress of the poorer class of the Bètsilèo tribe consists merely of a stiff rush mat, and some other tribes use the bark of trees beaten out flat in the same way. In the matter of cleanliness, too, the people of the central province of Imèrina are much in advance of many of the other tribes, though even here a beautifully clean lamba outside very often hides a filthy shirt or loin-cloth beneath.

Very little in the way of ornament, besides brightly coloured and elaborately embroidered garments, is worn by the people of Imèrina. The women frequently wear rings of silver, brass, or red coral, and bead or coral bracelets; and girls often stain their finger-nails with the petals of balsams or other flowers, and sometimes blacken their cheeks to enhance their beauty

Among some of the other tribes great attention is paid to personal decoration, silver and brass ornaments in great variety being worn both by men and women. In the Bètsilèo province both boys and girls tattoo their faces, necks, arms and hands, and some of the lace-like patterns on the chests of the women are very elaborate and elegant.

The Hova women pay great attention to the dressing of their hair, and there are a great number of different styles of plaiting and



Upper Row—HOVA WOMEN.
Lower Row—WOMEN OF THE OUTLYING TRIBES.

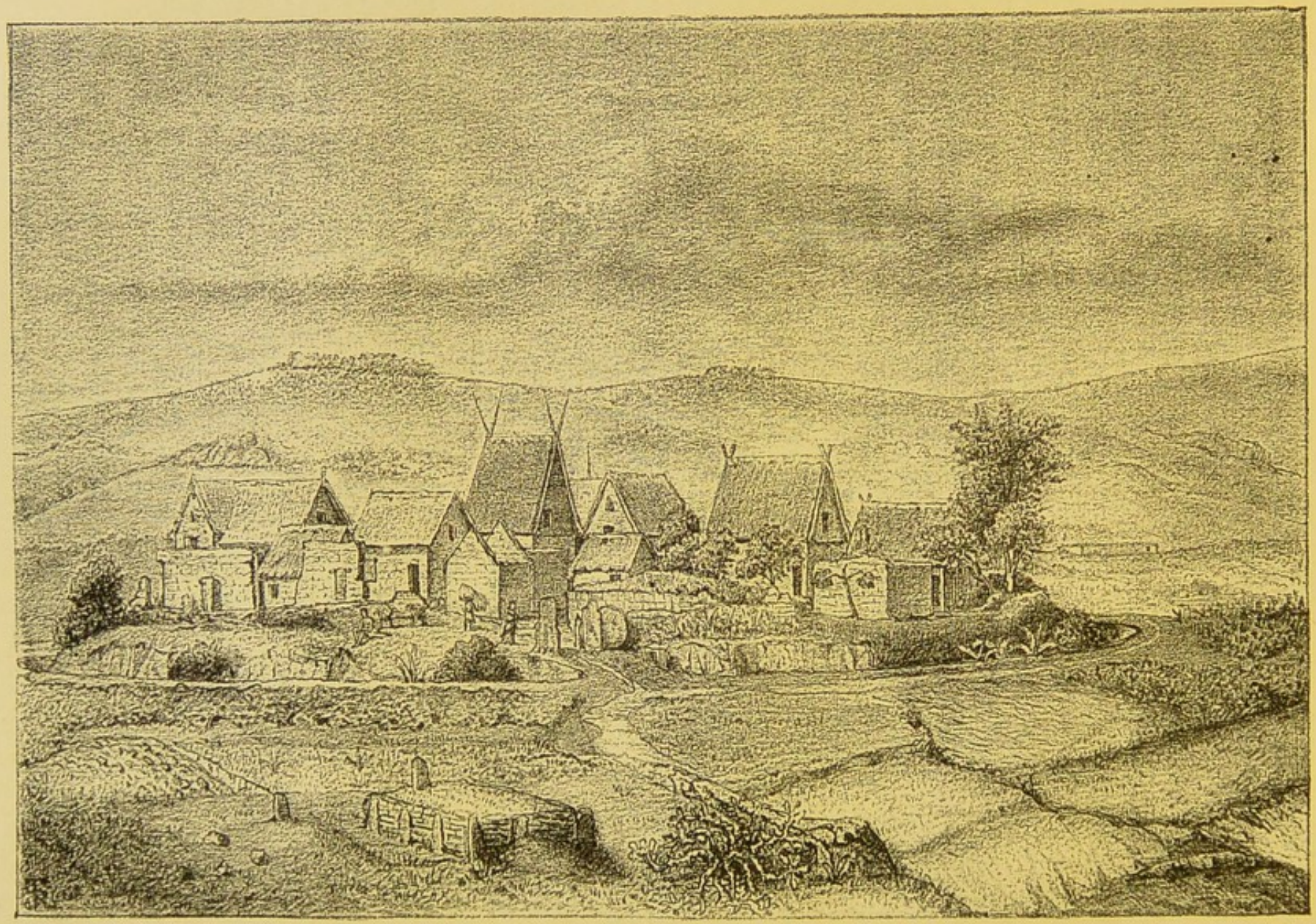
fastening it up. Some of these are very tasteful, as you will see by the accompanying drawing. While quite little, a child's hair is generally cut short—a very sensible practice, both for the sake of coolness and cleanliness. Often, however, a long tuft is left to grow on the crown of the head, and frequently the hair is not shaven clean off, but is cut in concentric rings round and round the head, giving the child a rather strange appearance, as shown in the picture on the cover of this book.

CHAPTER IV.

HOME LIFE.

ONE of the first things which a new-comer notices on arriving in Imèrina, is that many of the towns and villages are built on the tops of high hills. Very many of them are surrounded by deep trenches or fosses; and frequently two, three, four, and sometimes even as many as seven of these ditches may be seen, one outside another, encircling the town. These trenches are often very deep, and the soil which gradually accumulates at the bottom of them, being protected from the heat of the sun, and so remaining constantly moist, encourages in many cases a luxuriant growth of vegetation; while often dense impenetrable hedges of prickly-pear form a further protection to the town.

But you may wonder why the people have chosen such inconvenient places as the sites of their villages, and why they have taken such pains to fortify them so thoroughly. The reason of this is easily understood when we remember that in former times there was no settled government in Imèrina, but the country was divided into many little chieftaincies, which were constantly fighting and making plundering raids on each other. Many of these old villages are now deserted, and frequently almost all traces of former occupation have disappeared, nothing now remaining but the deep trenches to mark the site. For many years these civil wars have been a thing of the past, and now the people are no longer afraid to build their villages



A HOVA VILLAGE.

(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

on the low-lying or undulating land near the large rice plains. But let me ask you to climb with me the steep path which zigzags in and out in a bewildering manner up to the gate of one of these old hill fortresses. Crossing the last fosse on a little bridge of earth, we stand in front of the gateway. This is generally a small tunnel-like passage built up with rough stones, and just wide enough for one man to pass comfortably through. In former times the inside of the opening was blocked at night by an immense round slab of stone, which was rolled into its place every evening, and pushed back again when the gate was opened in the early morning. Now, through long disuse, many of these stones have become imbedded in the soil, or are lying prostrate by the road-side.

The interior of a Malagasy village presents a very different appearance from an English one. On entering, we see no broad, well-kept highway, but only narrow little paths winding here and there among the irregularly built houses. In the centre of some of the larger villages there is a wide open courtyard, where public proclamations are made, and here you may generally see a number of little naked slave children playing about, and long-legged fowls, and miserable-looking half-starved dogs, stalking round or picking a scanty meal from the refuse lying about.

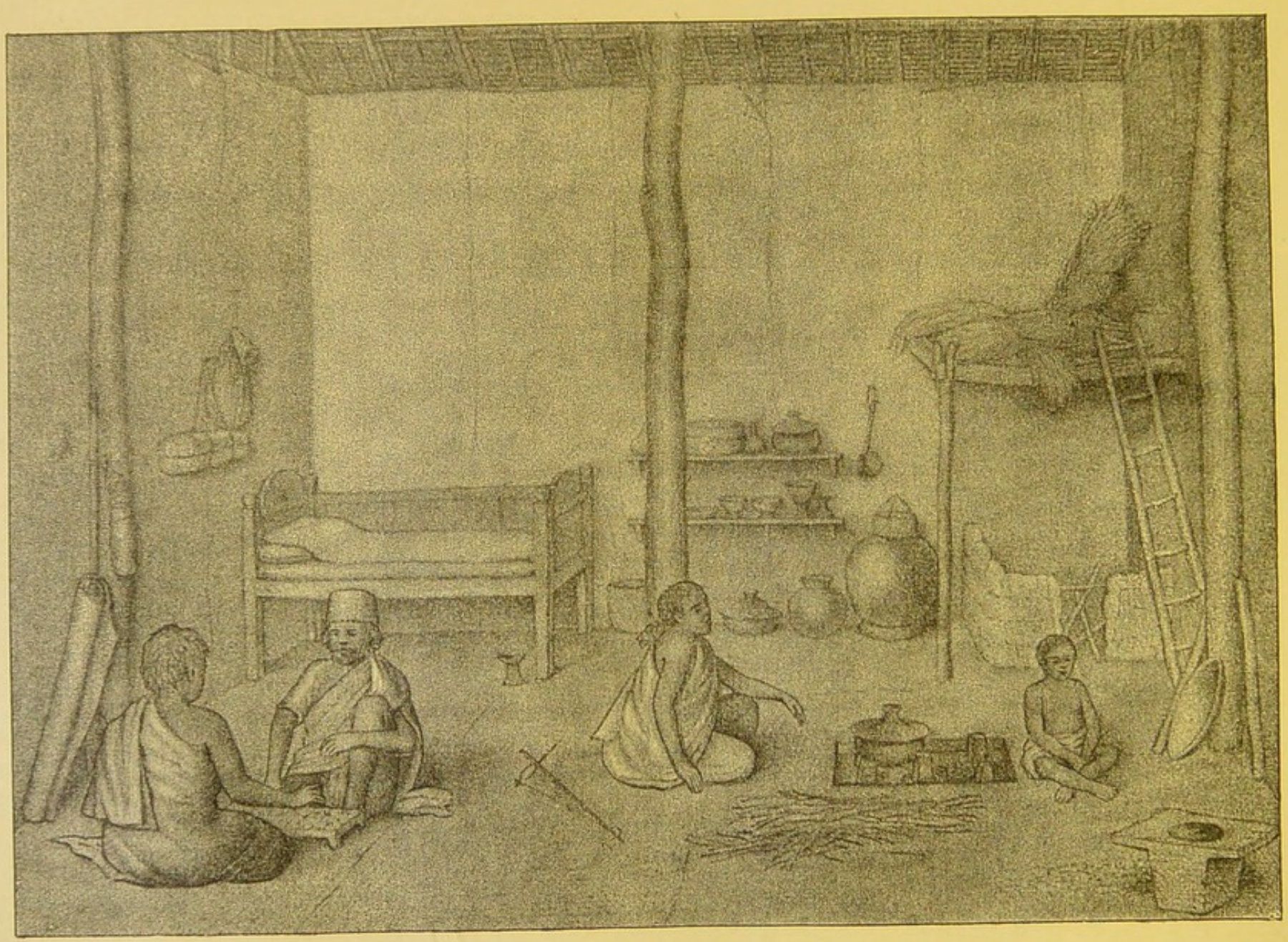
The houses in Imèrina are now generally built of mud or sun-dried brick, but in former times, and indeed until quite recently, wood was chiefly employed. In very many places the old high-pitched roofs, with their long *tàndroka* or 'horns,' may still be seen; but these are every year becoming fewer and fewer, and people are now building their houses more and more after European models. The old-fashioned houses were always built with their length running north and south, with a single window and door on the western side. In the Betsileo province the door is generally but little larger than the window, making it very awkward, as you may imagine, to get in and out.

But now we will step indoors and note the surroundings among

which Hova boys and girls pass their time when they are at home. If the good woman of the house knows beforehand of our coming, she will have everything neat and clean by the time we arrive ; but if we take her by surprise, we shall very likely have to wait a short time outside, while the house is being tidied up. Clouds of dust issue from the door and window, and a vigorous noise of sweeping is heard within ; and in a minute or two a slave comes running from a neighbouring house with a chair (likely enough the only one in the village), for the *Vazàha* to sit on. At last a clean mat has been spread, and the dust has somewhat subsided, the chair has been put in the place of honour at the north end of the house opposite to the window, and we are politely invited to come in.

On entering we are immediately struck with the scantiness of the furniture. In most Malagasy houses chairs and tables are unknown luxuries ; for the people sit, eat, and generally sleep too, on the floor. Directly opposite the door stand the pestle, mortar, and winnowing tray, for husking and cleaning the rice ; and beyond these again is the corner where the fowls, sheep, and calves are kept at night-time ; if the house happen to have a second storey, a ladder or flight of earthen steps leads up from this corner to the loft above.

As we make our way to the chair placed for us we pass the hearth, which consists of several large stones arranged in the middle of the mud floor on which to support the earthen cooking pots. But where is the chimney ? That is a thing sought for in vain ; for in the great majority of Malagasy houses the smoke is allowed to make its escape wherever it can,—by the window or door, if they happen to be open, otherwise through the thatched roof ! You may imagine that the house soon gets very grimy and black with the accumulation of soot on the walls and roof. Long cobwebs depend from the rafters or hang in festoons between the roof timbers ; and if there happens to be a high wind, showers of soot will fall all over the house. The part of the house north of the hearth is the place of honour, to which guests are always invited, and where, on ordinary occasions, the members of



INTERIOR OF A HOVA HOUSE.

(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

the family sit, the part near the door to the south of the hearth being left for the slaves.

Exactly opposite the window in the north-east corner is the bedstead. There is usually one bedstead in the house for the master and mistress ; every one else, children, slaves, and others, sleeping on the floor. If there happen to be a large number of visitors, the whole floor will often at night be literally covered with sleepers, so that it is almost impossible to get about without disturbing or treading on some one. A sort of thin mattress of papyrus stalks, covered with mats made from the peel of the same, often serves the double purpose of a seat by day and a bed by night. Another very common bed is made of rofia-cloth filled with dried grass, and this, with a thin pillow of the same, and a fine mat spread over it, constitutes all the bedding of the generality of the Malagasy—no blankets, counterpane, or sheets, except the single lamba worn during the daytime. Winter and summer alike this forms their only covering ; and they have a curious custom while sleeping of entirely concealing the head and face, while often leaving the feet uncovered. It is really a wonder that more of them do not become ill, so many sleeping huddled together every night in such small, close houses.

The articles just enumerated constitute, with cooking and water-pots, baskets of various kinds, weaving apparatus, spoons and plates, and a box for spare clothes, almost the only furniture in most Malagasy homes.

As very few people in country places possess clocks or watches, the natives tell the time by the sun ; and the houses being, as I have said, generally built north and south, the direction of the shadow of the roof, and the creeping of the sunshine across the floor, makes a rough sort of sun-dial which is sufficiently exact for general use. The Malagasy denote the different hours of the day by the following names :—

'Midnight.'

'First cock-crowing' . . . . (about 3 o'clock in the morning).

'Cock-crow' . . . . . (about 4 o'clock in the morning).
'Twilight' . . . . . („ 5 „ „ „).
'When diligent people awake' . („ 5.30 „ „ „).
'Sunrise' . . . . . („ 6 „ „ „).
'When the leaves turn over' . („ 7 „ „ „).
'When the cattle go out' . . („ 8 „ „ „).
'When the sun is over the ridge-pole' (noon).
'When the sunshine is peeping in at the door' (1 o'clock).
'When the sunshine has reached the place where the calf is tied up' (3 o'clock).
'When the oxen come home' (from 5 to 6).
'When the sun "dies"' or 'the fowls come home' (about 6 o'clock).
'When people are beginning to put the rice in the pot' (about 7 o'clock).
'When people are cooking their rice' (about 8 o'clock).
'When people are eating their rice' (about 9 o'clock).
'When every one has gone to bed' (about 10 o'clock).

Children, while still very little, are not allowed to go out of the village, for fear of being lost or kidnapped, or of falling into the fosses. Often a little slave is set to watch or nurse them, and it is not an uncommon sight to see a little child carried about on the back of another really not very much bigger than itself. A little boy or girl in Madagascar has no pretty toys to play with, but must content itself with whatever it can get hold of—a potsherd, an old horn spoon, a mango stone, or, when the rain comes, with dabbling in the water. When about three or four years old, its mother will begin to take it with her when she goes to gather herbs outside the village-gate; and when a little older its father will sometimes let it accompany him when going to work in the rice-field and plantations; but it is still too young to be allowed to venture out alone. On reaching the age of seven or eight, however, a boy will be sent off in company with others to mind poultry or sheep, or will sometimes follow his

father to market, trotting behind him and carrying a large *sobìky*, or rush-basket, on his head. When a little older, again, he will be entrusted with the care of one or more oxen, and will sometimes be allowed to take a turn at digging in the rice-field when his father is tired. Many little boys, too, spend much of their time in cutting fodder for the cattle, which are fattened in the ox-pits in the village.

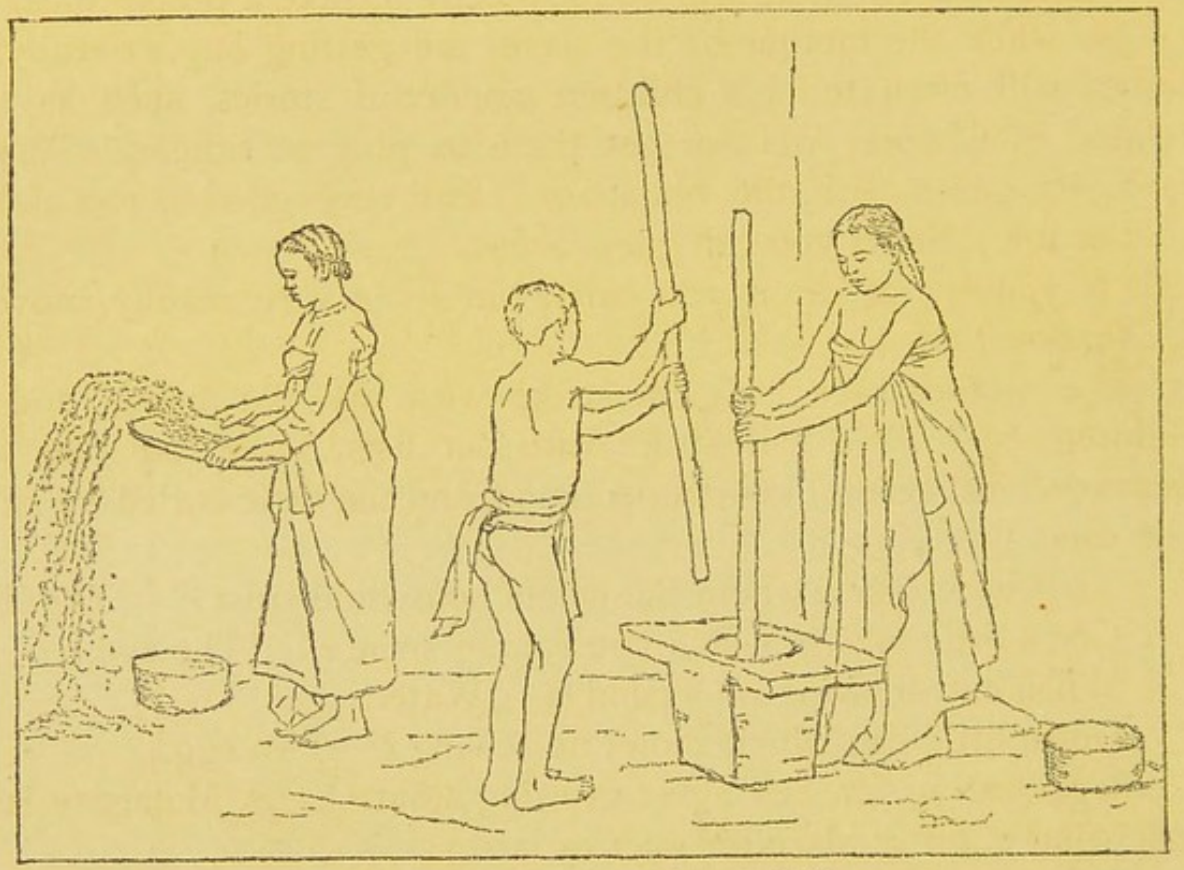
A girl meanwhile is helping her mother about the house, running errands, minding the younger members of the family, and learning to spin and weave.

On the whole, I fancy you would think a Malagasy woman leads a very idle life. You may see her squatting in the sunshine outside her house, gossiping and talking scandal for hours together ; but generally a woman is able to do some sort of work with her fingers—weaving, spinning, making mats, hats, baskets, &c., so her daughters will not be quite without home training in manual work. Some women make very beautiful lambas of native silk, gorgeously dyed in various colours, and woven into strange quaint patterns. Rofia, hemp, aloe-fibre, and cotton, are also prepared and woven into cloth by the native women and girls.

The chief occupations of a slave girl are the daily pounding and winnowing of the rice and the fetching of water from the spring. This rice-pounding is by no means easy work. The unhusked rice is put into a rough wooden mortar, and steadily pounded with the end of a thick, heavy wooden pestle four or five feet long. When the husks are removed, the rice is turned out into a large round tray to be winnowed. This is done by repeatedly tossing the rice up in such a manner that the chaff works to the edge of the tray and finally falls over. A second and often a third pounding follow, to remove the red inner skin of the rice, the process of winnowing being each time repeated.

Besides these home occupations, little girls are often to be seen outside the village, minding sheep or geese along with their young

brothers ; and when the rice harvest is got in, and the water is standing knee-deep in the stubble-covered rice-plots, it is a very pretty sight to see little girls wading about, two by two, with a small wicker basket or drag-net between them, fishing for the gold-fish which abound in the watercourses and rice-swamps.



POUNDING AND WINNOWING RICE.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

Travelling by night in Madagascar is next to impossible, owing to the condition of the roads ; and probably the idea of lighting up the streets by night has never yet entered into the Malagasy mind. The consequence is that, except on moonlight nights, very few people go out of doors after dark. The cattle are driven home an hour or two before sundown, and the cows having been safely lodged in the ox-pit for the night, and the calves and fowls fastened up in the corner of the house, the work of the day is over, and there is nothing to be done

but to wait for the cooking of the evening meal. As this is not usually prepared until eight or nine o'clock, you may imagine that the little ones get very sleepy before it is ready; but their parents do not like them to go to sleep before having their supper, for 'fear of making them thin;' I suppose from the idea that if they are waked up to eat their rice they will be too sleepy to take a proper meal.

So while the mother or the slaves are getting supper ready, the father will often tell his children wonderful stories, such as those related in Chapter VII., or get them to play at riddles. This is a favourite game with the Malagasy; and very good some of their riddles are. See if you can guess a few.

'If you try to lift it you can't, but it is very readily moved?' [A shadow.]

The mother says: 'I will strike with my flat hand,' and the children say: 'We will strike with our fists.' [A fern (the fully expanded leaf being like an open hand, and the little curled-up fronds like fists).]

'That little fellow whom the whole household trust?' [The bolt.]

'God's little lake in which you cannot swim?' [The eye.]

'When cut, showing no wound?' [Water.]

God's little bag which shows no sewing?' [An egg.]

'Ever eating fat, but never growing stout?' [A Malagasy lamp, consisting of a rag placed in suet or lard.]

'Having a mouth to eat with, but no stomach in which to put what is swallowed.' [A pair of scissors.]

'Having many shields, and many spears, but not able to protect his wife and children?' [An orange tree (the leaves and thorns being the shields and spears, and the fruit the wife and children).]

'Having a neck but no head?' [A shirt.]

'If it touches you, it is as sharp as a needle, but if you touch it, it is as soft as lard?' [A mosquito.]

'Having one mouth, but eyes all over its body?' [A net (the meshes of a net being called *eyes* in Malagasy).]

'Having its feet cut off did not kill it, but losing its clothes did?' [Rice (being reaped does not kill the grain, but being husked does so).]

'That little fellow who does not respect guests?' [A flea.]

When the rice is cooked, the whole family gather together near the fireplace and take their seats in order, the father of the household sitting furthest to the north and the mother next to him on his left hand; then on one side of the circle sit the older sons according to their age, and on the other the daughters, the younger children taking their places among the rest where they please. The horn spoons having been brought out and the rice ladled from the cooking-pot with a large wooden spoon, the father (if in a Christian family) will generally ask a blessing, though I have heard of a man who thought it too much trouble to give thanks before each meal, and so offered prayer once for all over his whole stock of rice in the rice-pit!

You must not picture a nicely-spread table as in an English home; there are no tables in most Malagasy houses, and to eat *ambòny latàbatra* (on a table) is thought about the height of luxury. They do not even indulge in a cloth, and very often two or three large plates, and an old basin for the gravy and herbs, will have to do duty for the whole family; and a large long-handled tin mug filled with water is passed from mouth to mouth as any one wishes to drink. The Malagasy are very particular always to rinse their mouths out after eating, and generally they wash their hands by pouring a little water over them out of the tin mug just mentioned. This same tin mug is a very useful article in a Malagasy home, for it also serves the purpose of a bath; and you may sometimes see a tiny little creature standing out of doors stark naked on a cold drizzly morning, while an older child pours water over it out of this *zìnga*, or mug, with one hand, at the same time briskly rubbing it down with the other.

Directly supper is over, every one as a general rule is ready for bed; but if it be a fine bright moonlight night, it is not at all uncommon for the children from several houses to meet together

and sit singing out of doors far on into the night. Sometimes in the country I have known a company of youngsters to keep on their monotonous droning chants until eleven or twelve o'clock.

No description of the home life of children in Madagascar would be complete without some account of a Malagasy wedding, for often in this country marriages take place between mere boys and girls. It is not at all uncommon to see brides of twelve and thirteen years, their husbands not being much older. Frequently matches are made by the parents while their children are mere babies, and it will often happen that as the young people grow up they have no special liking for each other, and yet are compelled to marry. At times a young man will leave the matter of finding a wife to his parents or to the pastor of the church to which he belongs; and he apparently makes himself quite content with the girl whom they choose for him. A very amusing case came under my notice a few years ago, in which I asked a former scholar of ours who was about to be married the name of his intended wife, and he actually could not tell me!

For a few days previous to a Malagasy wedding great cooking preparations go on in the houses of the future bride and bridegroom. All the slaves are sent for to help in repairing and cleaning the houses, after their own ideas of cleanliness, and new mats are bought and laid down; and relatives and friends call and present little pieces of money with their good wishes.

When the great day arrives, which has been previously specified as propitious by the diviners, the bridegroom, dressed in the most stylish clothes he can buy, borrow, or hire for the occasion (a black cloth suit and a tall hat being the most fashionable), waits at home for the arrival of his friends, who are to accompany him to the bride's house; and when all are ready, or a little before, he sends a few of his lady friends to the bride with a present of clothes, usually a dress and lamba, and a little money to pay her hairdresser. These women, on presenting the gifts, are invited to inspect the bride, and suggest any improvements in her toilet they may think desirable. They

then return laden with presents of fruit, and give the bridegroom a glowing account of her splendour, saying she is beyond description, and that he and his party in no way come up to her! No particular colour here is thought specially appropriate to a bride, and the costume varies according to the means and taste of each. With wealthy brides, bright green, yellow or blue silk dresses are fashionable, and the chief ornaments worn are large flashy rings and red coral bracelets; the hair in all cases receives great attention, and is often elaborately plaited, the operation sometimes taking three or even four hours. Embroidered white calico or pretty print dresses are worn by the poorer classes, with a white or coloured lamba thrown over them.

The bridegroom's procession now leaves the house and passes along the road, being freely commented on by the crowds of people who have been patiently watching for its appearance. If the bridegroom be well-to-do, he and his companions will all be carried in palanquins. The number of these may not exceed nineteen, but must on no account be eight, as the Malagasy word for eight (*fàhavàlo*) also means an *enemy*. One of the number is usually an elderly man, who is chosen for his cleverness at speech-making. When they reach the bride's house, some of the people assembled there come out to meet them and ask them in, and they are welcomed by many voices. The bride and bridegroom sit side by side in the place of honour. And when all the rest are seated and have saluted each other, the speech-maker gets up, and after a long-winded introduction, in which he wishes the Queen a long life, and apologises for his presumption in speaking, goes on to say that they have come to beg a daughter of the house.

Some old relative of the bride, also prefacing his speech with the usual good wishes to the Queen, makes reply that it is a pleasure to accede to their request; but he goes on further to say that in case her husband should divorce her, one-third of their possessions must return to her; and also that if debts be incurred, the wife must not be

accountable for her husband's debts, and the husband also shall not be accountable for the wife's. The bridegroom's friend answers in a flowery speech that they are quite agreeable to this arrangement. The girl's relative replies again that she is still young, and begs them not to be hard on her if she makes mistakes, but to teach her useful arts. The bridegroom's friend again rises, and says that he has brought the hind-quarters of a sheep (really some money, varying from threepence to twenty-eight shillings, or even more) as an offering to the bride's father. This is a very important part of the business, as it is the payment of this money that makes a Malagasy marriage legal, and it is probably a relic of the time when a husband had to buy his bride from her father and mother.

A feast follows all this speech-making. The host and his friends press the bridegroom and his followers to eat. These make reply, 'Come, sirs, and do you eat with us;' but the others answer, 'You must be feasted first, and afterwards we can eat at our leisure.' Large lumps of uncooked meat or live geese are placed on leaves behind the bridegroom and each of his companions, as presents for them to take away with them. The bride and bridegroom share the same plate, and formerly one lamba used to be thrown around them both. When the feast is over, the bride's belongings are sent off, borne on the heads of slaves. These consist of a rush basket filled with her clothes; or, if she is well off, there will be several baskets and probably also a wooden box, a roll of fine mats, and always a mattress.

The procession starts again, now in increased numbers, as the bride is accompanied by several of her girl friends. Certain directions are considered unlucky to take on the way home, and these vary with the different months; so the party may have to take a roundabout road before reaching the bridegroom's home. On arriving there, the bride is led round the interior of the house with a lighted candle, and after the usual salutations have been given, the speaker tells the young husband's parents all that has been said and done in the

bride's house; and after receiving their hearty thanks, he and his companions take their leave. Another feast is now given to the young couple and the bride's lady friends, and pieces of meat or geese are presented to each guest, as at the bride's home.

A few of the bridesmaids remain in the house with the young wife till the next day, for fear she should feel lonely and homesick. A general feast is frequently kept up for a few days; and the relatives all come to see the newly-married in a day or two, and they must also be feasted.

And now, having given you a description of a wedding in Madagascar, I will say a few words about Malagasy funerals. When any of the child's relatives die, there is a great time of mourning in the house. All the women and children unplait their hair and let it stand out all over their heads, or hang streaming down on their shoulders. The friends and relatives come flocking in to offer their condolence, or, as they say, 'to bring tears,' and each presents a little piece of cut money, which they call *sòlon-dàmbamèna*, that is, 'a substitute for a red lamba,' to wrap the corpse in; or *sòlon-kofèhy*, that is, 'a substitute for string,' to tie the lamba on with. The members of the family, in their turn, make presents of meat, fowls, &c., to the visitors. The meat thus given away at funerals is called 'bad meat.' This may not be eaten by nobles, and it is considered improper to use salt in cooking it. A child is not allowed to enter the room where the dead body is lying, and may not attend the funeral, as it is thought that to do so would cause it to die young.

A MALAGASY WOMAN IN MOURNING.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch*).

The Malagasy tombs consist of a large square hole or vault dug in the ground, enclosed on each of the four sides with stone slabs, and covered over at the top with a still greater slab of stone. All these have been split off the blue granite rocks by kindling fires upon them. Around the walls of this underground room other large slabs of stone are placed, one above another, like the berths in a ship; and on these the bodies are laid, having first been wrapped up in red silk lambas.

The building of a tomb is a great event in Malagasy family life; for since there are no waggons in Madagascar, all the great slabs of stone used in making the tomb have to be dragged from the quarry by main force. The stone is usually strapped to a sledge-like frame-work of rough timbers, though a primitive sort of truck with small clumsy wooden wheels is sometimes employed; but this is of so rough a construction, and the roads are so bad, that even when it is used it requires a great number of people to pull it along.

This stone-dragging is one of the most interesting sights in Madagascar. A number of ropes attached to the stone are held by long lines of people, men, women and children, all dressed in holiday attire, while one man mounted on the stone directs the movements of the others, singing and dancing, and flourishing a sort of flag which he holds in his hand. The rest all take up the chorus, and as they sing they simultaneously give the stone a series of short tugs, and so gradually move it along.

The Rev. J. Sibree has furnished me with the following account of the strange way in which some of the coast and forest tribes dispose of their dead. He says:—'They do not bury their dead, but throw them away into some low, damp place in the forest. One day we met a funeral in the forest, and a most saddening sight it was. I heard a great noise of shouting and singing, and thought it was the people dragging a great piece of timber, but on coming up close found it was a child's coffin. A rough wooden box was being carried by a great number of men, who were pulling it backwards and forwards,

first one way and then another. No signs of grief were visible on any one's face. It was a heathen funeral, without hope. I was also told that, when any of their relatives are ill and old, and happen to become insensible, their relatives take them while still alive and throw them into the place in the forest where they throw the corpses of their dead ; and if such sick people should recover consciousness, and return to their village, the people come out and throw stones at them until they kill them outright.'

CHAPTER V.

MALAGASY CHILDREN AT SCHOOL.

I WISH I could take some of my young readers with me at eight o'clock some morning to see our large boys' school assemble. We begin work early in Madagascar. As a rule, our scholars are early risers, and the morning is the best part of the day for all kinds of work. Immediately after the bell is rung the boys come trooping in, and in a very short time the whole two hundred are drawn up in five long lines running the length of our large assembly-room. It would be an interesting sight to you to look at these rows of intelligent, youthful faces. Here are all shades of colour, from a light olive-brown or almost white to a nearly jet black; though the prevailing colour is that of roasted coffee-bean. In looking along these lines of heads you would notice that almost without exception the hair is perfectly black, though it varies a good deal in appearance, many boys having perfectly straight and glossy hair, while that of others is short and frizzy and almost like a negro's. The variety of countenance is very striking. Many boys have well-formed, handsome features, with straight noses and thin lips; while not a few, on the other hand, have projecting jaws and lips which remind one of a negro's. But even the plainest have generally a bright intelligent look, which redeems their plainness.

You would be sure to notice their clothing. Two hundred English schoolboys all with sheets thrown round their shoulders, as though they were just about to have their hair cut, would be a curious sight,

but this is very much the appearance a Malagasy presents when he is wearing his native lamba, only that he has a knack of gathering one end of it up and throwing it over his shoulder in a very graceful manner, which an English boy would need a good deal of practice to accomplish. No clothes seem to suit the Malagasy so well as these lambas, the contrast of the dark skin and black hair with the white cotton being very becoming. The boys seem to pride themselves on keeping their lambas beautifully clean ; and it is very seldom that I have to give any of them a hint that a little application of soap and water would be advisable. I am now speaking of the high schools in Antanànarìvo ; but in the country, and especially at long distances from the capital, a very different state of affairs prevails.

You would be struck too with the absence of noise, as the boys move about over the boarded floor ; this is because they wear no boots or shoes. I sometimes envy them the feelings of freedom and coolness which they must enjoy when going barefoot in this hot climate. Occasionally a boy whose parents are well-to-do, or who wishes to pose as something of a dandy before his school-fellows, will come to school in shoes, but this is very exceptional. A good many, indeed the majority, wear trousers, and all without exception have a shirt or jacket under their lamba.

Generally speaking, these lads are a bright, light-hearted, merry set of fellows, at least so far as we come across them in our work. They seem to get on very amicably with each other, and it is very seldom that I have had to take any of them in hand for fighting or bullying ; but of course as ours is only a day school there may be much more of this than comes under our notice. In school they are very well behaved, though I think some of them find the restrictions of discipline rather irksome, and they would be glad to chatter a good deal more than we find convenient to allow them ; but of sulky, obstinate, 'pig-headed' boys, I have happily scarcely met with any examples. They enjoy a joke immensely, and are very easily put into a good humour.

But I am sorry to say many of them show a sad want of truthfulness, especially when they first come to us; but this is not at all to be wondered at when such a low standard of honesty and truth-speaking

A GROUP OF HOVA SCHOOLBOYS.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

is so often set before them in their own homes. There too they often hear a great deal of filthy conversation and bad language, which they are only too quick to learn and imitate; but still I feel persuaded

that there are not a few who are trying amidst great temptations to live pure and good lives.

'But what about their lessons? what do you teach them? Are they quick at learning?' I think I hear some of you asking. Well, when once the novelty of teaching the owners of olive-brown skins in a strange language has worn off, one finds school work here not so very different from what it is in England. On the whole, I think the Malagasy scholars need not be ashamed to compare in quickness and ability with their English brothers and sisters. If you were to go round from schoolroom to schoolroom at different hours of the day, you would find the children learning Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry, Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar, and Geography, Singing, Physics, Chemistry, &c., just as in an English school, and instead of Latin and Greek, French or German, you would find they devoted a good deal of time to the learning of English.

And very funny mistakes, too, the Malagasy boys and young men often make in their attempts at English translation or letter-writing. One man, wishing to encourage a recently arrived missionary in his early difficulties in learning the language, said to him: 'You shall soon have capacity in the Malagasy language.' And another youth, writing to a missionary in the country, kindly enquired: 'Who are you? and who is your wife?' meaning, of course, 'How are you? and how is your wife?' and one of the boys in our first class once, when translating the twenty-third Psalm into English, rendered the fifth verse: 'You *mend* a table before me,' &c., the same word being used in Malagasy both for 'mend' and 'prepare.'

Of course, too, absurd answers to examination questions are to be met with in school work here, just as in England. I have been informed by a Malagasy student that a 'circle is a figure bounded by one straight line called the circumference.'

In Madagascar, as in England, the time for the prize-giving and breaking up' is eagerly looked forward to, and scores of boys never miss a single school-time all through the half-year, and come with

unfailing punctuality, in the hopes of getting a prize when the great day arrives. Their diligence is not entirely due to this cause, for I know that many of them have a real love for their school work. I remember the case of a youth in one of our lower classes who lived a long distance from town, and who used in the middle of winter to start out from home before sunrise, and without breakfast ; and then in the middle of the day, having no one in town with whom to eat rice, he would wait about the school premises until the time for afternoon school arrived ; then in the evening return home, hungry and tired, to eat his only substantial meal during the day. When I heard what he was doing I could not let him continue thus, but invited him to come and take his dinner with my palanquin-bearers. Another scholar was some time ago so ill with heart disease, that the doctor advised him to discontinue attending school for a time ; but the poor lad begged and prayed his father not to keep him at home, saying that he had rather die than not go to learn.

At the half-yearly prize-giving, the articles which take a Malagasy boy's fancy most are not such as an English schoolboy would choose. Mechanical or scientific toys, such as clockwork mice, humming-tops, and magnifying glasses, they do not seem to appreciate, but articles of utility, such as pocket-knives, manuscript books, pencils, &c., are in great demand.

Malagasy is a very sweet-sounding, musical language ; there are no harsh clicks or grating guttural sounds, and no awkward combinations of consonants ; moreover every word, and every syllable even, ends in a vowel ; so you may imagine that it is beautiful language for singing. If you were to take up a book written in Malagasy, I expect you would be struck with the extraordinary length and curious appearance of some of the words. Those of you who are interested in grammar may like to hear how these serpent-like words are formed.

Here then we start with a little word called a root. As an example I will take *vèly*, which means 'struck.' Now by adding letters on at the beginning and end of this word we can get all kinds

of different shades of meaning, as you will see below. The root is printed in italics all down the column, and so may be easily distinguished.

vely	struck.
mi*vely*	to beat (a drum, &c.).
fi*vely*	an instrument used for striking.
mam*ely*	to strike or abuse.
mpam*ely*	a striker or abuser.
mifam*ely*	to strike each other.
mampam*ely*	to cause to strike.
mampifam*ely*	to cause to strike each other.
*velez*ina	being struck.
am*elez*ana	cause, time, place, &c., of striking.
fam*elez*ana	ordinary instrument, time, place, &c., for striking.
ampifam*elez*ina	made to strike each other.
hampifam*elez*ina	will be made to strike each other.
hampifam*elivelez*inareo	will be made by you to keep on striking or abusing each other.

Now this looks very hard, but if any of you should hereafter come out as missionaries to Madagascar, you will find that the language is not difficult after all; and I am sure that missionaries who go to China must have much more to discourage them in this respect than we in Madagascar have.

Here is a verse of a hymn in Malagasy which goes to the tune of 'Jesus loves me,' and I have given the English translation word for word below each line:—

'Jèso o! Mpitìa anày,
Jesus O! Lover-of us
Màminày ny tèninào
Sweet-to-us (*the*) *thy-words*,
Òsa nỳ fanàhinày,
Weak (*the*) *our-spirits*
Fà mahèry Hìanào;
But strong Thou.
Màmy, ry Jèso,
Sweet, O Jesus,
Ny fítiávanào.
(*The*) *thy-love.*'

Besides the high schools for boys and girls conducted by the missionary societies in the capital, there is a school in the palace, at which many of the sons of the Malagasy officers and courtiers learn, and in which a missionary of the London Missionary Society helps with the teaching. There are also schools connected with the various churches in town, in which little children, both boys and girls, learn.

Now on this bright sunshiny morning we will take a peep at one of the schools in the country, a long distance away from town. The building, which is both chapel and school, is roughly built of mud or red clay, laid in courses and dried in the sun ; the roof is covered with a broad-leaved flag-like plant, or with long dry grass ; on one side of the building there are a door and two windows, another door being usually placed at one end opposite the pulpit ; the remaining side and end being left quite blank, as a protection from the cold winds. Glass is, of course, an almost unheard-of thing, except in some of the best-built churches.

On entering we see no forms or desks, or at best only one or two of a very primitive and rickety construction ; but otherwise there is no furniture about the place except the teacher's black-board, and possibly a small table or reading-desk. A raised platform of dried mud at one end, with a mud wall or rough wooden railing, does duty for a pulpit. The walls are either left with the bare mud plaster, or are whitewashed and, occasionally, adorned with wonderful drawings of impossible palm-trees, pine-apples, umbrellas, clocks, &c. The floor is partly covered with rush mats of various degrees of dirt and untidiness, and squatting tailor-fashion on these are the youngsters whom we have come to visit.

Very different in appearance are they from the children whose acquaintance we have made in the high schools in the town. The sharpness and intelligence which we noticed on the faces of the children in the capital is often replaced by a look of stolid indifference or stupidity among the children in dark and distant places in the country. Of course, under proper teaching and training, these boys

and girls would brighten up, and probably show as much ability as their more favoured brothers and sisters in the town.

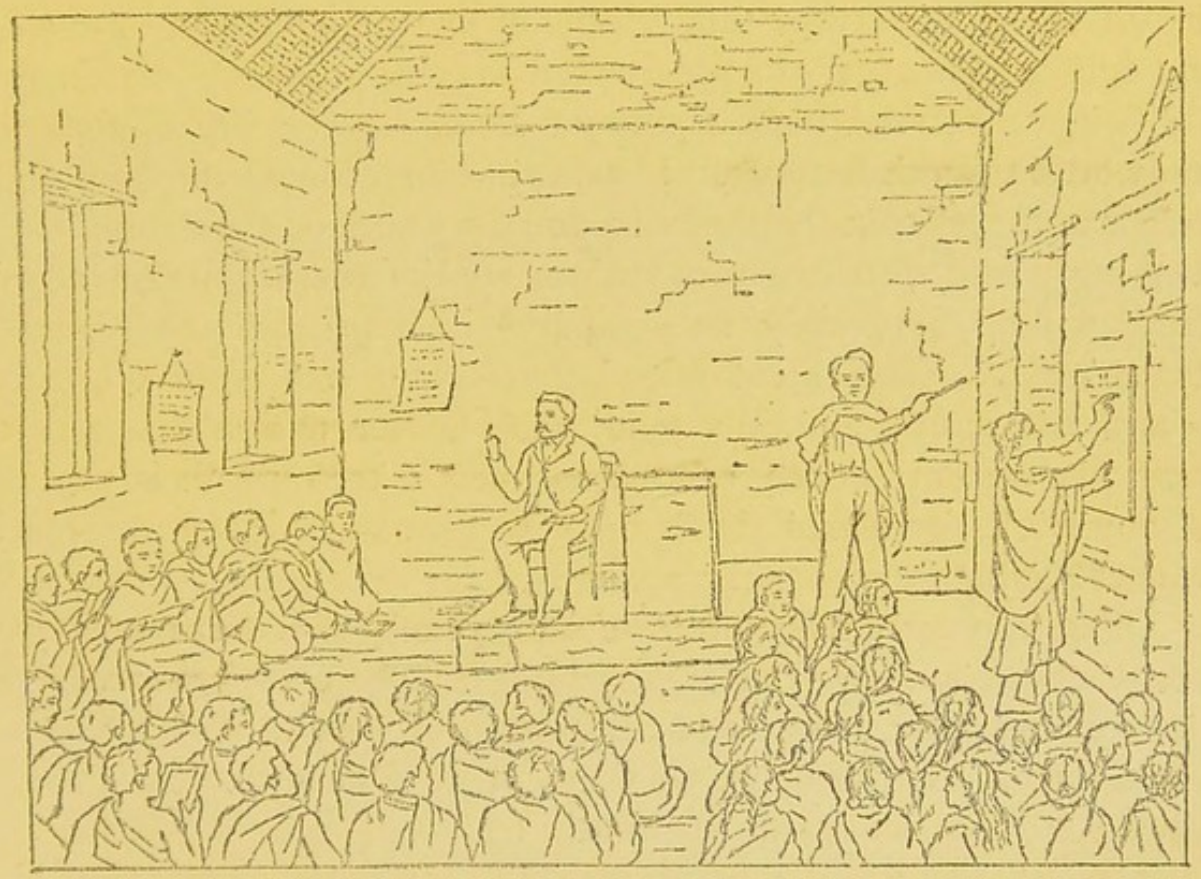
The clothing of the country children is frequently more scanty, coarse, and dirty-looking than that worn by the town children; indeed, strange as it may seem, one can often form a pretty correct idea of the intelligence and advancement of the people by noticing the cleanness or otherwise of their clothes and persons; at all events, one of the first outward and visible effects of advancing knowledge and enlightenment is an improvement in these respects.

The teachers of these country schools have many of them had some little training in town, but as a rule their knowledge and ability to teach are extremely limited; and very arduous and uphill work they must find it to teach a large school of these ignorant country children, with but very little sympathy or help from the parents of their scholars. Too often, indeed, the parents look upon the teacher as a necessary evil, and only send their children to school as a part of their government service; and consequently they are most unwilling to buy books or slates for them, or to give any money towards the teacher's support.

Often, too, after teaching for a number of years in the same place, the teacher comes to the end of his little stock of knowledge, and many of his older scholars have learnt from him all that he can ever teach them. A missionary told me of an amusing case of a poor country teacher who came to him in trouble to ask his advice as to what he should do; for he was, he said, *làny fahàizana*, that is, he had come to an end of his knowledge, and he did not see what more he could do for his scholars.

The great event of the year in the country schools is the visit of the missionary, who comes to *mampiàdy sòratra*, as they say, that is literally, to make the children 'fight at writing,' in other words, to conduct an examination. Great preparations are made for the coming of the white man, and at the time appointed the children from several neighbouring schools are assembled together at one central village, all

dressed in their best, and with clothes, faces, and hands unwontedly clean. All are arranged squatting on the floor in companies, according to their schools; and here hour after hour they will patiently sit, while the missionary examines them in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, and Scripture, until the slant rays of the evening sun come streaming in from the west, changing the mud



A COUNTRY SCHOOL.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

walls of the chapel to glowing ochre and ruddy gold; and then, after a few kind words of encouragement and advice, and a promise that prizes will shortly be sent to those who have acquitted themselves best in the examination, the children are dispersed, and hurry off through the deepening twilight to their various homes in the little hamlets round.

I have been telling you chiefly about the school-children in Imèrina; but it is not only among these that the work of teaching and enlightenment is going on. The Bètsilèo in the south, the Antsihànaka in the north, the Bètsimisàraka in the east, and even the Sàkalàva in the far west, are all coming more or less under the influence of mission work. The children in the Bètsilèo province are, as a rule, more dull and unpromising-looking than the Hovas; but it is wonderful how they will brighten up when brought for a time under the influence of the missionary, as you will see from the following account, which Mr. Fred. Brockway has kindly sent me of his work in North Bètsilèo. He says: 'The Bètsilèo children are, as a rule, small and thin (perhaps through scarcity of food), and there is nothing about them to suggest strength, either of body or mind. Pity is very frequently awakened by the poor, miserable-looking condition of many of the school-children. Some boys will come to school with nothing but a very slight girdle and a dirty piece of coarse hemp cloth hardly enough to cover more than their shoulders. The missionaries would gladly help in cases of real poverty, but it is very difficult to discover the actual state of the matter, as the parents, either from greed or from fear of being thought to have money, will not give their children decent clothes. They seldom wash what clothes they have, in spite of abundance of water. Neither do they bathe, or very seldom, so that the closeness of a class of twenty to fifty of them is next to unbearable.'

Mr. Brockway says that on receiving a new set of boarders about two years ago, most of them were very poor and dull-looking boys, and with a very minute amount of energy in them. 'They preferred sitting about or wandering up to the market to anything else, and it needed a stern order to get them to play a game of rounders or cricket. But under the school influence the change was certainly remarkable. A bright, intellectual look took the place of the former dull appearance, so that they seemed almost to be different persons. It used to be very difficult to get them to wash their clothes or bathe

themselves; now they do it with zest. They will now do voluntarily and diligently things that formerly we could only get them to do very lazily, and by repeated admonitions. And as for amusements, it is quite inspiriting to see their enjoyment of rounders, cricket, and other games. They enter into them almost like English boys. Some were a long time before the brightness of face and action came, but it has come at last. There used to be a considerable deal of fighting at first, but now they live in peace, and more singing than squabbling is heard. And this I believe to be characteristic of the Bètsilèo.

'Under a little careful training and the grace of God, the natural dull stupidity and unattractive looks are replaced by a bright intelligence and attractiveness of feature, which very nearly if not quite attain to that of the Hova. And as with the boys, so too with the girls.

'In examinations they are quite capable of making very odd answers. In a Scripture examination, I once asked where Moses was born, and where he died—the answer to be written on their slates. When the slates were examined, one boy's answer was this: "Born at Mount Sinai, died at Sumatra."'

In speaking of the power of these Bètsilèo children in learning by rote, Mr. Brockway says:—'I have heard that in the country-schools, on the night before the examination, boys will sit up and learn the answers in the Arithmetic-book by heart, that is, of those sums which are most likely to be set. I believe this to be true, and the Bètsilèo have certainly great powers of learning by rote. They can learn much by heart, but almost without any thought as to the meaning. Working arithmetic systematically, or really understanding the reasons of the processes, seems to be very far from them. Boys will read their Bible or learn home lessons by the very imperfect light of the little wood fire on which their rice is cooking. The book is placed with the page almost directly towards the fire, and the boy looks down upon it in a way that does not render the reading very easy, the book being held down perpendicularly.

'Of course, when the examination week is close, the diligence is extraordinary. They have a dread of examinations. Play and recreation are almost entirely given up, for as soon as they are out of school they are at their books, some of them being wise enough to sit out on the grass while learning, and they will keep on till quite dusk, and begin again as soon as the fire is lit. In everything that does not need much calculation they will do very well at the examination, but that in which they fail most is arithmetic, which of course cannot be learnt altogether by rote. Their enjoyment in learning increases with their intelligence, but they are like all boys in being most thankful for an extra half-holiday.'

The Rev. T. Rowlands, in speaking of the people of South Bètsilèo, says:—'The Bètsilèo as a whole are a suspicious, lying, superstitious and lazy kind of people; and the children, however small, have all these propensities. Laziness is as rottenness in their bones, and they will, if left alone, squat about and sleep for hours together. As compared with the Hova children they are naturally dull, slow and sleepy, and it is only by a tremendous effort that most of them can be got to learn at all. The Hova child, if not learning when at school, is probably up to some tricks and mischief; but a Bètsilèo, if not learning, prefers to stare about or sleep. It is very difficult to teach them to read and write well; indeed, I know but very few Bètsilèo who are really good readers or writers, especially the latter.

'Also in the villages, I have noticed a great difference between them and the Hova. If anything is being done, say building a chapel, when the scholars are expected to help, the Hova boys will buckle to and work with energy, while the Bètsilèo will sit and look on, unless they are forced to do something, and will probably take the first chance to run away. However, after they have been in school a short time and have advanced a little, they begin to brighten up, and after a while some of them learn well; still, to get results in the examinations equal to those in Imèrina, the Bètsilèo teachers would have to work very much harder than their brethren in Imèrina.

'The above applies to the majority of Bètsilèo children, but I have seen some splendid exceptions. I have one young man who learnt to read, write *well*, and do arithmetic up to compound division, in very little over one year. He was further trained here for three years, and at the teachers' examination last Christmas (1886) at Fianàrantsòa, he was prizeman for the whole of the Bètsilèo. He and many others show that the Bètsilèo are *capable* of doing more than they care to do.

'Their skins, too, seem very thick, as a thrashing does them but little good. As Topsy says, they do not consider it sufficient "to kill a 'skeeter.'" But compare a scholar (though he may not deserve the appellation) with an ordinary *Andrìambòhitra* (the name by which they are generally called here), and the influence of the school is manifest at once.'

Now from the south let us turn to the people of Antsihànaka, who live in a broad valley or plain about four days' journey to the north of Imèrina. During the latter part of 1886, the Revs. J. Peill and R. Baron paid a visit to this district, visiting the churches and examining the schools; and Mr. Peill has kindly sent me some notes of the work of the native teacher at a place called Anoròro. This village stands on the shores of a large lake called Alàotra. The people are very superstitious and heathenish. On 'bad' or unlucky days no *Vazaha* or foreigner may enter the village; and if it happen to be Sunday, they meet in the church, but will not allow prayer to be offered. They will allow singing, reading, and preaching, but prayer is *fàdy*, or tabooed. In fact, on 'bad' days they do not like any one to offer prayer in the village at all.

They will not let their children wash their clothes. They buy them new and clean things, and these they keep wearing month after month until quite worn out, without once washing them; so you may imagine the filthy state they get into. These people never wash their earthen plates, but eat off them just as they are from month to month. Their houses are frightfully dirty. They get their living by catching

and drying a fish called *fòny*, and the entrails of these fish they throw on the floor and leave them to decay there; so that the floor is in time quite raised with decaying garbage, and the stench is horrible. In summer, when the lake rises, the water often enters their houses, and their reed beds, &c., float in their huts; but this they do not seem to mind much. Once the teacher made an attempt to get the people to be cleaner, and brought a lot of soap to sell to them at a cheap rate; but they preferred their native dirt. Yet the children from homes like these are sharp enough, and can work fractions, know grammar and geography, and read well.

When the teacher, himself a Sihànaka, first settled here, the children cried and ran away from him, and even the grown-up people were afraid of him. If they saw a man with a hat on, they would run away and hide among the flags and reeds on the edge of the lake. The people seeing that the teacher wore trousers, said: 'What sort of a man is this? why, he puts clothes even on his legs!' At one time the teacher got some flower-seeds and sowed them in his garden; but these the people said were the white man's charms. Then they tied charms of their own to his house door and over it; but the flowers, they said, kept him from being injured by them, being more powerful charms than theirs. Once, however, when he was away, they cut them all down.

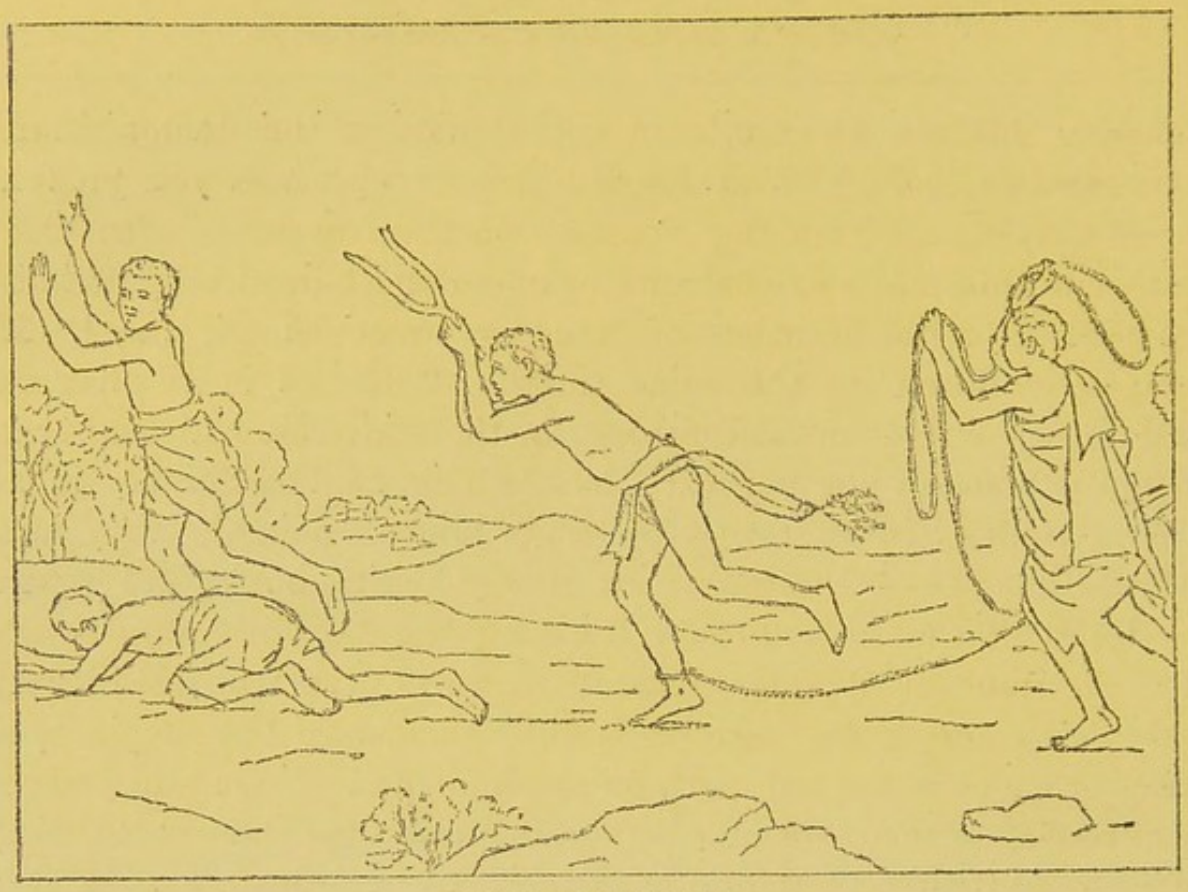
When the teacher taught the children the multiplication table, the parents were greatly astonished; they crowded round so closely that the teacher was nearly stifled. They used to say: 'What kind of reckoning is this? "Seven times seven are forty-nine." Is that true?' So they went off and got a number of stones, and counted them out into seven different heaps of seven each; and then they started and counted them all over again one by one, and were greatly astonished to find that they really came to forty-nine. So then they determined to try the teacher again, and went off and counted some more stones, say eight times nine. Then they came back, and, looking very simple, asked what eight times nine were? 'Seventy-two,' said the teacher.

Then they covered their mouths with their hands in astonishment and exclaimed: 'Difficult indeed is this learning which you get from the white man!'

Again, because the teacher would not swear at them, they stole his things, saying: 'What can he do if we take them? He is a fool. All he can do is to pray!' When the teacher was taken ill of fever, the people, seeing a lot of books in his house, said: 'He will die, for he does not use divination at all. He trusts in all these Bibles in his house.' And once, when he spent ten shillings on books, they said: 'What a fool! He has spent all his money buying books and papers. He is trusting in all those papers in his house.'

When the new church was built, the teacher, who was still ill, went to superintend the work. 'When it is finished,' said the people, 'you will see God in this house.' 'How?' replied the teacher: 'do you see your ancestors when you pray to them at the tombs?' 'No,' they answered. 'Neither do I see God,' said the teacher, 'for He is a Spirit.' 'Whenever did you hear of an unseen God?' they replied. 'He made the grass,' said the teacher, 'and flowers, and this Lake Alàotra; for if not, who did? Did you? Did your ancestors?' This logic was too much for them. 'After all,' some of them said, 'there is this unseen God.'

Sunday-schools have made very great strides among the Malagasy children during the last few years. There is now a Sunday-school connected with each of the nine town churches of the London Missionary Society and the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, as well as with the Palace church, and they are being rapidly established in many of the country districts. These institutions appear to be very popular with the children in town. No doubt the annual feasts and entertainments, and the great interest the Queen and Prime Minister have shown in the movement, contribute to this result.



PLAYING AT OXEN.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

CHAPTER VI.

GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS.

Do not many of my young readers remember a time, not so very long since, when to be a 'man like papa' or a 'lady like mamma' was the height of their ambition! Well, boy and girl nature is the same all the world over, and here in Madagascar you may see boys wearing false moustaches and little girls carrying roots of manioc about upon their backs for babies, and evidently thinking quite as much of themselves as their little English brothers and sisters when playing similar games.

In all countries many of the amusements of the children consist in copying the doings of the grown-up people. Certainly this is the case in Madagascar; and by studying some of the games of the

Malagasy children we may learn not a little of the doings of their fathers and mothers. What English boy or girl does not know the fun of playing at 'making houses,' whether in-doors with chairs, tables, curtains, and sofa-cushions, or under the blue sky in the leafy summer-time with branches of trees or sweet-scented hay? The Malagasy children do the same thing. I do not mean that they build houses with chairs and tables (for these are rare articles in most Malagasy houses), nor yet with hay, which can hardly be said to exist in Madagascar, but they do make houses, nevertheless. Often the little slave boys who tend their masters' cattle out on the prairies and slopes of the hills through the long hot days of spring-time, or when the rains of summer descend in torrents, or the bleak winter winds howl across the country, amuse themselves by digging out houses or caves in the red earth on the hill-sides. Sometimes when a storm comes on they will take refuge in these little houses from the driving rain, though certainly a wetting does not mean very much to them, as they have very little besides their own black skins to get wet. I have heard a sad story of a number of boys who dug out a large house in this way in the side of a gorge hollowed out by the rain. On a cold day they went into it and huddled together to keep warm, when the earth above them gave way, and they were all buried alive, and were quite dead before they were missed and could be dug out.

Another favourite game, chiefly with little slave boys, is playing at oxen. The great humped cattle, in which the wealth of many of the Malagasy so largely consists, are often very cruelly treated, especially just before being killed. A crowd of men and boys will collect round the poor animal, and worry and chase it about until it is nearly mad with rage and pain. They will tie a stout rope to its horns, and another to one of its hind legs, and pull it about this way and that, and pelt it with sticks and stones, and the more adventurous will even leap upon its neck and wrestle with it. Not unfrequently, however, a sad and sudden end is put to their cruel sport, for the

infuriated animal manages to catch some one and gore him with his long sharp horns, often causing instant death. Notwithstanding these frequent accidents, the practice still continues, though I think there is some improvement of late years, at any rate in the capital. Since even grown-up men will join in tormenting the cattle in this way, we cannot wonder that young boys should learn to copy them in their games. A number of children having assembled, and provided themselves with a widely branching forked stick and one or more ropes, they choose one boy to be the *òmby*, and then the others all set upon this one and chase him about, and jump upon him and throw noosed ropes at him, calling out wildly all the time: *Singòry! Singòry! Iantandròhy! Tolòmy! Alavòy ò!*—'Lasso him! Lasso him! Catch him by the horns! Wrestle with him! Throw him down!' He meanwhile runs about chasing them hither and thither, and trying to poke them with the forked stick which he holds out in front of him to represent horns. At length they overpower him, and having thrown him to the ground, tie his hands and feet up together with a string or cloth, just as the feet of the oxen are tied when about to be killed. Then they get a piece of reed or stick for a knife, with which one of them pretends to cut his throat, the others all dancing round and crying out: 'Cut him! Cut him! Divide him up! Bring the plates! Catch the blood!' Then having finished him off and cut him up to their satisfaction, they all go home carrying stones or sods with them to represent pieces of meat.

I fancy most English children have at one time or other played at funerals, probably over some pet canary bird, cat or rabbit. Now you will be interested in hearing that Malagasy children amuse themselves in just the same way. Having chosen a suitable place, they first of all make a tomb; for in this country a man generally makes his own tomb during his lifetime, and very often spends far more money over it than he does over his house, so that you may often see people living in a poor mud house, but with a fine tomb of worked stone in the yard outside. So too they will wear nothing but thin

cotton garments during their lifetime, and save up their money in order to buy a grand red silk lamba to wrap their corpse in when they die. While out once for a stroll in the country during our summer holiday, a little girl, apparently a slave, joined us and walked along some distance with our native nurses. The latter asked her whose slave she was. 'Oh,' she said, 'I am not a slave at all. I am a Hova.' 'Then why don't you wear a decent lamba?' 'If I wear one now,' was her reply, 'I shall not have one to be buried in when I die.'

Having finished their toy tomb, the next thing is to find a corpse to bury in it. This generally consists of a grasshopper, which they catch and put to death and then wrap up in broad leaves for lambas, tying it tightly round and round, just as is done with real corpses. Then a funeral procession is formed, and the dead grasshopper is carried with mock mourning and laid in the tomb. The burial ceremony being completed, the door of the tomb is closed and banked up with earth, and all go off to their homes.

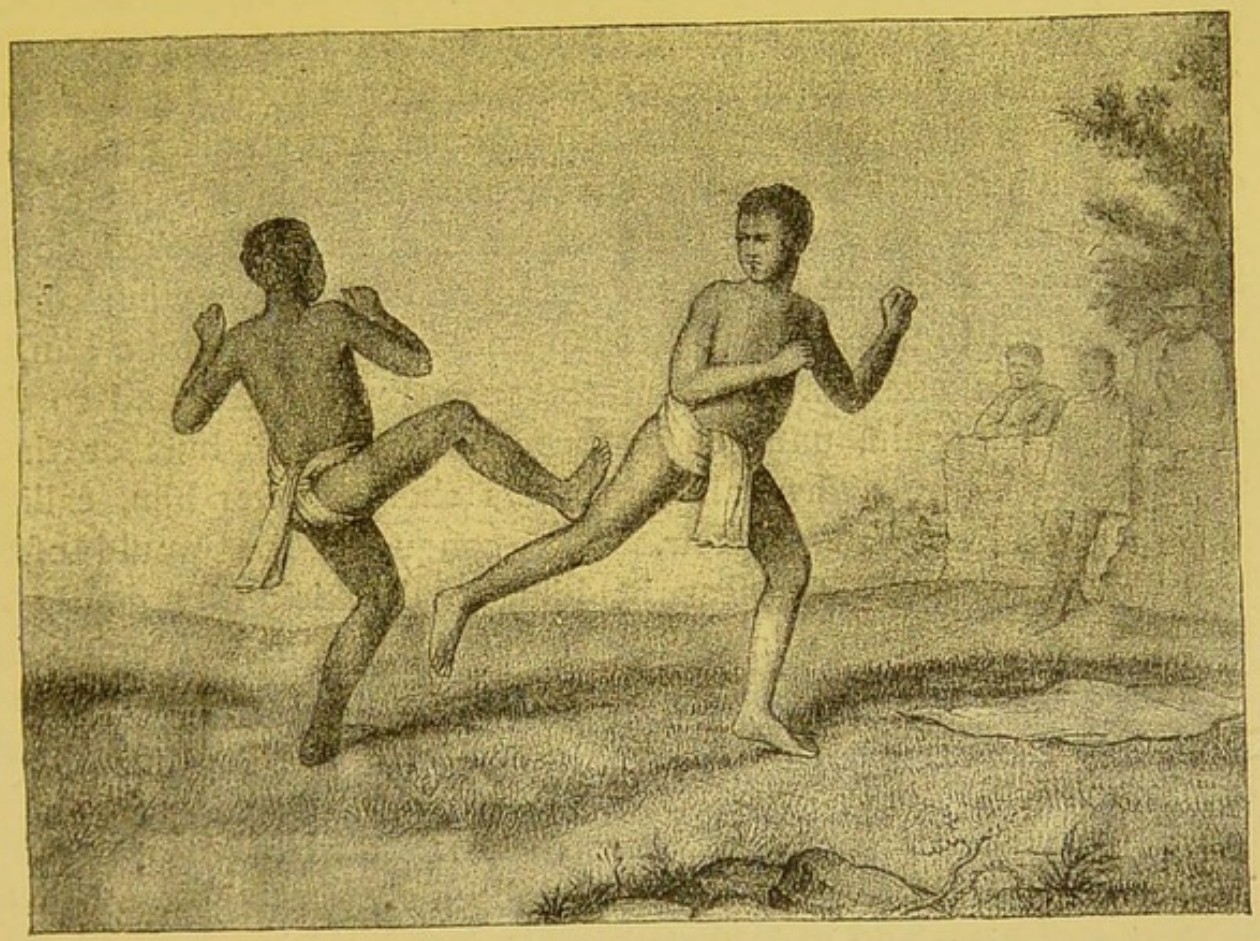
But the game is not yet over, for a very strange practice is common here, called *mamàdika*, literally, a 'turning over' of the corpse. After a certain period has elapsed, often several years, the corpse is taken out of the tomb, and, being placed on a sort of bier or stretcher, is carried off into the village with a great deal of noise, shouting, and drum-beating, after which it is wrapped in new lambas, and either returned to its former resting-place or reburied in a new and grander tomb. Of course the sham funeral would not be complete without this part of the performance ; so after three or four days the youngsters meet together again, and the tomb is opened, and the dead grasshopper taken out and carried round in state in the manner I have described.

A game which is perhaps as great a favourite as any with girls and young children is called *Kindrìandrìana*. This name literally means 'the little princes,' but it is really more like playing with dolls than anything else ; but the dolls are nothing more than little

pieces of earthenware, glass, and white rock-crystal. These they are very clever in grinding down on stones into various shapes,—generally small and round, like a pearl shirt-button, or long, narrow, and flat, about the length of a pin and the breadth of a lucifer match. The glass is often melted and made into little drops or bulbs of various colours. These different materials and shapes all have special meanings. The bits of glass stand for princes or nobles, the earthenware for the common people, and the little stones for slaves. The long ones represent men, and the small round ones women. Having first gathered a number of common brightly coloured flowers, they sit down on the ground and mark off a little enclosure for a garden, and in this they arrange the flowers they have got, sticking them in the earth at some little distance apart, to stand for a plantation of trees. They then mark off another part of the enclosure to represent the house, dividing it into rooms, and imagining all kinds of furniture and fittings, just as in a real house. These preparations having been satisfactorily completed, the real game begins; this consists in taking the little bits of glass and earthenware mentioned above, and making them each represent some real personage. There will be two of the largest and finest for the lady and gentleman who own the house; others will stand for their children; others, again, for their relatives, friends, or slaves. Then they will tell wonderful stories about the doings of these various personages, the adventures they go through, and the good luck or calamities that befall them, just as English children invent all sorts of stories in connection with their dolls. The little bits of glass and earthenware are meanwhile moved hither and thither as the story progresses, being made to undergo or perform all that is said about them.

One game which used to be very popular in Madagascar, but which is now forbidden by law, is called *Diamànga*. This is a sort of fight, in which the combatants do their best to injure and disable each other by kicking. This is not quite so barbarous as it might appear at first sight, since of course nearly all the boys go barefoot. They

do not use their toes, for this would hurt them more than their antagonists, but they have a peculiar way of turning round and striking out behind, giving their opponent a blow with the heel. A skilful player is able to aim very correctly, and will reach as high as his own head, so that he will often strike his adversary a blow in the mouth or on the cheek. It used to be a common practice in the old heathen



THE KICKING GAME.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

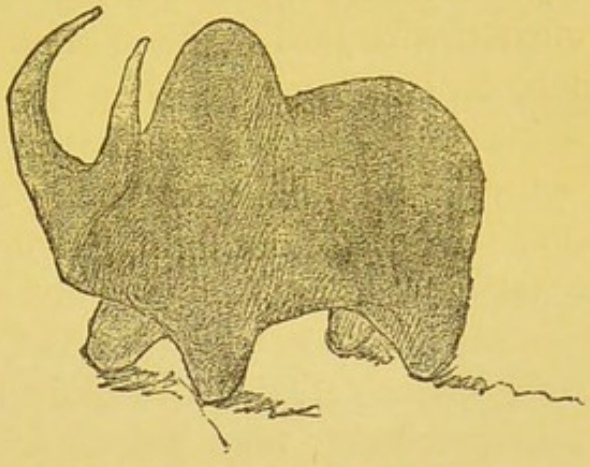
days for hundreds of men and boys to turn out on bright moonlight nights in the winter-time to play at this kicking game. When the rice was all reaped, and the fields were dry and hard, large numbers would assemble on the great plains round the capital for a night's sport. The game was played in different ways: sometimes a number would

meet together and divide into two companies, and a general fight would ensue; often two would be chosen or challenge each other to a single combat; and then the rest would encourage and urge them on, saying, 'Let neither of you be afraid, for you are both born men. May neither of you get the worst of it, for you have each been smeared with lard by his mother;' then each party incited their own man, telling him to 'chop his opponent up like sugar-cane,' and asking him, 'Is he your child, that you should be tender-hearted towards him? Is he a relative of yours, that you should grieve over him?' Then the fight began, and sometimes they struck each other on the head, sometimes on the cheek, sometimes in the pit of the stomach; and when one got the worst of it and was knocked down, his opponent called out to him to 'get up and come on again;' or he would pretend to take him on his lap and fondle and stroke him, in derision. This often incited him to renew the contest, and so the fight went on again, until at last one was so much hurt or tired that he ran away. Then all the others shouted after him, calling him a good-for-nothing fellow. The conqueror too would often go after him, and having caught him, would kick him gently in scorn, at each kick saying, 'It gives me pleasure! I enjoy it! Even a flea would bite you, much more I, a human being.' At last the poor fellow was allowed to escape, and ran home thoroughly discomfited.

A game which causes great amusement is called *Bìby àhitra*, that is, the 'grass monster.' A boy having been chosen to be dressed up as the beast, his whole body from head to foot is thickly covered over with a kind of long trailing grass. This is firmly tied on to him, each arm being made to terminate in a sort of switch or lash; a long tail and a pointed hat, also of grass, completing the 'get up.' He presents a very ludicrous appearance, heightened by his comical antics and awkward gait. He runs about hither and thither, trying to catch his companions, or attempting to lash them with the whips on his hands; they meanwhile dance around and scatter from him

wherever he turns, the more adventurous running up behind and catching him by the tail, or otherwise maltreating him.

Many young Malagasy children are quite clever at making models of various animals and objects in fine clay, and these they play with much in the way that English children do with bought toys. A short time ago I made friends with some little slave lads out in the country, and got them to make me a number of clay oxen; here is a copy of one of these drawn by one of the boys in our school.



CLAY MODEL OF AN OX.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

I am sorry to say that one of the chief diversions of many of the ignorant slave lads consists in tormenting poor helpless animals. As very many of these children are entirely neglected and allowed to run wild, with no one to teach them or show them the cruelty of such practices, one need not be much surprised that they find amusement in teasing dumb animals, and making them fight. It is sad to think of the thousands of poor creatures—oxen, dogs, cocks, chameleons, mice, lizards, snakes, crickets, ants, and many others—whose cries are constantly going up before God; and if the missionaries often feel grieved and oppressed at all the cruelty they see around them, how much more must He, without whose knowledge not even a sparrow can fall to the ground, and whose tender mercies are over all His works!

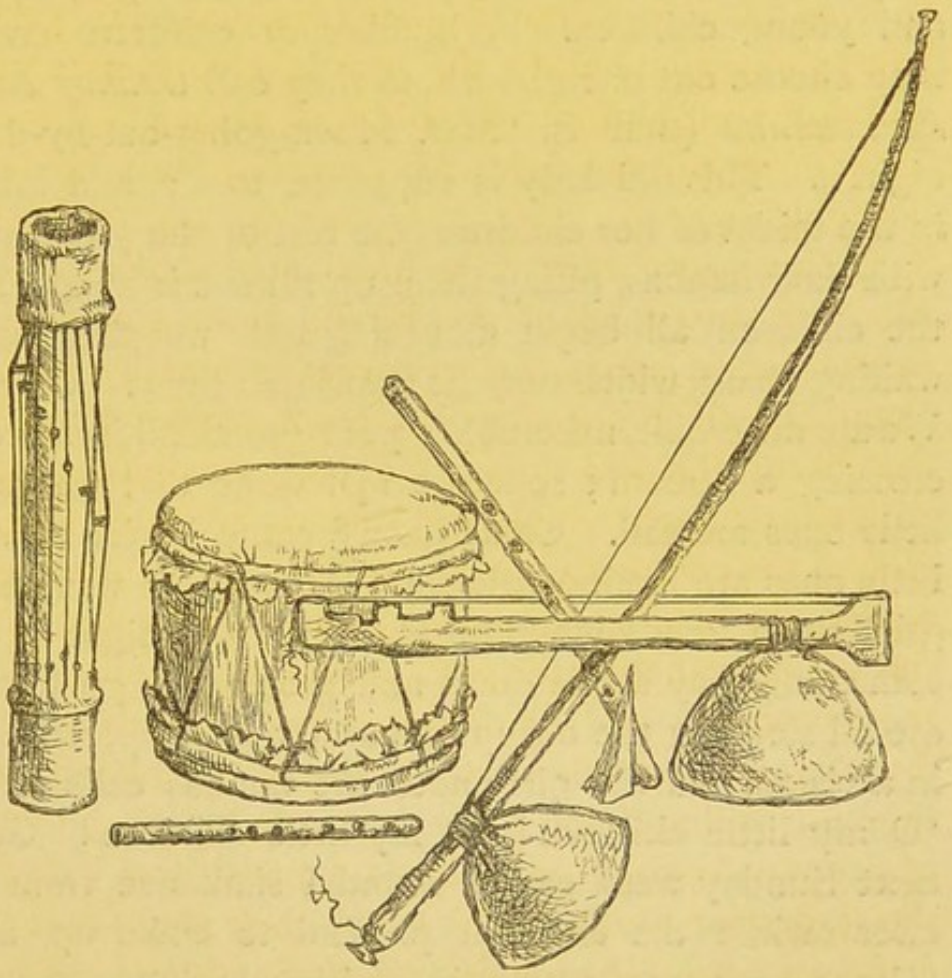
This is how they make crickets fight:—Having found one cricket, they pull off its feet or claws, and then let it go; these feet they then fasten to the end of a long piece of grass, which they poke down the holes of other crickets, saying, while they do so: 'Fight, you fellow, it is a hard thing to die, and life is sweet.' Then, if the cricket catches hold, he is hauled up. When a considerable number have been collected in this way, a small square hole or pit is dug in the ground,

and the crickets are put down two by two to fight, each boy squeezing his own cricket, to make it angry, and making a little speech telling it to be brave and 'hold the four corners of the pit.' As soon as one of them gets the worst of it, its owner takes it on the palm of one hand and pats it with the fingers of the other, counting as he does so—I suppose still further to enrage it—and then finishes up by speaking to it as follows: 'Your mother says, you fellow, "If that child of mine won't fight, give him to the lizards, give him to the owls; but if he will fight, put him into the big cooking-pot." Now, you fellow, fight!' Then, if he will not fight, the cruel lad pulls his feet off, or kills him outright.

But now we turn to a pleasanter subject. The Malagasy, as a rule, are very fond of music, and learn singing very quickly. The purely native songs, however, are generally somewhat monotonous chants, in which one sings a kind of recitative, while the rest join in the chorus, the solo-singer frequently accompanying himself on some native instrument. Toy instruments are often made by the children. One of the commonest of these is a curious little kettle-drum made of a piece of bladder stretched tightly across the broken-off mouth or rim of an earthen water-pot. The little urchins who congregate about the meat stalls and markets get much amusement out of these little drums, and very clever they are too in playing them. The words they use in describing the noise made by this and another larger kind of drum will, when pronounced quickly, give you a very good idea of the respective rhythms with which they play them; these are; *Fà-ra-la-hi-tà-ka-tra, Fà-ra-la-hi-tà-ka-tra* and *Ki-dò-mba-ra-mbì-ta, Ki-dò-mba-ra-mbì-ta.*

But another still more primitive kind of drum is made by the little slave boys who tend the cattle in the country. This consists of a small hole dug into the ground, some four or five inches in diameter, and perhaps a foot deep; on the mouth of this hole a cake of dry cow-dung is placed, and over this the long stalk of a kind of trailing grass is stretched, being supported in the middle by a piece of stick,

and fixed into the ground at each end with stones. This grass, when stretched tense, and strummed on with little sticks, gives out quite a hollow musical note. Another somewhat similar instrument they call by a name which means *earth shell.* This consists of two cavities in the earth, having small openings above, and a little passage or pipe connecting them below. If properly made, on blowing sharply into one of these holes, the air within is set vibrating, and quite a loud horn-like note is emitted.



MALAGASY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

Another curious instrument, called *jèjilàva,* is made by fastening to one end of a long stick a piece of string. This string is then stretched tight, so as to bend the stick, as in making a bow. Then a small box is made of the thin dry outer peel of the banana-tree. In this a few grains of dry white rice are placed, and the box is then hung across the string, and forms a sort of resonator. In playing, the bow is held in the left hand and pressed against the chest, the fingers of the left hand grasping the string, and moving up and down to alter the note, while

the right hand holds the little loop attached to the sounding box and at the same time strikes or twangs the stretched cord.

Little fifes are also ingeniously made from bamboos and other plants, even soft-stemmed weeds, onion-leaves, and rice-straw, being used for this purpose.

I will now mention two or three games played especially by girls and young children. A number of children having met together, they choose out one girl whom they call *Granny Ravòlanamàtiàndro-kavèlonàlina* (that is, 'Mrs. Moon-going-out-by-day-but-shining-by-night'). This old lady is supposed to die, and her corpse is placed in the midst of her children (the rest of the girls), who cover her over with their lambas, piling them up till she is almost smothered. Then the children all begin mourning and weeping, and sing a sort of wailing chant, which may be translated thus: 'O granny! O granny! We are miserable, miserable; your grandchildren are like locust-grubs crossing a stream; so wake up! wake up! we say; for the many little ones are sad. Come back! come back! we say; for the many little ones are famine-stricken.' They go on weeping and telling their grief for a long time, until at length the night is supposed to have come, and they all lie down and pretend to go to sleep. While they are all sleeping the old grandmother is supposed to appear to them in a vision, and the girl under the lambas calls out in a thin voice: 'O my little children! O my little children! Get ready, for when next Sunday week comes round I shall rise from the dead.' Then after awhile the children pretend to wake up, and they all say: 'Granny appeared to me in a vision, and told me that she is going to rise from the dead.' Then, after waiting again for a short time, they exclaim, 'The time has come.' Then the girl under the lambas rises up and pushes the clothes off from her back, and all the others cluster round her, patting her all over, and calling out, 'Pat old granny, pat old granny.' Then there are great rejoicings, and the youngsters go dancing and capering round, some of them singing, and others beating an accompaniment on their breasts, and calling out all the

time, '*Kodònga Rambìta, Kodòngo-dàhy, Kodònga Rambìta, Kodòngo-dàhy,*' in imitation of the sound of a drum.

A favourite game is a little like 'oranges and lemons.' The children all take hands and form a ring, two of the biggest girls taking their places side by side in one part of the circle. These girls act as leaders, and, separating a little, they raise their hands while still clasped, so as to form a sort of arch, still holding the hands of their neighbours on each side. Then these two leaders call to the rest in a pretty little song, saying: 'We bid you come, we bid you.' The rest all reply: 'We won't go there, we won't go.' The leaders ask: 'And why not come, and why not?' 'There's neither rice nor arum,' is the reply. The leaders then call out: 'It is Mr. Cardinal-bird's[1] house.' The children then all pass under the upraised hands of the leaders, beginning at one side of the gate thus formed, and still holding hands as they pass through, so that the ring, as it were, turns inside out, the two 'gate-posts' finally turning round, so as to face the ring as newly formed. While the youngsters are still running under, the song is continued, the leaders calling out: 'It's Mr. Cardinal-bird's house,' and the rest answering: 'It's a red house.' You may be interested in seeing the Malagasy words of this little play song put to the music to which they sing it. Key, G or F.

The leaders.	:s	s :-.f :m	r :-.r :d	d :— :—	s :
	Ma-	-na - sa ray	la - hy ma-	-na -	-s'ê
	Na-	-hoa - na ray	la - hy na-	-hoa -	-n'ê
	:	: :	: :	: :	:
The rest.	:	: :	: :	: :	:
	:s	s :-.f :m	r :-.r :d	m :— :—	r :—
	Tsy	ho a - ny ray	la - hy tsy	ho a -	-ny ê
	Tsy	va - ry ray	la - hy tsy	sao -	-njo ê

	s[1]	d
The leaders.	Tranon - rafodila-	-hy
The rest.	Trano mè -	-na

[1] The cardinal-bird, or *fòdy*, is very common in Imèrina. It is about as large as a sparrow, and during the pairing time, in the hot season, the plumage of the male bird is almost entirely a brilliant scarlet. It does much damage to the rice-crops.

Another interesting game is played as follows. The girls all sit round in a circle, as in 'hunt the slipper,' but holding hands, while one is chosen to remain standing outside. This girl then says: 'I am going to fetch water from the spring.' The others answer: 'May you find a husband there.' Soon she comes back, saying: 'My water-pot is broken.' 'Serves you right,' they answer. Then she goes off again, and soon returns as before, saying: 'My lamba is lost.' 'Serves you right,' they again reply. Then this girl who is 'out' tries to make her way in between the hands of the girls sitting down, saying: 'Is there a road here?' Then they all answer: 'There are thorns planted here.' So she goes on all round the ring, and at last is allowed to pass inside. Then she asks the first girl: 'Have you any fire here?' 'Yes, I have,' she replies, 'but it is stone fire' (or flint). Then she goes on round the ring, asking the same question and receiving the same answer, until she comes to the first girl again, who this time gives her a little dust or earth, which is supposed to be the fire. Then she takes this all round as before, saying: 'Please blow this for me; I can't get it to light.' The others each answer: 'I can't blow it, for I have lost my teeth.' So she goes on, until some one, either purposely or without thinking, blows it for her. The others then all deride and shout at this one, and so the game ends.

One of the most extraordinary games played by little Malagasy children is called 'Putting out [literally, 'killing'] stars.' On a bright starlight evening, after they have been having a good romp, and are tired of playing at more active games, one of them proposes that they should 'put out stars.' Then having fixed upon some one star 'to be killed,' one of them bends down and covers her face with her hands, and begins calling the star names, somewhat as follows: 'You're a hoax, sheep-dung, tomato, castor-oil seed,' &c. After repeating this over and over for some time, she calls out to her companions: 'Is that ill-omened thing dead yet?' They answer: 'Not yet.' Then she goes on again as before; and so they will continue sometimes for

half-an-hour, or even an hour, until a passing cloud may chance to hide the star.

The season of the annual festival of the *Fandròana*, or bath, is a great time of rejoicing to the youngsters, much as Christmas is to English children. There are very many curious and interesting practices in connection with this festival, some of which seem to suggest a connection with the Jewish Passover. Thus on a certain night in every house some animal is killed (generally a fowl or duck), and some of the blood used formerly to be (and still is occasionally) sprinkled on the door-post, just as the Jews do with the blood of the Paschal lamb.

The great ceremony of this feast is that of bathing, from which it derives its name. On one night—the Queen's birthday—her Majesty bathes in the palace in great state, with all her great officers and heads of clans about her ; the next evening is the time for the people to bathe. At sundown on these two evenings a very pretty and interesting sight may be seen in Antanànarìvo, and far and wide through all the surrounding country. As the sunset glow fades out of the western sky little twinkling lights appear one by one over the whole landscape, as far as the eye can reach. It is as though the stars were making a mistake and coming out on the earth below instead of in the sky overhead ; and from all sides we hear a chorus of children's voices calling out, '*Oie! oie! oie!*' If we look into our nearest neighbour's compound we shall soon see what the little fires mean. It is the children, who for some days before have been collecting or buying long dried grass, which they have made into small bundles and tied on the ends of long sticks ; and these being lighted, they are waving and swaying them about in the air or carrying them hither and thither in great glee, all the time emitting a monotonous long-drawn cry of '*O-i-i-i-e! O-i-i-i-e!*' The origin of this curious practice is lost in obscurity, but no doubt it is very ancient, and probably in past times had some superstitious associations connected with it.

Another game which is also a great favourite with the Malagasy girls at the *Fandròana* is called *Fàmpitàha* (rivalling). This is a very pretty and interesting game, though it has many objectionable features; in fact, it can hardly be called a game at all, as the spirit of rivalry and jealousy runs so high. The parties concerned are generally the girls from two neighbouring villages, who challenge each other to a

FÀMPITÀHA.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

contest of singing and dancing. Each party makes active preparations for the great event. Two of the best singers and most graceful dancers, having been chosen by their companions, are dressed up in the most costly clothes and ornaments they can command. Even silk and satin dresses and expensive coral armlets will be worn; while the poorer girls content themselves with clean gaily coloured cotton

lambas, and in place of more costly ornaments deck themselves with wreaths of gay flowers. On the day appointed the rival companies meet, and each in turn puts forward one of their champions to try and sing and dance the other down. The first contest is between the second best on each side, but this is merely an introduction, for the real tug of war begins when the champion dancer from each side is put forward. Often crowds of spectators will be present; and the supporters and sympathisers of each party will loudly cheer and encourage their respective champions. At times the feeling of rivalry has been known to run so high that the parents of the girls or other onlookers have come to blows. The girl who is soonest exhausted or who makes the least favourable impression is considered defeated, and she with her companions returns home disconsolate. You may imagine what heart-burnings and jealousies this game gives rise to.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE SLAVES.

A BOY ten or twelve years old costs in Madagascar just about as much as a donkey, namely five or six pounds; while the price of a girl of the same age is about equal to that of a small pony. Every Friday at the great market in the capital, men, women, and children of all ages may be seen exposed for sale; and intending purchasers examine them and discuss their good and bad points, and haggle over their price, just as if they were so many horses or dogs.

This slavery is the great curse of Madagascar; for I am sorry to tell you that very few indeed, even of the Christian men and women, appear to realise what a great evil it is. Many Christian masters and mistresses are no doubt kind to their slaves, and remember that they have souls to be saved, and that for them as well as for themselves Christ has died. But very many, on the other hand, treat their slaves with great cruelty, and seem to regard them as no better than so many cows or sheep. Sometimes when the poor slaves want to go to chapel on Sunday morning, the master will say: 'No, slaves do not pray; your only business is to serve your master.' Many, again, who take their slaves to chapel with them, only do so because they wish to be thought well off, and because they would be ashamed to go without a number of followers.

The missionaries sometimes hear very sad stories of the cruel treatment which the slaves suffer at the hands of heartless masters;

and no doubt a very great deal goes on that never comes to their knowledge at all. If a slave happens to do something displeasing to his master, he will often beat him most unmercifully, sometimes so brutally that he dies from his injuries. I heard recently of a case in which a slave who had vexed his master was bound hand and foot with ropes, and then his master and mistress and their son all set upon him together; the master thrashing him with a rope, the woman pinching and slapping him, and the son kicking him. After this had continued some time the slave could cry no longer, but became quite insensible. Then his master carried him off and locked him up in a room in the house. After two or three hours some of the neighbours, who had heard the youth's screams, becoming suspicious, came to the house to see what had happened. When the door was opened they found the slave nearly at his last gasp. Then the master and mistress began to be alarmed, lest they should be punished by the law for murder; for some of the onlookers sent in haste to let the chief of the police know what had happened, and soon crowds of people, hearing what had taken place, collected round the house.

Presently the word of the Queen came down, saying: 'If that slave dies, then the man, woman and boy who beat him shall die too; and if he lives, he shall be a slave no longer, but I will set him free, to be one of my subjects.' As soon as the master heard that, he was in a terrible state of alarm, and himself went for a doctor to try and save the slave's life. The doctor when he arrived applied some remedies, which happily were successful in bringing the poor man round.

Slaves who have offended their master have heavy irons riveted on their feet, and whenever they go to work, whether in the house or in the rice-field, or carrying loads on the public road, and even when they go to sleep, they must take their chains about with them. A slave chained with heavy irons in this way met a fierce ox in a narrow path between two walls. Not being able to run away, he tried to climb over one of the walls by the roadside, but on account of the heavy chains on his feet he could not get his legs up, and the savage animal

caught him and gored him to death on the spot. The cruel master would not even take the irons off his dead body, but had him buried just as he was.

Sometimes when a slave is disobedient, or makes a mistake in the business his master has told him to do, he will have heavy blocks of wood put on his hands and feet, and be thrust into a vile stinking hole, more offensive than those in which the cattle are penned. Here he will be half-starved for several days, until he becomes quite weak and emaciated. No wonder that slaves who are treated in this way try to take their own life. No wonder, too, that many of them run away, preferring to risk the chance of recapture or death by starvation, rather than endure the tortures to which they are subjected.

Another terrible evil connected with slavery, which, though forbidden by law, is still only too common, is the breaking up and separation of families. Indeed, the slaves often can hardly be said to know what real family life is. Their children are not their own, but belong to the owner of the mother; and of course he can do what he likes with them. Little babies not yet able to talk, and only just learning to walk, are thus cruelly separated from their mothers and carried away, never to know a mother's love and care again. This is what a native friend of mine says in describing their condition:—'Alas! the misery of these children; nearly every day they cease not to weep, but keep up their crying continually. Sometimes they quite faint away, and have perforce to stop for a time because they can cry no longer. When they call for their mother to take them in her arms or carry them on her back, there is no one to answer them, for she is as though dead to them. Having no nurse, the little child sits helplessly all day long by the wall of the house; and sometimes the master does not feed it, and it goes about out-of-doors picking up all kinds of garbage. Many of these children die, some from hunger, and some from eating unsuitable things, and some from constant crying, and from diseases brought on through want of proper care.'

Even when the mother and child live in the same neighbourhood

they are sometimes not allowed to see each other. The child's mistress will not let the little one go to its mother, 'for fear it should be bewitched, or lest she should run away with it;' and the mother's owner will not let her go to see her child, saying: 'She is always stealing the food out of the house to take to her child, and in a very short time we shall have none left at all.'

Of course the lot of all the slaves is not equally hard. Many are fairly comfortable, and not a few live with their master's children quite like members of the family. Some are allowed to come to school and learn, though these are comparatively few. The moral condition of the slave children is almost totally neglected; and they very early learn to lie and steal, and fall into all kinds of bad ways.

I have already in previous chapters told you about the occupations and amusements of the little Malagasy slaves. In the country the chief business of the boys consists in tending cattle and sheep, and in getting fodder for the oxen fattening in the pits in the villages. These little fellows, on the whole, have a pretty easy life, and find many ways of amusing themselves, although one cannot help pitying them, especially in the cold days and still colder nights of the dry season, with hardly anything to cover them, while we Europeans can scarcely keep ourselves warm with thick clothing. Happily, they are not so sensitive to cold as we are, or they could not live through the winter months.

While their cattle are quietly feeding on the prairies or in the green valleys, the youngsters have plenty of leisure to enjoy themselves. They amuse themselves by digging out houses in the earth, into which they creep when the rain comes on; often, too, when they are hungry or cold they will make a fire of cow-dung, and sit warming themselves while they cook sweet potatoes and manioc, or gold fish which they have caught in the neighbouring rice-swamps and rivers. Sometimes, when two or three lads go off together to cut fodder, they will get some stalks of papyrus or of a strong flag-like plant, and having stuck these upright in the ground they will strike at them in

turn with their fodder-knives, and he who succeeds in making the longest cut is considered free to enjoy himself the whole day long, and his companions are expected to cut enough grass for them all. The chief work of the little slave girls lies about the house, and consists in helping to pound and winnow the rice, feeding the grass fire at which it is cooked, minding the fowls, nursing her master's children, carrying water, running errands, feeding the silkworms, &c.

But some of you may ask: 'Where did these slaves of the Malagasy come from? How came they to be slaves?' Formerly a great many negroes used to be brought over from Africa by Arab traders, and sold to the Malagasy as slaves; but I am glad to say that the British Government have succeeded in inducing the Malagasy to set these all free; and now no more can be brought into the country. Most of the little slaves whom the Hovas now hold are children or descendants of captives whom they brought to Imèrina during the time when they were at war with the outlying tribes. Very many of these were taken captive during the reign of the heathen Queen Ràvavàlona I.; and dreadful stories are told of the cruelty shown by the Hovas in these wars.

The following extract from a book by two of the early missionaries,[1] showing how the inhabitants of one village were treated, may be taken as an example:—'The village was almost inaccessible, and within it were ten or twelve powerful chieftains and their people. The officers, finding it would be almost impossible to take the village by force, employed stratagem, and endeavoured to persuade the people to submit, promising, in the strongest terms, that, if they would quietly deliver up their arms, no one should injure them. This was done for three days successively. At length a division of opinion arose among the chieftains themselves; some were disposed to place confidence in the Hovas, and others as strongly resisted a measure so full of danger. One end of the village was connected with a large forest, and the latter party made their escape there during the night.

[1] Freeman and Johns' *Persecution of the Christians in Madagascar*, chap. ii.

About 20,000 persons, however, remained, and these being again assured of the most friendly dispositions towards them, delivered up their muskets, spears, &c. They were surrounded by soldiers, and all the men found able to carry a spear were ordered to pass from one circle of soldiers to another, while the women and children remained within the first circle. They were carefully examined as they passed along, to see whether they had yet concealed any weapons about them. The soldiers then commenced tying their hands with cords. The poor deluded villagers now saw their fatal mistake; death awaited them. Those that were not yet bound made a desperate rush through the soldiers, and some few of them got outside the circle, but were soon killed by the soldiers. Those that were bound were killed at leisure the following day. The carnage commenced early in the morning and lasted until late in the afternoon. The army then returned flushed with their success to the capital, bringing 13,000 captives.'

It is now only among the outlying heathen tribes that the practice of making slaves of the prisoners taken in war continues; but even in Imèrina a great deal of kidnapping constantly goes on, and many men make their living by stealing or buying children, and selling or exchanging them for cattle among the Sàkalàva or other tribes. Often the children thus kidnapped are already slaves, so for them the change of masters may possibly at times be for the better; but frequently Hova children are carried off and sold into slavery, and at times even in the capital children disappear mysteriously and are never heard of again.

It is in the country, however, that these kidnappers generally find easiest work. They have many devices for enticing children away. Sometimes when little lads are out tending cattle alone at some distance from the town, these men-stealers will come up, and pretend at first to be very friendly with them, making it appear that they know their parents and friends, and giving them food, and even helping them to mind their cattle; and having thus gained the boys' confi-

dence, they leave them for the present, mentioning that they will be coming again on such and such a day.

The children, greatly pleased with their new friends, do not fail to turn up at the same place at the time mentioned. When the men feel sure that they have thoroughly gained the children's confidence, they make some excuse for getting them a long distance away from the village. Here, when night comes on, they give them a good supper, and quiet their fears by telling them that they shall return home in the morning. But at dead of night, when the children are sleeping soundly, the men raise the cry of robbers, and at once, each taking a child on his back, they hurry off with all possible speed, not stopping till they have left the neighbourhood far behind, and are well on their journey down country.

Sometimes children who have let the cattle stray among the manioc plantations, or done something else for which they fear a beating, will be afraid to go home at night, and so sleep out of doors outside the village gates. To carry such as these off is very easy work for the thieves, especially as the lad's friends do not trouble themselves much about him, thinking that he will turn up again all right after a time. Greedy, gluttonous children, whose stomachs get the better of their good sense, fall an easy prey to the kidnappers, as the latter have only to tempt them with meat and fruit, and the youngsters are ready to follow them anywhere.

Frequently, as I have said, little Hova children are carried away in this manner and sold into slavery ; but to entice away those who are already slaves is often an easier matter still, especially if the child happen to have a hard master. Sometimes in this case the robbers will even have the impudence to go and make friends with the child's parents, and offer, 'out of friendship,' to get the child safely away for them to some distant place ; the parents agreeing themselves to follow after a time. But having once got the child away, the robbers sell him on their own account.

In some parts of the country kidnapping is carried on in a much

more open and high-handed way. The following account has been kindly sent me by Mr. Fred. Brockway, of Ambòsitra in North Bètsilèo :—' Last May (1886), some very serious raids occurred to the west of us, causing considerable excitement throughout the country. One instance will be enough to show how these robbers carry on their business. Early one morning approaching the town, they aroused the people by throwing stones against the houses, with the intention of bringing them out to see what was the matter, and then having despatched the men, to make off with the women and children. The people in the houses had no doubt what it meant, and preferred to stay within. Then the robbers, seeing that their first plan had failed, approached the houses and set fire to the thatch. The inmates then had either to stay within and be burned, or come out and be shot, speared, or captured. In this way the town was sacked, several men were shot, and a number of women and children carried off into the west to be sold as slaves. A few promising boys and girls were among the unfortunate captives. Those who escaped and those from the outlying villages took refuge for the most part in caves about the hills, and lived as best they could for some time in these unhappy circumstances. From other villages, where there was fear of similar attacks, the people fled to caves, and the children could not be persuaded to go to school even, so that some of the teachers came to us and asked permission to divide, in order that they might teach the children in the several caves where they had taken refuge.'

It is sad to think of the terrible fate which probably awaited the poor children thus sold away into the Sàkalàva country. Many of the Hova, as we have seen, are unkind enough to their slaves, but the Sàkalàva are far worse. They often marry the Hova women and girls whom they purchase ; and a terrible life of drudgery and degradation it is to be the wife of a Sàkalàva. When bringing food to place before her lord and master, she must crouch down like a dog, for if she does not *mandàdy tsàra,* that is, 'creep properly,' she is in danger of being shot on the spot. If she is seen conversing with a

Hova trader, it is as much as her life is worth. If she looks sad, and her master fears she will run away, he will sometimes burn the soles of her feet with hot irons, and as soon as the scars heal and the woman is able to walk, he repeats the operation. A lady belonging to a noble family in a district near the Ankàratra Mountains was treated in this way. While still a young woman she was enticed away by a bad man and sold to a Sàkalàva, and after twenty years of fearful suffering she was found by an evangelist sent out by the Imèrina Church Union. You may imagine the joy of her friends on hearing that she was still alive. They at once sent off a number of men with money to purchase her freedom ; but her master, having long since tired of her, was willing to exchange her for ten oxen. How shall I describe the joy of her mother and friends when she arrived at her native town? For a whole week the sounds of music scarcely ceased night and day, scores of oxen were killed, and the houses would hardly hold the crowds of people who flocked in to take part in the rejoicings.

As I have stated, very many of even the truly Christian people do not yet seem to see the evil of holding their fellow-creatures in bondage, though there have been a few cases in which slave-holders, feeling the sinfulness of the practice, have braved the opposition and ill-will of their fellow-countrymen, and set their slaves free ; and there are evidently many more whose consciences are very uneasy in this matter. Will you not pray that God will in His mercy hasten the time when this dark blot on the Christianity of the Malagasy, this terrible hindrance to the progress of the Gospel here, shall be removed ? I cannot tell you all the fearful evils connected with the slavery in Madagascar, but I hope that what I have told you will be enough to raise in your hearts feelings both of sadness and thankfulness ; sadness for the sufferings of the thousands of poor children who are still held in cruel bondage ; and thankfulness to God that your lot has been cast amidst the happy surroundings of a Christian country.

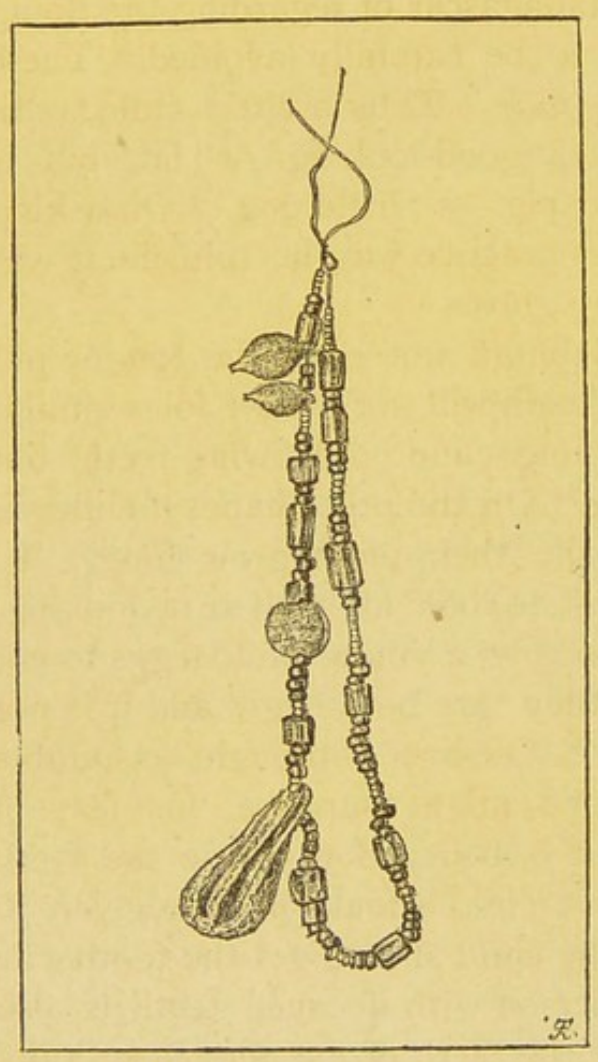
CHAPTER VIII.

MALAGASY SUPERSTITIONS.

MALAGASY mothers are great believers in medicine, and while a baby is still very young it is usually taken at least once a week to some old woman, to be dosed with a drink made from bitter herbs. On reaching the age of three months this nauseous physic is administered four times a week, viz. every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. If it is too fat, the old woman gives it medicine to make it thin; if too thin, she tries to make it fat. It is really a wonder how the poor little creatures manage to live through it at all. Even quite educated people, who ought to know better, allow their children to be taken to these old quack doctresses, and sometimes their friends and relatives will take them off on the sly, even against their parents' express wish.

The Malagasy women also seem to act on the principle that prevention is better than cure, for while a child is still little they often give it a strange decoction, which is supposed to be efficacious in preventing its bones from getting broken. In speaking of the softness of a little child's bones, they say they are *mbòla ràno* (yet water). Now I should tell you that the same word, *òdy*, is used in Malagasy for both 'medicine' and 'charms;' so that it is often difficult to know how far the people look upon even the medicine which the missionaries give them in the light of charms. At any rate, their notions of cause and effect in the matter of physic-taking are very strange, as may be seen by the articles which they use in making

this decoction for strengthening the bones. The following are some of these:—a *fanòto*, or pestle for pounding rice: a mallet used by carpenters in striking their chisels (these being used for beating and striking, are supposed to be typical of strength); rat-dung (this they say is used because the rat is an animal which is able to fall and tumble about anywhere without getting its bones broken); a small basket used for measuring rice (this being made of tough peel of the papyrus plant is very strong, and may be tossed about or thrown down without any fear of breaking). These things are steeped in boiling water, which the child is made to drink, and at the same time its limbs and body are rubbed and squeezed with great force.



A STRING OF MALAGASY CHARMS.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

As I have said, the same Malagasy word is used both for medicine and for charms, and it is evident that they regard many of their *òdy* as having some supernatural power for good or evil. Thus a little child who is cutting its teeth will often have a little necklace of red beads put round its neck to check the flow of saliva from its mouth. Others, again, wear little pieces of wood, metal, shells, &c., on various parts of the body to ward off disease or injury; thus one kind, called *òdy bàsy* ('gun-charm'), is thought to be effectual in protecting against bullets; another, called *òdy tàndroka* ('horn-charm'), is believed to guard the wearer from being gored by a bull; another protects from

crocodiles ; others promote growth, ward off disease, and so on. A very common charm in South Bètsilèo is a round white shell called *fèlana*, which is hung from the neck with or without other charms or ornaments. This is supposed to keep away the evil spirit which makes the individual lose flesh, or is worn where there is fear of being bewitched.

There is a curious custom in Madagascar of regarding the doing of certain things as unlucky, and to be carefully avoided. These prohibited things are spoken of as *fàdy*. Thus a little child, until about a year old, must not be called 'good-looking' or 'fat,' but is spoken of as 'ugly,' or called a 'little pig,' or 'little dog.' On asking an old man what the meaning of this practice was, he told me it was 'for fear the child should be hated by ghosts.'

Again, a child learning to talk should not have the tongue put out at it, as in that case they say its teeth will not grow ; for a similar reason people do not say that a young child is 'growing teeth,' but *manìry bìby*, that is, 'growing animals.' On the other hand, if children sing at meal-times, it is said to make their teeth grow long. To allow a young child, especially a boy, to look at itself in a looking-glass is also considered unlucky. To give a young child eggs to eat is *fàdy*, the reason given being that they 'are both eggs,' and it is not right that they should eat each other! Ox-liver is thought unsuitable food for young children, not, as one might suppose, for fear of upsetting its stomach, but because it is believed to cause the teeth to decay. Again, food prepared for a child should not be given to any one who has the toothache, lest the child should get the toothache also. To look into the mouth of a person with decayed teeth is also objectionable, being thought to cause the teeth of the person so doing to decay too. To extract marrow from bones is also thought to give the toothache. To cut the hair before a meal is considered improper, the reason given being 'that it is not right to take away before adding.' To dress the hair, wash the face, or cut the nails by night, are all unlucky. Other practices are also to be avoided by night,

such as to shout, whistle, or carry mutton, for fear of being followed by ghosts. And should a person be called to by ghosts, he must by no means answer, or death will be the result of his rashness. Similarly, should persons when travelling through the forest happen to get separated, they must be careful not to call out each other's names, for fear the ghosts should answer them and lure them to destruction.

To lie down at night without a light in the room is also *fàdy*, for this is like the dead, who lie in the dark in the tombs. To kiss a child's hand is to be carefully avoided, as it is said that the youngster so treated will become selfish and beg for everything it sees. To kiss a young child at all is considered objectionable, as it is thought that any disease which the person doing so may have is very likely to be caught by the little one. To nurse a child on the knees is thought to give it some disease.

Children are cautioned not to give anything, and then want it back again; the reason given for which is very remarkable, viz. lest it cause the death of their mother! Again, a son may not sit on a chair while his father is sitting on the ground, and may not take up his spoon before him when eating rice, nor precede him when walking, nor drink before him at a spring. Now these all seem very proper observances, and appear to show a dutiful spirit on the part of the children towards their parents; but you will be surprised to hear that some of these practices are not the results of filial respect at all; the reason given why a son should not drink before his father, is for fear of causing the death of the ducks and geese.

It is *fàdy* for boys to play with slings, throw stones, or make flutes of rice-straw, while the rice is still standing in the fields, as these practices are believed to bring on destructive hail-storms. A child must not make a strumming noise with his fingers on his lips, as this is believed to cause famine. To burn a knot on a string is unlucky, for this 'causes the knees to grow big.' To allow a child to play among green trees towards evening is to be very carefully avoided,

for fear it should be followed by evil spirits. Children and young people are advised not to plant trees, especially the màngo, zahana, and Indian lilac, as it is feared that to do so will cause them to die young.

I have several times, in the foregoing pages, spoken of the diviners, or *mpisikìdy*. These men are supposed to be able to foretell events, and numbers of people even here in the capital still go to them to get advice on all kinds of subjects. The *mpisikìdy*, when he is going to 'work the oracle,' spreads out a mat before him, on which are marked a number of little squares; on these he arranges in columns in a particular manner a number of beads, seeds, or little stones; and according as these come odd or even, or fall into particular squares, will be the answer sought. There is another class of diviners, who are called *mpanàndro*. These also are supposed to be able to foretell events, and give advice on all manner of subjects; but their method is very different from that of the *mpisikìdy;* they are more like the old astrologers and soothsayers of whom you read in the Bible; and the age of the moon, day of the week, time of the year, &c., give them the information they require.

Often the same man will be both a *mpisikìdy* and *mpanàndro;* and no doubt, in former times, these diviners used to make a very good thing out of the credulity and superstition of the people, who flocked to ask their advice. A man intending to go to a distant part of the country would consult the diviner as to whether his journey was likely to be prosperous or not, when was the best time to start, &c.; and of course the soothsayer did not give his information for nothing, but always received his fee, or some present, from the person consulting him. A man going to build a house would inquire the most favourable time for beginning it; or when intending to marry, he would wish to know the most lucky day for the event to take place.

Again, people attacked with disease, or overtaken by calamity, often send for the *mpisikìdy*, who will lay down a great many rules as to what they are to eat or to abstain from, where or where not to live,

the sort of charm they should wear, and the kind of offering required to appease the anger of the spirits; for many people think that diseases are the work of the spirits of their ancestors, or of the *Vazìmba*. These *Vazìmba* were the former inhabitants of the country, whom the Hova drove out very many years (or perhaps centuries) ago. Their tombs are still pointed out on hill-tops and other places, and are regarded by the people with superstitious dread in many parts of the country. Here people go and pray, and seek to propitiate the spirits of the dead by offering sacrifices to them. Often, on climbing up the hill-tops where these *Vazìmba* are buried, you may find a cock's head stuck up on a sharp stick at the foot of the tomb; some one has been praying there, and has offered up the cock in sacrifice. Sometimes, however, far more dreadful things are done to gain the favour of these spirits, or to avert the evil which they are supposed to be working.

Here is a story which was told me by a relative of the man whose cruelty it describes. She declares it is perfectly true, and that the events related took place during the last year or two. The man to whom the story refers is quite well-to-do, having many oxen and slaves, besides a considerable sum of money. As you will see, he is still a heathen, putting his trust in charms and divination. Two of the slaves of this man who were husband and wife, had a little girl born to them; and about a year after this event, one of the daughters of the master was taken very ill with a fearful disease. In his distress, he took his little daughter to consult the diviners (who also act as doctors, or medicine-men), but the medicine they gave her did no good at all. Then the diviners said that it was a *Vazìmba* who was making the child ill, and that the father must go and kill some oxen at the foot of two mountains called Ambòdikìlo and Manjòla, and take some of their flesh and hair and throw it away. He must also kill some more oxen on the banks of a certain river, and send their bodies floating down the stream. This, the diviners said, would remove the evil influence which was hanging over his child.

He carefully carried out their instructions; but, to his grief, he found his child got no better. At last the diviner told him that the *Vazìmba* who was oppressing his daughter was hard-hearted and cruel, and unless a human being was offered up in sacrifice the girl would not get better. So one day, having sent off the father and mother of the little slave-girl before mentioned to gather herbs and plant manioc a long distance from the house, he caught up this little child in his arms, and hurried off with her to the banks of the stream where he had killed the oxen. Here he took a broken piece of a glass bottle and cut the poor little creature about at every joint all over its body, until the blood gushed out, and it writhed in agony. He did not, however, kill it then, but took it home again. Of course he could not hide its condition from its parents, so he made the excuse that the child had fallen and got badly hurt, and that was the reason why it was bleeding all over.

After two or three days, however, he said to the parents: 'What shall we do? for both your child and mine are ill; and your daughter has an evil influence over all my family, and if she is not killed my child will not get better, but will die.' Then the poor parents pleaded with him, saying: 'Let her be sold to some one else, or send us off to some distant place, but pray do not kill her!' But he would not desist from his evil purpose, and after waiting for some time longer, carried the child off again, this time forbidding the parents to follow him, and threatening to kill them if they attempted to do so.

Having reached a quiet valley far from any houses, and where there were a great number of Sàkalàva tombs, he beat the poor little girl until she was covered with bruises, and blood flowed from her mouth. He did not quite kill her, but left her to die among the tombs. But a friend of her father had followed unobserved, and as soon as the cruel master had gone he went and took the poor child and carried her home and nursed her. The injuries were so great, that after a week of fearful suffering the child died. Then this man sent for the child's father and mother to come and be present at the

funeral; but the master would not let them go, telling them that if they went, or even mourned at all for the child, he should consider that they wished to kill his daughter. The father, however, escaped out of the house and went, but the poor mother was unable to do so.

As soon as the master found out that the man had gone, he sent after him and had him brought back from his child's grave side, and beat him most unmercifully. He then sent to have some fetters made, that he might put him in irons. But the smith, who seems to have been a kind-hearted man, took his time over them, and constantly made excuses for not getting them finished. This gave the poor slave a chance to escape, and three days after his daughter's funeral he made off at dead of night. He was soon missed; a cry was raised, and all the household turned out with torches to look for him. But he had made good his escape, and no doubt his fellow-slaves were in no great hurry to find him.

His master then paid people to hunt for him, but he could not be found. Then the master said that he would give a third of the man's price to any one who should find him; still he could not be found; or at all events no one was willing to betray him to his master. At length some kind-hearted person found him, and went to his master and persuaded him to pay two-thirds of the man's price if he would give him up. He did not, however, intend to give him up at all, but having got the master to agree to pay two-thirds of his price, he paid the other third, and set the man free. The poor woman remained a slave in the house of the murderer of her child; and the man's daughter was no better after all his cruelty.

Notwithstanding these strange superstitions, the people had some belief in the One true God even before the missionaries arrived in the island; indeed, it is said by the Hovas that charms were only introduced into Imèrina during the reign of Andrìanampòinimèrina, the father of Radàma, the king who was reigning when the first English missionaries arrived here. That the people had ideas about the true God some of their old proverbs clearly show. Thus one very common

proverb says: 'Do not think of the silent valley (as a place to commit some crime in), for God is above your head.' Another says: 'There is nothing unknown to God, but He intentionally bows down His head' (so as not to see); which reminds one of Acts xvii. 30, where Paul told the Athenians that 'the time of their ignorance God overlooked' (R. V.). Others speak of God as the protector of the weak and helpless: 'The simple fool should not be cheated, for God is to be feared;' and again: 'A snake that has been killed;—it has no hands to avenge itself, but it waits for God.' Others show a belief in God's truth, and His just judgment on evil; as, 'God loves not evil;' 'God is not to be blamed, the Creator is not to be censured, for it is men who are constantly wandering;' and again: 'It is better to be guilty before men than to be condemned by God.'

These and many other proverbs show that even in the darkest times of Madagascar's history God did not leave Himself without a witness in men's hearts, but here, as in every nation, some glimmerings of the True Light have been shining.

CHAPTER IX.

FABLES AND FAIRY TALES.

MALAGASY children have no story books describing the wonderful adventures of Jack the Giant-Killer, Cinderella, or Little Red Riding-Hood; and pretty coloured picture-books portraying the story of 'The Babes in the Wood,' or 'The Mad Dog,' or 'The Diverting History of John Gilpin,' are utterly unknown to them. Still they have their fairy tales; and many wonderful stories are told about strange mythical personages and dreadful fabulous monsters; and there are many curious and amusing fables, too, which even the grown-up people are fond of telling to each other.

One of the most wonderful of these mythical characters was a giant named Rapèto, who lived in the dim distant past at a village not far from Antanànarìvo, still called after him Ambòhidrapèto—that is, 'Rapèto's town.' His wife, who was named Rasòalào, was the mistress of all the flocks of wild cattle which roamed the plains of Imèrina in those days.

Many wonderful stories are told by old people about this giant. He was so tall that he could, it is said, while cooking his rice at home with one hand, be gathering firewood from the forest (some twenty or thirty miles off) with the other. And a large lake called Itàsy, some two days' journey to the west of the capital, is said to have been formed by him for his wife's cattle to drink at; but another account says that he had a quarrel with a neighbouring chief who owned the

rice-fields which formerly filled the valley where the lake now lies, and that to spite him he took up an immense stone, and, throwing it across the mouth of the valley, dammed up the stream, and so made it into a lake. You will be interested in hearing how he came by his death. One day his only son was crying to have the moon for a plaything, and begged his father to get it for him. His father told him that this would be a very difficult thing to do ; but the boy, who was evidently a spoilt child, still continued his crying, so the giant jumped up and tried to reach the moon with might and main. The moon, however, was angry at his presumption, and kicked him down to the ground, and the force of his fall caused his death.

Two other characters of whom many strange tales are told were named Ikòtofètsy and Màhakà. These were rogues, whose chief delight it was to go about deceiving and injuring people by their cunning and knavish tricks. Generally poor old women and defenceless, unsuspecting people were the objects of their roguish attacks. Here is a specimen of their exploits.

Ikòtofètsy and Màhakà set off one day, and happened to pass by an old couple weeding in their rice-plot. Says Màhakà, 'Come, let us tell them to go home and prepare a meal for us.' 'But what shall we say to them?' replied Ikòtofètsy. 'Oh, I'll manage that,' said Màhakà. Then he called out to the old couple, 'Alas, you poor old people! I suppose you have no children, that you still have to work like this in your old age?'

'No, my son,' said the old man, 'we have no children ; but that can't be helped, for it is the lot which God has given us.'

'Well, you go home and cook the *sakàfo* (meal), and let us weed your rice, for we are really sorry for you.'

'Yes, my son,' said the old man, 'and good luck to you! may you live long and be happy and prosperous, for you are truly like children to us!'

Then the old couple went home and killed their sheep, and prepared a grand dinner ; for they said, 'Even people passing by are

doing us a good turn, and it will be a shame if we have a poor dinner for them.'

But no sooner had the old man and woman gone, than Ikòtofètsy and Màhakà set to work might and main pulling up the rice by the roots. And when they had pulled it all up, they let the water in upon it. So the whole field was covered with glistening water. Then they went to the house.

When they arrived, the old couple were all hurry and bustle, preparing the dinner and receiving them with honour. Then they came in and the dinner was served up, and the fat tail of the sheep, its ribs, and all the best parts of the meat, were put before Ikòtofètsy and Màhakà, and they ate gluttonously.

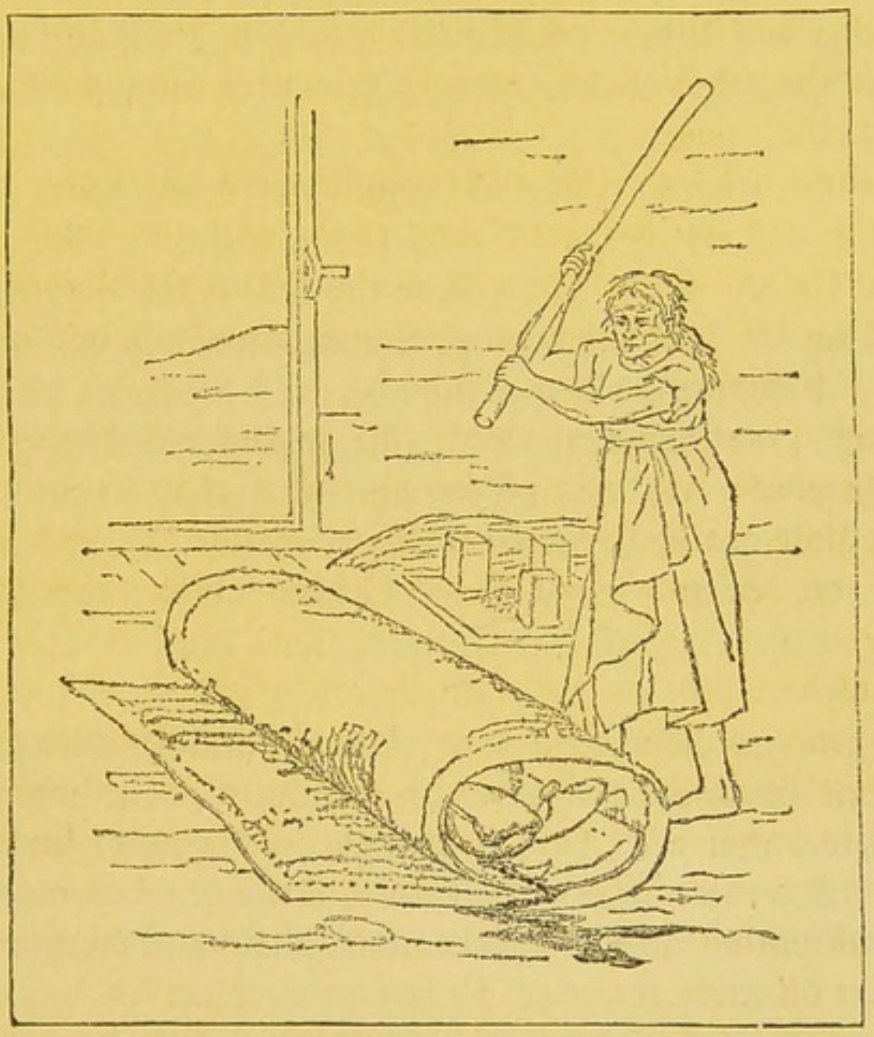
When they had finished, they said to the old woman, 'We are very tired, granny ; will you please spread a mat for us here beside the hearth, that we may rest ourselves awhile? And do you go meanwhile and see how well we've cleared the weeds out of your rice-plot.'

'Yes, and blessings on ye,' said the old woman. Now as soon as the old pair had got out of the gate, Màhakà made haste and took up the old woman's earthen dye-pot, which was full of red dye-water, and placing it down on the mat which the old woman had spread for them, covered it carefully over. Then taking up some of the old lady's ragged clothes and the good man's little mat, which he wore to keep the rain off, they made off as fast as they could.

But the poor old man and his wife, when they saw the rice-plot brimful of water glistening in the sunshine, and their rice all floating about, fell down on their faces in utter despair. But as soon as the old woman could recover her wits, she cried out, 'Quick, old man! after them, for the wretches will still be there!'

Then they set off running ; but the old woman got there first, and looking in she saw them, as she thought, still lying asleep under the mat. Then she tied her lamba tightly round her waist, and took up the big wooden pestle for pounding the rice and brought it down

with all her might upon the mat; of course the dye-pot broke, and the red dye ran out upon the floor. She then, all out of breath, thinking this was blood, called out in glee, 'Now let me spill the other



THE OLD WOMAN BEATING HER DYE-POT.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

wretch's blood about in the same way! for it's too much of a good thing the way they've ruined my rice.'

But when they turned back the mat to look, lo and behold! it was only the dye-pot which was broken, and not Ikòtofètsy and Màhakà's blood at all.

Here is another specimen of their meanness. Once upon a time

there was an old woman tending sheep in a valley. And this old lady, who was called Rafòtsibè, had sore eyes. Ikòtofètsy and Màhakà, happening to be passing, came up to her and saluted her. When they saw that the old woman had sore eyes they told her they were both charm doctors. Rafòtsibè was delighted, and begged them to put some medicine on her eyes. The two rogues of course consented, and getting a very sticky substance they plastered up the poor old woman's eyes so that she could not open them.

Rafòtsibè did not quite like this, so she said: 'Please, sirs, take this off, for I can't see.' Then they replied: 'Have patience, or you cannot be cured.' But the scamps thereupon set to work and carried off all the old woman's sheep, and she, poor creature, could not find her way home; but some one gathering grass for fuel happening to see her, had compassion on her, and led her by the hand up into the town.

These villains at last met with their deserts. They tried on their tricks once too often; for one poor old woman, whom they tried to take in, proved too much for them, and burned them to death, house and all.

There are no lions, bears or tigers found in Madagascar, and nothing more terrible than savages, crocodiles, wild-boars and pole-cats have been met with by Europeans, so far as is known all over the island. But there are vague traditions or reports current among the natives of various strange fabulous animals and wonderful races of human beings which have at times been seen in certain parts of the country. Now I daresay you would like to hear about some of these.

First, then, about the *songòmby*. This is said to be a beast about the size of an ox, and in appearance resembles a donkey with long flapping ears. It eats human beings, and can run very quickly. Not very long since the people in the Bètsilèo province thought that horses were *songòmby* brought from beyond the sea; and it was said that this is how the white man caught them. Having found out the den of a *songòmby*, a trap was laid at the cave's mouth and baited

with a live child. Then the *songòmby*, hearing the child screaming, came out to devour it, but was at once caught in the trap. Evidently the Bètsilèo were much afraid when they saw horses for the first time, as there is a proverb which says: 'Like that foolish Bètsilèo man who says, "How do you do?" to a horse.' Having caught sight of a man, the *songòmby*, it is said, attacks him furiously; but it is the male only which attacks, the part of the female being only to encourage and back him up. Naughty children are sometimes frightened by being told that they will be given to the *songòmby* to eat. It is said that once a cruel mother thrust a naughty child out of doors, saying: 'Here, Mr. Songomby, this is for you.' Then the *songòmby*, hearing his name called, really came. The child, seeing him coming, screamed out in terror: 'Oh! here he is really coming!' But her parents thought she was telling a lie, and so called out: 'Well, let him eat you up then.' When after a while they opened the door, the child was nowhere to be seen. Then they grew alarmed, and calling their neighbours together gave chase. By means of a lantern (for it was night) they could see drops of blood all along the road; following along, they found that these tracks led to the *songòmby's* den; but here they could find nothing save a little hand grasping a plant growing near the mouth of the den.

In several places in Imèrina there are holes and caves which are said to be dens of the *songòmby*. The natives regard these with superstitious dread, though certainly I have never yet met with anyone who says he has himself seen a *songòmby*. Some time ago, in company with a young friend, I explored one of these caves. It is situated near the foot of a high forest-capped hill about fifteen miles to the west of the capital. The school teacher at the neighbouring village conducted us to the spot, which was on a gently sloping prairie near the edge of a small rice-ground. The place presented very much the appearance of an old iron-working, for there had evidently been some kind of excavation, and a considerable quantity of earth had given way and sunk in bodily. At first we could not see the hole,

though our guide pointed out to us its position, for the mouth of it was hidden with long grass and ferns. On descending and pushing aside the rank vegetation, we found a small round hole some four feet in diameter, along the bottom of which a tiny stream of water was tinkling. The sides of the tunnel were adorned with numbers of large black moths both dead and alive, and far down in the dim recesses we could hear the hoarse croaking of a frog. By crouching down nearly double and waddling along, we were able to proceed some little distance, but it was too dark to see more than a few yards from the opening, so we sent a man off to a neighbouring house to get a light. After waiting a few minutes, the man returned with a large wisp of straw, in which were concealed some smouldering embers, and with this we again entered. We soon got the straw into a blaze, and by its light I was able to see round a turning into a small round cavern with a pool of water at the bottom, and beyond this the tunnel again continued, though the opening was apparently too small to have allowed of our going further. Further progress was at any rate out of the question, for by this time we were almost choking with the dense smoke from the blazing straw, and we had to make a precipitate and undignified retreat. I told my Malagasy friends that the stream of water was the only *songòmby* there, for it was evidently that which had tunnelled out this underground channel. I do not know whether they were altogether convinced; but the finding of the other end of the tunnel, with the water trickling down on the edge of the rice-field, rendered our explanation all the more probable.

Another strange monster is called the *tòkan-dìa*. This is said to be a large white animal with only two feet, one in front and one behind, the front one growing out of the middle of its chest. You would imagine that an animal with such an arrangement of legs as this would not be able to run very fast, but, strange to say, this creature can go at a tremendous pace; and however strong and swift the animal may be which it chases, it is sure to overtake it. Like

TRAVELLING IN MADAGASCAR.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

See page 14.

the *songòmby*, the *tòkan-dìa*, they say, goes about by night and eats people.

There is another strange creature said to be seen in the Bètsilèo country called the *kàlanòro*. Of this the following account is given by a native:—According to the belief of the Bètsilèo, these *kàlanòro* were the original inhabitants of the country. They are small people with long nails, and their bodies are covered all over with hair. They live in caves, and are very fond of milk, even venturing into people's houses to obtain it. They go about by night and lick off the chaff adhering to the rice-mortars. Their voice is weak, and their cry almost like that of a bird. Probably the existence of many kinds of lemurs (an animal allied to the monkeys) in Madagascar has given rise to these strange stories of the *kàlanòro*.

It is said that if a person happens to catch one of these *kàlanòro* it will ask, 'Shall I scratch you short, or scratch you long?' If the person replies, 'Scratch me short,' it will bury all its nails at once in his flesh; but if the man says, 'Scratch me long,' it will begin at his head and make one long scratch all down his body, right to his feet. And the Bètsilèo frighten their children when they cry by saying: 'Be quiet, lest the *kàlanòro* should scratch you short.'

I might tell you more curious stories about the strange monsters who, the natives say, are to be met with in various parts of the country, but I must now proceed to give you a few specimens of Malagasy fables. There are a great number of these, and not a few of them are very interesting and amusing, though it is not always safe to accept the moral teaching which they convey. Here is one entitled

The Fly and the Ant.

A fly and an ant once met, and the fly inquired of the ant, 'Who is this?' The ant replied: 'It is I, Mr. Ant.'

The fly began questioning him in a most impertinent and offensive manner as follows: 'Why, what makes you such a hunchback?'

The ant replied: 'It is no light work I have to do in carrying my burdens.' 'What makes your loins so very small?' inquired the fly. 'It is no easy matter digging as I have to do constantly,' replied the ant.

The fly straightway began to speak tauntingly to the ant, saying: 'Poor fellow, what a hard service you have to perform.' The ant replied: 'It is a pleasure to me to work hard in the service of my sovereign, and to make myself a house to dwell in!'

The ant in his turn questioned the fly, saying: 'And who are you?' The fly replied: 'I am a courtier, fellow.' 'And where is your abode, please?' inquired the ant. The fly replied: 'Well now, do you not see yonder immense house of the king? I dwell there in the daytime; I spend my time at the king's table, and at night I sleep on the ceiling.'

The ant was somewhat troubled as to what reply he should make, and considered how he should respond to the fly's vain boasting. The fly, imagining the ant to be nonplussed by his immense importance, began again his teasing, and said: 'Ah! how now, my elder brother? You just simply hear of my being a courtier, and you are in the dumps already. Whatever will happen if I continue my description, and tell you how the king loves me?'

The ant still kept silent, but could not refrain from indulging in a quiet smile. This silence encouraged the fly, and, unable to restrain his pompous vanity, he added: 'How are you, friend ant? Poor thing! he has no time to make himself sharp! When a youth, he creeps along; when an old man, he stoops under his own weight.' The ant then replied softly, and said: 'Come now, younger brother, do not let us make sport of each other; let each of us be content with the appearance God has given us; for if I should only just explain to you your own condition you would be ashamed of yourself.' At this the fly became enraged, and began abusing the ant, calling him a string of most ugly names. 'What can this thing know? Go along with you! How his teeth spread out! How pointed his mouth

is! Look at his little round head! What a little hunchback it is! Look how his breast sticks out! What a thin little waist it has! How his feet and arms spread out! Is he a poor old duffer, or is he ill?' &c.

The ant drew himself up, looked straight at the fly, and said: 'And pray who are you that you make such a rattle?' The fly prepared himself for replying, and, having stroked his wings, said: 'Dare you, sir, prate to me?' 'Why may I not prate to you, pray? Tell me, for I should very much like to know.' Said the fly: 'As I have told you before, I am a courtier who dwells in yonder great house of the king; in the daytime I disport myself at the king's table, and at night I sleep on the ceiling; but now allow me to tell you how much the king loves me.'

'Go on with your tale then,' said the ant. 'I tell you truly, fellow, that the great officers, yea, the princes of the blood, dare not enter the palace unless they first say they wish to enter, and are told to come in. But I, when I wish to go in, never do anything of the kind, for I can enter when and how I like,' said the fly. 'Yes, I know you can go into the palace; but look you here: I notice that the courtiers are cleanly, and therefore you are not happy among them; a sweet odour pervades the palace of the king, and you do not like it; dirt is your enjoyment; whatever stinks gives you a livelihood,' said the ant. The fly blusteringly replied: 'You little lying wretch! I am not happy there, say you? Why then do I sleep there nightly? I have only just now come from the palace.'

The ant looked about him and saw a sloppy place that stank from the filth lying about, and, pointing to it, said: 'Do not boast so foolishly, brother; I know where you love to be; it was only a little while ago that I saw you there' (pointing to the miry place); 'and yet you pretend that a clean palace makes you happy. Yes, truly you are a high-flyer; but low life is your element. You slept in the palace, of a truth; but you were all the while thinking of the filth in which you revel, and so passed a restless night; yes, you have just come

away, for you are not happy unless feasting in filth, and you find no happiness at the king's table. Do not be so fond of boasting, you dirty fellow, for I have caught you napping.'

The fly was startled, for he was getting the worst of the encounter; he was cunning, however, and so he washed his feet, hands, head, and wings, in a trice; he rinsed out his mouth, too, and, unabashed, addressed the ant, saying: 'What dirt is there that cannot be washed off? Where is there any now?' The ant replied: 'Yes; feet, hands, wings and head can be washed; the mouth can be rinsed out, and appear clean; but the stomach, into which all that filth has entered, cannot be washed out unless it be cut open.' At the same time the ant approached the fly, and, showing his teeth, said: 'Come here now, and let me open your dirty stomach with my scissors, and let out all that dirty water.'

The fly had had enough of it, and began to retreat, and spoke to the ant in a very mild tone, saying: 'But you know I should die if you were to cut me open with those scissors of yours.' The ant approached, saying: 'Bosh! you pretend to be so clean, come along now, and let me purify you.' The fly got ready to run away, saying, in a most piteous tone: 'We were only joking, brother, and you have got angry now, and are beginning to abuse me.' The ant replied: 'It was you who began despising and abusing me most unmercifully, when you saw I was a quiet well-disposed person, and I will not let you go away until I see which is the better.'

The fly spread his wings and away he went, saying, as he departed: 'You are envious, brother; you are indulging in dangerous horse-play; do not let us indulge in foolish talk any longer, but let each of us be content in the station to which God has called him.' He went away to the ceiling, and repeated to himself again and again, as he watched the ant: 'Distance lends enchantment to the view.'

That is said to be the reason why flies are so afraid of ants, and why they start if an ant passes by.

The Wild Hog and the Chameleon.

One day a wild hog and a chameleon met in a broad road, and the wild hog said: 'Prince Chameleon, how is it that all your family, whether old or young, walk so awkwardly? I see even the little children waddling along just as you do, and especially is it noticeable in the grown-up chameleons. Is it because you are unwilling to go on, or because you are thinking of turning back, that you all shake about as if you had the ague?'

The chameleon answered: 'The reason why we do so is because we are meditating on the past, and at the same time thinking of the future.' 'Ah!' said the wild boar, 'that is a very good thing.' Then the chameleon asked in his turn: 'But why do you wild boars all stumble and fall about when you walk, and go grabbing at everything that comes in your way?' 'The reason why we do so,' said the boar, 'is because we do not wish to remember the past or to think of the future, for we think that he who gets plenty to eat to-day is happy.'

'Ah,' said the chameleon, 'that's a great mistake.' The wild boar seemed to understand what the chameleon meant, and followed him slowly along the road. After a while, however, the wild boar, when he saw the pace at which the chameleon went, could hold his tongue no longer, but asked: 'But if anything should happen to startle you, Prince Chameleon, are you able to run away?'

'Oh, yes, we can run away,' replied the chameleon. 'Come, then,' said the wild boar, 'and let us run a race to the other side of yonder hill.' 'Very well,' replied the chameleon; 'but let me first climb up this tree and look along the road, for fear anything should befall us by the way.' 'Yes, that is a good idea,' said the wild boar.

Then the chameleon climbed up the tree, and got exactly over the neck of the wild boar. He then called out: 'Now then, off with you!' But just as the wild boar was about to start, the chameleon dropped down out of the tree on to his neck, and clung there. The boar, however, knowing nothing of this, rushed off at full speed. Then,

just as he was reaching the goal they had agreed upon, the chameleon sprang from off his back and coolly stood waiting for him as he arrived all out of breath.

The wild boar then agreed to follow the advice of the chameleon, and enjoined upon all his descendants that they should walk slowly and behave more gently. This wild boar, it is said, was the father of all the domestic pigs.

How the Five Fingers became divided.

One day the little finger said: 'I am hungry.' Then the ring-finger replied: 'If you are hungry, go and steal, that you may have plenty to eat.' The middle finger said: 'Bring enough, that we may all have some.' But the fore-finger replied: 'These are all leading the little one astray; if he steals, won't he be killed?' Then said the thumb: 'I don't at all approve of what these fellows are talking about. I'll separate from them.' That, it is said, is the reason why the five fingers are divided, and why the thumb is separated from the rest.

CHAPTER X.

TRUE STORIES OF MALAGASY CHILDREN.

I.—*A Story of the Persecutions.*

(Translated from a native account.)

DURING the reign of Queen Rabòdonandrìanampòinimèrina, a public proclamation was made that all the Christians, or 'praying people,' as they were called, should accuse themselves to the government, and 'those who do not report themselves,' said the word of the Queen, 'but whom I hear of from others, I shall consider as guilty.'

When the time appointed in the Queen's proclamation arrived, an immense crowd of people assembled at Anàlakèly, a plain to the north-west of the capital. Many of those who had professed Christianity came to report themselves, and some of the great officers of State were sent down by the Queen to hear their statements. Then those who were to accuse themselves came forward one by one, and some of them cursed and swore that they would not pray any more to that Jehovah, 'ancestor of the white men,' and the majority of them professed that they would discontinue the praying altogether.

At last a beautiful young girl came forward, who was the only daughter of her father and mother. When the chief of the Queen's officers saw her, he said: 'Tell me, girl: what do you mean by praying to these ancestors of the white men?' The child looked up at him and replied: 'When I look at your bloodshot eyes' (for the officer was a drunkard) 'and fierce countenance, and hear your dreadful

voice, you would expect that I should tremble and have nothing to answer you, but give way at once ; but look you, now you are sitting in judgment on me, but hereafter both you and I will be judged by Jesus Christ ; now your eyes are red and terrible-looking, and every one who sees you is afraid, but I tell you that hereafter you will be brought face to face with the Great Judge, and you will not be able to abide His gaze.' At this the officer was angry, and struck the girl on her cheek ; but she immediately turned to him the other, saying : 'There, sir, strike the other too!' The people were astonished on seeing the child's boldness ; and the officer said : 'This girl is bewitched with the white man's charms, and has gone out of her mind.'

When the officers returned to the palace, they told the Queen what had taken place, saying : 'Our lady, there is a little girl who is out of her mind, for she is really not one of the Christians at all.'

That same day those who had accused themselves suffered punishment ; some were fined, some put in irons, and some were '*lost*' (that is, reduced to slavery). And those who were not willing to swear, but held firmly to the 'praying,' were to be put to death : some were to be burned, and some to be thrown over the rocks at Ampàmarìnana. Among the latter was this little girl.

When she came to the place of execution, they made her look at the depth of the precipice down which she was to be hurled ; but still she would not deny her Saviour, for she knew whom she had believed. They made her look on while her companions were rolled over the rock, but even this did not make her give way in the slightest. Then her father and mother came and wept as if their hearts would break, and besought her to deny Christ, but she could not be persuaded. 'Look, child,' said they, 'at the depth of this precipice, down which you are to be hurled ; had you not rather swear than be cast down here ?' But she replied : 'I had rather be thrown down here than thrown into hell.'

When her parents saw they could not frighten her into submission,

they tried to coax her, saying: 'We will give you much money and great wealth, if you will only consent not to pray any more to this Jehovah and Jesus.' But the child replied: 'All the wealth in this world is as nothing to me, I had rather be without than miss the treasure in heaven. Throw me down,' she said to the executioners, 'for my companions have all gone.' Then they took her and wrapped her up in a rush mat, and having tied a rope to her body they let her down over the rocks. But after lowering her some distance they pulled her up again. 'Renounce this Jesus and Jehovah,' said the people standing by; 'do you not wish to live? Look at the sorrow of your parents here!' But still they could make no impression on her. She was now let down a second time, but after lowering her some distance down the face of the cliff they again pulled her up. This was done several times. Her father and mother and the bystanders pleaded with her to renounce her religion; but they could make no impression on her whatever. Pleadings and threats were alike utterly unavailing to make her renounce the religion which she had professed.

Then the Queen was informed of what had been done to the child, and how she still remained immovable. Now the Queen wished very much to save her, on account of her love for her, and because of the girl's beauty, so she said: 'Go, take the child to Anàlakèly again, and proclaim to all the people, saying: "This girl is not a Christian at all, but she is bewitched by the white man's charms; and it is that which makes her so obstinate," so I tell you that she shall be set at liberty.' So a *kabàry*, or proclamation, was made to this effect, and the girl was set at liberty. And from that time till the day of her death, many years afterwards, she remained a steadfast servant of God.

II.—*The Story of Razaka.*

(Translated from a native account.)

The growth of the Christian religion in Madagascar may be compared to the growth of a tree. When it was first planted by the missionaries in the reign of Radama I., the Holy Spirit blew upon it, and the rain of God's grace watered it, and it quickly sprang up and spread abroad, and gave promise of soon coming to perfection. But its beauty did not last long, for soon the winter of persecution came upon this land, and the beautiful tree, which gave promise of such good fruit, was loosened in the soil, and its fair crown of branches became dry and withered, and it seemed to have no life left in it. The black night of idolatry returned again upon Madagascar, and the thick clouds of persecution eclipsed Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. But although Satan had thus brought darkness over the land, God did not allow the darkness to hold undivided sway, for He caused the light of *His lamps* to shine in Madagascar, that is—His saints.

Now the light is shining upon this land, and soon the sun will reach the zenith, and the darkness is gradually fleeing away. Only two or three are now remaining of those early lamps, and recently another has departed never to return; and it is his history which I now wish to relate.

Razaka was born about the year 1814, and died in the year 1884, that is, at the age of seventy. He was a man who resisted sin even unto blood; his enemies pursued him like a greyhound chasing its prey; trouble clung to him as flesh and spirit cling together, and all because his love to Christ was like an inseparable shadow, from which he could not part.

At his birth his parents presented him to the idols, and the days of his youth were marked with many blemishes, for he wasted his

golden years in worshipping idols, and in following evil passions and pride. He was the only son of his parents. His father was chief of the town where he lived; so he grew up to be proud and very obstinate. One day, as he was talking with the school teachers in his village, he made such fun of them that they were greatly offended, and one of them told him that his soul would be lost for ever. When the youth heard this, he grew exceedingly angry, and answered in a rage: 'It is you, who are changing the customs of your ancestors, who will be lost for ever, and perish along with all your shadowy notions.'

His conduct greatly provoked many of the inhabitants of the town, and when people came to do government business at his father's house, and caught sight of this youth, who had the appearance of a human being, but the heart of a brute beast, they would scarcely go in for fear of him.

Such was his character while still a young man; but God, who worked in the heart of Paul, also worked in his heart to change him into a Christian. This is how he was converted:—He used to think a great deal as he noticed how the scholars in the village would not swear and use vile language, as others did; and sometimes when these scholars were talking together they would spell the words, so that Razaka might not understand them. So he forced himself to go and learn in the school, for he said, 'If these fellows should happen to be cursing me, how do I know what the curses are that they are pronouncing on me?'

After learning for a short time in the school he was able to read, and was very diligent in conversing with two Christian men in the village. And these men gave him three books—the Psalms, a Catechism, and a Hymn-book. After this he obtained a copy of the unfinished Bible from the missionary, Mr. Griffiths. He carefully read these holy books, and diligently stored up in his heart the words which he read; and it was these words which so comforted him in his troubles afterwards, and they were to him instead of food when

suffering from hunger. He became thus skilled in the Holy Scriptures, and remembered them well. One missionary in describing him said: 'He is indeed a Bible with legs.' He was a man pierced as with a sword in his heart, and he could find no peace until he became gentle as a lamb.

Then he built a new house near the houses of his Christian friends, that he might be able the better to converse with them, and have the benefit of their guidance. But he did not throw in his lot with them only in time of prosperity, he shared their troubles too; for very soon after this the Queen's proclamation was published, putting a stop to 'the praying'; and of course he was one of those who were liable to be persecuted on this account. But even though the persecution was waxing hot he showed great boldness in disputing about the idols and in showing their utter vanity. It was only God's protecting hand which preserved him at this time from having his head cut off, like so many others.

One day he came upon a certain diviner, and entered into conversation with him. Now this diviner was blind, and he was a wicked, cunning man, who professed to be able to prophesy; and there and then he pretended to tell all about Razaka; but of course it was all guesswork; for the things which he said were only such as were likely to have happened to him, as: 'You have lost a near relative,' &c. As soon as the diviner had finished, Razaka drew near to him and said: 'There is something in my head; you are blind, but perhaps you will put out your finger and show exactly where the little creatures are, that some one who can see may take them off.'

When the sorcerer heard this he was angry, and said: 'If you do not want me to divine for you, be off, and don't tempt me to no purpose in this manner.' Some of the bystanders were surprised at the blind man's want of skill; then the youth roundly rated the old deceiver, saying: 'How does it come to pass that you know all about the things which are a long way off, and which happened a long time ago, but the thing here under your very nose you know

nothing about at all? For my part, I think that if you cannot tell this, then all those other things which you have been saying are nothing but a pack of lies.'

At this the blind man was utterly disconcerted, and had nothing further to say for himself; so the people all went off to their own homes. It was thus that he resisted those diviners who deceived the people.

But there was another trait in his character, which showed that he was a true servant of Jesus Christ. It distressed him to see the Christians persecuted, so he used to hide away those who were fleeing for their lives. Rafaravavy, one of those who came over to England, he specially sheltered in this way. A short time previously to this he was often himself on the point of being arrested, but the Lord protected him.

After this he was impressed as a soldier, and his captain did all he could to distress him; but once while this captain was in a passion Razaka quickly drew a tract on *The Resurrection of the Dead* out of his pocket, and began reading aloud. The captain was smitten in his conscience by the word read, and became a meek-spirited man and a Christian.

On another occasion he was charged with stealing from the palace, and was on the point of being carried off to execution, but from this also he escaped without any difficulty.

Many were the troubles of this kind which threatened to fall on him, especially the hatred he incurred on account of his union with Christ; but God closed up the springs of persecution, that they should not overwhelm him.

After this again (about the year 1852) he was sent by Prince Radàma to the sea-coast along with five of his fellow-Christians. Here they were taken by the Sàkalàvas for spies, and he and four of his companions were sold to a French slave-ship, and carried off as slaves to Bourbon. Here he and his companions were bought by the Roman Catholic missionaries, who were at that time just beginning their operations in Madagascar. The Jesuits endeavoured, both by

persuasion and threats, to make them adopt the Roman Catholic faith, but they would not. 'No, no,' said they. 'We will not change our religion, for it is for this religion that our companions are being put to death in our fatherland.'

After being forced to be baptized and take the communion according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, the Jesuit missionaries made them each a liberal present of money, and allowed them to return to Madagascar. They reached their homes in safety, on account of their reliance on God.

Who would not carry the cross? for to those 'who do so there is an enduring crown.'

III.—*Rasoa, the Idol-keeper's Daughter.*

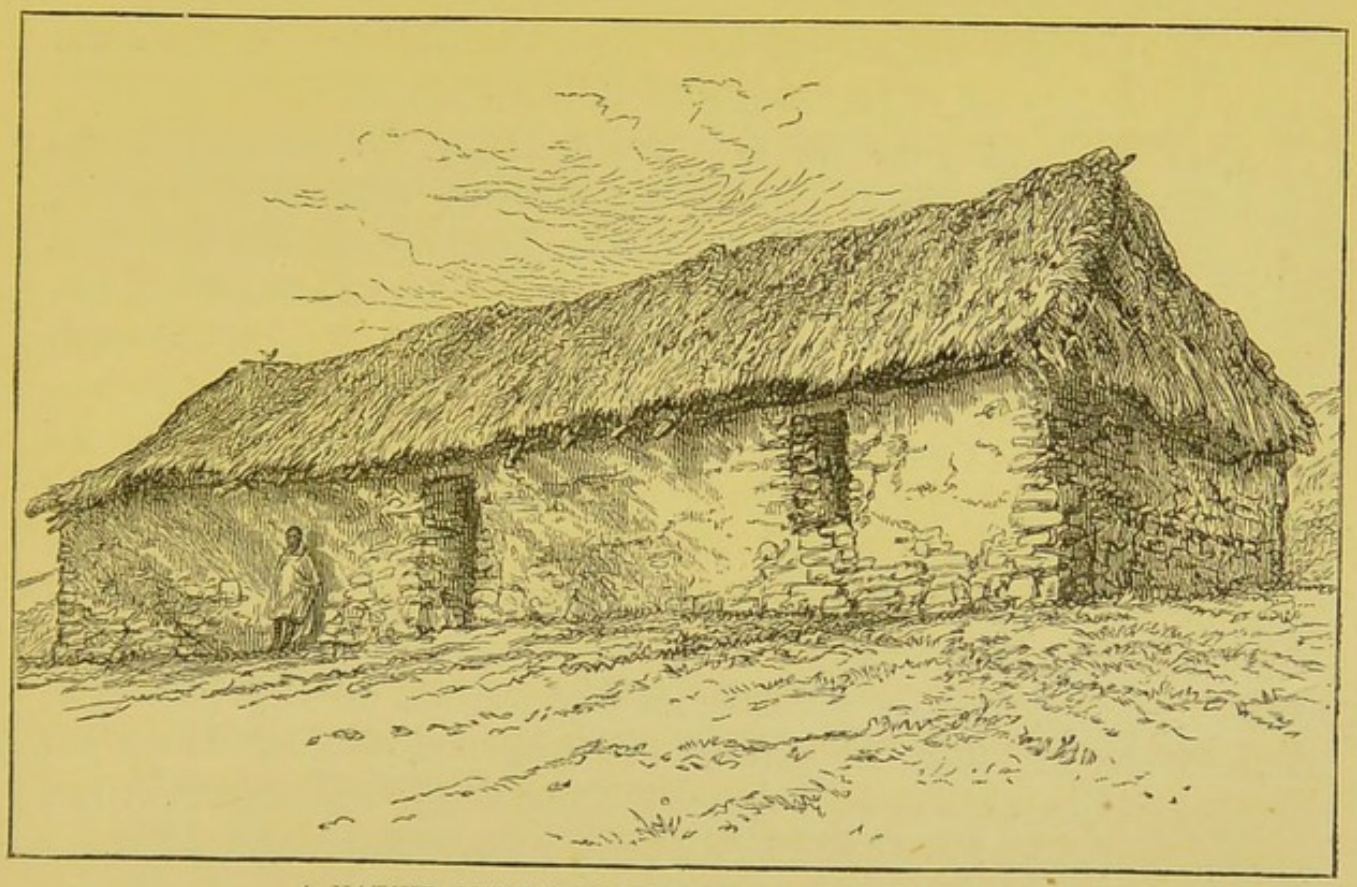
(Translated from a native account.)

Rasoa's father and mother were very wealthy. They had much money, many slaves, and cattle away in the desert. Very few indeed among their own clan were as wealthy as they, for if the sum of all their wealth both in the country and in the town was reckoned up, it amounted to some eight thousand dollars. They were in no want of this world's riches, for their wealth was quite enough to keep them in comfort all the days of their life; but for all this they lacked the true riches, for Christ was nothing to them. They were still worshipping idols and practising divination. They were in darkness in the presence of the light; for they made a pretence of going to chapel every Sunday, but the idols were their gods; it was in them that they trusted, and to them they prayed night and day; and it was only because they were ashamed of what people would think of them that they came to chapel at all.

After a time a little girl was born to them, whom they called Rasoa. They were glad indeed to receive this good gift from God.

Their joy was greatly increased; for their wealth was enough to keep them in comfort, and God had given them a child, too, for a companion.

As the little girl grew up and increased in understanding, she came to follow exactly in the footsteps of her father and mother. She became accustomed to all manner of wrong-doing; and cursing and swearing and all kinds of evil talking slipped glibly off her



A NATIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE OLD STYLE.

tongue. But the strength of God's grace, which is at work here in Madagascar, was about to draw her out of this evil condition.

One day, as she was playing with some girls who were scholars in the mission-school, these girls determined to sing in her presence that hymn which speaks of Christ's calling the little children, *Nitòndra ny zàza ny rèny tao Saléma* ('When mothers of Salem'). When they had finished the hymn, this daughter of the idol-keeper was touched

in her conscience, and said to herself: 'Oh! if I only could sing like that! I had no idea that they learnt such sweet songs as this in that place they call school! I will go there myself!'

Not long after this she carried out her intention, and even against her parents' wish she went to learn in the school. As soon as she was received her diligence was wonderful, and on this account she very soon learnt to read. She was very diligent at her lessons, and was scarcely ever unpunctual. Sometimes when she was eating rice and saw that the school-time had come, she would throw down her spoon and hurry off, to be in time for school-opening.

After she had gone on thus perseveringly for some time, she reached one of the upper classes, and was very diligent in learning by heart passages from the Bible. And one day, as she was thus repeating over the words of Scripture at home, her parents heard her voice saying: 'Thou shalt not have any gods beside Me. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them, for I, Jehovah, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the grandchildren and great-grandchildren who hate Me.'

Her parents were startled on hearing this voice of their child pointing out the evil of idol-worship; so they inquired, 'What is that you are saying, child?' and told her to repeat the words over again. So the girl repeated the words again, and she did so with great joy, because she saw that her parents had been able clearly to see the wrong of idolatry, and how directly these words reproved that evil condition of their hearts which had caused the living God to be angry with them. When the little girl had read these words clearly over to her parents, they stuck in their minds, and made them think a great deal.

And when they happened to be working the *sikìdy* (divination) or asking blessings of the idols, according to their custom, they durst no longer let their little girl see what they were doing, because they knew that the child had ceased to care for these things, for she was changed, and no longer believed the things which they believed; so,

even though she was their child, they were somewhat shy in her presence.

And so, when they had gone on some time hiding their evil practices from their child, a change came over them too, and they began also to hate their idols; for when they went to pray to them their conscience smote them hard, and they heard the voice of their child saying, 'Thou shalt make no image to pray to nor bow down to at all.' They were quite overcome by this voice, so that that which had been exceeding sweet to them became afterwards so bitter that they had no wish to taste it any more.

From that time to the present they have entirely given up serving idols or keeping them in the house at all; and now it is they who are amongst the foremost in leading the people in the district where they live to pray to God. If there happens to be any church member who is disowned by the church for wrong-doing, this man and his wife shed tears of sorrow, and go off and visit the wrong-doer in his own house, and warn and advise him and seek to bring him back again to Christ. And when there is any collection of money in the church for forwarding the Kingdom of God, it is they who are the foremost both in giving money themselves and in encouraging others to give. Especially when the collection was made for the poor soldiers who were protecting the Fatherland (during the late war with France), there was no one in the church to which they belonged who joyfully gave so much as they did.

May God be thanked! for His desiring mankind to serve Him is a great and joyful thing. And He is gradually opening the hearts of the inhabitants of this land of Madagascar, drawing them from the evil of their way, that the kingdom of Jesus Christ the Saviour may advance. Think of this man and his wife, who were serving idols, and doing all they could to resist God, but who have now become Christ's own followers, earnestly striving to forward His kingdom here on earth. But let it not be forgotten that it was the blessing of God upon the reading by their little girl of the words of the commandment

which led them to become servants of the living God, and produced such great results.

But God's decree cannot be resisted, and now these parents have been called on to part with this their beloved and only daughter. And how shall I describe their sorrow? While still lying ill this little girl sent a message of loving farewell to her teacher, saying at the same time that she would be very glad indeed if she could come and visit her. When her teacher heard this, not only did she herself go to visit her little scholar, but she took the girl's schoolfellows too. As soon as they came to the house, the sick girl at once stood up to receive them; previously to this, however, she had been so ill that she could not get up at all, for even when eating or taking medicine she had had to be propped up in bed; but her great joy at seeing her teacher and schoolfellows made her forget her sickness. She told them all to come near and shake hands with her. After this was done, some one read a passage from the Bible and offered prayer, and then they all united in singing a hymn. And then when they had sat for about a quarter of an hour they all shook hands with her again, and said good-bye. The poor girl's tears fell again as she saw her friends leaving her.

A week after this God called her home. One day before her death she kept on repeating over and over again: 'Oh, that I may die the death of the righteous! Oh, that I may die the death of the righteous!' On the same day too she said to all her relatives who were assembled in the house: 'Now I am happy; if it had not been for this death driving me away from this world, I should still have been content to stay here; but now He is taking me away hence that I may go to heaven to Jesus, my beloved Master. So do not grieve too much for me, for we shall meet again; and be sure you say good-bye to my teacher for me! Good-bye!'

Oh that all the young people who are now growing in knowledge may be filled with love to the Saviour as this girl was, that they may all meet in that sweet home above!

IV.—*The Story of Razafy.*

(Kindly contributed by Miss Gilpin.)

In the year 1870 a bright slave girl occupied a place in one of our lower classes. Her name was Razafy. By her diligent attention she quickly passed on from class to class, soon reaching the first place in the school. She then became one of the 'helpers.' These are girls who receive a shilling a month, and are expected to supply the place of any teacher who may be absent.

Not long after this she became a teacher, and very earnest she was in teaching the little ones under her care. After a few months thus diligently spent in teaching, I missed her from her accustomed place, and on inquiry found that in some way or other she had offended her mistress, who revenged herself by keeping the poor girl away from school. It often happens here that when the slaves get a remunerative position with the foreign residents, they give to their masters or mistresses half their money, and are then left free to do the duties of their post. But some of the masters and mistresses demand all the wages, and I think it was some dispute of this sort that vexed Razafy's mistress.

I went to her house, but was not allowed to see Razafy, and though I pleaded long and earnestly with the woman I could get no other answer from her but 'I shall not let Razafy be a teacher any more.' I came away very sad, and for some months Razafy was away, and her place filled by another teacher. After this one day Razafy came to me with a very bright face to tell me that she was free. It seems her own family (though slaves themselves) had borrowed money, and freed her, that she might pursue her loved occupation unmolested. Poor Razafy was greatly disappointed to find her place filled up, and although I made her at once an assistant teacher, by

which she got one shilling a month, I could not at that time find her a place as teacher, since all the classes were supplied. This I the more regretted, as I knew that the family were looking towards Razafy's wages to help to pay off the debt which they had incurred on her behalf.

At this time I had an application for a teacher for one of the chapel schools; and as the wages were a dollar a month, I asked Razafy if she would like to take the place. She was not very desirous to go, and said she should miss the Tuesday Bible class; I replied that I had made an arrangement with the missionary in charge, by which she should be liberated still to attend these classes.

After a little while she said she would take the place offered to her. She did so, and gave great satisfaction by the way in which she performed her daily duties.

At first she diligently attended our teachers' Bible class; but after a few months her attendance became irregular. When questioned as to the reason for this, she had always some excuse ready. At last, one day she and her mother came to call upon me, and asked to speak to me privately. As soon as the door was shut, poor Razafy burst into tears, and told me as well as she could how she had been enticed to do wrong, and had yielded to the temptation. She seemed truly sorry for the sin itself, and not as many, sorry only for the consequences of the wrong-doing. We spoke of the great love of Jesus, who came that He might take away sin; and I was glad to see that she was evidently deeply sorry for having grieved so kind a Saviour.

Of course I told her that her position as teacher would have to be given up at once. At the end of our conversation she turned to me and said:

'But you won't turn me off, will you? I shall be your child still.'

'Oh no! Razafy,' I replied. 'I cannot turn you off, you are my

child ; and I shall think of and pray for you that you may come back to the loving Saviour whom you have so grieved.'

When I visited Razafy, I found her still greatly humbled, and wishful to do what was right. After a year, she came to me to ask if she might come back to school again. 'Not as a teacher,' I said. 'Oh no!' she replied. 'I knew I could not come as a teacher ; but may I not come to learn?' To this I gladly assented ; and I never had cause to regret this decision ; for her quiet, penitent demeanour was marked by all, and had a good influence on her companions. In 1875 she had been with us for a year, and as she had been reinstated as a member of the church she formerly belonged to, we thought the time had come to let her teach again. This she was very glad to do, and worked diligently. After about a year-and-a-half, or two years, she was married to a teacher at one of our country villages not very far from town.

Since then, she and her husband have offered themselves to the Native Missionary Society, in connection with the churches under the care of the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association, and have been carrying on a useful work ever since.

V.—*The Little Slave Girl who became a Christian Chieftainess.*

The Bara are a very barbarous and warlike tribe, who live near the south of the island. Every boy is taught that the most honourable thing he can aspire to is to be able to steal cattle ; in fact, he is counted a fool and a coward if he cannot do so. Moreover, he is not entitled to marry until he has been one of a party in a successful cattle raid. Every Bara boy is taught to use the spear and gun when

very young, and every man carries a gun and two spears with him wherever he goes.

About the middle of the reign of Ranavàlona I., in one of her wars with the Bara tribe, a little girl, the daughter of a chief, was taken captive. She was carried to Antanànarìvo and sold. After a time she became acquainted with some of the persecuted Christians; she attended their secret meetings, learned to read the Bible, and was converted. Not long after this she was redeemed by her relatives. But she would not leave Antanànarìvo, as she had formed a warm friendship with another young Christian woman living there.

A BARA WARRIOR.

During Radàma II.'s reign, however, she came south again, and lived with her people at Sàhanàmbo. After she was converted she called herself Rasòanjanahàry (Blessed by the Creator).

During her stay at Sàhanàmbo she went to Fianàrantsòa, the capital of the Bètsilèo province, a distance of nearly three days' journey, to the Communion service every two months. On the way she would stay at Ambòhimandròso, and she, with one or two others, started a little service in a house there; but she was driven out of the town for it. Her people opposed and annoyed her in various ways; and at last, when she could stand their persecutions no longer, she

left, and went to Fianàrantsòa. There she was married to a Christian man, who afterwards became pastor of the church at Ambòhimandròso, to which place she and her husband removed shortly after their marriage. She was one of the first who formed the church there, and has since lived a very exemplary life. She is remarkably intelligent and courageous, and has often been subject to petty persecutions because of being so outspoken. She has been employed as Bible woman at Ambòhimandròso; and when Mrs. Rowlands, the wife of the missionary at this station, is from any cause unable to teach her women's Bible class, she takes her place, and can do her work quite creditably.

She has, under God, been the means of converting one of her brothers and his wife, who are also now leading consistent Christian lives, and though not possessing much ability, have been working among their own tribe for several years.

She has also been the means of opening a door for the Gospel to her people; and at present, in the district of Sàhanàmbo, there is a mud chapel and a small school, and several adults are able to read.

Upon the death of her elder brother, chief of Sàhanàmbo, she was appointed his successor. She does not mean to live permanently there, but will leave the government business in the hands of her Christian brother.

VI.—*An Autobiography of a Slave Scholar.*

The school I first went to was at Antsàmpanimahàzo; but when the teaching began at Ambòdin' Andohàlo, I became a scholar there. And when the school there had been going on for some little time there was an examination, and I came out second in it, and because the girl above me was a teacher I got the prize.

Now, when my mistress heard how I had come off in the examination, she sent for me, and said: 'Leave off learning now, you have had enough; you must serve me for the future.' I was very sorry indeed at this, and begged leave to continue a few more days; the real reason being, however, that I might be able to tell Mrs. Richardson and Miss Cameron about it. When I told them they were sorry and surprised, and this was what they said to me: 'Tell your mistress that we shall pay her 2*s.* a month if you may learn, or she can hire some one to take your place, and we will pay her wages.' When I told her this she said: 'I cannot order other people's slaves about, I only want my own.'

Then I considered again and talked with some of the other slaves in the house, and when they heard about it they were willing to do my share of work; but when I told my mistress that her own slaves agreed to do my work she would not hear of it, and then I saw that what she really wanted was that I should leave off learning. I determined firmly in my mind that, no matter what happened to me, I would not give up learning.

About a fortnight after this my mistress sent for me; but I did not go to her until Friday afternoon, when the week's school was over; and on Sunday or Monday morning I returned south again to be in time for school. I continued to do like this for about two months. My mistress was very angry indeed with my conduct. I

know I was wrong in so doing, but the love of school was so strong in my heart that I could not resist.

After things had been going on like this for some time my mistress sent word to my father and mother, saying: 'I am going to sell Ramànandràisòa, so I send to let you know. Therefore do you find some one to buy her, but I will not take less than 200 dollars for her.' My father and mother were astonished when they heard this, but still they only thought it was a threat of my mistress, to get me to leave off going to school. Therefore they advised me to go and live with my mistress. But their words only made my heart harder, and I would not go.

A little while after this she said: 'If you cannot find a new place for her, send her north to me; she is mine, and I will sell her, for there is some one here who will buy her.'

However, the person sent to fetch me told me that an Arab trader had made an agreement with my master to buy me. Even then I was not much afraid, but waited for the guidance of God. My father on hearing this was afraid, and went and told our relatives, and begged them to plead with my master on my behalf. But this is what he replied: 'If she will come and live in my house and obey me and do all I have told her to do, I will not sell her; but if not, the person is already here who will buy her.' (But some of the things he said to me I cannot mention here.)

When these people who had been pleading for me came and told me those words I was afraid when I heard them, and wept and sobbed bitterly. Then when I had ceased crying they reproved and advised me, saying: 'It cannot be helped, child, you are a slave! go and do your *fanompòana* (duties of a slave), for why should you cause this separation between us, your relatives, and yourself?' I did not answer them; I wept again, and they went away, not seeing what more could be done. When my father saw this, he went to a man whom he could trust (a church member) about the matter, and he kindly agreed to let me live in his house.

Not long after this my master sent for me again, and he would not allow the person who came for me to tell me anything, but merely to fetch me. On arriving there, some of my friends were sorry for me and said to me: 'If your master can still be pleaded with, it would be better to do so rather than that you should be separated from your relatives; for the man is now quite ready to take you down to Mojangà.' When I heard this I thought of how I might run away, but there was no longer an opportunity, for they had set a watch over me. When I saw no way of escape, this is what I said: 'I pray you, oh my mistress! let me once more seek some one to buy me, and if I do not find any one, I will come back and live with you.' She consented to this, and we made a fast agreement that if I did not return at the appointed time she might do with me whatsoever she wished.

So I went south again, and when I got there I told my father all we had said, and also that I would not live there any longer, but would hide. My father counselled me again, and begged me to wait a little, in case some other plan might be thought of. But I would not listen to his advice, for hiding was the only thing that commended itself to my mind. So on Sunday I left home; and I had only gone about forty yards when people came to the house to fetch me; they looked for me among all my relatives and acquaintances in the chapels and also at the Sunday-school. That was not all, for they waited on the road; for said they, 'She will be sure to go to school, she loves learning so much.' They watched like this for about a week.

When my father saw how they lay in wait for me, he sent word to me that I must do whatever I possibly could to escape being seen, for very close search and inquiry was being made after me. 'And great trouble will come upon you,' he said, 'and the people with whom you are staying, if you are found.' When I heard this, I dared not any more venture out till it was too dark to recognise people. The house I hid in first was near one of the ancient city gates, and the people were entirely trustworthy, for they took more

care of me even than my father and mother. My chief occupation during that time was reading my Bible, and praying that I might return to school, and crying every time the clock struck eight and one (the times for going to school).

After a little over a month Miss Cameron sent me a dictionary, in which she had written in English, 'Remember me,' and also some sewing to do. On seeing these, my sorrow and longing for school only increased, and I could not keep back my tears. When that sewing was finished, I took it to one of my friends, a fellow scholar from Ambòhitsòa. I often went there to ask how the school was going on. Sometimes also I went with my father to Miss Cameron to beg her help. But although she was very sorry, she did not see what she could do ; she was willing, however, to give £4 towards freeing me, if it could be accomplished. When I had been about three months in that place, there were spies seen watching about near the house, and I was afraid. At Ambòhipèno (a town some distance from the capital) there was a widow lady of high rank, a friend of the people with whom I was staying, who had been very friendly with me, and she was glad when it was proposed for me to go and stay with her. When the agreement was settled I went, and there I was able to go about and attend chapel, because there was no one who knew who I was.

About a fortnight after my arrival, a man named Rabèngìlo, from east of Ambòhimànga, came to the village ; he had married a wife from Ambòhipèno, and sometimes they lived at her home and sometimes at his. I did not know him at all, and I had no idea that he knew my mistress either, but he knew me, and he had agreed with her to look for me.

When I had been there about two months, I had a dream one night, and this was what I saw :—Three men came to the house ; one looked in at the window while the other two waited at the door ; and they saw me quite easily, because it was a one-roomed house, without any division in it. When they had captured me, they put me in

fetters then and there, and I said to them: 'Now you have caught me I will not try to run away from you again; don't put me in chains, for you are only disgracing yourselves needlessly.' After this they addressed the woman in the house with whom I was staying, and wanted to have her arrested and carried before the judges. But I pleaded with them again, saying, 'Don't, I beseech you; you have me now, and I will do whatever you wish.' So they desisted. Then I awoke, and I saw it was only a dream, and in the morning I told the woman of the house; but she said, 'It was only a dream; don't be afraid; there is no one who knows you here at all.'

Nevertheless, two days after my dream the man named Rabèngìlo arrived there. We happened to be sitting outside the house on the east side, when, behold, he came from the north, slinking along with his lamba over his head. I was immediately afraid, and trembled violently, and I said to my hostess, 'Oh, I am terribly afraid;' and she replied, 'Come then, let us go into the house. Whatever makes you so fearful? Why, he is only some one who constantly sees you!' I said, 'I don't know, but I am afraid.'

When we had been sitting in the house for about half an hour I trembled again, and said, 'Let me go, Rasòa (for that was the name of the woman), for my mind will not be at ease, and I am very much afraid.'

Then she answered again, 'It is evening now, and where can you go? Wait till to-morrow morning before going.' It was about half-past five then. 'No,' I replied. 'Do let me go, for over yonder at Ambòhipò there are some of my relatives; and should there be people looking for me, they had better find me on the road, for you would be in great difficulties should they find me here.' Then she said, 'Oh, don't, Raivo (for that was the name I went by), for God will guard us.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'God does indeed protect us; but when He startles us with something and disturbs our minds, if we do not attend to the warning, it is our own fault.' She assented to that, and this is what we planned: she would take me over to the east, to where my relatives

DIGGING RICE-FIELDS AND PLANTING OUT YOUNG RICE.
(*From a Native Pencil Sketch.*)

[*See page* 44.

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lived, and then would return and watch and see what would occur in the village, and if anything suspicious happened I should not again return. So we went ; but we had not left the house more than about a quarter of an hour when the three men came there, just as they had appeared in my dream.

The next morning, which was Sunday, the woman returned home ; but I remained, to wait for word from her. When she reached her house, she inquired of her daughter what had happened, and her daughter told her what had taken place. At this she was sorry, at the same time thankful to God. Then she went up to Antanànarìvo, to tell the man with whom I had first hid what had occurred.

This man got a preacher to accompany him, to come and fetch me and take me up to town ; but Rasòa tried her best to go with me, she was so sorry for me. When we came up to town, I returned to my first hiding-place until another could be found for me. The third place I lived in was also the house of a church member.

When my mistress could not get hold of me, she vented her anger on my younger brothers and sisters. The two girls she took to live with her, and the two boys she sold in the public market, intending, if they found no purchasers, to send them down to Mojangà to be sold. However, Andriamatòa Ramàhatra bought them.

Many people tried to free me from my trouble, when they heard of my distress. Ramatòa Ravèro, one of the royal princesses, did what she could to buy me, on account of her sorrow for me, for we had been in the same class at Ambòdin' Andohàlo. Some of the preachers also tried to free me, but without success. Those words, 'I have been young, and now I am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,' kept running through my mind.

At this place I did not hide continually, because there were many orchards, and I could stay among the trees during the day. I remained there a little less than two months, and then went to another place, for fear I should have been seen by any one.

Then I went to still another place ; but after being there a month

the people became uneasy, lest I should be discovered, and they punished by the government. So I sent word to my father to look out for some trustworthy people to whom I could go. I did not in the least blame those people, for I knew that the Queen's law against giving refuge to run-away slaves was very stern ; therefore I thanked them. I then went to another part of the town, and there I was badly off indeed, for the house was one without an upstairs, and I had to hide right over the fire, and I could not come down till 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening.[1]

I lived about five weeks there, and then I begged my father to find me another place, because my eyes would soon be spoiled with the smoke. He sought again, but he could find no one trustworthy nearer than Isòtry, and he was almost in despair. When I heard this I said with sorrow and many tears, 'If you cannot find any other place for me, O my father, let me appear before my master, and let him do what he will with me. If he should find me in any one's house, and you should be punished, how should I bear to hear of your trouble and the grief that would come upon all our relatives if you suffered the penalty of the law?' He too was sorry on hearing what I said, and replied: 'No, my child, God has shielded you all this long time, and the day will yet come when He will bring you out of your hiding-place. Have patience yet awhile.'

I hid there another month, but because I was known to many people at Isòtry I removed again, and went to live with my brothers. After that I moved from one place to another. Altogether I was about a year and eight months in concealment. In all the houses I went I took nothing whatever with me but my Bible. My chief occupation was reading it, and I read it all through twice.

When I had been thus hiding for nearly two years, I almost determined to come out, for I could not bear it any longer, and we

[1] In many houses there is a rough frame-work of light wood or bamboo over the hearth, and this being covered with mats, forms a commodious shelf for stowing the earthen cooking-pots and other utensils.

could hardly find any trustworthy people with whom I could stay. Mrs. Richardson, however, on account of her sorrow for me, sent a letter to England to Mrs. Pillans and her friends, telling of my distress, and they sent 110 dollars for my ransom. But Mrs. Richardson never told me till the money had really come. And this is what she said about it: 'Seventy dollars ought to go towards my freedom, and the rest she would keep for me to buy books,' &c.

One day, when I no way expected it, my father came to tell me about the money. Oh, what joy was mine! I almost danced; but these words never left my mind: 'O God, how I thank Thee! O God, how I thank Thee!'

It was considered what arrangements could best be made for buying me, and Andrianàivoravèlona and Andriambelo, two of the town pastors, undertook it. The former pretended to buy me for himself. My mistress still refused to sell me, but her husband persuaded her, and she at last agreed to 120 dollars as my price.

VII.—*The Little Orphan Boy.*

Not far from the capital there lived three little orphans. But though they had lost both father and mother, they were carefully looked after, for their rich old grandmother took them to live with her, and tried her best to train them up to love God and trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The youngest of the three was a bright, intelligent little boy, fond of asking questions. One day, on reading about the many mansions in the bright home above, he asked if the *Vazàha*, or white people, would have chairs and tables and pretty things in heaven, as they have now, and would the Malagasy merely sit on the floor on mats as they do here? He also wanted to

know if Jesus would let him have one of the beautiful mansions if he loved Him and prayed to Him. He seemed to fear that he might be sent to live, not with his parents, but in some inferior dwelling with his slave nurses. For the slaves of a wealthy person usually have small houses allotted to them, and do not live in the master's house, and in some cases the children of the master are put out to be nursed by slave women. Once he asked if Jesus meant little slaves, too, when He said : 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.'

He longed very much for a pony, and begged his grandmother to buy him one, but she refused, thinking him too young, and fearing lest he should be hurt.

Then the little boy thought that he would ask Jesus to put it into his old grandmother's heart to give him one. But when a whole month had passed, and still no pony came, he gave up praying, saying : 'I have prayed to God three times a day with my window open, as Daniel did, and yet God has not given me what I asked. I will give up praying ; He does not hear me.'

Some time after this he was very ill one night, and said to his little slave, who slept by him : 'I have not prayed for a long time, and perhaps that is why God is making me ill. If I feel better in the morning I will thank Him.' When the morning came he was better, and on going downstairs, to his great delight, he found the long-wished-for pony ; and not only that, but his grandmother had also bought a slave boy to have charge of the pony, and take care of him when out riding.

Not long after this the little boy had a great trouble to bear ; his good old grandmother died rather suddenly, and left him without her tender care. He had never been very strong, and from this time he began to get weaker and weaker till he became really ill. On some fresh medicine being brought to him one day, and the hope being expressed that it would soon make him well again, he replied : 'I do not want to get well ; I may be a naughty boy when I am bigger, and I have not got my grandmother now to teach me and take care

of me. If it please God, I would rather die.' On seeing those around him weeping, he wept a little too, and then said: 'Farewell! May God bless you all! I am going to die now, and when I get to heaven I will ask Jesus to take me as one of His little lambs; and I will ask God to send teachers to Madagascar, to teach the poor people who have not heard how Jesus loves them.'

This little boy has no longer any need to ask about the bright mansions, for he passed away to Jesus before he was eleven years old.

VIII.—*The Little Scholar early taken Home.*

(Kindly contributed by Miss Gilpin.)

Rasòaray was about ten years of age; for in Madagascar people do not often know their ages, but reckon by events. Frequently when you ask a person's age, the reply is: 'Oh, I was born in the days of Andrianampòinimèrina,' or, 'This child was born just as the Queen left to go to Ràmomafàna,' &c.

Rasòaray was the child of Christian parents, for both father and mother were members of Mr. Cameron's Bible class. She attended the Sunday-school conducted by him and his daughter, with the help of other friends, both English and Malagasy, and held in connection with the Anàlakèly church. She attended the girls' school at Fàravòhitra, and was a very diligent, docile scholar. The lesson she loved best of all was the Bible lesson. On her return home, when school was over, she would frequently go over it again to her parents; and it was also her delight to go with them to the weekly Bible classes held by Mr. Cameron at his house.

The last day she came to school she had a bad headache, and her mother thought she had better stay at home, but she pleaded, 'Let me

go! This is the day for the Bible lesson.' This headache was the beginning of an attack of typhoid fever. She was taken to the hospital to be nursed; in her delirium she said: 'I have forgotten all my Bible lesson, Jesus won't take me to heaven:' and again, 'I have not got a new heart, Jesus won't receive me.' But when the delirium was over she was able to trust her Saviour. One time she said: 'Don't talk, or I shall forget what Miss Gilpin has told me in the Bible.'

Her father, who had just returned from the coast, was greatly distressed to find his darling so ill; and trying to rouse her, he told her of the beautiful dresses he had brought her from Tamatave. She replied: 'If you had brought me a hundred dresses, I should not want them, for I am going to Jesus, and shall have plenty there.' To her little sister she said: 'I will give you all my pretty things, for I am going to Jesus; I am happy, and want nothing.'

Her delirium was one of the first instances noticed by the doctor of Malagasy wandering in mind on religious subjects; and we hailed it as a sign that the hearts of our dear girls are beginning to think more deeply on these things.

Rasòaray passed away to Jesus on Sunday morning the 14th of February, 1875, and was buried the next day. That evening her day-school teacher was able to go and visit the sorrowing parents, and found them stricken indeed. Her father said: 'We are not sorrowful on her account, for we know she is happy with Jesus, but we are very sorrowful to have lost our little girl.'

Miss Cameron, who kindly visited her daily, wrote the following note to her day-school teacher, who was ill at the time, and unable to visit her:—

'You will have heard that our little friend, Rasòaray, has gone to the Happy Land. It was sudden at the last, for she had been pronounced better yesterday morning. The dear child was very happy in her mind, for she was resting in the love of the Good Shepherd, and knew she was going to Him. I wish you could have seen her

earnest, patient look yesterday ; it told how One we know of was standing by her side to help and comfort. Let me rejoice with you, dear friend, that one of your young lambs is safely gathered to that dear home. The thought must give you hope and encouragement, especially now that you have days of weakness and suffering appointed you.'

IX.—'*Suffer the Little Children to come unto Me ;*' *the Story of Ramiàto.*

(Translated from a native account.)

Ramiàto Andrianòny's child was one of twins born on Dec. 30th, 1878. She was a timid baby, and would go to no one but her nurse. Although her twin-sister was the stronger of the two, she died when about a year old. A little while after this the nurse's own child became ill with whooping-cough, and she went off secretly to see it, taking little Ramiàto with her. When the doctor heard this, he said it would be best to take the child entirely away from her beloved nurse, lest she should get the whooping-cough. The parents were very much perplexed, fearing greatly that the little one would grieve over her *nèny*, but to their joy she soon became much less timid, and was willing to be petted and nursed by others.

When she was about a year and two months old she began to walk alone. The first word she was able to say was *dàda* (father). And when she was able to say a good many words her father began to teach her that it is wrong to tell lies, and that she should tell at once if she spoiled anything. A little while after this she happened to break something in the house, and her nurse and those in charge of the house said to her : 'What will you do when your father comes home ?' She did not answer, but when her father came home she

ran to meet him, saying: 'I have spoiled something, father.' When he heard this he said: 'I am glad; because my child has done what I told her to do.'

Sometimes in the evening, when her father's work was done, and they two were alone together, he delighted to rest and talk with her. And she had plenty of questions to ask when they talked, and would not leave off till her mind was satisfied. One evening she was talking about heaven, and asked: 'Who lives there, father?' After he had answered her, she asked again: 'Where are the stairs by which they got up there? Where is the door by which they entered?' and her father answered her.

When she was about three years old she was taken to chapel, and her mother gave her a lamba with a rosebud pattern on it to wear; and afterwards, whenever that was handed to her to put on, she would say: 'Is it Sunday to-day?' And one Sunday she heard the words given out from the pulpit: 'Each bring a little money,' and after this, every time she went to chapel, she used to say to her mother: 'Mother, take a little money.' Not long after this she went to stay awhile with some of her relatives, and while playing out-of-doors she happened to climb up on to a wall that was not safe, and it gave way, and carried her with it down a precipice some twenty feet deep. She was stunned; but God graciously spared her life, and she came round again; and when she was able to speak she said to her sister: 'Shall we go home?' and continued: 'Lest father should say: "Perhaps you were naughty, Miàto, and that was why you fell."'

After this a dog belonging to her brother bit her in their own yard. The dog had been fighting in the morning with other dogs in the market-place, and at noon, when it came home, her older brother called out: 'Don't let our dog go out, lest it should fight again in the market.' He did not address his words to her, nevertheless she went to prevent the dog from going out again, and it turned and bit her near her eye. A number of people collected at once, as it was by the road, and near a market, and the child was loved by all the

neighbours. The wound was well washed at once, and she did not resent it in the least. As soon as this was done she was taken off to the doctor, and on the way her father said to her: 'If you do not cry when the white man burns it, I will buy you whatever you like.' 'No, I won't cry,' she said. When she arrived at the doctor's she was asked which she would like—to have something put on to the wound that would be very painful, but would do her good, and still to live with her parents, or not to have it and to die. 'Put it on,' she answered; 'but let me sit on my father's knees.' Then the doctor cauterised the wound. There was no sign, however, that the dog was mad, for just after biting the child it turned to play with her.

Just two months from the day she was bitten she became feverish, nervous, and threatened with convulsions, but her parents thought she had only caught cold. The next morning, however, it was noticed that the scar was red and swollen.

Many of the missionaries came to see her and brought her toys, and they were all still doubtful as to whether her illness was occasioned by the bite, or from some other cause, because it had been well washed and cauterised. But she still got worse, so she was taken to the hospital at Anàlakèly. When the doctor saw her, he was at first very doubtful, but in the end he was quite sure that her illness was caused by the bite, and told her friends to take her home, and that her father and mother must give up all hope of her recovery.

They took her to her grandfather's house, where, not long after her arrival, messengers came from the Queen and Prime Minister to express their sorrow, and the little one thanked them, and said: *Misàotra tòmpoko ê*—'I thank you, sirs.' She got worse and worse, till she could neither eat nor drink, and when it was near sunset there was no hope left, for it was difficult for her to speak, and difficult to understand her words. But when she said 'Pray,' which she said often until she died, it could be understood, for she expressed it by her eyes, and knelt down; and when 'Amen' was being said she raised her eyes and clasped her hands. And this is what she said to

her sister: 'Ramatòa, oh, teach me what is His name!' and she answered: 'Jesus is His name.' Then the little one said: 'Jesus! Jesus!' and steadfastly looked up and said: 'Oh, there they are! Look! Look!' and her face was bright and glad when she said it, and she danced and clapped her hands. Just before she died, she said to her grandfather, *Vàvaka, ry Dàdabè ô*—'Pray, grandpapa.' He prayed, and she repeated 'Amen,' and added, 'I am healed.' When that was done, she said, 'I will pray now, grandpapa, I will pray.' Then she remained quite still for about a minute, and, on saying 'Amen,' her spirit passed away.

She died at the age of four years and one month. There were six or seven of us who remained with her to the end, and none of us were afraid (although we knew that often those who have been bitten by mad dogs bite and hurt people), because of our love for her. And I believe that not one of us who nursed her will ever forget that time till the day of our death. In the morning many friends, both Malagasy and Vazàha, came to see her, and all were surprised to hear she had passed away so soon; many saying that in most similar cases people linger on four or five days before they die; but God did not leave this little child to suffer long.

X.—*Rasitèra's Happy Death.*

(Kindly contributed by Miss Herbert.)

Some time ago one of our scholars, named Rasitèra, sent to me to visit her because she was too ill to come to school. She had been learning in our school about thirteen months, and was a very diligent scholar. Her home was at Ambàtolaivỳ, about a day's journey from

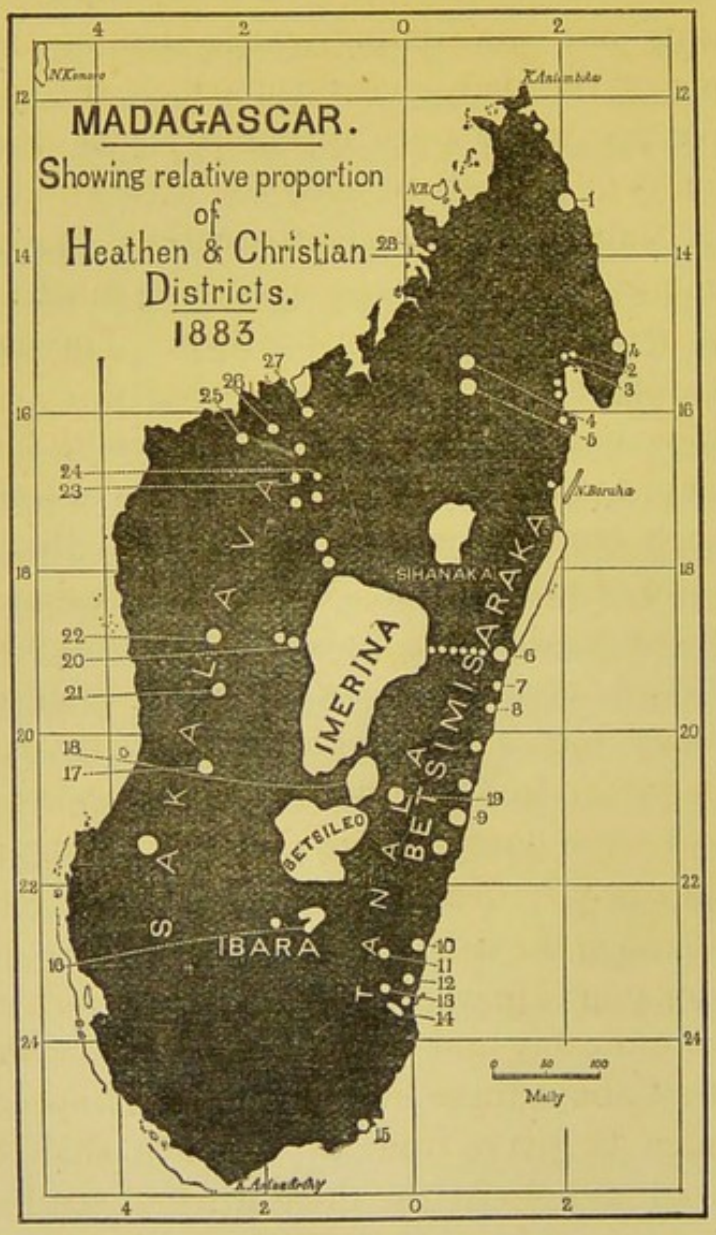
here, but she had begged her parents to allow her to come up to the capital, that she might get a better education. She brought a letter from the missionary in charge of the district, telling of her desire to learn in town, and asking us to admit her. This we did; and shortly afterwards she came to my Sunday-school class. One morning after the lesson she asked to speak with me alone. Great was my joy when she said she wished to be a Christian. 'I have been a sinner indeed,' she said, 'and now I want to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

After some conversation and prayer she went home, but she was not yet happy. Next day she asked me to pray with her, and on leaving me she said: 'Jesus Christ is my Saviour, and I will serve Him.' Her aunt, with whom she lived in town, has told me many times how different she was grown from other girls; she was so willing to help others, and tried to get some little slaves to listen to her while she read the Bible, or told of what Jesus had done to save them.

One day she sent for me to bid her good-bye. The week previous she was at school, but she had taken a cold, which settled upon her lungs, and, not being strong, she rapidly grew worse. When I entered the room, she took my hand and smiled. I asked if she was happy; she replied: 'Yes.' Again I asked in what she was trusting. Her reply was, 'Jesus the Saviour.' Yet again I said: 'Do you wish to live?' She replied, 'In heaven only.' I left her to ask the doctor to visit her. He went, but she passed happily away into her Heavenly Father's care, about ten o'clock that same evening

CONCLUSION.

HERE is a little map which I would like you to look at. It is a map of Madagascar; and the part left white shows where European missionaries or native evangelists are at work teaching the people,



1 Vòhimàrina.
2 Màroantsètra.
3 Isòanieràna.
4 Màndritsàra.
5 Màritandràno.
6 Andèvoràntо. To the west a line of stopping-places between the coast and the capital.
7 Vàtomàndry.
8 Màhanòro.
9 Màsindràno.
10 Ambòhipèno.
11 Màhamànina.
12 Ambàhy.
13 Ankàrana.
14 Vangaìndràno.
15 Fàradofày.
16 Ihòsy.
17 Malaìmbàndy.
18 Ambòsitra.
19 Ambòhimànga.
20 Valàlafòtsy.
21 Ankavàndra.
22 Vònizòngo.
23 Mèvatanàna.
24 Antògodrahòja.
25 Trabònjy.
26 Màrovoày.
27 Mojangà.
28 Anòrontoànga.

while the black parts show the districts where no missionaries have as yet settled, but where the people are still heathen.

How great the work is that still remains to be done in this island of Madagascar! You have read in this book that even in those parts of the country where missionaries and teachers are at work, very many

of the people are still very superstitious and ignorant. What, then, must be the condition of those tribes among whom evangelists and teachers have never yet settled?

Sad indeed are the accounts given by missionaries and others who have travelled among these distant tribes, of their ignorant and benighted condition. Fighting and quarrelling, cattle-stealing, and getting drunk—these are some of the daily events of which the lives of many of these poor people are made up. In some places whole villages of people may be seen drunk together, even the little children reeling about the streets in a state of hopeless intoxication. Crafty and suspicious, cruel and immoral—these are the words we must use in describing the condition of many of these poor heathen. The dark places of the earth are indeed full of the habitations of cruelty.

When you think how you live in free and happy England, with kind Christian friends, who have taught you from your earliest days to know and love the Saviour, and then contrast your condition with that of the poor children of Madagascar, do not feelings of thankfulness arise in your hearts for all the blessings with which God has surrounded your path? What have you done to deserve His favour? Why has He seen fit to give you so many blessings of which your poor little brothers and sisters in Madagascar know nothing? Is it because of any goodness of yours that you were born a happy English child, and not a poor little heathen Malagasy? No; it is nothing but God's goodness and grace which has made the difference.

And now, do you think that your Heavenly Father will be pleased with you if you settle down comfortably and enjoy the blessings which He has given you, and forget all about these little Malagasy children? Remember that to whom much is given, from them much shall be required, and God wants you all to help in the great work of sending the glad tidings of a Saviour's love to the poor heathen.

But, perhaps, some of my young friends who read these lines may be inclined to say: 'What can I do to help mission work? I am too young to be a missionary myself, and I have no money to give, as some have, to help in sending out missionaries and teachers to the

heathen.' Be sure, in the first place, that you have given your own heart to Jesus, to love and serve Him ; for, unless what you do is done out of love to Him, and from a real desire to do His will, your labour will bear but little fruit. But if you have thus given your own hearts to God, there is something which you can all do. You can pray that God's kingdom may come. You can pray that He would strengthen and guide all the missionaries at work in foreign lands, and open the hearts of the heathen to listen to their message ; and that He would in all nations raise up many more native teachers and evangelists, who shall be willing to go and preach the Gospel to their own countrymen who are still sitting in heathen darkness. You can ask, too, that He would open the hearts of people in England and other nations, to give freely of their money, so that very many more missionaries may be sent out to heathen lands.

Pray also that God would show you plainly what He would have you to do. You cannot all go out as missionaries ; but among those who read this book there may be some whom God will call and prepare for this great work. I remember, when about twelve years old, reading a book which told of the persecutions of the Christians in Madagascar, and I little thought then that I should ever come out to this land as a missionary ; but God has since plainly showed me that it was His will that I should do so. So, too, among those whose interest in the 'Children of Madagascar' has been awakened by reading this book, there may be those who will hereafter be called to come out and help in the work of teaching and training them.

Should the reading of this book lead my young friends to see that they all have a part in the great work of sending the glad tidings of deliverance to the slaves of Satan in the dark places of the earth, it will not have been written in vain.

THE END.

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